

Assam-Arunachal border row: 12 injured



Dhemaji, Aug 11: At least 12 residents from Assam were injured after alleged firing by miscreants from across the inter-state border in Assam's Dhemaji district, escalating long-standing land dispute tensions between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

The violent confrontation occurred at Mingmang Basti, located along the inter-state border in the Gogamukh revenue circle under the jurisdiction of the Gerukamukh police station. According to senior police officials, the clash erupted following a dispute over alleged encroachment on land in Assam by individuals from Arunachal Pradesh. Preliminary investigations indicate that miscreants from the neighboring side opened indiscriminate fire targeting local residents of the village.

The injured were initially rushed to the Gogamukh Rural Hospital for emergency treatment. Seven of the victims, who were in critical condition, were subsequently referred to the Dhemaji Civil Hospital, with four critically injured individuals later transferred to the Assam Medical College and Hospital (AMCH) in Dibrugarh for advanced medical care.

India reiterates Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and indisputable reality

New Delhi, Aug 11: Reaffirming its unyielding stance on national sovereignty, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Tuesday reiterated that Arunachal Pradesh is an "inalienable and integral part of India" and emphasized that no external claims or objections can alter this indisputable reality.

Addressing a press briefing in New Delhi, MEA official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that India's position regarding the northeastern state is self-evident, historical, and



non-negotiable. "Let me reiterate this once again that Arunachal Pradesh is an inalienable and integral part

of India, and this is a fact that is self-evident," Jaiswal affirmed, adding that "nothing can change this indis-

putable reality". The MEA's firm response comes in the wake of fresh objections raised by Beijing following India's decision to formally update and identify 27 key locations in Arunachal Pradesh by their official standard names on the Survey of India map. The government highlighted that the mapping exercise guarantees precise geographical identification of these border sites while enhancing public awareness of their rich historical, strategic, and spatial importance.

IAF Agniveervayu recruitment rally to be held in Chumoukedima

Chumoukedima, Aug 11: An Open Recruitment Rally for enrolment in the Indian Air Force (IAF) as Agniveervayu (other than Science subjects) will be conducted at the Nagaland Armed Police Training Centre (NAPTC), Chumoukedima District, in September 2026.

According to a notification issued by the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Kohima, on August 5, 2026, the recruitment rally for women candidates will be held on September 1 and 2,

with candidates required to report at 5:30 AM on September 1.

The rally for men candidates will be conducted on September 4 and 5, with reporting scheduled for 5:30 AM on September 4. The recruitment rally is being conducted by the Indian Air Force pursuant to a communication received from the 11 Airmen Selection Centre, Guwahati, dated July 30, 2026.

All eligible candidates from Kohima District have been encouraged to partici-

pate in the recruitment rally. Candidates have been advised to check the detailed notification, eligibility criteria, online registration process and other instructions on the official IAF recruitment website: <https://iafreruitment.edcil.co.in>. The continuous selection process at the rally site will comprise initial document verification, a Physical Fitness Test (PFT), a written examination, and Adaptability Tests I and II, followed by medical evaluations for shortlisted candidates.

'Har Ghar Tiranga' Exhibition 2026 launches at Nagaland Secretariat

Kohima, Aug 11: As part of the ongoing nationwide Independence Day celebrations, the Department of Art & Culture, in collaboration with the Home Department, inaugurated the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Exhibition 2026 at Gate No. 1 of the Nagaland Civil Secretariat in Kohima.

The curated exhibition serves as a formal call to all citizens to bring the National Flag into their homes and hoist it with pride, fostering a deep personal connection with the Tiranga as a symbol of national unity, integrity, and collective commitment to nation-building. Adding a special historical dimension

to this year's state celebrations, the campaign simultaneously marks the 150th anniversary of India's National Song, "Vande Mataram".

The inaugural ceremony was graced by Kuko Mero, IAS, Secretary, Home Department, as the special guest. Addressing the gathering, Mero emphasized that the Har Ghar Tiranga initiative is designed to showcase the strength, unity, and shared heritage of the nation. He noted that the exhibition at the Civil Secretariat forms a central component of the broader campaign, which will feature a series of commem-

orative activities across all districts in the coming days. The event was attended by key government dignitaries, including Home Department Secretary Elizabeth Ngullie, Commissioner & Secretary for Art & Culture Bodeno S. Colo, and Director of Art & Culture Adela Moa, alongside senior officers and staff. The official program was chaired by Assistant Archivist Kr. Temjenjungla. Designed to immerse visitors in India's freedom struggle and Nagaland's historical heritage, the exhibition features historical displays, archival records, and interactive installations.

Arunachal Minister Dasanglu Pul urges faster geothermal, critical mineral exploration

Itanagar, Aug 11: Arunachal Pradesh Science and Technology Minister Dasanglu Pul called for accelerating geothermal energy and critical mineral exploration across the state, emphasizing the need to harness its rich geological resources responsibly to achieve sustainable development and energy security.

Chairing a high-level review meeting at her office in Itanagar, Pul stressed the importance of seamless coordination among scientific bodies, public sector undertakings, and government departments. "Arunachal Pradesh possesses immense



potential in geothermal energy and critical minerals. We must translate scientific research into practical, on-the-ground applications that directly empower local communities and drive long-term economic growth," she stated. Addressing critical mineral exploration, the review

highlighted progress on the Phop Graphite and Vanadium Block, recently acquired by Oil India Limited during Tranche-IV of the Ministry of Mines' competitive auction process. Acknowledging the role of early-stage drone mapping and geological survey work executed

by CES&HS, Pul noted that critical minerals have acquired paramount strategic and economic significance for India's clean energy transition. She urged all executing agencies to back exploration activities with modern technology, geospatial data, and advanced scientific expertise. The review session was attended by Science and Technology Secretary Wayong Khimhun, CES&HS Director Tana Tage, OIL Resident Chief Executive Binayananda Bharali, along with senior representatives from Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited (MECL).

India rejects China's claims, calls Arunachal Pradesh an inalienable part

Itanagar, Aug 11: Reaffirming its firm stance on territorial integrity, India categorically rejected Beijing's persistent attempts to assign fictitious names to locations in Arunachal Pradesh. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) reiterated that the northeastern state was, is, and will always remain an "integral and inalienable part" of the country.

The official response comes as China's Ministry of Civil Affairs periodically releases standardized Chinese names for geographical features, towns, and passes across Arunachal Pradesh—a region Beijing attempts to claim as "Zangnan" or South Tibet. Dismissing Beijing's cartographic assertions as



"vain and preposterous," New Delhi emphasized that inventively renaming Indian locations cannot alter ground realities or fabricate legal validity.

Official sources noted that assigning fictitious names to Indian territory is a recurring tactic employed by Beijing to manufacture baseless narratives. MEA officials warned

that such unilateral moves inject unnecessary negativity into bilateral communications and derail ongoing constructive efforts aimed at stabilizing and normalizing

relations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

In a decisive counter-move, the Ministry of Home Affairs, in consultation with the Arunachal Pradesh state government, formally identified and updated 27 key geographical sites, mountain passes, and border villages with their standard official names on the Survey of India (Sol) map. The marked locations include strategic high-altitude passes such as Thag La, Dzo La, Riza La, and Pukur La, as well as historic border villages like Longju and Maja. Prominent war memorials, including Jaswant Garh and the Sher-e-Thapa Memorial honoring heroes of the 1962 war, were also formally cataloged.

Rio urges Amit Shah to review proposed FCRA amendments

Dimapur, Aug 11: Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, urging the Centre to reconsider the proposed Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, and seek wider stakeholder consultations before moving forward.

In his letter, Rio proposed that the bill be referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for detailed examination. He emphasized that subjecting the legislation to broader parliamentary scrutiny would allow affected stakeholders to present their views, help address genuine apprehensions, and reinforce public confidence while safeguarding national security interests.

Rio's intervention follows extensive deliberations on August 9 with prominent religious lead-



ers, including representatives of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) and the Bishop of Kohima. Highlighting that over 90 percent of Nagaland's population is Christian, the Chief Minister urged the Union Home Ministry to treat the representations submitted by church bodies with sensitivity, keeping in mind the state's

unique historical, social, and developmental context. The Chief Minister noted that churches and Christian charitable organizations have historically played a vital role in Nagaland, supporting key education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, and disaster relief initiatives—especially in remote and economically disadvantaged regions.

Nagaland Governor calls for stronger enforcement against illicit liquor and drug trafficking

Kohima, Aug 11: Calling for a zero-tolerance approach against organised crime and the narcotics trade, Nagaland Governor held a high-level review meeting with top officials of the Department of Excise and Prohibition at Raj Bhavan in Kohima. Emphasising that the vision of a "Nasha Mukta Nagaland" cannot be realized through government action alone, the Governor urged law enforcement agencies to build robust institutional mechanisms and foster community participation to combat drug abuse and illicit alcohol smuggling across the state. During the review session, the Excise Department presented a comprehensive assessment of its operational mandate, achievements, and structural challenges. The briefing

highlighted key enforcement activities carried out between April 2021 and March 2026 under various statutory frameworks, including the Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition (NLTP) Act, 1989, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, and the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

The Governor reviewed extensive seizure reports detailing police and excise raids that led to the confiscation of significant volumes of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), country liquor, heroin, opium, poppy straw, and illicit prescription drugs such as cough syrups and capsules. Officials also briefed the meeting on recent destruction drives conducted for confiscated narcotics and



contraband items.

On the financial front, the department reported a total excise revenue collection of ₹22.51 crore (₹2,250.66 lakh) during the five-year period from April 2021 to March 2026. Notably, annual revenue collections grew steadily from ₹317.36 lakh in 2021-22 to ₹591.96 lakh in the 2025-26 fiscal year.

Infrastructure development was another primary focus of the review. The Governor evaluated ongoing projects under the Excise Housing Programme 2025-26, which includes the construction of new departmental offices in Phek and Peren, as well as a modern Excise Bonded Warehouse in Dimapur aimed at streamlining regulatory oversight. Stressing the strategic imperative to

dismantle illegal supply chains along inter-state borders, the Governor called for enhanced intelligence sharing, tighter surveillance along key transit corridors, and aggressive field operations. The Governor instructed the department to expand public awareness drives targeting youth in educational institutions and work in close coordination with tribal hohos, civil society groups, and faith-based organizations to root out substance abuse across Nagaland. Stressing the strategic imperative to dismantle illegal supply chains along inter-state borders, the Governor called for enhanced intelligence sharing, tighter surveillance along key transit corridors, and aggressive field operations.

Ropeway: JAC challenges ‘public consent’ and requests a new hearing

Shillong, Aug 11: As the state government gears up for a post-monsoon initiative regarding the Shillong Ropeway, the Joint Action Committee (JAC) Against the Shillong Ropeway Project and for the Protection of the Lum Shyllong Catchment has raised concerns about the validity of the government’s claim of ‘public consent.’ They assert that the proposed ropeway project is being pushed through without the authentic approval of the local populace who rely on Lum Shyllong’s water.

The JAC has questioned the validity of a public consultation that took place on September 27, 2022, at Lumshatsngi Community Hall under the Riat Laban Dorbar Pyl-lun, alleging that the meeting was predominantly attended by sup-porters of the project and did not adequately engage the broader pub-lic.Officials from the Forest De-partment, the Meghalaya Institute



of Governance, local dorbar rep-resentatives, and members of the public were present at the consul-tation.In a statement to reporters, a delegation from the JAC empha-sized that the government and local authorities should not presume that the opinions shared during the con-

sultation represent the views of the larger community. “A small group of Rangbah Shnong cannot deter-mine what the residents of this area and the citizens of Shillong as a whole desire,” the committee re-marked.The JAC contends that the essential question of whether Shill-

ong requires a ropeway project has not been subjected to a democrat-ic vote by the public.“The issue at hand is whether we truly need the ropeway. The public should have the opportunity to decide if they are willing to accept this de-velopment at the expense of Lum Shyllong, its forests, and its vital water catchment areas,” they stat-ed.They further argued that while development often entails trade-offs, it is imperative for citizens to have a say in determining whether the advantages of the project justi-fy the potential environmental re-percussions.“There is a saying that to gain something, one must lose something. However, in this in-stance, the public must determine if they are willing to sacrifice the Lum Shyllong forest and catch-ment area for the sake of the rope-way project,” the JAC concluded. The committee has called upon the Tourism Department,

Police Seize 44 Cattle and Arrest Smuggling Suspects in Morigaon



Guwahati, Aug 11: Mikirbtheta Police busted a cattle smuggling ring in Assam’s Morigaon district. Officers intercepted four vehicles at Kalikajari after receiving a tip-off. They recovered 44 head of cattle during the raid. The vehicles involved bear registration numbers AS 12 CC 3029, AS 01 SC 5595, AS 02 DC 9729, and AS 02 EC 1343.

Police took six suspects into custody. The individuals named in the report are Firkul

Islam, Sufikul Islam, Sadikul, Ubaidulla, Insan Ali, Mofikul Alam, and Hasen Ali. The official report noted the discrepancy, stating, “six persons were arrested while seven names are listed.”Authorities im-pounded the rescued animals. Investiga-tors are now tracking the smuggling net-work and the intended destination of the livestock. This operation marks an uptick in local police efforts to shut down illegal cattle transit across the region.

Solar Purifiers Cut Byrnihat Pollution by Nearly Half

Shillong, Aug 11: Air quality in Byrnihat im-proved significantly during a two-day trial of solar-powered purifiers. The Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board reported a 40 to 45 percent reduction in toxic air. The state govern-ment tested the WARO C6 system at two separate loca-tions. Mumbai-based Zero Carbon Tech24 Pvt. Ltd. built the machines. Each unit pulls in dirty air and re-leases 30 litres of clean air every second.

Officials remain cautious about the results. “Initial reports indicate it has been helpful in reducing pollu-tion by 40-45 percent, but we are yet to receive the full report as it is only on a trial basis,” Sohtun said. A



decision on a wider rollout depends on that final assess-ment.

Byrnihat ranked as one of India’s most polluted towns in 2024. The state has already shuttered sev-eral non-compliant indus-

trial units. Minister Sohtun stated that the pollution is a cross-border issue affecting both Meghalaya and Assam. He called for strict enforce-ment from state and central boards.

The High Court of Me-

ghalaya continues to mon-itor the situation through a suo motu petition. Senior Counsel Dr. Mozika told the court that draft guidelines for environmental bank guarantees are near com-pletion. Regional Director Dr. Shantanu Kumar Dutta submitted an affidavit for the Central Pollution Con-trol Board. The state Health and PWD departments must submit replies by August 12. The court also ordered the Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority in Nongpoh to attend the next hearing on August 13. These legal actions stem from a re-port by the CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, which identified major emission hotspots.

KSU Sets a 15-Day Deadline for the Meghalaya Government

Shillong, Aug 11: The Khasi Students Union launched a statewide campaign in Mawkyrwat this Mon-day. They gave the MDA-II gov-ernment a 15-day ultimatum to act on five specific demands. The union leadership warned the state against ignoring their platform. Pynshai-borlang Rani, the CEC assistant gen-eral secretary, addressed the crowd. He told the government that if they try to suppress the public, they are making a grave mistake. “We have our own new methods and tactics of this generation to fight against the government if it violates the rights of the people, the rights of the citizens, the rights of the indigenous people, and the rights of the poor,” Rani said.

The union demands the immediate cancellation of the July 31 public hearing held for the Shree Cement limestone mining project at Lum Syrman. Rani slammed the district administration and police for their



conduct during the event. He claimed the session functioned as a private meeting for corporate interests. Op-ponents of the project faced tear gas and stones while trying to attend.

The KSU also lists four other re-quirements. They want the govern-ment to implement the Meghalaya Residents Safety and Security Act of 2016 and amend the 2020 Mi-

grant Workers Act. They also called for streamlined recruitment at NEI-GRIHMS and better transparency within the MPSC and District Selec-tion Committees.

The union plans to hold follow-up public meetings in Khliehriat, Umsning, Sohra, Nongstoin, Mawry-ngkneng, Mairang, and Jowai to keep the pressure on.

PLA denying Indian forces access to key

Guwahati, Aug 11: A fact-finding committee (FFC) deputed by the Peo-ple’s Party of Arunachal (PPA) has reported that China’s People’s Libera-tion Army (PLA) troops have effectively denied Indian forces access to key patrolling points in the Taksing area of Upper Subansiri district and are steadily expanding con-trol over traditional In-dian grazing and hunting grounds along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).The four-member committee, headed by former minister and PPA chief adviserKah-fa Bengia, visited Taksing on 10 July. Other members were Kaling Jerang (vice president), Sorang Kiokam (secretary) and Narah Jim-my (secretary). The team held detailed interactions with local leaders, elders and intellectuals from Tak-sing, Maza and Galemo, as well as with senior defence personnel and jawans sta-tioned in the area.One of the most serious findings concerns Shera 5 Point, a designated Indian pa-trolling point. According to local accounts shared with the committee, Indian and Chinese troops had a physi-cal confrontation at the site in 2023The Indian forces subsequently withdrew and have not returned. PLA troops later dismantled the remaining Indian markers and have since blocked Indian patrols from ac-cessing the point. The FFC described this as a clear illustration of how increas-ing Chinese intrusions are being consolidated on the ground.The PPA team also reported that Nanga

Pahar, traditionally used by the Nah and Mara commu-nities for hunting and yak rearing, has been declared a strictly prohibited zone for local residents.“This restriction,” the committee noted, “has given the PLA greater freedom to push forward. The nature of the intrusions is well calculat-ed, gradual and persistent, following a familiar pattern seen over several years,” it stated.The team identified major operational gaps and vulnerabilities in the area, including that the Indian Army’s patrolling is large-ly confined to the April-Octo-ber window. The harsh winter weather and heavy snowfall lead to suspension of regular patrolling for the remaining months, whereas the PLA activity continues year-round.

It also observed that the porters, who normally ferry supplies for Indian troops, are not engaged during the winter months, “which indicates clear low presence of Indian troops.” Idemanded that the gov-ernment expedite the Tak-sing-Pokorla road via Yaja and Huri under a strict time-bound schedule and construct a helipad at Sipi 2 (Rest Point) and estab-lish permanent Army base camps at Sipi 4 and Sipi 6. The FFC also recommend-ed providing reliable power supply (instead of diesel generators) and functional telephone/network connec-tivity in forward locations such as Maza and Galemo. Both jawans and local res-idents flagged poor power and communication links as major demotivating fac-tors, it said.

Conflict regarding the Assam-Arunachal boundary has intensified, resulting in violence

Guwahati, Aug 11: The Assam-Arunachal Pradesh boundary row turned violent here in Lower Siang district on Monday. The latest clash, which has left at least a dozen injured, came days after a similar boundary dis-pute had erupted in Tarasso in Papum Pare district.As per reports, several people were injured in the clash reported from Hime village. The tension further escalated after the gaon burah (GB) of Hime village, Mikkok Ngom-le, along with a police official and another villager from Hime, was reportedly kidnapped by people from neigh-bouring villages of Assam.

Meanwhile, the situation is reported to be normal now. “The situation is normal. The Assam and Arunachal po-lice are patrolling in the border villages. The situation has returned to normal for now,” said Lower Siang SP Bom-ben Basar.As per reports, the clash between the people of Hime village and neighbouring villages of Assam broke out over a grazing ground.“There is a grazing ground in-side our Hime village. For so many decades, we have shared this grazing ground with neighbouring villages. But of late, a dispute over it has arisen. So, we decided to have a sit-down and resolve it,” said a resident of Hime village.A meeting was reportedly fixed for 10 August to resolve the dispute. However, on the same day, the peo-ple of Hime were called for a special intensive revision (SIR) hearing in Kangku circle headquarters.

“Due to the SIR hearing, we requested them to post-

pone the meeting. But they refused, and at around 9:30 am today, more than 300 people entered our village. They destroyed properties and acted violently inside our village territory. The incident took place almost 2 km in-side Arunachal and not in the boundary area, as claimed. GB Ngomle and some youths tried to stop them, but the crowd overpowered them. The GB was kidnapped and taken to Assam,” the villager alleged.

The GB has lodged an FIR detailing how he was al-legedly kidnapped by the mob and taken to Assam.

As the majority of the villagers had gone to Kangku for the SIR hearing, the few youths who were present reportedly fired in self-defence.

Later, the deputy commissioners and superintendents of police of Lower Siang and Dhemaji districts arrived in the area and brought the situation under control.Following intense discussions, the GB, police personnel and vil-lagers were released by the Assam side after the Arunachal side agreed to release a youth from Assam whom they had detained in Hime village.At least 12 people from As-sam were injured in alleged firing from Arunachal.The injured have been identified as Durgheswar Patir, Rohit Dole, Nagaraj Dole, Biggeshwar Patir, Pame Pegu, San-jay Tayung, Utpal Dole and Jan Dole, while the identi-ties of four persons are yet to be ascertained, the Assam chief minister saidMeanwhile, a senior official said that all the injured were initially admitted to the Gogamukh

rural hospital. Seven of them were later referred to the Dhemaji civil hospital in critical condition.

Of them, four critically injured persons were shifted to Assam Medical College and Hospital for advanced treatment, the senior official said.Assam Chief Min-ister Himanta Biswa Sarma said he has deputed a Cabinet minister to hold talks with the Arunachal government to hammer out the differences. He added that the DGP and chief secretary are already in touch with their counter-parts in Arunachal.Earlier, Sarma, speaking to report-ers on the sidelines of an official function in Sonapur near Guwahati, said that a “localised incident” had been reported in Dhemaji along the Assam-Arunachal bor-der.“There is nothing to do at the state level as such. The situation has been promptly brought under control, and the tension has been defused,” he said.Sarma said Edu-cation Minister Ranoj Pegu has been deputed to resolve the matter, and that he is in touch with his counterpart in the neighbouring state.This is not the first time that Hime village has witnessed tension over the boundary dispute. In 2018, tension flared up in Hime village after a contractor from Assam attempted to construct a road through wet-rice cultivation fields in the village under funding from the Mishing Autonomous Council (MAC). The tension was later defused following the intervention of members of the Galo Welfare Society (GWS) and the Mishing Autonomous Council (MAC). (With PTI input)

Leaders in Dimapur are calling for improvements to the power grid as the rollout of smart meters progresses

Urban Council Chairmen Federation

Guwahati, Aug 11: Dimapur Urban Coun-cil Chairmen Federation president Zasivikho Zakiesato demanded urgent repairs to the city power grid. Irregular supply and voltage spikes are frying household appliances. Fans, refrigerators, air-conditioners, and televisions are failing at a rapid clip. Families pay the price for these repairs. The federation claims about 25,000 prepaid smart meters now sit in homes across the district.Residents expected better service after switching to prepaid met-ers. They held up their end of the bargain with timely payments. Now they want the efficiency they were promised. The group acknowledged the work of power department staff under the Revamped Distribution Sector



Scheme, but demanded tangible results. Suc-cess must mean reliable power, not just more meters.Students face a crisis. Exams are com-ing soon. The group urged officials to guaran-tee stable electricity during evening and night

study hours. Beyond blackouts, the federation raised alarms about aggressive installation tactics. They claim some teams use threats to force meters onto properties. The federation holds proof of these claims.

Leaders from the Dimapur District GBs As-sociation and the GB Union Dimapur Sadar met with over 300 council members on Au-gust 24, 2025. They formed a committee to handle these grievances. The group submit-ted three clear demands. They want a phased rollout starting with government offices and commercial sites. They also want consumers to choose their meter type. The federation noted, “The success of smart metering and RDSS should not be measured merely by the number of meters installed or infrastructure upgraded, but by visible improvements in the quality, safety and reliability of electricity reaching consumers.” The federation expects a response via dialogue, not coercion.

PHE Minister Krishnendu Paul visits Golaghat’s flood-affected districts



New Delhi, Aug 11: In response to a plea for a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) investigation into alleged fraudulent law degrees, fake advocates, and activities connected to the “Cockroach Janta Party” (CJP), a satirical online movement that arose in response to remarks made by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant during a court hearing in May, the Supreme Court on Tuesday requested responses from the Center and other authorities.In response to a plea submitted by attorney Raja Choudhary, who appeared as a party-in-person, the Union government, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), the Bar Council of India (BCI), and the CBI were notified by a bench made up of CJI Kant, justices Joymalya Bagchi, and V Mohana. The plea also seeks examination of what it describes as the “commercial exploitation” and monetised circulation of oral observations made during Supreme Court proceedings, alleging that portions of the May 15 courtroom exchange were selectively clipped and subsequently turned into memes, videos, mimicry, political branding and commercial content. The petition, however, makes it clear that it does not seek to curb criticism of the judiciary, democratic dissent, satire or free speech guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. Rather, it claims that speech exchanges during court proceedings cannot be separated from their context and turned into commercial or political digital property. Instead, it accuses “organised commercial exploitation,” trademark appropriation, and the monetized circulation of courtroom observations. The incident began on May 15, during proceedings before a bench led

by Chief Justice Kant. At that time, the court was debating issues pertaining to professional standards in the legal profession and the purported admission of individuals with phony or fraudulent law degrees.The CJI used the term “cockroaches” to describe young, unemployed lawyers who are turning away from the legal profession and toward social media and RTI activism throughout the hearing. “Some young people, like cockroaches, are not finding work in the field. The CJI noted during the conversation that “some are on social media, some become RTI activists.”The comments received a lot of attention on the internet and were later extensively shared in memes and cut videos. The CJI later clarified that the statement was aimed at people purportedly joining professions on the basis of fraudulent degrees and certificates, not at young people without jobs or real lawyers who couldn’t find employment. In a statement released on May 16, the Chief Justice of India said, “I am pained to read how a section of the media has misquoted my oral observations made during the hearing of a frivolous case yesterday.” He emphasized that he had “immense respect” for India’s youth. The petition filed before the Supreme Court now contends that portions of the courtroom exchange were selectively extracted from the proceedings and circulated without the surrounding context, resulting in trolling, mimicry and viral content.It further alleges that the controversy was subsequently converted into a vehicle for branding, publicity, online engagement and commercial activity. The “Cockroach Janta Party,” an online satirical movement that took the CJI’s phrase and made it its main political and cultural symbol, was also born out of the May courtroom exchange.The appeal claims that the movement quickly gained a sizable social media following and that trademark registrations for the phrase “Cockroach Janta Party” were filed.Beyond making fun of the courtroom debate, the campaign organized protests, such as one at Delhi’s Jantar Mantar against purported exam paper leaks and problems with the educational system.

A police trainee was nabbed for defrauding other trainees of more than RS. 7 lakh

New Delhi, Aug 11: According to authorities on Tuesday, a police recruit trainee officer has been arrested for allegedly defrauding his fellow trainees by obtaining more than ₹7 lakh from them in exchange for uniforms and then using the money for an online gambling game.The culprit, Sambhu R. Krishnan, a trainee in the Special Armed Police (SAP), was taken into custody late on Monday nite,

according to a Peroorkada police station official.He has been charged under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita section 318 (cheating). The FIR claims that the accused, who was a member of the uniform committee, received more than ₹7,18,320 from a number of trainees and deposited it into the accounts of the society that stitches the uniforms and the police dry canteen for the purchase of uniform supplies.

According to the FIR, he engaged in this behavior between July 3 and July 13 and purportedly used the money to benefit from an online betting game rather than depositing it.A senior commanding officer of the SAP filed a complaint with Peroorkada police after his fellow trainees reported the alleged cheating to their superiors.A case was filed against the accused trainee based on the complaint.

The ongoing delays in building Eklavya schools are criticized by a House subcommittee

New Delhi, Aug 11: The ongoing delays in the building and operationalization of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) have been criticized by a parliamentary standing committee, which claims that the steps taken have not been sufficient to address persistent issues. It suggested that the work for the boarding education program for Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in distant locations be supervised by an independent organization.The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment stated that 723 EMRSs had been approved out of a target of 728 in its report on the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry’s response to suggestions in the Report on the Demands for Grants. As of April 30, just 428 school buildings were finished, it further stated. 51 schools were still in the pre-construction phase, while 249 locations were under development. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party lawmaker PC Mohan-led 31-member committee said it was dissatisfied with the ministry’s response. It added the National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) had reported utilisation of ₹4,896.40 crore in 2025-26.The panel said that the ministry’s measures to



accelerate the construction and operationalisation of EMRSs are repetitive. It added that the ministry had largely taken these measures earlier also, but the same problems persist. The panel highlighted that delays in school construction could lead to increased costs for the NESTS program and urged the ministry to create an independent agency to resolve these bottlenecks, ensuring timely operation of schools within their buildings. It expressed concerns about the current state of functional schools, noting that out of 499 operational EMRSs, 377 were in permanent buildings while 111 were in government buildings and 11 in rented facilities, which may lack modern educational resources like AI labs and smart classrooms.Additionally, the committee observed a decline

in beneficiaries under the Scheme for Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas, aimed at supporting Scheduled Caste students. The number of selected schools decreased from 142 in 2022-23 to 130 by 2025-26, with students dropping from 16,479 to 14,281. The committee urged the Union and state governments to promote the scheme to attract more eligible students, emphasizing the need for annual growth in schools and student numbers.The government attributed the decline to factors such as non-renewal of school recognition certificates and NGO closures. However, it reported a rise in beneficiaries to 13,051 by 2025-26, indicating ongoing monitoring and measures to improve implementation.Lastly, the report pointed out the implementation gaps of the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) for the socio-economic development of 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, with progress in health, education, and sanitation lagging. The panel called for a developed mechanism for timely execution of PM-JANMAN during its extended implementation period initiated in November 2023.

Due to bad weather, Suvendu Adhikari’s helicopter makes an emergency landing at Kolaghat



New Delhi, Aug 11: Due to inclement weather, West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari’s helicopter had to make an emergency landing on Tuesday. The BJP leader’s chopper was forced to land in the Kolaghat area of Bengal, according to officials.According to sources, the pi-

lot chose to land at an open area in Kolaghat as a precaution after the chief minister had departed by helicopter from Dumdum for Keshpur.Adhikari reportedly traveled to Keshpur to attend a function honoring liberation hero Khudiram Bose.It was unclear after the landing if the Bengal

chief minister would travel to Bankura by air or by road. Adhikari’s helicopter experienced a technical issue before the emergency landing, but it was promptly fixed before the BJP leader boarded it at Kolkata’s Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, according to peo-

ple acquainted with the situation.Despite traveling to his destination in the same helicopter, Adhikari was forced to land at Kolaghat and drive the remaining distance due to unfavorable weather in Keshpur, which saw a few thundershowers on Tuesday morning and caused waterlogging at the temporary helipad at the venue. As the monsoon continues to wreak havoc across India, additional rain is predicted in some areas of South Bengal.Jhargram, South 24 Parganas, Paschim, and Purba Medinipur districts are predicted to have significant rainfall starting on Wednesday, according to the India Meteorological Department.Over the next seven days, light to moderate rain and thundersorms are predicted for the eastern state, according to the IMD prediction.

CJP Will Start A Nationwide Initiative To Enhance Rural Government Schools

New Delhi, Aug 11: Abhijeet Dipke, the founder of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), called on parents to perform social audits of basic facilities and sarpanches to take on the task of renovating government schools in villages as part of a statewide campaign. The CJP is urging residents, parents, and village officials to collaborate in order to remedy what it refers to as “neglect of rural educational infrastructure” during the campaign’s August 15 launch.In a video message, Dipke stated that he will start the project from his Maharashtra hamlet of Hingoli by asking the village chief to upgrade the government schools there.

We will celebrate our 80th Independence Day on August 15th. However, Dipke stated that the government schools in our areas have been the most overlooked or neglected during the past eight decades.We have created a new PM house and a new Parliament. Why can’t we construct new schools in our villages? “Do we not view the offspring of farmers and laborers as our nation’s future?” he questioned.According to Dipke, village children frequently lack access to basic amenities like drinking water and restrooms, and they still have to trek great distances to get to school. Village children face challenges, including long walks to school and lack of water and toilet facilities, particularly affecting girls.

On this August 15th, an appeal is made to improve government schools as part of a campaign led by the CJP. Village heads are encouraged to participate in the “Sarpanch Challenge,” where they will receive recognition for enhancing school conditions.

In Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, an 80-year-old woman was killed after her house collapsed during a downpour

New Delhi, Aug 11: In the Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh, a house collapsed during rain on Tuesday, killing an 80-year-old woman and injuring another, according to authorities.The Amir Garden neighborhood was the scene of the event. Residents raced to the scene and assisted in rescuing those buried beneath the rubble. According to police, Majeed’s wife, Jaitoon (80), died after being buried beneath the debris, and a 25-year-old lady was hurt. The district hos-



pital admitted the injured woman. Police arrived to the scene right away

after learning of the event, according to Kotwali in-charge Sangram Singh.”The deceased’s body has been sent for postmortem examination, and the injured woman is receiving treatment at the district hospital,” Singh stated. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reports that Meerut received 10 mm of rain in the 24 hours that concluded on Tuesday morning. Since Monday, the district’s lowest temperature has been 25 degrees Celsius.

The Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee wants Pema Khandu to step down

Itanagar, Aug 11: On Monday, the Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) called for Chief Minister Pema Khandu’s resignation on moral grounds, claiming that the state administration had not assisted with a preliminary investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) that was ordered by the Supreme Court.Tanga Byaling, the working president of the APCC, claimed that the government had not sufficiently supported the CBI in its investigation of public works contracts valued at around Rs 1,270 crore, which were purportedly given to companies connected to Khandu’s family.According to Byaling, the Chief Secretary and Principal Secretary (Home) were called before the Supreme Court following reports from the CBI alleging non-cooperation. On April 6, Khandu officially welcomed the investigation and pledged cooperation, while the Congress questioned the government’s actions. The APCC also requested the government to prevent the change or destruction of work orders, digital records, and tender files, and expressed concerns about recent transfers of officials in departments under investigation.The party called for the protection of officials and whistleblowers supporting the investigation, the release of a status report on the government’s participation, and the surrender of any materials requested by investigators.

Congress Targets NPP at Shillong Rally Against FCRA Bill

Shillong, Aug 11: On Monday, the Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) held a protest demonstration in Shillong against the planned Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, calling it “draconian” and calling for the resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.The demonstration started in Laitumkrah’s Fire Brigade Ground and ended at Don Bosco Square. Working President Deborah C. Marak, AICC Joint Secretary Anthony Mathew, MPCC President Vincent H. Pala, and other prominent party figures and Mahila Congress members led it.The proposed revisions, according to the Congress, might have a negative impact on hospitals, schools, colleges, non-governmental organizations, and charitable organizations that rely on foreign donations, especially those that are managed by Christian missionary organizations. Speaking to the assembly, Pala characterized the proposed legislation as a grave danger to churches, schools, and non-governmental organizations that receive donations from overseas. He voiced concern about Clause 16(a), claiming that if FCRA registrations were not updated or turned in, it may allow the government to seize institutional properties.According to Pala, Meghala-

ya may be especially impacted due to the state’s large number of church-run social and educational organizations. He asserted that limitations on foreign contributions might have an impact on organizations that offer welfare, healthcare, and educational services. The National People’s Party (NPP), which is currently in power, was also targeted by the Congress, which questioned its stance on the proposed Bill in Parliament. According to Pala, the NPP’s actions would indicate whether it supported Meghalaya’s institutions or its political ally, the BJP-led NDA at the federal level.While admitting that the Congress had not yet ascertained the NPP’s official stance, he said that the NPP-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance government would back the measure due to its political affiliation with the BJP.Additionally, Pala questioned the results of the previous meeting between Union Home Minister Amit Shah and religious leaders in Delhi, claiming that there had been no tangible commitment or modification to the proposed Bill. He claimed that increased government control could jeopardize the ownership and operation of schools, hospitals, and churches and that the proposed revisions might have an impact on NGOs and institutions belonging to non-Christian communities.

Despite environmental concerns, the Shillong Peak Ropeway project was approved, and officials outlined safety precautions



Shillong, Aug 11: Following talks between the Meghalaya government, district administration, relevant departments, and local Dorbar members, the Shillong Peak Ropeway Project has been approved, with officials guaranteeing that safety and environmental regulations are being adhered to.Concerns expressed by locals and

community leaders over the safety of the ropeway system, the preservation of water sources, and the felling of trees were discussed at a meeting on Saturday. The project site was inspected after the meeting. Tourism Department Commissioner and Secretary R. M. Kurbah said the ropeway alignment had been planned in a

manner that would keep it away from the main catchment area and protect the Patakahana and Wahingdoh water sources.Responding to concerns raised by Rangbah Shnong and residents, Kurbah said there were no water sources in the immediate vicinity of the project site that would be adversely affected by the construction.Officials said the project’s original design envisaged a lower height for the ropeway. During the planning process, it was found that the alignment and infrastructure at that height could affect trees measuring up to around 25 metres.The government subsequently revised the Detailed Project Report (DPR) and increased the height of the ropeway cable cars and stations to reduce the extent of tree cutting required for the project. About 545

trees have been cut down, according to officials, in order to build the ropeway stations and other related projects. They claimed that the felling was only carried out following the acquisition of the required legal clearances.Large-scale plantation operations are being carried out as a compensatory strategy. According to officials, if more land is made available for the project, new plantations will also be started. IIT Delhi has examined the ropeway project’s technical design and safety requirements, according to officials. The construction process includes incorporating a number of safety precautions, such as ground stabilization devices. Safety will continue to be a top focus both throughout construction and after implementation, according to the project officials.According

to J. P. Singh, Resident Manager and Project Head of KEC-TCL, the organization would prioritize safety throughout the project’s execution.The initiative has received support from the Riat Laban Dorbar Pyllun Shnong. According to its president, Iosterston Sun, the Dorbar will do everything within its power to ensure that the ropeway is completed on schedule. In addition to creating job opportunities and assisting businesses that rely on tourism, local representatives suggested the project might boost tourism in the region once it is operating. Meghalaya’s first significant passenger ropeway project, the Shillong Peak Ropeway, is officially scheduled for completion by 2028. The construction business has promised to try to finish the project before the deadline.

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The growing terror of social invisibility

Each generation faces its own workplace fears. Initially, job security was the main concern, overshadowing other issues. Over time, people worried about missing promotions, falling behind financially, or seeing colleagues advance more quickly. These fears were concrete, often reflected in job titles, salary increases, and reporting structures.

Professionals are no longer just concerned about job security but about maintaining relevance — whether their judgment will continue to be trusted, if their contributions will be recognised, and if their presence will still be appreciated.

This anxiety manifests in various ways. A senior executive questions if decades of experience still command respect in an era of instant information. A young professional fears that their accomplishments are quickly forgotten after being shared. A middle manager takes on another certification, feeling that remaining static could be risky. Meanwhile, a competent employee contributes more frequently in meetings, as silence seems dangerously close to vanishing. These are different expressions of the same concern: no one wants to become invisible.

Modern organisations have amplified this concern by valuing visibility nearly as highly as performance. Employees who participate in presenting, networking, publishing, mentoring, and volunteering often seem to navigate the system more effortlessly than equally capable colleagues who quietly excel. Work now not only needs to be accomplished but also showcased. Digital platforms have vastly expanded this performance beyond traditional office settings. Professionals continually share their careers with colleagues, clients, recruiters, and strangers. They announce milestones, share opinions, and showcase expertise publicly. The subtle yet constant pressure is to stay visible, or else risk fading into obscurity.

Artificial intelligence has

entered this field when visibility and relevance are closely linked. Many professionals worry not just about AI replacing their jobs soon, but also about whether their unique qualities will still make them stand out. If technology can generate analyses, presentations, designs, summaries, and initial drafts in seconds, what makes one person's work memorable instead of just acceptable? Much of the debate surrounding AI overlooks the emotional core of the issue. While technology speeds up change, it also heightens a fundamental human desire: to feel useful and needed. Artificial Intelligence raises this concern more sharply because it involves tasks historically seen as signs of intelligence, creativity, and expertise. Ironically, the more professionals worry about disappearing from view, the more they strive to stand out. They go to yet another conference, finish another course, post another update, accept another panel invite, and pile on more credentials to their already busy profiles. Some of this is driven by genuine ambition, while some stems from a subtle hope that staying constantly busy will guard against becoming outdated. The danger is that visibility becomes a treadmill. Recognition is brief, comparison is constant, and professional identity begins to depend on unstable external signals. A person may become increasingly visible yet feel progressively less secure. Visibility and value, however, have never been identical. Over time, organisations learn to differentiate between individuals who merely attract attention and those whose contributions enhance thinking, foster stronger relationships, stabilise teams, and build trust. The most impactful professional isn't necessarily the loudest in the room. Often, it's the person who poses the overlooked questions, exercises sound judgment amidst uncertainty, supports others quietly, or maintains moral integrity when taking the easy route would be simpler.

How the Mecca agreement could impact India's regional stance

There was always something inevitable about the new Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Turkey mutual defence agreement. Islamabad's security ties with longtime allies Riyadh and Ankara have intensified in recent years, culminating in last year's Pakistan-Saudi Arabia defence pact and stepped-up Pakistan-Turkey defence cooperation that resulted in Pakistan drawing on Turkish drones in its conflict with India last year.

And after many years of tensions, Ankara and Riyadh have experienced a rapid rapprochement spearheaded by a 2023 Turkish drones deal. With the three countries further increasing cooperation during the Iran war, recent months had produced ample buzz about an imminent new trilateral arrangement. With each country having a strong interest in deterring Iran and Israel, there was an urgent imperative to band together. And with each country bringing something unique to the table Pakistan's nuclear capacities, Saudi Arabia's oil money and wider capital, and Turkey's arms production comparative advantage was never going to be a problem.

But it's also important not to overlook how the Donald Trump factor gave the three countries such a strong rationale to conclude a deal, as well. The Mecca agreement has likely been received well by the White House. The Trump administration wants to see more burden-sharing by its allies in ways that help advance US interests. The pact — a collective effort at deterrence, with an eye towards Tehran does exactly that. That positive response in Washington is what the pact's signatories want, given that each is keen to ensure continued strong ties with the Trump administration. To that end, public messaging about the deal from the three signatories has been smart. It has emphasised that the pact is not meant to target any particular country. This is likely meant to pre-empt any US concern about the pact being used against Israel for offensive or other hostile purposes.

But there's an irony here: While the deal may be acceptable to Washington, it was pursued in great part because of concerns about Washington. The agreement reflects a view among the signatories that the US's own deterrence

capacities can no longer be counted upon in West Asia: Washington has been unable to deter Iran, and it is unwilling to deter Israel. It's also a case of hedging against the unpredictability of the Trump administration: With no clear indication of what its approach will be to Israel, Iran, or the wider region in the coming months, the three countries decided to take matters into their own hands. Earlier this year at Davos, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney called on the world's middle powers to unite amid global churn and push back against superpowers including the US. He warned that "if we're not at the table, we're on the menu." The Mecca deal is a case of three key regional players taking a seat at a table where they believe the US no longer sits.

To be sure, the US remains a formidable actor in West Asia. And to its credit, it has pushed for peace in Iran. Also, US Vice President JD Vance has castigated Israel for its militaristic policies highly rare US criticism of its close ally. But at the end of the day, Iran through its own actions and those of its proxies continues

to threaten the region, and Israel continues to strike Gaza. And with the US having reduced its energy dependence on West Asia and the Trump administration having asserted that its most serious security and strategic threats are closer to home, it's quite likely the US will become less present in the region whenever the war ends in Iran. For India, these hedging tactics are quite familiar. From accelerating an ongoing modest rapprochement with China to pushing to finalise a new FTA with the EU, New Delhi has done its own share of hedging activities against US unpredictability to advance its interests. And on one level, the Mecca deal could help India as well. India stands to benefit from any stability the pact helps create. India is a big part of West Asia's evolving geoeconomic architecture, from the I2U2 Quad to IMEEC. India also has deep ties with Israel, the world's fastest-growing major economy, and is an attractive investment space all major advantages in today's West Asia, and, incidentally, none of which apply to Pakistan. But the Mecca deal also presents new challenges for India. It institutionalises

security partnership between Pakistan and Turkey one an Indian rival, the other a country with shaky ties with New Delhi and Saudi Arabia, one of India's closest partners in West Asia.

Second, it further embeds Pakistan in West Asia's growing, evolving security architecture. This is significant, because the region has become a battleground for India-Pakistan competition. India and Pakistan view West Asia as a highly strategically significant space for the same reason: It is home to many of their closest partners, to the majority of their hydrocarbon imports, and to large expatriate communities. Both countries are active there, and the Mecca deal at least for now puts India on the back foot. Ultimately, however, the main takeaway from the deal is that it reflects the willingness of global players to go their own way and form new arrangements to hedge against the Trump administration's unpredictability. Such efforts bolster the causes of multilateralism and multipolarity outcomes that will be welcomed in New Delhi, even if several key actors involved aren't on its friend list.

Why protecting the right to protest matters more than ever for India

There was a remarkable exchange in the Delhi high court last week. The government was asked why it was not considering shutting down Jantar Mantar area as a venue for protests. "Why don't you shut it down? According to me, these things should not happen in the city, but it's the government's call. Why should the city be put to ransom unnecessarily?" the court asked. It was hearing a plea filed by All India Dalit Christian Rights Protection Committee seeking directions to the Delhi police to decide its plea seeking permission to hold a protest at Jantar Mantar.

The group's advocate then asked if it was the Centre's stand that in Delhi there can be no protests. To this, the reply was: "That's for the police to decide." The advocate said: "Fair enough, let them say that there will be no democratic, peaceful protests in Delhi. We will accept it." The bench's position was that the "city should not be held to ransom" by protesters. The government's response was not known but all governments in India think that protests are a nuisance which gets in the way of "good governance". It is important to examine the issue at some depth and therefore this column today. Article 19 says that: "All citizens shall have the right (a) to freedom of speech and expression; (b) to assemble peaceably and without arms; (c) to form associations or unions; (d) to move freely throughout the territory of India; (e) to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; (g) to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business."

The reality is that today we have no such rights. Do Indians have the right to "assemble peacefully and without arms"? No. We have the right to apply for permission for peaceful assembly to the local police station.



The police has the right to approve, deny or not respond (that was the reason the Dalit Christians moved court). That is where the real right is held. Scenes of groups of protesters, some as small as half-a-dozen, holding placards and chanting slogans outside business establishments and government offices, and even political rallies, are common in the United States and Europe. In India, such a gathering will be broken up or not allowed to happen. India has criminalised protest. Where it is allowed, after written permission, it is usually in so-called "designated areas" allocated for protests.

Some see even these as a nuisance. Jantar Mantar in Delhi is such a place, an area cordoned off at both ends with stalls of protests, some of them there for months, unseen and unheard. In Bengaluru, you have Town Hall and Freedom Park, in Mumbai Azad Maidan,

where protests after permission may be allowed during specific periods of time. This does not constitute the right to peaceful assembly. It is denial of a fundamental right given to us by the Constitution. We have to claim this right as we need to the others. Freedom of speech and expression is qualified by so many laws that it is hard to know where to begin. India has criminalised free speech through sedition, criminal defamation and criminal contempt of court. The mother country we borrowed these laws from no longer has them. There is no right to dissent in India, and anything offensive to majoritarian Hindutva is called anti-national. Kashmiris can teach you a thing or two about freedom of speech and expression if you claim that India is free. Forming associations is not easy in India and registration can be denied or cancelled. Those who work

in the organised civil society space, meaning professional NGOs, know just how difficult the State makes it for them to exercise this basic right. We have seen the problem with the right to carry out a trade, which has been struck off for butchers, and by extension, for restaurants. Many of these rights have become ossified. The State has strong investment in denying them to us, and we have not been as strong in claiming them.

The footnote under Article 19 reads "Nothing shall affect the operation of any existing law, or prevent the State from making any law, in so far as such law imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right..." The question is whether the restrictions imposed are reasonable. They are not. Reclaiming our fundamental rights is the only way to realise and unlock the value of our Constitution. We have to peacefully reclaim our rights both at the level of the individual and the level of civil society. India has a weaker civil society than most other democracies. It is vibrant, yes, and it is defiant and it is brave. But it is small. India needs to create a bigger space for that part of our nation which is not government and not business corporations. That is civil society. It is groups, formal and informal, and individuals, and the space that they create with their actions. These groups must be encouraged and given space to express themselves. They should not be seen as a nuisance, but unfortunately that is precisely how those in power and those with authority see them. The reason the government does not want protests to be held is that every time Indians are mobilised, against the farm laws, against the NRC, against exam paper leaks, the government succumbs. And it is for this reason that we must ensure that we do not lose this right of ours to peaceful assembly.

Depleted arsenal: the vulnerability of U.S. military stockpiles

History offers a sobering reminder that even the world's most powerful militaries are not immune to depleted arsenals. The United States has repeatedly confronted the consequences of munitions shortages - from the opening months of the Korean War, when inadequate stockpiles and strained logistics forced commanders to ration artillery fire, to the prolonged campaigns in Vietnam and Afghanistan, where years of sustained operations exposed weaknesses in procurement, production capacity, and supply chains.

Each time, Washington recovered by mobilising its industrial base, expanding defence production, strengthening logistics, and rebuilding strategic reserves. Yet history appears to be echoing once again.

Years of military assistance to Ukraine, combined with the demands of a prolonged conflict with Iran that has lasted far beyond initial expectations, have renewed concerns over the resilience of U.S. munitions inventories. The issue is not whether America possesses the world's most advanced weapons. That it does. But whether it can manufacture, replenish, and sustain them at the pace demanded by modern high-intensity warfare. The first visible indication of mounting pressure came with the administration's request for emergency funding from Congress (reportedly around \$87 billion) to support military operations and 'rapidly replenish equipment and munitions'. Such a request is more than a budgetary measure; it reflects

a strategic reality: even the United States can find its military capabilities constrained when operational demand outpaces industrial capacity.

The lesson from Korea remains relevant. In 1950, Washington expected a short campaign that many believed would end by Christmas. Instead, Chinese intervention transformed a limited 'police action' into a three-year war of attrition, forcing the United States to rapidly expand its defence industrial base. The conflict demonstrated a recurring truth of warfare, i.e., political timelines rarely match military realities, and ammunition stocks can be exhausted long before strategic objectives are achieved. A similar challenge appears to have emerged during the Iran conflict. Operation

Epic Fury was conceived as a rapid campaign aimed at achieving decisive military objectives. Instead, the conflict has continued for months, creating sustained demand for precision-guided munitions, air-defence interceptors, and long-range strike weapons. The resulting pressure on inventories has intensified calls for additional funding and accelerated production. Defence analysts have highlighted the strain on U.S. missile stocks. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) has estimated significant reductions in inventories of systems such as Patriot interceptors and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missiles after sustained operational use. Such assessments have fueled concerns about whether

Washington can maintain adequate reserves for future contingencies while meeting current commitments. They have also provided adversaries an opportunity to portray reported shortages as evidence of declining American military strength.

The debate has taken on a political dimension in Washington as well. Reports that President Donald Trump confronted Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth over possible weapons shortages intensified scrutiny of U.S. preparedness. The President strongly rejected such reporting, describing it as 'treasonous' and promising severe action against those responsible for leaks. Yet the controversy highlights a deeper issue - precise information about U.S. weapons inventories remains classi-

fied, and increased restrictions on Pentagon information have made independent assessments more difficult. Secrecy may protect operational details, but it can also amplify uncertainty. If concerns over U.S. military preparedness and defence manufacturing capacity prove accurate, the implications extend well beyond America's current conflicts. The question is not simply whether Washington can sustain ongoing operations, but whether it can continue to honour long-term security commitments while preserving reserves for unforeseen crises. The ability of the United States to simultaneously replenish weapons supplied to Ukraine, support its own forces, and respond to emerging threats will be closely watched by allies

worldwide. For strategic partners such as India, the lesson is significant. Advanced American defence systems provide major operational advantages, but their effectiveness ultimately depends on assured access to ammunition, spare parts, upgrades, and sustainment support during a crisis. Modern warfare has shown that possessing sophisticated platforms is only one component of military power; the industrial ecosystem behind them is equally decisive. A nation may possess superior technology, but without the ability to produce at scale and sustain losses over time, that advantage can rapidly diminish in a prolonged conflict.

The credibility of defence partnerships is therefore measured not only by con-

tracts signed during peacetime, but by the reliability of supply chains during wartime. Allies do not merely purchase weapons; they invest in the promise that those weapons will remain operational when national security is at stake.

The Iran conflict has therefore reinforced a strategic imperative for India, i.e., to accelerate indigenous defence manufacturing while avoiding excessive dependence on any single foreign supplier. Diversification combining domestic production with multiple trusted international partnerships provides insurance against geopolitical shocks, export restrictions, production delays, or the competing demands placed on supplier nations during prolonged conflicts.

Rupee Slips to Rs 95.38 as Middle East Tensions Push Oil Prices Higher

Mumbai: The Indian rupee weakened by 8 paise to ₹95.38 against the US dollar in early trade on August 11, pressured by renewed geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and a sharp rise in global crude oil prices.

The domestic currency opened at ₹95.38 per dollar in the interbank foreign exchange market and remained around the same level during the initial trading session. The rupee had declined 13 paise in the previous session on August 10 to close at ₹95.30.

Weakness in domestic equity markets also weighed on investor sentiment. The BSE Sensex fell 320.14 points to 78,204.40, while the NSE Nifty declined 94.35 points to 24,490.85 during morning trade.



Global oil prices emerged as a key pressure point for the rupee. Brent crude futures climbed to \$87.67 per barrel from around \$84 per barrel on August 10, as tensions between the United States and Iran remained centred on the Strait of Hormuz. Fading expectations of an early diplomatic resolution further contributed to the rise in crude

prices. The US dollar index, which tracks the greenback against six major currencies, meanwhile edged down 0.04 per cent to 99.77. Intervention by the Reserve Bank of India and foreign portfolio inflows helped limit the rupee's decline. Foreign institutional investors recorded net pur-

chases of Indian equities worth ₹1,974.76 crore on August 10, providing some support to the domestic currency.

Anil Kumar Bhansali, executive director at Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said the rupee had remained within a relatively narrow range despite Brent crude moving higher. He attributed the limited downside to RBI intervention, with state-run banks reportedly selling dollars on behalf of the central bank.

Bhansali said the rise in Brent crude remained a major concern for the rupee as uncertainty surrounding the Strait of Hormuz persisted amid continuing tensions between Iran and the United States and reduced expectations of an immediate agreement.

Nvidia Joins Top Financial Firms to Build \$500 Billion AI Infrastructure Funding Network



Mumbai: Nvidia has joined forces with six major financial institutions to create a specialised financing initiative aimed at mobilising more than \$500 billion for artificial intelligence infrastructure worldwide.

Under memorandums of understanding signed on August 10, Apollo Global Management, Blackstone, BlackRock, Brookfield Asset Management, Goldman Sachs and KKR will develop dedicated financing platforms to support purchases of Nvidia hardware and the construction of data centres.

The initiative is expected to provide funding for hyperscale cloud companies, advanced AI research laboratories and enterprise computing operations. The financing will cover both the acquisition of high-performance computing hardware and the physical infrastructure required to deploy and operate the systems.

The partnership marks a broader shift in the way AI infrastructure could be financed, bringing institutional credit, insurance capital and private equity into the technology hardware market. Nvidia's advanced processors

are increasingly being viewed as long-term productive assets capable of generating revenue, rather than simply as technology components.

Nvidia shares fell 2.9 per cent following the announcement, leaving the semiconductor company's market valuation at around \$5.26 trillion. Nvidia founder and Chief Executive Officer Jensen Huang said the development represented a significant change in the status of technology hardware as an investment asset.

"This is really the first time that technology chips have become an investable asset class," Huang said. He described the processors as revenue-generating, productive, long-lived and flexible assets, adding that computing had increasingly become part of essential infrastructure alongside electricity and the

internet. Senior executives at the participating financial institutions also highlighted the growing role of capital markets in supporting the expansion of AI computing capacity.

Blackstone President and Chief Operating Officer Jon Gray said the firm remained a major investor across Nvidia's ecosystem and viewed the initiative as further evidence of confidence in the company's technology platform and the long-term prospects of AI infrastructure.

Goldman Sachs Chief Executive Officer David Solomon described the period as a pivotal stage in a historic AI investment cycle. He said the bank's investment and distribution activities reflected its confidence in Nvidia and its interest in developing a credit market backed by Nvidia's computing assets.

India's Russian Oil Imports Hit Record

Mumbai: India's imports of Russian crude oil rose to a record 2.8 million barrels per day in July, marking the second consecutive month of record purchases as refiners continued to benefit from discounted Russian supplies despite tighter Western restrictions.

Russian crude accounted for about 55.5 per cent of India's total crude imports of slightly more than 5 million barrels per day, compared with an average of around 1.8 million barrels per day in 2024. India's Russian fossil fuel purchases stood at €6.4 billion in July, including €5.5 billion worth of crude, €512 million of coal and €341 million of petroleum products.

The record inflows were

supported by higher arrivals at several secondary terminals. Russian crude receipts at Mundra increased 58 per cent from June, while Vadinar and Mumbai recorded increases of 35 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively. Deliveries to Jamnagar remained largely stable, while Paradip recorded a 22 per cent decline.

India has emerged as the second-largest buyer of Russian crude, accounting for about 37 per cent of Russia's crude exports covered by the analysis, behind China at around 50 per cent. Russia's supplies to India have risen sharply from less than 100,000 barrels per day in 2021 to nearly 1.8 million barrels per day in 2023.



The increase has been driven partly by the price advantage offered by Russian crude. Urals crude averaged \$60.22 per barrel in July, while in June it traded at an average discount of about 28 per cent to Brent.

India's role has also extended to the export of refined petroleum products.

Refineries in India, Turkey, Brunei and Georgia shipped €633 million worth of products to sanctioning jurisdictions in July, including €234 million to the United States, €214 million to the European Union and €184 million to Australia. CREA estimated that about €284 million of those

products were derived from Russian crude.

Five cargoes from Indian refineries using Russian crude were discharged at EU ports during July. US buyers also received refined products from the Jamnagar complex, where Russian crude accounted for about 35 per cent of feedstock during the three months preceding August.

The July figures followed a 34 per cent month-on-month increase in India's Russian crude imports in June. The continuing rise highlights the growing role of Indian refiners in absorbing Russian crude and supplying refined fuels to domestic and international markets amid changing global sanctions and trade routes.

SBI Chairman Calls for AI Push to Expand Rural and Farm Credit

Durgapur: Artificial intelligence can help banks widen access to credit for farmers, rural communities and small businesses while improving risk management and operational efficiency, State Bank of India Chairman Challa Sreenivasulu Setty said on August 11.

Speaking at the inaugural session of an annual banking conference organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Indian Banks' Association, Setty said the next phase of digital banking must extend beyond customers with established credit histories and reach underserved sections of the economy.

"The next wave of AI-led banking must take us deeper



into the economy—to rural India, small businesses, and customers whose financial histories may not fit conventional models," Setty said.

He said AI-based tools were already supporting agricultural lending through data-driven assessments, digitised land records and satellite imagery. These technologies can help lenders improve credit decisions, monitor agricultural activity and manage loan portfolios more effectively.

Setty said the key challenge was to expand existing pilot

projects into affordable, scalable solutions that could reach borrowers at the last mile.

Banks are also using AI to study customer behaviour, improve services and streamline loan underwriting. However, Setty warned that wider adoption could increase exposure to sophisticated fraud and cybersecurity threats.

"Banks will, therefore, have to strengthen their defenses at the same time as they expand their use of AI," he said, stressing the need for stronger governance as automated systems take on more significant responsibilities.

"The more consequential the decision, the greater must be our emphasis on explainability and human accountability," Setty said.

Centre Clears RBI Plan for Trial of Polymer Rs 10 and Rs 20 Notes

New Delhi: The Central Government has approved the Reserve Bank of India's proposal to conduct field trials of two billion polymer banknotes in the ₹10 and ₹20 denominations. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed the Rajya Sabha on August 11. The proposal, submitted by the RBI's central board under Section 25 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, provides for the trial circulation of one billion polymer notes each in the ₹10 and ₹20 de-

nominations.

The field trials will assess the performance and operational suitability of polymer-based currency before the RBI considers moving towards regular issuance of the notes in the two denominations. Polymer banknotes will initially circulate alongside existing paper-based currency and are not intended to immediately replace the current notes. The procurement process is still at an early stage, and the government has not

yet finalised the overall cost or a detailed implementation schedule. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra had earlier indicated that the central bank was aiming to begin circulation from the start of the next financial year, subject to the progress and outcome of preliminary testing. The proposed trials are expected to help authorities evaluate the durability, handling and operational performance of polymer currency before any wider adoption.

Coimbatore Industry Leader Takes Charge of National Pump Manufacturers' Body

Chennai: K.V. Karthik, Managing Director of Coimbatore-based Deccan Industries, has been elected the 39th president of the Indian Pump Manufacturers Association (IPMA) for the 2023-24 term, taking charge of the industry body at a time when Indian pump manufacturers are seeking to strengthen exports and improve global competitiveness. Karthik was elected at the association's 72nd Annual General Meeting held in Coimbatore. The meeting was attended by industry representatives from major manufacturing centres, including Pune, Ahmedabad and Rajkot, with Aquasub Group Managing Director R. Kumaravelu serving as the chief guest. The Indian Pump Manufacturers Association represents the country's organised pump manufacturing industry, which has an estimated annual market value of around \$2 billion. After being elected, Karthik called for greater cooperation among industry associations to improve the competitiveness of

domestic manufacturers. He proposed closer coordination between the IPMA, the Southern India Engineering Manufacturers' Association and the Rajkot Engineering Association.

Together, the three organisations represent around 1,500 organised pump manufacturers. Karthik said coordinated efforts could help companies benefit from joint sourcing, reduce production costs and improve product engineering and development.

Increasing India's presence in international markets was identified as one of his key priorities. Karthik set a target of taking the domestic pump industry to a valuation of ₹1 lakh crore by 2030, supported by stronger exports and rising global demand. He said Indian pump exports had grown by more than 20 per cent since the pandemic, with demand increasing across sectors such as irrigation, wastewater management, mining and industrial applications. Karthik also stressed the need for Indian

manufacturers to adopt newer technologies to remain competitive internationally. He advocated greater integration of Internet of Things technology and remote monitoring systems into pumps and pumping equipment, using India's capabilities in software development and digital technology.

He also called for regulatory reforms to simplify certification procedures for manufacturers. Karthik proposed a unified framework based on the principle of "one country, one product, one standard, and one certificate" to reduce compliance difficulties arising from multiple certification agencies. Alongside easier compliance, he urged authorities to take stricter action against substandard products manufactured and sold through the unorganised market. He said stronger quality enforcement would help protect consumers, ensure fair competition and strengthen the reputation of Indian pump manufacturers in overseas markets.

RBI Governor Sees AI as Next Major Force in India's Credit Expansion

Mumbai: Artificial intelligence could fundamentally reshape credit delivery in India in much the same way the Unified Payments Interface transformed digital payments, Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra said on August 11, calling on banks and other financial institutions to make greater use of advanced technology while maintaining strong safeguards.

Speaking at the FIBAC 2026 banking conference, Malhotra said India was in a favourable position to deploy artificial intelligence across the financial system because of its extensive public digital infrastructure, growing availability of financial data and established regulatory framework.

"We in India stand at a unique vantage point to leverage AI," Malhotra said, highlighting Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, the Open Network for Digital Commerce, the Unified Lending Interface and Account Aggregator networks as important components of the country's digital ecosystem.

He said the Reserve Bank of India was also working to strengthen the digital payments architecture through the proposed Digital Payments Intelligence Platform. The initiative is intended to complement existing public digital systems and improve the ability of financial institutions to identify and manage risks across the expanding digital financial ecosystem.

Malhotra said the combination of public digital infrastructure and artificial



intelligence could significantly broaden the number of individuals and businesses that banks are able to serve. Traditional lending models generally depend heavily on established financial histories, audited accounts and other conventional documentation, leaving many potential borrowers outside the formal credit system.

AI-based assessment models, however, could allow lenders to examine alternative sources of information such as cash-flow patterns, Goods and Services Tax filings, utility bill payments and activity on digital platforms. Such data could provide banks with a more complete picture of the financial behaviour of borrowers who lack conventional credit records.

"Traditional underwriting relies on financial history, precisely the data that is thin or absent for new-to-credit borrowers, for the gig workers, or those underserved sections of our society because they do not have formal books," Malhotra said.

He said the availability of

alternative digital data could help banks extend the boundaries of formal credit and bring more individuals and enterprises into the organised financial system.

"AI models on alternative data, which we have a lot now—cash flows, GST filings, utility payment bills, digital platforms—they can all extend the frontier of bankable India considerably," Malhotra added.

Lower operating costs, combined with automated processing and improved risk assessment, could allow banks to serve smaller borrowers more efficiently. AI could also support faster underwriting, improve customer service and assist financial institutions in analysing large volumes of information that would otherwise require substantial human resources.

However, Malhotra stressed that technological advancement must not come at the expense of accountability. He warned that AI-based financial systems could introduce risks related to biased data, excessive dependence on

technology providers, privacy breaches and cybersecurity attacks.

"The ultimate responsibility has to lie with the bank and not with a vendor or with an algorithm," Malhotra said.

He emphasised that financial institutions cannot transfer responsibility for lending decisions to automated systems or external technology providers. Banks would remain accountable for decisions generated with the assistance of artificial intelligence, particularly where those decisions have significant consequences for borrowers and the stability of the financial system.

Malhotra called for stronger governance mechanisms as AI becomes more deeply integrated into banking operations. He asked banks to establish board-approved policies governing the development and use of AI systems and to maintain comprehensive inventories of the models deployed across their operations.

Banks should also conduct regular stress testing of AI models to assess how they perform under changing economic and financial conditions. Greater transparency in automated decision-making would be necessary to ensure that lenders can understand, review and, where necessary, challenge the outcomes produced by algorithmic systems.

The governor said effective oversight would be particularly important as banks begin relying on increasingly sophisticated AI systems for credit evaluation, fraud de-

tection, customer interaction and other critical functions. Ensuring that automated decisions can be explained and monitored would help institutions identify errors and prevent systemic risks from spreading through interconnected financial platforms.

He said the RBI would adopt a consultative and evidence-based supervisory approach as banks increase their use of artificial intelligence. The central bank would work with financial institutions to understand emerging technologies and risks while ensuring that innovation remains compatible with financial stability.

Malhotra's remarks indicate that the next stage of this transformation could involve using AI to connect these digital systems with credit assessment and financial decision-making. Such integration could allow lenders to process information more efficiently and potentially serve customers who have remained outside conventional banking models.

At the same time, banks will have to balance the expansion of credit with the need to protect customer information, maintain cybersecurity and prevent discriminatory or unreliable automated decisions. The challenge, according to Malhotra, will be to use AI to improve efficiency and financial inclusion without weakening the safeguards that underpin the banking system.

"The broader challenge is to expand credit while cutting operating costs and managing AI risks without compromising financial stability," Malhotra said.

Judge temporarily blocks Mamdani’s pied-à-terre tax on second homes

New York: A judge has temporarily blocked Zohran Mamdani’s pied-à-terre tax, which would place a surcharge on second homes in New York City, dealing a blow to the progressive New York City mayor after homeowners sued over the policy.

The tax would apply to people who own, but do not reside full-time in, any house worth more than \$5m, or a condominium or cooperative unit worth at least \$1m.

The temporary, emergency pause comes after a group of homeowners filed a lawsuit against the mayor and the city’s finance director over the tax last week. They allege the city wrongly identified their homes as potentially subject to the surcharge despite the properties serving as their primary residences.

“The city has arbitrarily and capriciously foisted onto New York City residents the burden of proving they are not subject to the surcharge,” reads the complaint filed on Friday.

The temporary pause was issued by a state judge on Monday, the Wall Street Journal reported, and means the city is barred from issu-



ing any additional letters notifying homeowners of their potential tax liability and taking down a public list of properties.

The city published a tax roll of about 960,000 owners who could be subject to the tax. It also sent notices to 17,000 addresses. Announcing the tax in April, Mamdani and Kathy Hochul, the New York governor, said it was expected to generate \$500m in annual revenue.

Mamdani’s critics accuse the democratic socialist mayor of targeting the wealthy, while others have welcomed the tax, seeing it as a helpful way to raise revenue from affluent property owners in a city grappling with a high cost of living.

The proposed tax on multimillion-dollar second homes, known as pied-à-terres, comes as Democrats are trying to address voter concerns about affordability ahead of this

year’s midterm elections.

Critics, including prominent business leaders, Republicans and some moderate Democrats, have warned that slapping new taxes on rich people who maintain apartments and townhouses in New York, but don’t consider it their primary home, will lead the very wealthy to abandon the city.

In a statement to the Guardian, Matt Rauschenbach, a spokesperson for Mamdani, criticized the ruling and said the mayor’s office planned to appeal.

“We disagree with today’s ruling, but we are confident in both the pied-à-terre surcharge and the City’s ability to implement it fairly and effectively,” Rauschenbach said. “This surcharge asks those who own second homes valued at \$5 million or more to contribute their fair share to the city they benefit from.

The Law Department will appeal the ruling immediately which will stay the order, and the City will continue with the pied-a-terre’s implementation.”

Ukraine from Using Starlink for Deep Drone Strikes Inside Russia

Kyiv: American entrepreneur Elon Musk has reportedly refused to allow Ukraine to use his Starlink satellite internet service to conduct deep drone strikes inside Russian territory, according to two close associates of former Ukrainian Defence Minister Mykhailo Fedorov. Russia’s international news television network RT, citing the US magazine The Atlantic, reported that Fedorov, a prominent advocate of drone warfare and a key figure on technological matters, was removed from his position last month.

Following his dismissal, his associates reportedly appealed to Musk to reconsider his position on the use of Starlink, but no positive decision has been taken so far.

According to one of Fedorov’s associates, Musk

has consistently conveyed the message that the time has come for Russia and Ukraine to reach an agreement. Meanwhile, Fedorov’s removal from office has also triggered considerable discussion in Ukraine.

Reports suggest that disagreements had emerged between Fedorov’s strategic priorities and the country’s military leadership.

The report further said that during Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s visit to the United States last month, he asked US President Donald Trump to help influence Musk on the issue. However, according to the report, Trump did not provide any concrete assurance in this regard.

Shortly after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war,

Musk’s company SpaceX provided Ukraine with thousands of Starlink terminals.

The service subsequently became a critical communications tool for both the Ukrainian military and civilians throughout the conflict.

Over time, however, differences between Musk and Ukrainian officials have intensified. Musk has repeatedly advocated ending the Russia-Ukraine conflict through negotiations and warned that further escalation could increase the risk of a broader global confrontation.

In 2023, reports emerged that Musk had rejected a Ukrainian request to use Starlink to facilitate an attack on Russia’s Black Sea Fleet near Crimea, which was then under Russian

control.

At the time, Musk said that allowing such an operation would have resulted in SpaceX becoming directly involved in an act that could escalate the war and the wider conflict. Last month, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said that if Musk genuinely wanted to see an end to deaths in Ukraine, he should completely shut down Starlink’s service there.

Musk’s reported position is now being viewed as a potential challenge to Ukraine’s military and diplomatic strategy.

Starlink has served as an important technological resource for Ukrainian communications and military operations throughout the war.

The reports surround-

ing Starlink come amid continuing concerns in Ukraine over shortages of air-defence systems needed to counter Russian aerial attacks. Zelensky and Ukrainian military officials have recently raised concerns about ensuring an adequate supply of interceptors to defend Ukrainian cities against Russian strikes.

Overall, Musk’s reported stance on Starlink represents a significant challenge for Ukraine, as the technology has played an important role in maintaining Ukrainian communications and supporting military operations during the war. However, the reported decision to restrict the use of Starlink for deep strikes inside Russia has not yet been independently confirmed.

Beijing braces for one-third of its annual rainfall as storm



Beijing: Beijing is expected to hit by more than one-third of its annual rainfall over a 24 hour period starting late Tuesday, as Typhoon Dolphin moves deeper inland prompting the closure of tourist areas and suspension of construction projects.

From Tuesday evening through to Thursday, most areas in Beijing will experience heavy downpours with a cumulative rainfall of more than 150mm in 24 hours, the city’s meteorological service has forecast. That compares with Beijing’s average annual rainfall of 528mm, the bulk of which normally falls between June and September. Four districts on Beijing’s outskirts activated level one emergency flood responses. In the mountainous district of Mentougou in western Beijing, authorities issued the highest level of flood emergency alert on Tuesday and advised people to stay indoors unless necessary, and avoid travelling to mountainous areas and rivers.

The strongest typhoon to hit China this year, Dolphin has proved an unusually resilient storm system, travelling nearly 6,000km (3,728 miles) before making landfall over the weekend, drenching China’s eastern coast and bringing with it a sprawling cloud field.

More than a million people were moved to safety across eastern China over the weekend, amid fears torrential rain would cause flooding and landslides.

Wenzhou, a coastal city in Zhejiang province, said it relocated more than 900,000 people and opened more than 1,500 emergency shelters. In neighbouring Fujian, 98,900 people were moved. In Shanghai, 215,600 people were moved from areas considered at risk by Sunday evening.

Early on Tuesday Dolphin moved over the central Chinese province of Hubei, a major auto and hi-tech electronics manufacturing hub and home to more than 58 million people.

On Tuesday, the National Meteorological Center re-

newed an orange alert for heavy rain, the second-highest warning level, with north-western Hubei expected to receive up to 250mm in a 24-hour period. Hubei authorities have issued a yellow warning for cities including Xiangyang, Huanggang and Suizhou, citing a heightened risk of flooding and landslides.

Scenic areas across the province have announced temporary closures, including the popular Three Gorges Dam tourist area in Yichang. Of 107 major highway and waterway construction projects under way in the province, 26 projects deemed high-risk have been suspended.

In neighbouring Henan province, authorities issued a flash-flood alert as the storm continues to channel moisture northward. Japan is also preparing for landslides, flooding and strong winds after the Japan Meteorological Agency said Typhoon Chan-hom, could move across Japan’s mainland later on Tuesday.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez announces decision to freeze her eggs



New York: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has announced she is going to freeze her eggs and will be sharing the process online.

The progressive New York congresswoman, 36, revealed her decision to undergo fertility treatment in a series of Instagram stories this weekend. “This is a choice that I am making to feel more in control of my life,” Ocasio-Cortez said.

Ocasio-Cortez said she had been saving for the procedure for a very long time, and said there was not a lot of information for women interested in doing so.

“As women in general, we are not taught about our bodies, we are not prepared for our own lives, whether that is in puberty, whether that is in pregnancy, whether that is in perimenopause, menopause, whether that is in so many different aspects of our lives,” she said in one of the stories.

Ocasio-Cortez recognized the balancing act that comes with undergoing fertility treatment with her work as a congresswoman. Ocasio-Cortez told viewers

that she would be taking her shots in the dressing room before a scheduled ABC interview on Sunday.

“I want you all to see that,” Ocasio-Cortez said. “Because women can do anything. And I think it’s badass that I’m gonna be giving myself shots in the green room, get my glam on, roll out, talk international events, domestic policy, elections, pop out, live my life, do my thing.” Ocasio-Cortez also showed the medicines and tools, such as syringes and alcohol wipes, used in the process, which involves injecting multiple forms of medication over a period of time that typically lasts around 10 days or more. She joked she would not be injecting herself on a live feed, quipping: “Maybe I should start an ASMR egg-freezing channel.”

“Don’t be weird about this, even I know though all of you will be,” she said with a slight smile moments before finding an injection site on her abdomen. She exhaled, injected the medication, and then remarked: “That wasn’t so

bad!” During her Sunday interview on ABC, Ocasio-Cortez discussed her decision further.

“In this political environment where this administration is denying reproductive care to women across the country, from abortion rights to the ability to carry out a healthy pregnancy, I think it’s important for us as leaders to have these conversations and share these processes, especially for working women across the country and normalize them,” she said.

Ocasio-Cortez’s announcement drew praise.

Amanda Litman, co-founder and president of Run for Something, a political action committee that supports young progressive candidates, said on X: “I’m just so grateful for her honesty & vulnerability.”

Xochitl Hinojosa, a Democratic strategist, responded to Litman’s post by saying: “THIS. We don’t talk about women freezing their eggs or what women have to go through to start a family. Thank you @AOC for your bravery.”

US Senate Backs 100% Tariffs on Russian Oil Buyers

Washington: The United States has stepped up pressure on countries that continue to purchase oil and gas from Russia, with the US Senate overwhelmingly approving the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 by a vote of 86-11.

The proposed legislation could authorise additional tariffs of up to 100% on imports from countries that continue to purchase Russian energy, including India and China. However, the tariffs have not yet been imposed, and the bill must clear further legislative hurdles before it can become law.

According to reports by The Guardian and other media outlets, India is among the major countries that could potentially be affected by the legislation because it has remained a significant buyer of Russian crude oil since 2022. However, the Senate’s approval of the bill does not mean that a 100% tariff has been imposed on India immediately.

The legislation still needs to pass the US House of Representatives and subse-

quently be signed into law by the President.

Following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war, India increased its purchases of Russian crude after Western countries imposed sanctions and restrictions on Russian energy. The availability of discounted Russian crude enabled Indian refiners to secure oil at relatively lower prices and helped support the country’s energy security.

However, India’s continued purchases of Russian oil could now bring it within the potential scope of the proposed US measures. Under the legislation, if the President chooses to exercise the authority provided by the bill, additional tariffs of up to 100% could be imposed on goods imported into the United States from major purchasers of Russian energy. The measure is designed to target the largest buyers of Russian crude oil or natural gas and countries that facilitate sanctions evasion.

Such a move could have a direct impact on Indian exporters. Higher tariffs would make Indian products more

expensive in the US market, potentially weakening their competitiveness and placing additional pressure on India-US trade relations.

The most important point is that no new 100% tariff has been imposed on India at present. The Senate has approved legislation that could give the President the authority to impose such tariffs under specified circumstances.

For the measure to become law, it must first be passed by the House of Representatives and then signed by the President. Even after enactment, the tariffs would not automatically take effect; the President would retain discretion over whether, when and against which countries to exercise the authority.

The bill is not limited to countries purchasing Russian oil. It also contains provisions for additional sanctions targeting Russian officials, oligarchs, financial institutions, energy-related entities and other actors connected to Moscow’s war effort. The legislation also targets Russia’s so-called “shadow fleet”, which is

used to transport Russian oil and help circumvent Western sanctions.

The legislation also includes measures related to Iran, aimed at continuing restrictions on the Iranian energy and weapons sectors. Its broader objective is to maintain economic pressure on both Moscow and Tehran.

The bill received overwhelming bipartisan support in the Senate and passed by a vote of 86-11. However, some lawmakers have raised concerns about granting the President broad authority to impose tariffs. Critics, including Republican Senator Rand Paul and Democratic Senator Ron Wyden, have argued that such extensive executive powers could allow tariffs to be used beyond the intended purpose of pressuring Russia, potentially affecting other trade disputes as well.

Supporters of the legislation argue that putting pressure on Russia’s energy revenues could form an effective part of the economic strategy against Moscow over the war in Ukraine. Their argument is that com-

peting major purchasers of Russian energy to reconsider their dependence could reduce Moscow’s ability to finance its military campaign.

The bill will now move to the US House of Representatives for consideration. It will become law only if it is approved by the House and subsequently signed by the President. If enacted and the President exercises the powers provided under the legislation, the measure could have significant implications for India-US trade, Indian exports and India’s energy relationship with Russia.

It is therefore important to note that the US Senate has not imposed a 100% tariff on India. Rather, it has advanced legislation that could empower the President to impose additional tariffs of up to 100% on major purchasers of Russian energy under certain conditions. The ultimate impact on India will depend on the bill’s passage through the House, its enactment into law and the President’s decision on whether to exercise the tariff authority.

You can create effortless, fashionable looks with these six wardrobe essentials



The festive season is nearly upon us, signaling the perfect opportunity to refresh your wardrobe. Rather than acquiring outfits that may only be worn once, consider selecting versatile pieces that simplify dressing up while ensuring comfort and effortless style. Options such as a classic kurta set or a lehenga saree can be incorporated, as they are easy to style and can be worn in various ways. Many of these items can transition seamlessly from a brunch to a family gathering, enhancing their utility beyond the festive period. The best part is that these wardrobe essentials can

be mixed and matched with pieces you already own and feel most comfortable wearing. So, before you start adding everything to your festive wishlist, here are 6 wardrobe essentials worth investing in for fuss-free festive dressing. A classic kurta set

A kurta set is a festive wardrobe essential for effortless dressing. The best part about adding one to your wardrobe is that you don't have to spend hours figuring out what to wear as a top or bottom. I would suggest looking for sets in rich colours, subtle prints, embroidery or traditional motifs that instantly give your look a festive

touch. Jewel tones like emerald green, wine, navy and deep pink can make the outfit feel festive without making it look too heavy. As for the fabric, I personally prefer cotton, as I find it more comfortable.

A Statement Blouse or Festive Top

Finally, spend money on one top that can work with multiple pieces already sitting in your wardrobe.

A metallic blouse, embroidered top, embellished shirt or festive crop top can be paired with sarees, skirts, trousers or even your favourite pair of jeans. This is useful if you already own plenty of traditional pieces but want to give them a more contemporary feel. For example, a statement blouse can completely change the appearance of an old saree, while a festive top can turn a simple pair of trousers into a party-ready outfit.

A Pair of Statement Bottoms

Your festive wardrobe does not always need another top. A pair of wide-leg trousers, embellished pants, sharara-style bottoms or flowy palazzos can give your existing kurtas and tops a completely new look.

For example, a simple solid kurta can look far more festive when paired with a printed or textured bottom.

Versatile Dress

Festive season is not just about wearing ethnic outfits; I prefer comfort too. For those who are like me, an ethnic dress can be a great investment. Look for details that give a simple dress a festive feel,

such as metallic accents, interesting sleeves, satin-like finishes, florals, rich colours or subtle embellishments.

Style it with heels, a compact clutch and statement earrings. A Festive Dupatta

Sometimes you do not need a completely new outfit. A statement dupatta can make an existing kurta or suit feel completely different. Look for bandhani, printed, embroidered, brocade or zari-detail dupattas that can work with multiple solid-coloured outfits. A bright dupatta can add colour to a simple white or beige kurta, while a heavily detailed piece can turn a basic kurta and trouser combination into a more festive ensemble.

A statement saree

Every festive wardrobe deserves at least one saree that can instantly transform your look. You do not necessarily need a heavily embroidered or elaborate saree. A beautiful fabric, interesting border, statement blouse or traditional weave can be enough to make the outfit stand out.

Style it with statement earrings, a sleek clutch and heels or embellished sandals. Quick festive shopping checklist

Kurta set for effortless ethnic dressing. Statement saree for bigger celebrations.

Festive dupatta to refresh existing outfits. Ethnic skirt for fusion looks. Festive dress for contemporary occasions. Statement bottoms to create new combinations. Statement blouse/top to transform existing pieces.

Four DIY Drinks for Skin That Glows Naturally



When exposed to UV light, skin tone begins to change. Dark spots result from it. Managing pigmentation is challenging. Skin tone changes frequently. The face and other specific body parts do not experience this alteration uniformly. You need to have a few beers to get rid of this.

Which drink will remove skin blemishes?

Coconut water and chia seed syrup

Take 1 glass of coconut water, 1 spoon of soaked chia seeds and mint leaves. This time grind the chia seeds and mix it with coconut water. Sprinkle mint leaves on top and drink

it. You can also soak chia seeds in coconut water and drink that drink.

Beetroot juice

Blend one cup of beetroot pieces, one cup of raisins, and one cup of cucumber slices well. This time, add water to it, strain it, and add mint leaves to the drink. Fill this drink in a glass jar and keep it in the refrigerator. After that, mix lemon juice in it and drink it. Pineapple-mint juice

Soak a cup of pineapple chunks and a handful of mint leaves in a large glass container. Leave it like this for at least two to three hours. This drink can be consumed throughout the

day. Pineapple contains an ingredient called bromelain, which helps in eliminating digestive problems. It also eliminates water deficiency in the body. Drinking this drink regularly will also keep your stomach healthy and your skin will also regain its glow.

Saffron-almond sherbet

This drink will remove dark spots on the skin. The skin will be radiant like a heroine. Take 5-6 soaked almonds, a pinch of saffron, and a glass of warm milk or coconut milk. Grind the almonds. Mix saffron in lukewarm milk to give it color. This time, mix it well with almond paste.

The quirky socks from The Sock Street for running and dance classes

I never imagined I would develop strong feelings regarding socks until I began dancing frequently and engaging in running. It may seem like a minor detail, but the appropriate pair of socks can significantly impact the comfort of your feet during a workout. Socks that slide, bunch up, feel overly tight, or cause your feet to sweat can be exceedingly bothersome when you are already concentrating on your movements or your run.

So when The Sock Street sent me a bunch of their socks to try, I was immediately drawn to the designs. They are anything but boring. I received everything from a seven-day set with the days of the week printed on each sock to bright neon green, red, blue, black and white pairs. And after wearing them to several dance classes and while running, I have to say, the quirky designs aren't even the best part. The comfort is.

My honest review of The Sock Street

My first impression: these socks are seriously fun

Let's start with the obvious: The Sock Street makes socks that actually look fun. My favourite was probably the seven-pair set with each day of the week printed across the socks. Monday through Sunday, quite literally. It's such a simple idea, but it makes something as mundane as getting dressed a little more playful. I also received solid pairs in black, white and blue, along with brighter combinations including neon green, red and blue, and green and black. The colours are vibrant without making the socks feel cheap or overly loud.

They have that slightly quirky, streetwear-inspired personality that makes even a basic pair of sneakers feel more styled.

And honestly, I like that.

But how do they actually feel?

This was the part I was more interested in.

The socks have a thicker, plush feel, which makes them particularly comfortable for longer wear. Despite that thickness, I didn't find them stuffy. They felt breathable enough during my dance classes, where I'm constantly moving, and my feet can get quite warm.

The fabric is also very stretchable, which makes a difference when you're moving around. Instead of feeling restrictive around the foot or ankle, the socks move with you.

I also noticed that they hold their shape well rather than immediately becoming loose after wearing them. That combination of stretch, thick-



ness and breathability is probably what stood out most to me.

I actually wore them for running, and they passed my test

I'm a beginner runner, so I'm still figuring out what works for me when it comes to running gear. I've realised that footwear gets all the attention, but socks matter too.

I've worn The Sock Street socks while running and found them comfortable enough that I wasn't thinking about my feet throughout the workout—which, for me, is exactly what I want from a pair of running socks. There was no constant adjusting or distracting bunching, and the stretch made them comfortable around the foot. For a beginner runner, that is a pretty big win. I wouldn't necessarily say you need a particular sock just because you're running, but a comfortable, breathable pair that stays in place can make the experience much better.

Dance class was where I really appreciated them

If you've ever taken a dance class, you know how much your feet are doing.

I've worn these socks to several dance classes, and the comfort really held up through movement. The stretch was particularly useful because I didn't feel like the socks were restricting my feet when moving.

And because they're relatively thick, they also felt cosy between classes and while travelling to and from the studio.

As someone who dances regularly, I would happily keep a few pairs specifically for my dance bag.

The quality feels more premium than I expected

Another thing that surprised me was the overall feel. The socks have a thick, soft and almost luxurious finish, rather than feeling like flimsy everyday socks that lose their shape after a few wears. The designs also feel well integrated into the fabric rather than like an afterthought.

That makes them feel a little more special than the standard multipack of socks you might pick up simply because you need more pairs.

And I think that's where The Sock Street gets its appeal right: they've made something functional feel like an accessory.

The quirky designs are actually the selling point for me

I usually don't think of socks as part of an outfit, but these changed that a little. The neon pairs can peek out underneath sneakers, the graphic designs add a bit of personality to an otherwise basic gym look, and the day-wise set is just genuinely fun.

It's also a nice way to experiment with colour without committing to a bright outfit. You can be wearing black leggings, a basic T-shirt and sneakers and still have a flash of neon or red socks showing.

It's a small styling detail, but it works.

Would I buy them myself?

And I think the biggest compliment I can give them is that I continued reaching for them even after I had finished testing them.

For me, the combination of quirky designs, thick and comfortable construction, stretch and breathability makes them particularly useful for active days. I've worn them for dance classes, beginner runs and everyday wear, and they've been comfortable across all three. The price is another plus. Considering the quality and the fact that many of the designs come in sets, they feel like good value rather than something you're paying a premium for simply because they look quirky. My verdict

The Sock Street has managed to make me care about socks far more than I expected to. And while the colourful, quirky designs are what initially caught my attention, it's the comfort and quality that convinced me to keep wearing them.

If you're a dancer, runner, gym-goer, or simply someone who spends a lot of time on their feet; I'd say good socks are worth paying attention to. Your shoes may be doing the heavy lifting, but your socks are right there with them.

And if they happen to have Monday written across them, even better.

How to smooth and silky your hair at home by getting rid of frizz

Managing my frizzy hair can be quite challenging at times, and despite using the finest shampoos, conditioners, and hair masks, they have not significantly improved my wavy, frizzy locks. It was then that I decided to experiment with hair serums and began incorporating them into my routine regularly. After extensive testing of various serums, I discovered five exceptional products that not only lived up to their promises but also assisted me in controlling my hair. If you face issues with frizz, flyaways, split ends, or lackluster hair, a quality hair serum can greatly enhance your hair care regimen. Here are the five serums I would choose for achieving smooth, manageable hair in just a few minutes.

My favorite five hair serums

1. Livon Hair Serum, For Dry & Frizzy Hair | Provides shine, smoothness & damage protection: Livon has become one of my easy everyday choices because it feels lightweight and does not leave my hair looking oily. The formula is enriched with vitamin E and Moroccan argan oil, which help smooth the appearance of dry, unruly strands while adding shine. The brand describes its professional smoothening serum as non-sticky and non-greasy, making it useful for detangling and controlling frizz without weighing the hair down.
2. Streax Professional Vitariche Gloss Hair Serum, 200ml | for Dry Frizzy Hair | for Women | Enhance Shine and Smoothness, Anti Frizz: When my hair looks dull and needs a quick glossy finish, this is one of the serums I reach for. The formula is designed to smooth the hair and add shine without leaving behind a sticky finish. It is particularly useful when I have flyaways or rough-looking ends that make my hairstyle appear untidy.
3. L'Oréal Paris Extraordinary Oil Hair Serum Powered by Floral Oils for All Hair Types, Volume- 100 ml, Makes hair frizz-free, stronger: Despite the word "oil" in its name, this is one formula I like when I want softness and shine without an obviously greasy finish. I use a small quantity after washing my hair or before styling. It helps make my strands look smoother and more polished, which is especially helpful when humidity turns my hair frizzy.
4. L'Oréal Professionnel Liss Unlimited Leave-In Hair Serum for Frizzy & Unruly Hair - 125ml | Intensive Smoothing Serum for Frizz-Control: This is the one I would choose when frizz control is my biggest concern. It is designed for smoother-looking hair and is particularly useful when I want my hairstyle to look more polished. I find that using a small amount can help tame unruly strands and give the lengths a softer appearance.
5. Minimalist Hair Serum for Dry Frizzy Hair with SPF 30, Keratin, Argan Oil & Ceramides | Heat Protection Serum: This is an interesting option for anyone who wants frizz control along with added protection from everyday environmental exposure. Its lightweight format makes it easy to incorporate into a regular hair-care routine.



fore stepping out, especially when my hair is already prone to dryness, frizz, and flyaways. As always, I would apply it mainly to the lengths and ends rather than the scalp.

Why I use a hair serum

For me, the biggest benefit of a hair serum is instant manageability. It can make rough-looking hair appear smoother and help reduce the appearance of frizz and flyaways. A serum can also add shine, make detangling easier, and give the hair a more polished finish.

Some formulas are also designed to provide heat or environmental protection, depending on their ingredients and claims. However, I never assume that every serum is a heat protectant. If I am using a straightener, curler, or blow dryer, I specifically look for a product that says it provides heat protection.

How I use hair serum without making my hair greasy

This is where I think I finally got my routine right. I start with a very small amount and rub it between my palms. Then I gently smooth it over the mid-lengths and ends. I never apply serum directly to my scalp.

If my hair still feels dry, I add a tiny amount rather than applying a large quantity at once. This gives me the softness and shine I want without making my hair look oily.

For me, the biggest lesson has been that the right hair serum does not need to leave my hair oily to make it look soft and glossy. A lightweight formula, the right amount, and careful application through the lengths are enough to turn a frizzy hair day into a much more manageable one in minutes.

ENTERTAINMENT

Zaid Darbar slams daisy shah's remark

Mumbai : Daisy Shah and Zaid Darbar entered Alliance as a pair, but towards the end of the show, their relationship soured, and the actress slammed the latter and his wife, Gauahar Khan, in an interview with News18 Showsha. Now, during an exclusive chat with us, Zaid has reacted to Daisy's comments and asked her to watch the show before making assumptions.

Speaking to us, Zaid hit back at Daisy for calling Gauahar Khan the 17th contestant of the show and said, "Gauahar Khan was the 17th Ally in the show, correct, and she is my OG Ally as well. But yes, in the show, Daisy was my Ally, and she is my friend outside. I guess that when you are friends with someone, it's completely different when you come out of the show. And the way she is saying that she gave me a shoulder to cry on and all, we are supposed to do that when we are friends. We both were there for each other whenever we needed. It's not like I wasn't there." Zaid further continued and asked Shah to watch the show before making such comments, "I really want her to watch the show; she will know what the reality is. I would still give that to her, that she is my friend, and we need to see the larger picture. I would wait for her to understand. We have a lot of time, and I believe we are friends, and what happens between friends should remain between them. I think I will keep my dignity up and end this here."

Daisy admits that some of Zaid's actions truly hurt her, and she had expected more from him as a friend. "I'm not saying that Zaid spoke ill of me behind my back. But he was never there for me. Each time he would break down or would get riled up, I offered him my shoulder to cry on. But he has never offered his shoulder to me," she recalled. Daisy, who recently got evicted from Alliance, further continued, "I don't know if that came across, but all 16 allies inside the headquarters felt this too.

Vidya Malavade recalls shooting 'chak de! India' climax match across 15 night shifts

Mumbai : Actress Vidya Malvade, who essayed the role of Vidya Sharma, the captain of the women's hockey team in Shah Rukh Khan-starrer 'Chak De! India', revealed that the film's dramatic climax of the hockey match was shot over 15 nights. In a video posted on her social media account, Vidya looked back at the making of the 2007 film as it completed 19 years and expressed gratitude towards fans for the outpouring of love.

"So, it's been 19 years since Chak De India. And it's like a blessing that never stops giving. And this is your love. Thank you so so so much for loving us so much. So much love, that you've been giving us for 19 years, I'm so thankful



for that," she said. Vidya said she finds it heartwarming that audiences continue to remember her character even after nearly two decades. "I always say, it's my parents' blessings, their blessings, and I don't know, a little bit of hard work, and this is what, nowadays, when people don't remember the names of the movies that have come out, you

guys still remember and call me Vidya Sharma India. And I think that's, it's really heartwarming," she said. Recalling the early days of the film's shoot, the actress said the team had no idea that 'Chak De! India' would eventually become so memorable. "Our group of girls, my entire team, we've all been wishing each other, and hoping that we'd be to-

gether. You know, when we started shooting for Chak De, we had obviously no idea that it would become what it has become. But for us, we were just playing," she recalled. She revealed that the actresses underwent extensive hockey training and spent an entire year practising before and during the shoot. "We were taught set plays. That's all we were doing. We were learning it, and we didn't know where the cameras were kept, we didn't know literally nothing. We were just doing our set plays, and then when they would say cut, they'd say, okay, we've got this take, let's move on, and we'd move on and do the next set play. That is what we were doing throughout," she said.

"But, it took us one year. One year of practising hockey, and out of that, there was a six-month shoot. And whichever day, the day we weren't shooting, any one of us not shooting, we would be on the field playing, learning our set plays," Vidya added. "So it never really occurred to us that in the future, you guys would remember this for the next 19 years," she said. Vidya also recalled shooting the film's climactic hockey match, revealing that the team spent six weeks in Australia and shot the finale for 15 nights. "Yeah, 6 weeks in Australia. 15 nights of shooting the final match. All the lovely women who joined us. Australian team, the Korean team, rest of the teams are from Aus-

tralia. And yeah, 16 girls. That bond is still there. It's our group," she said. Looking back at her role, Vidya said she felt fortunate to have played the captain of the team. "I think I got really lucky that I could play the captain of the team. I got really lucky that I could play Vidya Sharma India!" she said. The actress also revealed a heartbreaking incident that got her to lose all the memories of the shooting tenure. "I had around 12,000 photos at that time when Chak De was going to be released. The one year we were together. But I don't even have one of those now because Apple laptop crashed and all my photos have gone. So now, I have nothing from the time when we

were shooting," she said. She added, "But I just have tonnes and tonnes of memories. Literally, every place, everywhere. Yeah, 6 weeks in Australia. 15 nights of shooting the final match." The actress also spoke about the bond shared by the 16 girls who played members of the hockey team, and revealed that they continue to stay connected through a WhatsApp group. "Like I said, we have been on WhatsApp group with each other. Going a little crazy and thinking we should be together. I miss my girls right now," she said. Directed by Shimit Amin and produced by Aditya Chopra, 'Chak De! India' released in 2007 and starred Shah Rukh Khan as coach Kabir Khan.

Guru Randhawa donates ₹7 lakh for Assam flood housing drive



Guwahati : Guru Randhawa, who has been facing backlash over his latest song Fine Shyt, has now donated Rs 7 lakh towards Assam flood relief efforts. The singer has partnered with the Sikh Aid Foundation to help build 35 permanent, flood-proof homes for families affected by the floods in Sivasagar, Jorhat and Nepali Khuti regions of Upper Assam.

Not only that, Guru Randhawa had also donated Rs 5 lakh earlier to the Hello Life Foundation. They helped in providing essentials such as food, clothing, medical supplies and other basic necessities to the displaced communities in Assam. As per PTI, the flood situation

in Assam remains critical as the death toll touched 100. Meanwhile, almost 1.4 lakh people reel under the deluge in seven districts, according to an official bulletin. Several rivers are flowing above their danger mark, posing a threat to newer areas, said an official of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

Coming back to Guru Randhawa, he is currently facing massive trolling over his new song Fine Shyt. The music video is set in an office, featuring Randhawa as a young professional in a senior position. He is seen handling his work and checking on his colleagues, while several female co-workers dance and perform around

him. Viewers are questioning the video's content and presentation of women. Guru had recently reacted to the ongrowing criticism, calling it "a silly little slang." Taking to his Instagram handle, Guru wrote, "Guilty as charged of making songs that repeat in your head forever. Low-key loving the edits though. No bad vibes! It's just a silly little slang... calm down calm down calm down fam."

Fine Shyt is performed by Guru Randhawa and Yashvi Desai, with lyrics written by Guru Randhawa and Gurjit Gill. The music video also stars Ruhee Dosani, Divinity Bisht, Arshia Sinha, Raema Grover, Darlene Laura and Mehar Kaur alongside Guru.

Jude Anthany joseph clarifies Mohanlal casting remarks alongside Ayushmann Khurrana

Mumbai : Jude Anthany Joseph has clarified his comments about the Hindi film he was developing with Ayushmann Khurrana following a meeting with the actor. The filmmaker took to social media to share a photograph with Ayushmann, while stressing that there was no animosity between them over the project that eventually fell through.

The clarification comes days after Jude spoke about the circumstances that led to the shelving of the proposed Hindi film. The director had revealed that the script featured a role specifically written for Mohanlal and that he had insisted the veteran Malayalam actor be part of the project. According to Jude, a disagreement over how Mohanlal was described during the casting discussions ultimately led him to walk away. In his latest post, however, Jude made it clear that Ayushmann himself was never the source of the disagreement. "Wonderful catching up with Ayushmann today. Just to clarify, my Mohanlal Sir comment was about the producer and had nothing to do with him. Nothing but respect between us. Hope we get to work to-

gether soon!"

Jude also revealed that Ayushmann had been enthusiastic about the script and the proposed role for Mohanlal, making it clear that the actor was not responsible for the film failing to materialise. "He was so happy with the Mohanlal sir script, and unfortunately it didn't work out. It was definitely not his fault that it didn't happen. But I'm genuinely happy that I got to meet an actor with so much talent and calibre. Hope we get to work together someday." Jude had previously detailed the episode in an interview with Club FM 94.3. According to the filmmaker, he had developed the complete screenplay with a character specifically written for Mohanlal, while Ayushmann had responded positively to the story.

"I had a character for Mohanlal sir in it. I had written the full script for it," Jude said, explaining that discussions with the Hindi film team continued for six to seven months. The filmmaker said he had made his position clear from the outset: the team would have to commit to the film with Mohanlal as part of the cast. The discussions took a turn



when Jude received an email stating that the team would consider "secondary casting" depending on how the script was structured. Jude said he subsequently sought clarification on whether Mohanlal was being referred to as secondary casting and was told that this was indeed the case. That prompted him to withdraw from the project. "Then, I emailed them, saying, 'Since you called one of the top actors in Indian cinema 'secondary casting,' I do not want to do a film with you."

Ayushmann responded warmly to Jude's clarification, reiterating his admiration for both the filmmaker and Mohanlal. "I'm a fan of your work and I hope that I

get the opportunity to work with you soon. I have the utmost respect for Mohanlal sir's work. He is a legend. I hope I'm worthy enough to share screen space with him someday." The exchange effectively puts to rest any suggestion of a rift between Jude and Ayushmann, while also highlighting the filmmaker's longstanding admiration for Mohanlal.

Jude is currently receiving attention for Thudakkam, which features Mohanlal in a key role alongside newcomers Vismaya Mohanlal and Aashish Joe Antony. The film marks the acting debuts of Vismaya, Mohanlal's daughter, and Aashish, the son of producer Antony Perumbavoor.

Spider-Man: brand new day is now the highest-grossing Hollywood movie in India

Mumbai : Marvel Studios' latest outing 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day', featuring Tom Holland's Peter Parker, has become the highest-grossing Hollywood film of all time in India, reported Deadline. The Marvel film has collected USD 10.6 million over the weekend for a cumulative USD 52.8 million take,

overtaking the record previously held by James Cameron's 'Avatar: The Way of Water' after only 11 days of release. It is worth mentioning that the Tom Holland starrer has not faced much competition in India since its release, with two major films (Sunny Deol's 'Batwara 1947' and Emraan Hashmi's 'Awarapan 2')

now set to open in Indian theatres.

On the other hand, Hollywood films have rallied well at the Indian box office, with both Christopher Nolan's 'The Odyssey' and 'Obsession' earning over USD 10 million. Earlier, 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day' made a historic theatrical debut in India, overtak-

ing 'Avengers: Endgame' to earn the biggest opening day bench-mark for a non-Indian film till date. According to Variety, the film made a gross collection of Rs 72.44 crore on its first day, already surpassing the previous Hollywood launch bench-mark set by 'Endgame'. An audience of nearly 1 million people flocked to theatres on

its opening Thursday alone. Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, the film features Tom Holland, Zendaya, Sadie Sink, Jacob Batalon, Jon Bernthal, Tramell Tillman, Michael Mando, and Mark Ruffalo.

Holland made his debut as Peter Parker in 2016's 'Captain America: Civil War', officially joining the Mar-

vel Cinematic Universe. He went on to headline 'Spider-Man: Homecoming' alongside Robert Downey Jr., before reprising the role in 'Avengers: Infinity War', 'Avengers: Endgame', 'Spider-Man: Far From Home', a cameo in 'Venom: Let There Be Carnage', and 'Spider-Man: No Way Home'.



Mohsin Akhtar share pics with second wife, calls marriage 'Allah's script'



Mumbai : Mohsin Akhtar Mir, Urmila Matondkar's former husband, has shared pictures from his wedding reception with Nidhaa Bhatt, months after the couple got married. The businessman and model also posted a romantic note for his wife, calling her his "home" and "peace". Mohsin had announced his wedding with Nidhaa in June this year by sharing pictures from the ceremony.

He has now given fans another glimpse of the celebrations, along with a heartfelt message about his new marriage. Sharing pictures from the reception, Mohsin wrote, "You didn't just become my wife. You became my home, my peace, and my favorite part of every day. I'm grateful to God for bringing you into my life, and I promise to cherish you, stand by you, and love you through

every chapter of our journey. Here's to us, to forever, and to the beautiful life we're about to build together. Thank you for being mine, my love. Forever grateful for you."

Mohsin had also shared a personal note when he first announced his wedding to Nidhaa. The message spoke about faith, patience and trusting God's plan. "Pure intentions, honest love, and a heart full of sabr and shukur. Keep your soul pure, heal along the way, and trust that Allah's script is always better. In His perfect time, my gorgeous wifey @nidhab_, he rewarded me with your sincerity and blessed me .You brought light in my life. Before his marriage to Nidhaa, Mohsin was married to actor Urmila Ma-

tondkar. The couple tied the knot on February 4, 2016, in an intimate ceremony attended by close friends and family. Their marriage had attracted attention at the time because of their interfaith relationship and their age difference. Mohsin, a Kashmiri businessman and model, was around 10 years younger than Urmila.

The couple reportedly met at the wedding of designer Manish Malhotra's niece in 2014. Their relationship developed after that, and they eventually got married in a private ceremony. Manish Malhotra was among the few celebrities present at their wedding celebrations. After eight years of marriage, reports in 2024 confirmed that Urmila filed for divorce from Mohsin Akhtar Mir.

Sukriti Kakar announces engagement to Shoumik Shetty with dreamy pics

Mumbai : Sukriti Kakar has announced her engagement to entrepreneur Shoumik Shetty! The singer, famously known for the song 'Kar Gayi Chull', has shared photos of the dreamy proposal on Instagram. Soon after announcing her engagement, Sukriti received congratulatory messages from several friends and colleagues in the music industry. Her twin sister Prakriti Kakar, along with Armaan Malik, Vishal Dadlani and others, took to social media to shower the couple with love and good wishes.

Sukriti took to Instagram to share pictures from the special moment, giving fans a peek into the proposal. The first photo shows Sukriti looking ecstatic as Shoumik gets down on one knee and slips a ring onto her finger, with lush green fields making for a beautiful backdrop. The other pictures offer glimpses of their romantic moments after the proposal, including an intimate dinner date overlooking a stunning view. Sukriti also proudly shows off her dazzling diamond engagement



ring in the photos. Sukriti Kakar is known for songs including 'Kar Gayi Chull' from Kapoor and Sons, 'Jhoom Jo Pathaan' from Pathaan, Maine Tujhko Dekha and Humraah, and has also collaborated frequently with her twin sister, Prakriti Kakar.

Interestingly, Sukriti's engagement comes a few months after her twin sister Prakriti's own wedding.

Prakriti married entrepreneur Vinay Anand in an intimate ceremony at Fort Barwara in Rajasthan on January 23, 2026. Shoumik Shetty is a Mumbai-based entrepreneur who works at the intersection of wellness, hospitality and luxury experiences. According to his LinkedIn, he is the co-founder of Courtside, a luxury padel club in Mumbai.

Bodhana Sivanandan, an 11-year-old of Indian origin, becomes the youngest British women’s chess champion



Coventry: Indian-origin chess prodigies 11-year-old Bodhana Sivanandan and 17-year-old Shreyas Royal won the 2026 British Chess Championships this weekend. Bodhana became Britain’s youngest-ever women’s chess champion at the games, which ended on Sunday in Coventry. Cheered on as “Godhana” throughout the rounds, she won her championship in a tight rapid-chess playoff against Ireland’s 14-year-old Trisha Kanyamara, a potential prodigy in her own right. “Unreal! Bodhana has won.” “She is incredible, a generational

talent,” Grandmaster Danny Gormally commented as he finished his commentary for the English Chess Federation (ECF). Bodhana famously began playing chess during the COVID pandemic lockdown, when her father’s friend was returning to India and left her a few suitcases containing a chess board. “I was interested in the pieces, so I started playing,” she explained at the time. Since then, the northwest London schoolgirl has set records as one of the youngest players on the tour. Bodhana is the current UK Open Women’s Blitz Champion and joint

pete with the established elite, moving into outright contention for the title as the tournament progressed. Shreyas, who was born in India, moved to the UK aged three with parents Jitendra and Anju Singh from Bangalore. Around eight years ago, the ECF campaigned with the Home Office to allow the exceptionally talented chess prodigy to continue to reside in the UK and hone his talent. “In 2018, as Home Secretary, I made the decision to enable Shreyas and his family to remain in the UK. It’s wonderful to watch his great skill blossom. “Britain is proud of you, Shreyas,” former minister Sajid Javid wrote on social media following Royal’s recent success. The 2026 British Chess Championships were described as the largest in the event’s 122-year history, with over 1,750 entrants and a record 34,000 pounds in prize money for the open tournament.

Praggnanandhaa and Sevia draw in the opening match of the Sinquefield Cup

Lewis: In the opening round of the Sinquefield Cup, the last tournament of the Grand Chess Tour, Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa and American rival Samuel Sevian drew easily. In the 10-player 9-round event this year, top seed Fabiano Caruana took the lead early on after defeating Jorden Van Foreest of Holland. The other matches finished in draws. Vincent Keymer of Germany was unable to defeat Wesley So of the United States, while Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan, a candidate for the world title, halved the point with Armenian-turned-American Levon Aronian. Anish Giri of Holland also drew with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave France. For Praggnanandhaa it turned out to be a decent start as he gave nothing away as black against Sevian with the black pieces. The Arkhengelsk variation in the Ruy Lopez gave an easy game to the Indian as Sevian too was in no mood to complicate matters too much. Also the preparation of the Indian proved to be better. By the 11th move itself a pair of rooks changed hands and the exchanges continued till the players reached a queen and minor piece endgame. With both players having two knights each, the result was a foregone conclusion and once the queens also got traded it was just a matter of time before the desired result was reached. The game lasted 48 moves but it could have been drawn earlier. Caruana proved once again why he is best player of the tour thus far as he outwitted Foreest out of an equal position. The Dutchman simply blundered a pawn overlooking a tactic in the middle game and Caruana’s technique was flawless in converting that into a full point after 55 moves. The USD 475000 prize money tournament saw Sindarov giving nothing away with his white pieces against Aronian as he opted for an irregular queen pawn set-up with his white pieces. Aronian lost a pawn raising hopes for the Uzbek but the resulting endgame with Bishops of opposite colours was just a draw theoretically.

Anish Giri was unable to make any progress against Vachier-Lagrave and was forced to settle for a draw in a rook and pawns endgame that was played till the very end. Vincent Keymer had a similar scenario against Wesley So, and his attempts to assault the black king were easily denied.

A farmer from Rajasthan concealed Rs 5 lakh from his relatives Termites had devoured everything a year later

Rajasthan, Aug 11: According to reports, a farmer in the Balotra area of Rajasthan lost Rs 5 lakh after termites damaged the money he had hidden in his field for security. Mangilal Meghwal, who lives in Newai hamlet near Pachpadra, reportedly sold a piece of land around a year ago and collected Rs 5 lakh. Instead of keeping the money at home, he chose to conceal it in his field out of fear of robbery and concern that his sons could spend it. The farmer buried the cash in a trench on his property after putting it in a plastic bag. He kept the whereabouts of the money a secret from his wife and kids. He went to get the money when he needed it months later to construct a room on the property. But he could no longer recall the precise location of its burial. He looked all over his 10-bigha field, but he couldn’t find the money. He eventually told his family about the money that was concealed. They initially found his claim hard to



believe, but eventually they joined the hunt. The money was still missing even after that. A broken bag with the money allegedly turned up on the field during the monsoon season, almost a year later. Family members found that the bundle of notes was infected with termites when they opened it. The majority of the Rs 500 notes were shredded and severely damaged. In an attempt to retrieve at least some of the lost funds, the family gathered the termite-damaged banknotes and went to the State Bank

of India (SBI) branch in Pachpadra. After evaluating the notes’ condition, bank officials allegedly declined to exchange them. The family went to SBI’s main branch in Balotra after that, but their efforts were unsuccessful. The loss has only made the family’s suffering worse, with no swap or recompense in sight. The farmer’s wife and son are now accusing him of hiding the money rather than putting it in a bank, claiming that doing so eventually destroyed the family’s hard-earned earnings.

The Unadulterated Feeling of Winning a Judo Medal



Glasgow: India’s achievement in judo at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026 was historic, as the country won three medals in the sport. One of the architects of that accomplishment was 23-year-old judoka Unnati Sharma, who won bronze in the women’s 63kg event. In an exclusive post-CWG 2026 interview, Unnati discussed the raw sensation of winning a medal on the big stage, the surprise messages of congratulations that followed her accomplishment, and the pioneers who helped her reach to the top.

For Unnati Sharma, the bronze medal at the Commonwealth Games 2026 did not come easy. She had narrowly failed to qualify for the Games in 2022 after finishing second in the nation-wide trials. History was about to repeat in 2026, were it not for a retrial, which she won. In Glasgow, Unnati’s win streak ended in the semi-finals, but she kept her composure to win bronze on a watershed day for Indian judo. What followed was pure joy. “When I won the bronze medal, I was in a bit of shock. Then I felt very happy that I’ve finally won a medal.

I got a bit emotional as well, but at the end of the day, I was just really, really happy,” Unnati said. The joy was seemingly tenfold in her hometown in Uttarakhand. From sweets to dhols, elation erupted. “My family was watching live at home when I won my medal. People in the neighbourhood also came to know when I won... Many came to our home with sweets. People from the neighbourhood brought a dhol, then the media came too. It was a full-on celebration. When I returned home from Delhi, I received a grand welcome. Even my school teachers came!” Unnati revealed. Unnati and India’s triumph prompted a wave of congratulatory messages, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The 23-year-old judoka was surprised to receive a note of congratulations from the Prime Minister himself. First and foremost, seeing Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) sir and President (Droupadi Murmu) ma’am greet me with my name in their tweets was startling. That was extremely surprising, simply the fact that they’d taken time out of their own schedules to congratulate me,” she remarked.

“My Style” vs. “Poor” Tamil: Vijay Minister’s Budget Speech Causes a Conflict

Chennai, Aug 11: The DMK and BJP have attacked the Tamil Nadu Finance Minister for his “poor” Tamil, which has caused a significant political storm in the state. The minister has retaliated against his critics. The issue started when DMK MLA TM Rajendran said in the Assembly that Finance Minister N. Marie Wilson had switched to English and made “grammatical errors in Tamil” in her address during the Budget presentation on August 5. “The Finance Minister should speak in flawless Tamil, at least when he has the chance in the future,” Rajendran stated. Wilson, clearly irritated by Rajendran’s critique of his Tamil, stood up and defended his communication style, emphasizing that government and the advancement of the state were more important to him than linguistic conventions. “Don’t advise me regarding Tamil. It’s my unique style. I can only speak like this. Accept it or not. I can’t change it for you,” Wilson snapped at the DMK MLA. Intervening in the spat, Assembly Speaker JCD Prabhakar pacified the minister, saying members should handle such debates in a lighter vein. “No. You spoke in a way people are able to understand your speech. Take it lightly,” he advised the minister. The



Finance Minister then said that Christianity had taught him only love and empathy, which, he taunted, many in the House did not understand. “Christianity has taught me one language. That is love and empathy. Half of the people can’t understand this by reading Tamil. I have read it in the Bible. I am a born Christian.” But the DMK kept up its attack on the minister for his “faulty” Tamil. Senior party leader TKS Elangovan said: “He does not want to accept that his Tamil was the worst and that he was reading it wrong. When he read the Budget in Tamil, he made mistakes in many places. A Finance Minister should be able to read it properly.”

The BJP launched a vicious attack on the minister, demanding an apology and accusing him of disparaging Tamil. You may be born into any faith, but you must realize that we are all Tamils by identification and feeling. This was brought up in the Assembly by your own party leadership, didn’t they? As a result, maintaining your religious beliefs is perfectly acceptable. However, we will never tolerate you disparaging the Tamil language. Therefore, you have to publicly apologize for the offensive comments you made about the Tamil language during an emotional period! Nainar Nagenthran, the head of the Tamil Nadu BJP, stated. “P.”

Activist Devendra Mahto Hospitalized After Participating in Jharkhand Protest March

New Delhi, Aug 11: JLKM leader Devendra Nath Mahto, who has been on a hunger strike for nine days due to alleged anomalies in Jharkhand recruitment tests, was admitted to a hospital here after participating in a student protest march. Doctors deemed Mahto’s health severe owing to a “drastic” decline in blood sugar levels. He is being treated in the emergency department. Ranchi Sadar Hospital’s Medical Officer, Nancy Priya, told PTI. Pankaj Kumar, an aide of Mahto who was with him in the hospital, claimed that he was injured during lathi-

charge by the police near the assembly. Despite his frail health, Mahto joined the agitators during the march to assembly earlier in the day, arriving at the protest site in an ambulance carrying a portrait of former chief minister Shibu Soren. He later stood on a stretcher to address the gathering. “A government cannot be run with batons, bullets and guns. A government is run by keeping the people satisfied,” Mahto told reporters near the assembly. “I have been on a hunger strike for the past nine days. Despite this, police pushed and shoved me, harassed



me and forcibly put me in an ambulance. But, I will continue this fight,” he asserted.

For the first time, “Vande Mataram” will be sung in the Red Fort on Independence Day



Ranchi, Aug 11: In a historic first, the national hymn ‘Vande Mataram’ will be performed at the Independence Day festivities on August 15 at the landmark Red Fort, with the event’s subject being the contributions of young power to make India a developed nation by 2047, the government declared on Monday. In a news conference, Defense Secretary R K Singh stated that the idea to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of youngsters during the event “predates” the students’ protest at the Jantar Mantar. “Youths are a critical part of our journey towards Viksit Bharat because they will both be contributing to it and will be hopefully gaining from it. That is the only reason,” he said. “The plan to celebrate the success and contribution of youth at the Independence Day celebrations predates any other event,” Singh said. “I can assure you that this planning predates the Jantar Mantar agitation,” he added. India will mark its 80th Independence Day on August 15, with Prime Minister

Narendra Modi leading the celebrations from the Red Fort in Delhi. Singh stated that as 2026 marks 150 years of ‘Vande Mataram’, the national song that inspired millions during the freedom struggle, will be sung from the ramparts of the Red Fort for the first time as a tribute to its enduring legacy. ‘Vande Mataram’ will be sung upon the prime minister’s arrival at the Red Fort.

Thereafter, he will unfurl the national flag and deliver the customary address to the nation, according to the defence secretary. The celebrations this year will also commemorate ‘Yuva Shakti’ (youth power), acknowledging the contribution of young India in building a ‘Viksit Bharat’ by 2047, he added. A Mi-17 helicopter of the Indian Air Force will carry a banner commemorating 150 years of ‘Vande Mataram’ and shower flower petals over the people gathered at the Red Fort. To a question, the defence secretary said Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has been invited to the

event and the seating arrangements for the invitees will be strictly followed as per the Table of Precedence (ToP). Singh said as per ToP, Gandhi’s seat will be after the cabinet ministers. The Independence day celebrations will acknowledge the success of youth in different spheres, another defence ministry official said. “Achievements of 19 medallist students of International Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematical Olympiad 2026 is an example of the success of Yuva Shakti in the field of science. They have been invited for the function and will be seated on the rampart,” the official said. Approximately 5,000 special guests, who are achievers from different walks of life and are guiding the country in its ‘Viksit Bharat’ journey, have been invited as special guests for the celebrations, he said. The invitation cards for the main event this year showcase ‘Seva Teerth’ to motivate the people to move forward with dedication for the well-being of every citizen, the official said. “Dharm Chakra on the invitation card symbolizes the eternal movement of righteous duty and continuous selfless action,” he stated. PM Modi dedicated ‘Seva Teerth’ to the nation, describing it as a “radiant and powerful symbol of duty, compassion, and commitment to the principle of nation first,” according to an official. To stop VIP culture and emphasize the need of water conservation, the sitting enclosures were named after rivers in honor of Republic Day, according to officials. The seating enclosures for Independence Day events have been named after prominent Indian lakes, he noted.

The video of India winning the Sepak Takraw Bronze Medal at the King’s Cup goes viral

Glasgow: At the King’s Cup Sepak Takraw Championship in Thailand on Friday, India won the bronze in the men’s quadrant competition. For India, it was a major victory that greatly increased their confidence before the 2026 Asian Games. In an exciting three-set match, India fell to hosts Thailand in the semi-finals, but they did not give up easily. India finished on the podium after losing 15-9, 9-15, and 9-15. Due to the sport’s recent surge in popularity and the viral video of their campaign and medal celebrations, the bronze medal win caused a stir on social media. Sepak Takraw is a sport that incorporates aspects of martial arts, football, and volleyball. To maintain the ball in the air and deliver it over the goal, players are permitted to utilize their heads, knees, feet, and other body parts (except from their hands). The gameplay is quite similar to volleyball, even tho it is played on a court like badminton. The King’s Cup Sepak Takraw Championship is one of the big competitions in the sport with big names taking part every year. The tournament, dedicated to the King of Thailand, began



in 1985 and Malaysia were the first ever winners. Since then, Thailand have dominated the competition. This was yet another good show for India after they won the men’s quadrant gold medal at the Asia Sepak Takraw Championship 2026 in Nagoya, Japan. India defeated Japan 15-10, 12-15, 15-12 in the final after topping Group B comprising of Malaysia and South Korea. They defeated Thailand in the semi-finals of the competition. Back in March 2025, India won their first-ever men’s regu gold medal at the International Sepak Takraw Federation World Cup and this last win further strengthened the men’s quadrant team as India’s medal hope at the Asian Games 2026.

Jadumani Singh Recalls Kargil Vijay Diwas’ Win Over Pakistan’s Boxer

Glasgow: Indian boxer Jadumani Singh, who won a silver medal in the men’s 55kg category at the Commonwealth Games 2026, spoke with Prime Minister Narendra Modi about his emotional triumph over a Pakistani opponent on Kargil Vijay Diwas. On Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with India’s Commonwealth Games 2026 gold winners at his house in New Delhi, where they recounted their most memorable memories from the Games. During the conversation, PM Modi questioned Jadumani about his triumph on Kargil Vijay Diwas.

“Who won on Kargil Vijay Diwas?” PM Modi asked in a video posted on his YouTube channel on Monday. Recalling the bout, Jadumani said the date held special significance for him as he is associated with the Indian Army. “It was Kargil Day. The day I fought against Pakistan was on that day. Being from the Indian Army, I was very determined that I had to beat Pakistan. I defeated them 5-0 and dedicated it to our Indian Army heroes,” Jadumani said. Jadumani defeated Pakistan’s Sumama Rehman by a dominant 5-0 unanimous decision in the Round of 16 clash at the Games. Appreciating the Indian boxer, PM Modi said dedicating the victory to Kargil heroes added greater significance to his achievement. “Remembering that, especially because you are a member of the forces, I sincerely feel the passion you displayed in donating your medal to the Kargil victors added to the grandeur of that triumph. And you defeated the very person you were expected to!” PM Modi said.

Bibiano Fernandes takes India U-15 job as Ranjit Bajaj’s role uncertain



New Delhi : Bibiano Fernandes is set to return to the India youth setup, with the former U-17 coach reportedly accepting the All India Football Federation’s (AIFF) offer to take charge of the U-15 national team. His appointment comes as India prepares for the inaugural FIFA U-15 World Cup & Festival in Azerbaijan later this year. According

to a report by Times of India, Bibiano has agreed to the role after the concerns around the proposed coaching structure were addressed. The AIFF technical committee had identified him as its preferred candidate, with the federation’s executive approving his appointment as head coach last week. The initial arrangement had raised eyebrows, with Min-

erva Academy owner Ranjit Bajaj getting the nod as team manager. Bibiano was understood to have concerns over the possibility of interference, while Bajaj had earlier indicated that he would be willing to take up the manager’s role if Bibiano decided against accepting the coaching position. With Bibiano now reportedly ready to take charge, however, Bajaj is unlikely to accept a role that would largely be administrative. The responsibilities of the coach and manager have since been clearly defined, with Bibiano expected to have control over footballing matters. Bibiano’s return gives India a coach with a strong track record at the youth level. The former India midfielder guided the country to three successive

AFC U-16/17 Asian Cups between 2018 and 2023 and also oversaw the memorable 2-1 win over Iran that helped India qualify for this year’s championship. The AIFF has now separated the footballing and administrative responsibilities of the two positions. Bibiano will be responsible for coaching and player selection, while the manager’s role is expected to focus on logistics and other administrative duties. That arrangement could allow the coach to work without the concerns that had initially surrounded the appointment. Bajaj, meanwhile, has built one of India’s most successful youth football programmes through Minerva Academy, which has won trophies at both domestic and international level.

Sarfraz Khan in, Dhruv Jurel out as Mohammad Kaif picks his India XI

New Delhi : Former India star Mohammad Kaif has backed Sarfraz Khan to beat Dhruv Jurel to a place in India’s playing XI for the first Test against Sri Lanka. The former India batter believes Sarfraz’s ability against spin makes him the better option for the conditions in Galle. Sarfraz was brought into the squad as a replacement for injured Sai Sudharsan, giving him another opportunity to return to India’s Test setup. Speaking on his YouTube channel, Kaif said India could still favour Jurel because he has already been part of the team, but Sarfraz would be his choice for the best XI. “If they follow the trend of backing the players who have already been playing for the team, then they might say, ‘Jurel has been with us already. He hasn’t scored consistently, but we will back him because he has already been part of the team.’ If that is the approach, then Sarfraz will have to wait,” Kaif said. “But if you ask me what the best XI is, Sarfraz’s name comes into my best XI because of his ability to



play spin at No. 5 or No. 6. His record against spin is excellent.” Sarfraz has played six Tests since making his debut in 2024, scoring 371 runs at an average of 37.10. His record includes a century and three fifties, with his standout innings coming against New Zealand in Bengaluru, where he scored 150. Kaif feels Sarfraz’s range of strokes could become particularly useful as a Test pro-

gresses and batting conditions become tougher. “He also has a wide range of shots. When you get to the fourth or fifth day, batting becomes more difficult, and that is where a player like Sarfraz Khan can be very useful,” he said. “He knows how to use sweeps and reverse sweeps effectively. He can hit over extra cover, he is good off the back foot and he attacks spin.”

Know your athlete: How shooter Vidarsa’s husband fuelled her Asian Games dream



New Delhi: When Vidarsa K Vinod first picked up a rifle through the National Cadet Corps (NCC) back in 2018, her goals were modest. Coming from Kerala’s Kozhikode district, the youngster simply wanted to experience the sport - and perhaps, down the line, leverage it into a secure government job. Fast forward eight years, and the 27-year-old is set to represent India on one of the biggest stages in world sport: the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, competing in both the 10m Air Rifle and 50m Rifle 3 Positions events. While her journey to the national squad

is a testament to grit and sacrifice, its defining spark came from an unexpected place: a single, provocative question asked by fellow shooter - and now husband - Manu S Ravi. Growing up in a middle-class family where her father worked as a contractor and her mother as a homemaker, the eye-watering costs of competitive shooting meant Vidarsa spent her early years on borrowed equipment. Even after becoming the aggregate champion at the Kerala State Championship, the dream of owning a professional rifle remained out of reach, until Manu entered the

frame. Meeting at the range after the COVID-19 pandemic, the two built a close bond as friends before eventually getting married. Today, Manu serves as a shooting coach in Kerala and remains Vidarsa’s closest confidant. But back when her career was idling, he posed the question that recalibrated her life. “He simply asked me, ‘Why don’t you own a rifle?’” Vidarsa recalled. “At first, I laughed because buying one wasn’t financially possible for us. But he made me realise that if I truly believed in my dream, I had to take that step.” That push gave Vidarsa the conviction to speak to her parents. In 2021, the family took out a loan to buy her first rifle, a high-stakes investment that proved to be the turning point of her career. Under Manu’s constant encouragement and guided by coach Manoj Kumar, her scores began to climb, leading to her first national medal in 2022. Belief, however, had to be matched by endurance. To elevate her game, Vidarsa took the tough decision to leave Kerala for New Delhi’s Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range, entering a high-intensity training environment while Manu returned to Kerala to coach.

West Indies miss automatic 2027 World Cup spot, forced into Qualifier route

New Delhi : West Indies’ road to the 2027 ODI World Cup has taken another difficult turn, with the two-time champions set to go through the qualification tournament after missing out on an automatic spot. Afghanistan’s win over Ireland confirmed their place among the teams heading directly to the tournament. The top eight teams in the ICC ODI rankings on September 30, 2026, excluding hosts South Africa and Zimbabwe, will qualify automatically. Afghanistan’s victory in Belfast moved them into that group, leaving West Indies, currently ranked 10th, outside the automatic qualification places. West Indies still have two ODIs against India before the cut-off date, but even two wins will not be enough to take them into the automatic qualification bracket. They will therefore have to return to the Qualifier in February 2027



for another shot at reaching the World Cup. This is an unwanted return to familiar territory for West Indies. They also had to go through the qualification process for the 2023 ODI World Cup. But after finishing fifth in the Super Six stage, they failed to make the tournament, missing the World Cup for the first time in their history. That absence had a knock-on effect. West Indies also missed the 2025 Champions Trophy, having last featured

in the tournament in 2013. 2027 qualification pathway gives them another route, but it will not be straightforward. West Indies and Ireland, the two lowest-ranked non-host Full Members. Cricket World Cup League 2. The top four teams from the Qualifier Playoff. The Playoff will feature the bottom four teams from League 2 and four teams from the Challenge League, effectively the third tier of the qualification pathway. The revised

qualification system has also changed what happens after the main Qualifier. The winner will secure direct entry into the second round of the 2027 World Cup. The teams finishing second, third and fourth will then enter a three-team Super Series, with the winner also progressing to the second round. The format was approved by the ICC Board in July as part of changes aimed at making the 14-team World Cup more competitive and shorter. However, the changes have not gone down well with some Associate nations, who have raised concerns about fewer direct opportunities to reach the World Cup. For West Indies, though, the immediate focus will be much simpler. They have another qualification campaign to navigate, having already experienced the consequences of falling short four years ago.

Afghanistan seal direct 2027 ODI World Cup qualification with Ireland win

New Delhi : Rashid Khan held his nerve under pressure to guide Afghanistan to a three-wicket win over Ireland in Belfast on Monday and secure their direct qualification for the 2027 ODI World Cup. Chasing 207, Afghanistan looked in control at 97 for two before Ireland fought its way back into the contest. They slipped to 154 for six and then 176 for seven, with Gavin Hoey’s four-wicket spell putting Ireland within sight of a remarkable comeback. Rashid, however, stayed composed and finished unbeaten on 37 off 43 balls, hitting four boundaries. Along with Yamin Ahmadzai, who re-

mained not out on four from 26 balls, he took Afghanistan to 207 for seven in 44.5 overs to seal a three-wicket victory and, with it, their place at next year’s World Cup. Afghanistan had gone into the match knowing a win would guarantee direct qualification for the 2027 tournament, which will be jointly hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia. The victory also gave them a 2-0 lead in the five-match series after the opening ODI was washed out and Afghanistan won the second match by 92 runs. Rashid had earlier played a key role with the ball, taking 3/44 as Afghanistan’s spinners kept Ireland’s

batters under pressure. AM Ghazanfar also claimed three wickets, with the pair combining to account for six of Ireland’s wickets. Ireland were struggling at 128 for eight when Gavin Hoey and Jai Moondra produced a crucial ninth-wicket partnership. The pair added 76 runs, a record ninth-wicket stand for Ireland in ODIs, to give their side a total they could defend. Hoey top-scored with 36, while Moondra made 31 in only his second ODI innings. Moondra used his feet well against Afghanistan’s spinners and played with enough intent to keep Ireland’s innings moving.



The partnership ended when Moondra edged Yamin Ahmadzai behind. Ahmadzai was making his first ODI appearance since 2022. Hoey was dismissed soon

after, bowled by Azmatullah Omarzai while attempting a big shot down the ground. Afghanistan made a positive start to their chase, with Rahmanullah Gurbaz taking

on Ireland’s pace attack. He reached his eighth ODI half-century and appeared to have put Afghanistan firmly on course for victory. Hoey then turned the game around

with a superb spell through the middle overs. The leg-spinner finished with 4/34, removing Sediqullah Atal for 27 before Mark Adair bowled Rahmat Shah after finding movement off the surface. Hoey went on to dismiss Hashmatullah Shahidi, while Darwish Rasooli and Azmatullah Omarzai also fell as Afghanistan’s chase began to unravel. With Afghanistan seven wickets down and still needing 31 runs, Ireland sensed an opportunity. Rashid did not allow the pressure to force him into unnecessary risks, instead staying at the crease and gradually bringing the target

within reach. When Afghanistan needed 15 more, Rashid began to open up. A wristy whip took the target into single figures before he completed the chase with two runs off Harry Tector in the 45th over. The win means Afghanistan will feature in their fourth consecutive ODI World Cup, with their direct qualification for the 2027 tournament now confirmed. Afghanistan secured direct qualification for the 2027 ODI World Cup by defeating Ireland in Belfast. Chasing 207, Afghanistan lost early momentum but Rashid Khan’s calm unbeaten 37 guided them to a three-wicket win.

Ex-Delhi Capitals leg-spinner named Nepal ODI captain, replacing Rohit Paudel as new skipper

New Delhi : Former Delhi Capitals leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane has been appointed Nepal’s ODI captain for the upcoming ACC Men’s Premier Cup 2026, replacing Rohit Paudel at the helm. The 26-year-old will return to the leadership role as Nepal prepare for the 10-team tournament in Malaysia, which will be played from August 30 to September 12. Lamichhane previously captained Nepal in 14 ODIs before Paudel took over in 2022. Lamichhane is Nepal’s leading ODI wicket-taker and has been one of the country’s most influential cricketers. He became the fastest Nepalese bowler to reach 150

ODI wickets and has also been a key part of the team’s recent success in the format. Paudel, meanwhile, leaves the captaincy after playing an important role in Nepal’s rise in international cricket. He has remained a key batter and leader for the side, with his recent performances in the ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 also helping Nepal stay in contention for the 2027 ODI World Cup. Nepal will begin their Premier Cup campaign against Bahrain on August 31 at the YSD UKM Oval in Bangi. They will then face Malaysia on September 3 before taking on Saudi Arabia on September 6. Nepal’s final group-stage match will



be against Hong Kong on September 8. The tournament features 10 teams divided into two groups. The top two teams from each group will advance to the semi-finals, which are scheduled

for September 10. The third-place playoff and final will take place on September 12, with the championship match scheduled at the Bayuemas Cricket Oval in Kuala Lumpur.

Absolutely ready: Bhuvneshwar Kumar eager for India return ahead of 2027 World Cup

New Delhi : Bhuvneshwar Kumar has expressed his willingness to make a comeback to the Indian team and feature in the 2027 ODI World Cup, insisting he would be ready if the selectors decide to give him another opportunity. The veteran pacer is currently representing Lucknow Falcons in the Uttar Pradesh T20 League, where his immediate focus remains on playing competitive cricket and performing for his team. Bhuvneshwar was asked on Sunday whether he would be interested in returning to the Indian side for the World Cup. “Why would I say no if I get a call? Absolutely ready,” Kumar said. Bhuvneshwar has not played for India since November 2022. His last international appearance came in the third T20I against New Zealand in Napier on November 22, 2022. The 36-year-old has continued to remain active in

domestic and franchise cricket, and his performances in the IPL have kept his name in the conversation despite his long absence from the national setup. Bhuvneshwar enjoyed a strong IPL 2026 campaign with Royal Challengers Bengaluru, playing an important role in their title-winning season. The experienced seamer claimed 28 wickets in 16 matches, maintaining an economy rate of 7.95 and producing several crucial performances throughout the tournament. His ability to swing the new ball and his experience in handling pressure situations remain among his biggest strengths. Bhuvneshwar’s recent IPL form could therefore give the selectors something to consider, particularly with India looking to build a strong pace attack for the 2027 World Cup. The pacer, though, stressed that he is not approaching the UP T20 League with the sole



intention of forcing his way back into international cricket. Honestly, I cannot say exactly how ready I am. My job is to play cricket and that is why I have come here to play in the UP T20 league. I didn’t come here with the intention of moving to another place or reaching another level.