

Conrad Sangma inaugurates NPP's Manipur state office in Imphal

Shillong, July 24: Meghalaya Chief Minister and National People's Party (NPP) president Conrad K Sangma on Friday inaugurated the party's new Manipur state office at Mantripukhri, Imphal, marking what he described as a "significant step" in strengthening the party's presence in the region. The event was attended by senior party leaders, MLAs, and office-bearers. Expressing his delight at returning to Imphal, Sangma said in a social media post, "I am happy to be back at Imphal, Manipur, to inaugurate our new party office, an important step in strengthening our mission and deepening our connect with the people." He added that the new office



would serve as a hub for coordination and outreach, enabling the NPP to work more closely with communities across Manipur. Sangma also held detailed

consultations with party functionaries, legislators, and grassroots leaders to review ongoing initiatives, set priorities, and chart the way forward. "Together, we

remain dedicated to serving the people of Manipur and work with its people for peace and prosperity of the state," he emphasized. The Chief Minister arrived

in Imphal on a two-day visit, during which he is scheduled to meet various stakeholders and assess the party's organizational activities in Manipur. Party insiders noted that the inauguration reflects the NPP's growing focus on expanding its footprint in the Northeast, beyond its strongholds in Meghalaya and other states. The Mantripukhri office is expected to play a pivotal role in strengthening the party's organizational structure, providing a platform for dialogue, and mobilizing support at the grassroots level. Leaders present at the event reiterated the NPP's commitment to inclusive development, peace-building, and political stability in Manipur.

180 stranded people evacuated amid rain-triggered landslides

Guwahati, July 24: Rescue efforts have intensified in Nagaland, which has been affected by rain-triggered landslides and flash floods with authorities airlifting over 180 stranded people and sending relief materials to the affected areas. A statement issued by the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) said the state government has stepped up response measures as heavy monsoon rain continues to disrupt road connectivity and trigger landslides. With road access to Mon and Longleng cut off, the NSDMA requisitioned Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft to evacuate stranded passengers and airlift essential relief supplies. A state government helicopter also supported the evacuation efforts.



On July 23 and 24, the IAF evacuated 148 stranded passengers, including 43 from Mon and 105 from Longleng, while the state helicopter airlifted another 41 passengers from Mon district. Those evacuated included students and Nagaland Public Service Commission Combined Educational Services Examination (NPSC CESE) aspirants stranded due to dam-

aged road connectivity. The airlifted relief consignments comprised food supplies arranged by the NSDMA through the department of Food and Civil Supplies, medical kits and clothing contributed by Konyak Students' Union Kohima and additional relief materials mobilised through the DonateKart Foundation for distribution in disaster-hit areas.

Tripura Police Forms Three-Member Team to Probe Former DGP Anurag's Death

Agartala, July 24: The Tripura Police has constituted a three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the mysterious death of former Director General of Police (DGP) Anurag, whose body was found at the State Police Headquarters in Agartala on July 20. According to an order issued by the office of the Director General of Police, West Tripura Superintendent of Police Namit Pathak will head the probe team. The other members are Additional Superintendent of Police (Urban) Dhruba Nath and Sub-Inspector Subhojit Deb, who has been investigating the unnatural death case. The order authorises the SP (West) to induct additional officers from the Tripura Police Crime Branch or any other unit if required. It also permits the investigating team to seek technical assistance from the Cyber Crime Unit of the Crime

Branch. The team has been directed to submit weekly progress reports to the Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) for review by the DGP. Anurag's body was discovered under mysterious circumstances inside the washroom attached to his official chamber at the State Police Headquarters in Agartala, triggering widespread speculation and demands for a transparent investigation. The senior IPS officer was cremated with full state honours at his ancestral town of Baraut in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat district on July 22. His son, Abhishek, performed the last rites in the presence of family members, senior police officers and hundreds of mourners. Before the cremation, the Uttar Pradesh Police accorded him a ceremonial guard of honour in recognition of his distinguished service. Several dignitaries, including Tripura Governor

Indra Sena Reddy Nallu, Chief Minister Manik Saha, state ministers, Chief Secretary Jitendra Kumar Sinha, Home Secretary Abhishek Singh, acting DGP G.S. Rao, and senior civil and police officials had paid their last respects in Agartala. Meanwhile, opposition parties, including the CPI(M), CPI and Congress, have demanded a judicial inquiry monitored by a sitting judge of the Tripura High Court to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the death. The Left parties and the Congress have also organised separate protest rallies seeking a court-monitored probe. A 1994-batch IPS officer of the Tripura cadre, Anurag assumed charge as the state's DGP on May 17, 2025, succeeding Amitabh Ranjan. Prior to his appointment as DGP, he served as Director General of Police (Intelligence) in Tripura.

Upper Assam Flood Situation 'Very Grim', Death Toll Likely to Rise: Himanta Biswa Sarma

Guwahati, July 24: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday described the flood situation in Upper Assam as "very grim", warning that the death toll could increase as 20 to 25 per cent of the worst-affected areas remain inaccessible to rescue teams. Addressing the media, Sarma said unprecedented rainfall in Assam and neighbouring Nagaland triggered devastating flash floods in Sivasagar and Charaideo districts, areas that have traditionally remained outside the state's regular flood-prone belt. According to the Chief Minister, Mon, Mokokchung and Wokha districts of Nagaland, along with Charaideo district in Assam, recorded 435 to 493 per cent excess rainfall between July 18 and 19, leading to widespread destruction within a few hours. "The situation is extremely serious. These districts have never experienced such rainfall before. They are generally not flood-prone, but this time the devastation has been unprecedented," Sarma said. He informed that Charaideo has reported 10 deaths, while Sivasagar has recorded 21 fatalities, taking the combined death toll in the two districts to 31. Although seven people have officially been reported missing,



he cautioned that the actual figure could rise as communication remains disrupted in several marooned villages. "Many villages are still cut off, and several families have not yet been able to report missing persons. The casualty figures are likely to increase," he said. Nearly seven lakh people have been affected across the two districts, with extensive areas continuing to remain under floodwaters. The Chief Minister said rescue and relief operations are being carried out round the

clock with the assistance of the Indian Army, Indian Air Force, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and various state agencies. Two state ministers have been stationed in the affected districts, while Revenue Minister Keshab Mahanta has been entrusted with overseeing relief operations. Despite these efforts, Sarma admitted that nearly 20 per cent of Charaideo district remains inaccessible because roads have been washed away and connectivity has been severely disrupted.

He also confirmed that Union Home Minister Amit Shah had spoken to him and informed him that an inter-ministerial Central team would arrive in Assam on July 25 to assess the extent of the flood damage. Describing the disaster as different from conventional floods caused by overflowing rivers, Sarma said the destruction unfolded within just a few hours following extremely heavy rainfall. "Normally, floods can be anticipated as river levels rise gradually. This time,

rain started around 3 pm on July 18, and by 7 pm entire areas had already been inundated," he said. On whether the event could be classified as a cloudburst, the Chief Minister said that while experts would decide the scientific classification, rainfall nearly 500 per cent above normal had produced the same impact from an administrative standpoint. Responding to queries on drone-based relief operations, Sarma said drones have limited effectiveness in such conditions, noting that conventional methods of delivering relief have proved more practical in flood-hit areas. He further informed that electricity has been restored in many locations, reducing the number of affected households without power from around 1.6 lakh to nearly 40,000. However, supply remains suspended in areas where transformers are still submerged to prevent accidents. The Chief Minister added that although the state government currently has sufficient funds for relief operations, the overall financial assistance required from the Centre will be determined after the Central assessment team completes its damage survey.

Unchecked Development Near Assam-Meghalaya Border Could Threaten Guwahati: Himanta Biswa Sarma

Guwahati, July 24: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday voiced concern over the growing risk of floods and landslides along the Assam-Meghalaya border, warning that rapid and unregulated development in Meghalaya's Jorabat-USTM region could have serious environmental consequences for Guwahati. Speaking to reporters in Dispur, Sarma said a committee appointed by the Supreme Court had already examined the issue and submitted what he described as a "very devastating report" highlighting the potential environmental impact of construction activities in the area. According to the chief minister, the committee's findings indicate that ongoing development in and around



Jorabat, particularly near the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM), could pose a significant threat to Guwahati due to increased runoff and

environmental degradation. Appealing to the Meghalaya government, Sarma urged it to consider the impact of development on neighbouring Assam and adopt measures

to regulate construction activities in the border region. "I appeal to the Meghalaya government to sympathetically consider the impact on Assam and ex-

amine how development in and around Jorabat can be controlled," he said. The chief minister cautioned that if unchecked construction continues, Guwahati could face severe challenges in managing stormwater and flash floods. "Otherwise, Guwahati will become an unmanageable city. The volume of water flowing downhill cannot be handled by any drainage system," Sarma said. He also revealed that he has been in touch with Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on the issue and noted that the matter is currently pending before the Supreme Court. "The Supreme Court is hearing the matter, and whenever it comes up, we will present our arguments before the court," the chief minister added.

VPP, NEHU students express solidarity with CJP, demand Pradhan's resignation

Shillong, July 24: Opposition party of Meghalaya Voice of the People Party (VPP) and students of the North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) have expressed solidarity with the CJP's protests over NEET paper leak, describing the movement as a fight to safeguard public institutions and the future of India's youth. VPP spokesperson AW Rani said the issue went beyond the alleged irregularities in the medical entrance examination and reflected growing concerns over corruption, nepotism and political interference in public institutions. "To the VPP, this protest is not confined only to the alleged irregularities in the NEET examinations. It is all about protecting public institutions from corruption, nepotism and undue political interference, and safeguarding



the interests and future of millions of our youth across the country," Rani said. The opposition party also condemned the alleged use of force against protesters and questioned the Meghalaya government's silence on the issue. "We believe that peaceful dissent and constitutional demonstration on genuine issues such as this must be met with dialogue, not force," he said, urging the state government to clarify its stand on the controversy.

Meanwhile, the North-Eastern Hill University Students' Union (NEHUSU) also expressed solidarity with activist Sonam Wangchuk and students protesting across the country, calling the alleged NEET paper leak a serious blow to public confidence in India's examination system. In a statement, the union said students continue to suffer due to systemic failures and condemned reports of peaceful protesters being beaten and detained.

NE/EAST

Miscreants blow up bridge, torch telecom vehicle

Imphal, July 24: A bailey bridge in manipur Kamjong district was destroyed late Tuesday night by a powerful bomb suspected to be an IED (improvised explosive device), police and local reports said.

The vital bridge over the Namban Lok River between Phange and Chatric villages under-Sahamphung Block was reduced to debris around 10.30 p.m. A Bolero pick-up vehicle belonging to the telecom department, parked nearby, was also found torched. Farmers in the vicinity reported hearing a loud explosion and later discovered the destruction. The bridge, constructed under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), served as the only alternate lifeline connecting Ukhrul-Imphal via Chatric village and was crucial for more than 10 villages along the Indo-Myanmar border. On receiving information, Kamjong district police rushed to the site and registered a suo motu case at Chasad police station. Meanwhile, Khanuithot-Khon (Voice of the Naga Youth), an Ukhrul-based body, strongly condemned the incident, blaming "Kuki narco-terrorists" and alleging involvement of Assam Rifles personnel. It demanded a judicial or independent probe, registration of criminal cases against those responsible, and suspension of personnel found directly involved pending investigation. The body further pressed for immediate restoration of the destroyed bridge to ensure uninterrupted civilian access, warning that any attempt



to shield perpetrators or delay justice would erode public trust. Khanuithot-Khon noted that for the past five months, people of Ukhrul and Kamjong have faced immense hardship as movement along NH-202 (Imphal-Ukhrul Road) remained restricted under armed escort, forcing thousands to rely on the Chatric route for healthcare, education, markets, and essential services. "The destruction of infrastructure essential to civilian life cannot be normalized or justified under any circumstance," the body asserted, urging decisive action from the Manipur government.

'Save Manipur' slogan used in Delhi protests to mislead youth: Mnp HM

Imphal, July 24: Manipur Home Minister Govindas Konhoujam on Thursday said the 'Save Manipur' slogan raised at the ongoing students' protests led by the CJP in New Delhi was to "mislead the youth" of the northeastern state.

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) has been spearheading the youth protest at Jantar Mantar in the national capital over the NEET paper leak.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP's state head office here, Konhoujam claimed, "The 'Save Manipur' slogan in Delhi protests is a technique employed to mislead the youth of Manipur. The state will be saved by us, not by those raising slogans at Jantar Mantar." The strife-torn Manipur has been making efforts to restore complete peace and normalcy, he said.

The state has been witnessing ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups for more than three years. Over 260 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in the strife since May 2023.

"We must try to achieve the level of success made by other states," the minister added. Konhoujam said the

Centre has decided to set up fast-track courts to ensure swift and stringent punishment for those involved in the paper leak, and urged the youths to have trust in the Prime Minister.

He claimed that opposition parties are behind the students' protests in the national capital, which are being branded as youth demonstrations.

"The Delhi protests are being shown as youth agitations, but we can clearly see the involvement of several political parties. The unrest is influenced by political parties including the AAP, the Congress, the SP and those who have failed in politics."

The state home minister alleged that undemocratic means have been used to disrupt the monsoon session of Parliament and tarnish the image of the country. "We strongly condemn such acts and agendas. Since the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government was formed, no parliament session has been allowed to be conducted peacefully by opposition parties. Opportunities to address and discuss critical issues have been wasted," he said. Konhoujam also alleged, "Even a conspiracy has been hatched to disrupt the monsoon ses-



sion of Parliament by staging a sit-in at Jantar Mantar by a newly formed party." Claiming that large funds are required to stage such protests, the Manipur home minister questioned where the money is coming from. "There are many countries which do not want India to grow and advance. However, the country will be able to achieve the vision of PM Narendra Modi by 2047," he said. "There are many NGOs, which would be affected by the amendment to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act. We all know that. I want to ask who is funding the food, water and other things at such big protests. On the contrary, the BJP is a party which seeks the wel-

fare of the country and the youth," Konhoujam claimed.

He said the prosperity of the country depends on the youth, and this is "well understood by the Prime Minister, who, in his speeches, often refers to the term - Young India".

Responding to a query on the destruction of a bailey bridge in Kamjong district on Wednesday, he said, "The police are trying to ascertain the exact cause. One report says the bridge was blown up by militants from across the border, and the other indicates that it could be the handiwork of miscreants from inside the state to slow down the movement of Assam Rifles troops."

CBI Launches Investigation Into Chakma Minor's Death Amid Extortion Claims

Itanagar, July 24: The Central Bureau of Investigation has launched a probe into the death of a 15-year-old Chakma girl. The minor worked as domestic help in Roing, Lower Dibang Valley district. She died on December 11, 2025. The agency's Kolkata Zone registered FIR number RC0562026S0002 on July 15. The National Human Rights Commission directed the move. Inspector Rahul Shukla leads the team on the ground.

New allegations complicate the case. The Arunachal Pradesh Chakma Youth Association accuses Chikond Chand Chakma of the All India Chakma Students' Union of extorting 3 lakh rupees from the accused to settle the case. The association bases this on a video statement from the girl's father. APCYA President Rup Singh Chakma submitted a June 18, 2026, complaint to the CBI regarding the



matter. Rup Singh Chakma pushed for a wider investigation. He stated, "The CBI inquiry will go a long way in addressing the menace of child trafficking within the Chakma community in Arunachal Pradesh. However, it is equally important to

investigate allegations of extortion and other attempts to interfere with the investigation and the administration of justice in cases involving violations of child rights, particularly child labour and sexual offences against children."

The association claims AICSU leaders cleared Chikond Chand Chakma after an internal inquiry instead of reporting the extortion. APCYA officials now demand a full accounting of these interference claims.

Assam and Nagaland Propose Joint Border

Kohima, July 24: District officials from Karbi Anglong and Dimapur met at the Circuit House in Dimapur on July 23 to lock down a plan for border stability. The meeting included Karbi Anglong Deputy Commissioner Aranyak Saikia and various police brass from both states. They want faster communication.

Assam revenue officials brought piles of records to the table. They cited census documents, electoral rolls, and old boundary notifications to argue that disputed villages belong to Assam. Despite the conflicting land claims, both administrations agreed that keeping the peace takes top priority. They praised local police for preventing past flare-ups.

"Such cooperation has helped prevent escalation of disputes and ensured the safety and security of residents living along the border," officials noted.

To stop trouble before it starts, the group proposed a joint border monitoring committee. This body will pull in police, district officials, and village representatives



to track activity and foster dialogue. The committee will hold the current status quo until higher authorities settle the land dispute for good. Everyone agreed that future trips to sensitive areas must be joint operations to keep things transparent. Both sides left the meeting committed to regular contact to preserve harmony.

Mizoram Congress Demands Special Session Block FCRA Amendment Bill



Aizawl, July 24: The Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee wants an urgent special session of the State Assembly. They aim to pass a resolution against the Foreign Contribution Regulation Amendment Bill of 2026. On Thursday, party president Lal Thanzara submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Lalduhoma. The document labels this legislative battle a matter of utmost importance.

Former MLA John Siamkung claims previous BJP-led government changes to the law already choked foreign funding for local groups. He warns the new bill will hurt Christians and NGOs across Mizoram even further. The party demands the state government stop stalling. They want a public stance

immediately.

The Congress also called for a high-level delegation to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This group should include church leaders, political figures, and NGO representatives to demand the bill be withdrawn. Additionally, the party expects both of the state's Members of Parliament to vote against the legislation when it reaches the floor in New Delhi. Congress leaders say they want the state to unite to protect its land, people, and faith. They remain frustrated that the government has stayed silent while local churches have already begun holding prayer meetings regarding the proposed changes.

Mizoram Chief Minister Orders Faster Work on Major Infrastructure Projects

Aizawl, July 24: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma pushed for faster construction on July 23. He chaired the fourth Mi-PRAGATI committee meeting to audit major state projects. He wants results now. Officials reviewed the Aizawl Western Bypass Road. They tackled roadblocks including forest clearance, unpaid compensation, and refugee relocation. The Vairengte-Sairang section of NH-306 and NH-06 shows some progress. This four-lane artery links Mizoram to Assam. Workers finished a 2 per cent increase in physical work since the last check. Court battles over land ownership continue to stall

other sections of the route. The Ekta Mall in Aizawl sits at 21 per cent completion. Teams built a materials testing lab and bought all required machinery for the site. To "pursue unresolved issues more vigorously" to finish the work. The state launched the Mi-PRAGATI initiative last year to force faster development across Mizoram. Interest Litigation and ongoing compensation fights. Lalduhoma told departments to "pursue unresolved issues more vigorously" to finish the work. The state launched the Mi-PRAGATI initiative last year to force faster development across Mizoram.

Mizoram Police Seize Rs 23 Crore in Drugs, Arrest 11

Aizawl, July 24: Mizoram Police netted narcotics valued at Rs 23.23 crore over four days. Officers arrested 11 people in a string of raids. Police filed five cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. The biggest bust hit on Tuesday. A joint team from the CID Special They seized 15 kilograms of suspected methamphetamine tablets. Officers nabbed 9,016 Police caught 29-year-old Malsawmtluanga of Zokhawthar driving the vehicle.

Meghalaya BJP Defends Youth Chief Despite Violent Social Media Post

Itanagar, July 24: Meghalaya BJP is shielding youth wing president Mewaker Lyngdoh Pakma following a violent post on his social media accounts. The party claims his profile was hacked. Yet they refuse to file a formal police complaint. No FIR exists two days after the incident. The trouble started when Pakma's Facebook and Instagram accounts posted, "Shoot them! Tear gas ain't enough!" The message included the hashtag UAPA_Sedition. It targeted student protesters at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.

BJP spokesperson Arnab Das insists the party does not stand by the post. He claims the hackers deleted the evidence once the public lashed out. Das says Pakma denies writing the message. Despite this, the party has not approached the police to investigate the alleged security breach.

The Hynniewtrep Youths' Council is now demanding accountability. Hyc President Roy Kupar Synrem condemned the post. He wants enforcement agencies to book



Pakma for the threat. Synrem said, "Just because we protested, it does not mean we are against the government." He maintains that citizens have a constitutional right to dissent without facing intimidation from political figures.

NSF Demands Liquor Law Enforcement and Disaster Relief in Nagaland

Itanagar, July 24: Nagaland is reeling. Nine people are dead after massive landslides and flash floods tore through the state, hitting Mon district the hardest. Thousands are now homeless. Crucial infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and communication networks, lies in ruins. The Naga Students' Federation (NSF) and the Nagaland Gaonburas Federation (NGBF) are now pushing the state government for immediate relief and long-term rehabilitation for survivors.

Relief efforts are underway. The Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority, the State Disaster Response Force, and local volunteers are working through the debris. Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio toured the devastated regions to oversee the response. The NSF demands that



aid be distributed transparently and equitably. Beyond basic needs, they want investment in scientific landslide mitigation, proper drainage, and slope stabilization to prevent

future catastrophes. "Until such time as the Legislature amends or repeals the Act through due process, every authority entrusted with its enforcement is constitutionally and legally

bound to uphold its provisions in both letter and spirit," the NSF stated in a separate push regarding local laws.

The federation is also fed up with the open violation of the Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition (NLTP) Act of 1989. Despite the law, illegal bars and liquor outlets operate across urban centers. The NSF claims this rot feeds organized crime and corruption.

They sent a formal representation to the Chief Secretary, calling for the police and excise departments to launch sustained crackdowns immediately. The federation warned it would not remain a silent spectator if the state keeps failing to act. If authorities stay idle, the NSF says it will launch its own democratic course of action.

Students who protest are being treated by the Modi government as enemies of the country: Gandhi, Sonia

New Delhi, July 24: Congress Parliamentary Party chairman Sonia Gandhi launched a vicious attack on the Center on Friday, claiming that the Modi government is treating the demonstrating students as “enemies of the nation” in response to the current student protests and the government’s handling of them.Sonia Gandhi stated that students have called for accountability and educational reforms in a sharply worded piece that appeared in “The Hindu” daily.She wrote, “But the Modi government has reacted to their bravery with cowardice and wanton cruelty, treating them as enemies of the nation rather than inheritors of the future.” She claimed that the ‘brutality’ perpetrated by the police personnel “functioning under Union Home Minister” on student protesters is hardly unprecedented for this regime.“We all remember vividly how armed policemen and paramilitary forces ravaged university campuses during the anti-CAA-NRC protests in 2020. The unacceptable excesses against India’s women wrestlers can never be erased from our memories,” she said. She noted that in recent weeks, students’ nonviolent protests over exam paper leaks and the general deterioration of the educational system had gained traction throughout India.The former Congress chief claimed that the Delhi Police and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) attempted to

put an end to them violently on July 20, 2026, which she called a “day of infamy,” using lathicharges and tear gas. Gandhi pointed out that police used batons indiscriminately, injuring many non-violent protestors and even students returning home.According to her piece, “the country has seen some of the most depressing images of youth whose bodies have been scarred by pellets, the use of which would undoubtedly have been approved by Union Home Minister Amit Shah himself.”Gandhi declared, “It is time to say loud and clear: Stop, these are our sons and daughters, our young men and women. The videos from that day are seared into our memories and have stirred our collective conscience.” She criticized the Modi government for undermining student protests by labeling dissent as anti-national instead of addressing the policies that triggered unrest. Gandhi emphasized a decline in India’s education sector, noting a 50% budget cut for school education and a 33% cut for higher education, while public schools are closing and private institutions proliferate. She condemned the government’s lack of accountability, particularly targeting Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for dismissing crucial recommendations from a parliamentary committee. Gandhi declared it a moral duty to support students amidst these challenges.

Amid the CJP protest, 17 Delhi Metro stations were closed for security reasons

New Delhi, July 24: In the midst of the ongoing Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) demonstration outside Jantar Mantar here, 17 metro stations in central Delhi were blocked for the third day in a row on Friday due to security concerns.Due to security concerns, the 17 stations—Lok Kalyan Marg, Rajiv Chowk, Patel Chowk, Ramakrishna Ashram Marg, Barakhamba Road, Supreme Court, Seva Teerth, Janpath, Mandi House, Central Secretariat, ITO, Delhi Gate, Indraprastha, Khan Market, Jor Bagh,



Shivaji Stadium, and Jhandewalan—will remain closed from 7.30 am until further notice, according to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC). It stated that Rajiv Chowk, Mandi

House, and Central Secretariat stations will still have access to the interchange facility.On Wednesday and Thursday, these 17 stations were closed. Office workers, students, and other commuters have been inconvenienced by the closure of metro stations.The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) filed a request at the highest court on Wednesday, claiming that it was challenging for attorneys and litigants to appear in court due to the shutdown of multiple metro stations.

On the 26th day, Sonam Wangchuk drinks soup to end his fast

New Delhi, July 24: Activist Sonam Wangchuk, accompanied by union ministers, supporters, medical personnel, and family, today concluded his hunger strike at Gurugram’s Medanta Hospital after going without food for more than three weeks. Twenty-six days after Union Minister JP Nadda laid out the government’s promises, Wangchuk sat up on his hospital bed and took his first sip from a cup that wasn’t water.After breaking his fast, Wangchuk took a sip of soup and remarked, “Hunger tastes better.” He elaborated that while the soup tastes good, hunger “doesn’t taste bad” either. In a roughly seven-minute video, Wangchuk’s family members, doctors, top leaders of the Apex Body of Leh Ladakh, Jitendra Singh, and Union Minister JP Nadda were seen standing close to him. “The government is positive about not registering cases against those protesting peacefully at Jantar Mantar in Delhi and those participating in the march to the Parliament on July 20, 2026,” Nadda stated after reading the government’s guarantee. The government has previously promised to hold talks in the Parliament to address issues related to paper leaks and educational reforms for exams. Additionally, the government is favorably evaluating appropriate compensation for the victims of recent NEET paper leaks who committed suicide. To this, Wangchuk said, “I’m grateful and happy to break my fast. Thank you” - while holding the hands of Nadda



and Singh. Wangchuk expressed gratitude to the government and called on protesting students to remain peaceful, emphasizing his disapproval of violence and the risk of anti-social elements exploiting protests. He acknowledged his wife, Gitanjali Angmo, for her unwavering support. Wangchuk conducted a hunger strike starting June 28 in Delhi, seeking the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET paper leak controversy. Due to health complications, he was removed from the protest site on July 18 and taken to Safdarjung Hospital. Following concerns regarding negligence, Gitanjali petitioned the Delhi High Court, which permitted Wangchuk’s transfer to Medanta Hospital in Gurugram, where he subsequently ended his fast. Prime Minister Modi encouraged Wangchuk to heed medical advice to restore his health, expressing hopes for his recovery.

Overnight events amid CJP protest: Wangchuk ends quickly, the PM’s selfie video, and the new education secretary

New Delhi, July 24: In the midst of continuous student protests over alleged irregularities in NEET, activist Sonam Wangchuk ended his 26-day fast late on Thursday night amid a flurry of political and bureaucratic activities.Since last night, a lot has happened: the Opposition demanded that Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan be removed, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that a significant bill will be introduced in the Parliament for severe penalties against those accused of paper leaks, a new higher education secretary was appointed, and the Cockroach Janta Party declared that the protests will go on. Wangchuk had started an indefinite fast on June 28 seeking accountability from the government on the alleged NEET paper leak and the resignation of Pradhan.The government’s assurance to Wangchuk, which included a discussion on the issue in Parliament, compensation to those who died by suicide over the NEET paper leak, and no cases against student protesters, was accompanied by other key developments in the matter overnight. In a video statement regarding the NEET controversy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that a bill with provisions for



stringent measures against paper leaks would be presented in Parliament the following week. Modi stated in a video message that the union cabinet meeting on Friday will consider and decide on the proposed legislation.”On Friday, the cabinet will debate the problem of paper leaks, and after considering recommendations from other cabinet members, further action will be decided. In a video uploaded to his social media accounts, Prime Minister Modi stated, “A bill with provisions for strong action against paper leaks will be brought on Monday when the second week of the Monsoon session of Parliament will begin, and we will

try to pass it as early as possible.” According to him, the measure calls for harsher penalties for individuals responsible for paper leaks as well as expedited courts.In the meantime, the Opposition persisted in its previously stated demands. Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, reiterated his call for the resignation of the union education minister and referred to PM Modi’s message as a “pathetic midnight video.” Rahul Gandhi stated, “Mr. Modi, our students are demanding Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation,” in reference to PM Modi’s video. Don’t use this pitiful midnight video to belittle their intelligence.” He

Meet Naresh Pal Gangwar, Selected to Become the New Secretary of Education Despite CJP Protests



New Delhi, July 24: In a major bureaucratic reorganization, IAS officer Naresh Pal Gangwar was named Secretary of the Department of Higher Education.His appointment coincides with heavy scrutiny of the Ministry of Education because to the ongoing scandal surrounding the NEET-UG paper leak. Additionally, demonstrators, including the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), have demanded that Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan quit due to suspected irregularities in competitive exams and accusations of student suicides associated with the issue. Vineet Joshi, an IAS official from the 1992 batch, would be replaced by Gangwar, an IAS officer from the Rajasthan cadre

in 1994. After current secretary Vivek Bhardwaj retires on July 31, Joshi will take over as secretary of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.Naresh Pal Gangwar is a member of the 1994 IAS class and passed the UPSC civil services test in 1993. He has held a number of significant posts in the national and Rajasthani governments over the years. Gangwar, who was born in Nainital on October 21, 1970, earned an M.Tech in Communication and Radar after completing a B.Tech in Electronics and Communication Engineering. In addition, he has a master’s degree in economics. Gangwar worked as a district collector in a number of districts when he was in Rajasthan.In 2001, he was named Collector of Tonk.

A customer received Rs 1.8 lakh from Flipkart after receiving oil instead of an iPhone

New Delhi, July 24: A consumer court in this area has ordered Flipkart and the seller to pay Rs 70,000 in compensation and legal fees, as well as to return more than Rs 1.11 lakh to a customer who ordered an Apple iPhone but received beard growth oil instead.In an order issued earlier this month, the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Additional DCF, Mumbai (Suburban) declared that it was “unfair trade practice” to repeatedly close customer complaints without providing any meaningful remedies.It stated that the order was placed and the required payments were made via the online platform. “Therefore, the opposite party No 1 (Flipkart) owed a corresponding duty to ensure that the consumer received the product ordered and to provide an effective mechanism for redressal of consumer grievances,” the commission said. An e-commerce entity cannot simply distance itself from a transaction after facilitating the sale, particularly where the consumer immediately reports that a completely different product has been delivered, it said. According to the commission, it “amounts to a clear cut deficiency in service and also constitutes an unfair trade practice” to fail to look into the complaint, retrieve the incorrectly de-



livered package, offer a replacement or refund, and continuously close the complaint without offering any meaningful assistance.The panel further emphasized that the vendor, International Value Retail Pvt Ltd, plainly demonstrated a defect in service by failing to deliver the agreed product and address the grievance despite numerous requests.Accordingly, the commission decided that the vendor and the platform are both jointly and severally accountable for the complainant’s loss and annoyance. The complainant, a resident of Mumbai’s Powai area, had purchased an Apple iPhone 14 Pro (128 GB) on April 22, 2023, via Flipkart for Rs 1,11,793 using a no-cost EMI scheme.While a separately ordered charger and cover were delivered successfully, the main package delivered the following day contained “beard growth oil” and packing material instead of the high-end smartphone.The complainant

alleged that despite repeatedly approaching Flipkart’s customer support between April and May 2023 and submitting all required documents, the company failed to resolve the issue. Rather, the complaint was continually marked as “resolved” with no replacement or reimbursement.The consumer forum ordered Flipkart and the vendor to reimburse the principal of Rs 1,11,793 plus 9% annual interest starting on April 22, 2023, and continuing until actual realization.They were also mandated to pay Rs 20,000 in legal fees and Rs 50,000 in compensation for mental suffering and harassment within 45 days.In a written statement, Apple India, another party to the case, argued that the complaint should be dismissed since it was not maintainable under the law or the circumstances. The company stated that it sells Apple-branded goods through independent dealers and resellers on a principal-to-principal basis and that it has no influence over the responsibilities that these independent sellers have to their clients.The panel rejected the case against Apple India after acknowledging their argument.It stated that there was no proof linking the manufacturer to the packaging, shipping, or the purported lack of service, and that the dispute only concerned the delivery of the incorrect product.

The long-range Kusha missile system is tested by India

New Delhi, July 24: The first test of India’s homegrown Kusha long-range surface-to-air missile system, which can intercept aerial threats up to 350 kilometers away, was conducted on Thursday. According to officials aware of the development, this important capability will bolster the nation’s air defense network once the weapon is put into service.

The officials, who asked not to be named, stated that the missile system is anticipated to be deployed in three to four years and is capable of engaging threats across the 150–350 km range band. According to the defense ministry, the test was carried out by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) against an electronic target that mimicked a high-speed, high-altitude airborne threat, which the missile system successfully intercepted. Off the coast of Odisha, on APJ Abdul Kalam Island, it was tested.

The Kusha missile system is designed to neutralize a raft of aerial threats, including fighter jets, missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and large enemy aircraft, across a wide range and altitude envelope. “All weapon system elements, including the missiles, radars, and command and control centre, have been developed by various DRDO laboratories and industry partners,” the ministry said.

According to defense minister Rajnath Singh, Kusha’s successful flight test was a significant milestone and demonstrated the nation’s ability to construct a long-range surface-to-air missile system, which is only possessed by a few number of countries.

“This signifies a huge leap in the nation’s air defense capability and will also eliminate the import dependency for such systems,” Singh stated. Rajesh Kumar Singh, the defense secretary who is also in charge of DRDO, kept an eye on everything going on throughout the launch and congratulated the team members who participated in the flight test. The Russian-imported S-400 system is part of India’s air defense arsenal.

In October 2018, the nation placed a government-to-government order for five S-400 units from Russia for ₹39,000 crore. Three of the air defense system’s units have already been deployed by the IAF; a fourth arrived in June, and the fifth squadron is anticipated to be delivered by the end of the year from Russia.

The Adani Group disputes reports that it is starting airlines



New Delhi, July 24: On Friday, Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL) denied market rumors and media claims that the top Adani Group firm was preparing to start an airline.According to earlier reports, Adani Group is considering entering the airline industry.A representative for Adani Enterprises Limited stated, “We would like to categorically deny the recent media reports and market speculation suggesting that Adani Enterprises is planning to launch an airline.”These reports are totally inaccurate and completely unfounded. The statement continued,

“Adani Enterprises is not considering any proposals to enter the aviation industry.With an initial investment of over Rs 20,000 crore, Adani Airports has launched an ambitious plan to create integrated airport cities throughout its airport network in five states. The project covers more than 655 acres of land spread among six airports in five states, with nearly 440 acres located in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai alone. According to Adani Airport City Limited (AACL), a fully owned subsidiary of Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL), the big-

gest private airport operator in India, almost 22 million square feet would be created throughout Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Jaipur, and Guwahati. Throughout its network of airports, it will create integrated airport cities that combine retail, hospitality, entertainment, convention, and commercial infrastructure into easily navigable urban areas.According to the firm, about 70% of the planned investment would be concentrated on Mumbai and Navi Mumbai, reflecting the Mumbai Metropolitan Region’s (MMR) status as India’s top commercial, financial, and aviation gateway.Travelers, businesses, and local communities can access hotels, offices, retail, dining, entertainment, and convention facilities in environments that are seamlessly integrated with airport, metro, and city transportation infrastructure in these integrated, walkable urban districts.

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The Cost of a Forgotten Maintenance Day

A small crack in a road, a minor leak in a pipeline, or a flickering streetlight may not appear urgent. But when routine maintenance is repeatedly postponed, minor defects can turn into major failures.

The same principle applies to public buildings, vehicles, drainage systems, and even digital infrastruc-

ture.

Preventive maintenance rarely attracts attention because its success is measured by problems that never occur

Yet regular care is often cheaper, safer, and more efficient than emergency repairs. A well-maintained system is one of the quietest signs of good management.

Britain's Local Governments Need More Than Promises

Britain has long promised to devolve power from Westminster to local communities, yet successive governments have struggled to turn that promise into reality. Although political leaders frequently speak of empowering towns, cities, and regions, many important decisions continue to be made by central government. This concentration of authority has led to criticism that Britain remains one of the most centralised democracies in Europe, with ministers in London controlling policies that directly affect local housing, transport, social care, planning, and public services.

While national governments have an important role in setting overall priorities and providing funding, critics argue that many everyday issues are better understood and managed by local authorities that possess greater knowledge of community needs and regional challenges.

The debate over devolution has intensified as governments announce nationwide programmes to tackle homelessness, improve bus services, expand social housing, and reform social care. Supporters view these initiatives as necessary responses to national problems, but opponents argue that they reflect an outdated belief that Westminster can successfully manage services from the centre. Challenges such as rough sleeping, affordable housing, elderly care, and public transport differ significantly from one community to another. A policy that works in a large metropolitan area may prove ineffective in a rural district or coastal town. Local councils, voluntary organisations, and community groups are often better placed to understand these differences and develop solutions that reflect local circumstances.

Homelessness illustrates the limits of centralised policymaking. Rough sleeping is influenced by a combination of housing shortages, mental health issues, unemployment, addiction, family breakdown, and social exclusion. These problems require coordinated support involving local councils, charities, healthcare providers, housing associations, and community organisations. National funding can provide valuable assistance, but lasting progress depends upon local partnerships capable of delivering personalised support. Central government can establish broad objectives and allocate resources, yet successful implementation usually

relies on institutions operating close to the communities they serve.

Housing policy presents a similar challenge. Governments frequently announce ambitious construction targets to address housing shortages and improve affordability. However, planning decisions, land availability, infrastructure requirements, environmental concerns, and community priorities vary considerably across regions. Local authorities possess detailed knowledge of these factors and are generally better equipped to determine where development should occur and how it should balance economic growth with environmental protection and community interests. Excessive central intervention may undermine local accountability while creating tensions between national objectives and regional priorities.

Social care also highlights the importance of local decision-making. Caring for older people, individuals with disabilities, and vulnerable adults involves highly personal services that depend on close relationships between care providers, families, healthcare professionals, and local communities. Many observers argue that these services cannot be effectively directed through highly centralised bureaucracies. Instead, local governments and community organisations may be better positioned to coordinate care, respond quickly to changing needs, and integrate services with local health systems. National standards and funding remain essential, but flexibility at the local level can improve both efficiency and quality of care.

Despite repeated commitments to decentralisation, Britain has become increasingly centralised over recent decades. Governments of different political parties have pledged to strengthen local democracy, yet they have often expanded central oversight of taxation, education, housing, planning, and local government finance once in office. This pattern has contributed to frustration among local authorities that possess significant responsibilities but limited financial independence. Compared with many European countries, British local governments exercise relatively little control over taxation and public spending, leaving them dependent on decisions made by the Treasury and central departments.

Between Caring for Parents and Raising Children: The Generation Caught in the Middle

For generations, the idea of paying a new tax to fund social care has been treated as a political danger zone. Politicians who approach the issue often discover that the debate quickly becomes dominated by fear, particularly the fear that people will be forced to surrender their homes, their savings, or the inheritance they hoped to leave behind. Yet there is another reality that receives far less attention: millions of families are already paying a hidden care tax every day. They pay it through unpaid hours, lost earnings, emotional exhaustion, damaged health, and the constant pressure of trying to support elderly relatives while managing their own lives.

The debate about social care is often framed around government spending and taxation, but the real question is much broader. What kind of society does Britain want to become as its population grows older? Should ageing remain a private family struggle, where individuals quietly absorb the financial and emotional consequences of illness and disability? Or should care be treated as a collective responsibility, similar to healthcare and education, where everyone contributes because everyone benefits from a system that protects people when they need it most?

For many members of Generation X, this question is no longer theoretical. They are reaching the stage of life where they are simultaneously supporting ageing parents, raising children, and maintaining demanding careers. Unlike previous generations, many couples today are working full-time while also managing complex caring responsibilities. Their lives are divided between multiple households and competing obligations. They move between the homes where they grew up and the homes where their children are growing up, balancing

medical appointments, financial decisions, school pressures, and workplace responsibilities.

This generation has found itself caught between two different phases of family responsibility. Their children may still need guidance, education, and emotional support, while their parents may need help with mobility, medication, dementia care, or everyday tasks. The result is a form of invisible labour that rarely appears in economic statistics but has a major impact on society. People reduce their working hours, refuse promotions, change careers, or leave employment completely because the demands of caring become impossible to manage alongside paid work.

This is the hidden care tax. It already exists, but it is paid privately rather than collectively.

The financial costs of inadequate social care are enormous. Families may face thousands of pounds in nursing home fees, home care expenses, transport costs, and specialist support. For those who do not have significant savings, the pressure can become overwhelming. However, the financial burden represents only one part of the problem. The emotional cost can be equally severe. Adult children often find themselves making difficult decisions about a parent's health and safety while experiencing guilt that they cannot do more. They worry about whether they are visiting enough, whether they are noticing problems early enough, and whether they are failing someone who once cared for them.

The impact extends beyond individual families. Employers lose experienced workers when caring responsibilities force people to reduce hours or leave jobs. Businesses lose productivity and valuable skills. The wider economy suffers when thousands of people are prevented from

participating fully in the workforce because the care system is unable to meet demand. A failure to invest in social care therefore creates costs elsewhere, including increased pressure on hospitals, delayed discharges, and preventable health problems.

A stronger care system is not simply a social expense. It can be an investment that reduces future costs. Supporting people earlier can prevent small problems from becoming major crises.

Helping older people maintain independence, improve mobility, and manage health conditions can reduce emergency hospital admissions and delay the need for intensive care. Prevention is often less expensive and more humane than responding only after a person reaches a point of serious decline.

Despite this, political leaders have repeatedly struggled to build public support for reform. Social care has become one of the most difficult policy areas because any proposal involving taxation creates immediate fears about personal finances. Previous attempts at reform have often collapsed after opponents successfully framed them as unfair burdens rather than shared protections.

One of the biggest challenges is the language used in the debate. Terms such as "death tax" create a powerful emotional reaction because they suggest that people are being punished at the end of their lives. They turn a discussion about protecting families into a discussion about government taking away wealth. Once that framing takes hold, it becomes extremely difficult for politicians to explain the wider benefits of reform.

A different approach may be needed. Instead of presenting social care funding as a tax imposed on people when they die, it could be presented as a contribu-

tion towards ageing with dignity and security. Most people accept the logic of insurance. They pay for protection against risks they hope never to experience. Home insurance, car insurance, and health coverage are accepted because people understand that shared contributions protect everyone from unpredictable events. Long-term care should be viewed through a similar lens.

The reality is that a significant number of people will eventually need support because of illness, disability, frailty, or conditions such as dementia. The question is not whether care needs will exist, but whether individuals and families should face those costs alone or whether society should create a system that spreads responsibility fairly.

A universal care service could transform the experience of ageing. Rather than becoming involved only when people reach crisis point, such a service could provide early guidance, information, and practical support. Families often struggle because they do not know where to turn. They face confusing systems, complicated assessments, and uncertainty about what help is available. A visible and accessible care service could make support easier to understand.

The success of other universal services shows the importance of making support available before problems become emergencies. A well-designed care system could provide community centres, advice services, health assessments, social activities, and practical assistance for older people and their families. The goal would not simply be to provide care when someone becomes dependent, but to help people remain healthier and more independent for longer.

Other countries have already experimented with approaches that focus on

prevention and early intervention. Regular assessments for older people can identify risks before they become serious. Simple interventions, such as improving balance, strengthening muscles, adapting homes, or addressing isolation, can dramatically improve quality of life. Ageing should not be viewed only as a period of decline; with the right support, it can also be a period of continued activity, independence, and contribution.

The debate about inheritance also deserves careful consideration. Many younger people hope that inherited family wealth, particularly property, will help them achieve financial security in an increasingly difficult housing market. This makes any inheritance-related tax politically sensitive. However, a well-designed system would need to balance different generations' needs rather than setting them against each other.

The purpose of social care reform should not be to take wealth from families. It should be to prevent families from being financially destroyed by circumstances beyond their control. Without a shared system, the burden falls unevenly. Some people will require expensive care for years, while others will not. Some families can absorb these costs, while others cannot. A collective approach spreads the risk more fairly.

The challenge for politicians is therefore not only designing a policy but explaining why it matters. People need to understand that social care is not simply about supporting a small group of elderly citizens. It is about protecting everyone's future. Almost every family will encounter questions about ageing, illness, or disability at some point. A good care system benefits parents, children, workers, employers, and communities.

The fear surrounding care taxes comes partly from the belief that people are being asked to pay for something they may never personally use. But the same argument could be made against many public services. People contribute to schools even if they do not currently have children. They contribute to healthcare even when they are healthy. They support emergency services even when they do not need them. The principle behind these systems is that society functions better when people share responsibility for risks that affect everyone.

The question facing Britain is whether it wants to continue relying on unpaid family carers to carry the burden quietly or whether it is prepared to create a system that recognises care as a fundamental part of social infrastructure.

Ageing is not a failure. Needing support is not a personal mistake. A society that values its citizens should ensure that growing older does not mean losing independence, dignity, or financial security. It should also ensure that families are not forced to sacrifice their own futures because they are trying to care for the people who cared for them.

The debate should therefore move beyond fear of taxation and towards a broader understanding of what care represents. A contribution towards social care is not simply a cost. It is a guarantee that people will not face old age alone and that future generations will inherit not only financial assets but also a society built around compassion, security, and shared responsibility.

The hidden care tax is already being paid. The real choice is whether Britain continues paying it privately through exhausted families or creates a fairer system where everyone contributes and everyone benefits.

The Erosion of Public Trust in Contemporary Britain

Britain today faces a challenge that goes far beyond economic growth, tax policy, or public services. It is confronting a crisis of confidence. Across the country, many people have become increasingly doubtful about politics, sceptical of government promises, and pessimistic about the nation's future. Public opinion surveys consistently reveal declining trust in political leaders and institutions, while concerns about the economy, healthcare, housing, and living standards continue to grow. Although governments can introduce reforms and announce new policies, success ultimately depends on whether citizens believe that those changes will improve their daily lives. Restoring public confidence therefore requires more than effective administration; it demands rebuilding the relationship between the state and its people. Political leadership is not only about making decisions but also about convincing citizens that progress is possible and that government can once again serve the public interest.

Recent studies of British public opinion paint a complex picture. Many citizens express frustration with politics, believing that elected representatives fail to understand ordinary people's concerns or keep their promises. Confidence in politicians has steadily declined over several decades, leaving many voters convinced that governments are disconnected from the realities of everyday life. This erosion of trust is significant because democratic institutions rely not only on elections but also on public belief that leaders act responsibly, honestly,

and competently. When trust disappears, every policy announcement is viewed with suspicion, every reform is questioned, and every political disagreement reinforces the belief that government is incapable of delivering meaningful change.

Yet public opinion is full of contradictions. Many people demand better public services while simultaneously opposing higher taxes. Citizens want shorter waiting times in hospitals, improved schools, reliable public transport, safer communities, and stronger social care, but they are often reluctant to accept the financial costs required to sustain these services. This tension creates one of the greatest dilemmas for policymakers. Modern welfare states require substantial public investment, yet political debates frequently encourage the belief that governments can provide more while spending less. Such expectations are difficult to reconcile, leading to disappointment regardless of which party is in power.

International comparisons further illustrate this contradiction. Many Britons admire countries with highly developed welfare systems, excellent healthcare, generous parental leave, and well-funded education. Scandinavian nations are often praised for their high quality of life, strong public services, and low levels of inequality. However, these achievements are supported by significantly higher levels of taxation than those accepted in Britain. Admiring the outcomes without accepting the financial commitments creates unrealistic expectations. Governments cannot easily deliver Scandinavian-style services with

substantially lower levels of public revenue.

The growing divide between individual responsibility and collective welfare also shapes contemporary political debate. Some citizens believe individuals should rely primarily on their own efforts, savings, and personal responsibility to secure their future. Others argue that society functions best when risks are shared collectively through public institutions. These competing philosophies influence debates on healthcare, pensions, education, housing, and social care. While many people continue to support the principles of the welfare state, increasing numbers also emphasise personal independence and self-reliance. Balancing these values remains one of the defining challenges of modern British politics.

Economic inequality has intensified many of these concerns. Despite decades of economic development, opportunities are not distributed equally. Wealth, family background, education, and inherited assets continue to influence life chances to a significant degree. Many citizens no longer believe that talent and hard work alone guarantee success. Rising housing costs, unequal access to quality education, and widening wealth disparities have weakened confidence in social mobility. Younger generations often face greater financial obstacles than their parents experienced, making the traditional promise that each generation will enjoy a better life increasingly uncertain.

This decline in optimism affects public attitudes towards the future. Concerns about economic instabil-

ity, international conflict, climate change, technological disruption, and demographic pressures contribute to a growing sense of insecurity. Constant exposure to negative news through television, newspapers, and social media reinforces these anxieties, making crises appear permanent and progress almost invisible. Although Britain continues to possess many strengths—including world-class universities, respected scientific research, democratic institutions, cultural influence, and a skilled workforce—public discussion often focuses overwhelmingly on problems rather than achievements.

Interestingly, national pessimism does not always match personal experience. Many people report satisfaction with their own lives while simultaneously expressing negative views about the country's overall direction. Families continue to celebrate milestones, communities remain resilient, and individuals often enjoy meaningful relationships and fulfilling careers. Britain has also become more socially tolerant over recent decades, with broader acceptance of diversity, greater protection of individual rights, and stronger recognition of equality. These positive developments rarely dominate political debate, even though they represent genuine social progress.

One reason for this mismatch between perception and reality is widespread misunderstanding about the role of the state. Many citizens underestimate the value of the services they receive through taxation. Public discussion frequently focuses on the taxes people pay while overlooking the extensive benefits

they receive in return. Healthcare through the National Health Service, publicly funded education, pensions, transport subsidies, policing, social care, and numerous other services provide significant value throughout people's lives. Individuals often evaluate taxation solely by examining deductions from their income rather than considering the full range of services financed collectively.

Economic research has repeatedly shown that a large proportion of households receive public benefits whose value exceeds the taxes they contribute directly. This calculation includes not only cash benefits but also access to healthcare, education, and other publicly funded services. Such findings challenge the widespread assumption that most people contribute more than they receive. Better public understanding of this balance could reshape debates about taxation, government spending, and public investment.

Misconceptions about taxation also create fertile ground for political polarisation. Simplified slogans often replace nuanced discussion about how modern economies function. Tax increases are frequently portrayed only as financial burdens rather than investments in public goods. Conversely, spending commitments are sometimes presented without acknowledging the resources required to finance them. Honest political communication requires recognising both sides of this equation. Citizens deserve clear explanations of how public money is collected, allocated, and transformed into services that benefit individuals and communities alike.

Hindustan Zinc Q1FY27 profit jumps 1.45 times, revenue surges 77%; EBITDA more than doubles

Mumbai: The June quarter earnings season (Q1FY27) of Indian companies is gathering pace, and Hindustan Zinc has joined the list of companies reporting their financial performance for the first quarter of FY27.

The mining and metals company delivered a sharp rise in both revenue and profit compared with the same period last year. According to the company's exchange filing, consolidated revenue from operations rose to Rs 13,747 crore in the June quarter from Rs 7,771 crore a year ago. This represents a 76.9% year-on-year increase. Total income also climbed sharply to Rs 14,063 crore, compared with Rs 8,050 crore in the corresponding quarter last year, registering growth of around 74.7%. At the same time, total expenses increased to Rs 6,749 crore from Rs 5,065 crore, a rise of nearly 33.2% Hindustan Zinc reported a profit before tax of Rs 7,314 crore, compared with Rs 2,985 crore in the year-ago period. The company's net profit also surged to Rs 5,469 crore, up from Rs 2,234



crore reported in the June quarter of FY26. The profit was 145% higher year-on-year. Another key highlight was operating performance. Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) nearly doubled to Rs 8,050 crore, compared with Rs 3,859 crore in the same quarter last year, a growth of about 108.6%. The stock has delivered mixed returns across different time periods. Over the last five trading sessions, it has gained around 1%. However, on a six-month basis, the stock is still down nearly 27%. Looking at the longer-term trend, the stock has generated a 19% return over the past one year. So far in 2026, however, it has declined around 13%

ACC's profit for the first quarter has decreased by 61%; earnings have been adversely

Mumbai: ACC reported net profit at Rs 147 crore in Q1FY27, declined 60.90% year-on-year (YoY) from Rs 376 crore reported in Q1FY26.

Revenue of ACC Stood at Rs 5,790 crore, declining 7.76% YoY, from Rs 6,277 crore reported in Q1FY26. The company said it achieved marginal sequential cost savings through focused cost optimisation initiatives despite these headwinds. It added that the peak impact of higher fuel costs is expected to coincide with the seasonally weaker second quarter because of the industry's 60-90 day fuel inventory cycle. ACC said cement demand is expected to grow around 5% in FY27. While monsoon-related weakness, geopolitical uncertainties and input cost volatility could affect near-term demand, the company expects long-term growth to remain supported by infrastructure spending, urbanisation and housing demand. Whole-Time



Director and CEO of ACC, Vinod Bahety says profit was hurt by maintenance shutdowns at key plants and higher service-related charges paid to parent Ambuja Cements. "We have commenced FY'27 with a resilient performance, driven by a higher share of trade volumes and continued premiumization. During the quarter, profitability reflected the impact of planned maintenance of larger Integrated Units, higher

MSA with parent Ambuja Cements, even as we continued to prioritize value-led growth and quality earnings," Bahety. Along with Q1FY27, ACC also announced that the board has approved the acquisition of a 26% stake in Amplus Andhra Power for about Rs 5.31 crore through a cash transaction. The company will acquire 9,58,548 equity shares to procure renewable electricity as a captive consumer under the Elec-

tricity Act's captive consumption framework.

The deal is expected to be completed by October 30, 2026, and does not require any regulatory approvals. ACC said the transaction is not a related-party deal. Amplus Andhra Power, incorporated in 2016, operates in the infrastructure and renewable energy sector and reported revenue of Rs 8.54 crore in FY25. On sequential basis,

ACC posted 38.24% decline in its profit. Revenue also declined 18.73% quarter-on-quarter (QoQ). ACC sold 10 million tonnes of cement during the quarter, lower than 10.7 million tonnes

Q1FY26. However, the company increased its trade sales share by five percentage points to 81%, while premium products accounted for 44% of trade sales, up three percentage points from a year earlier.

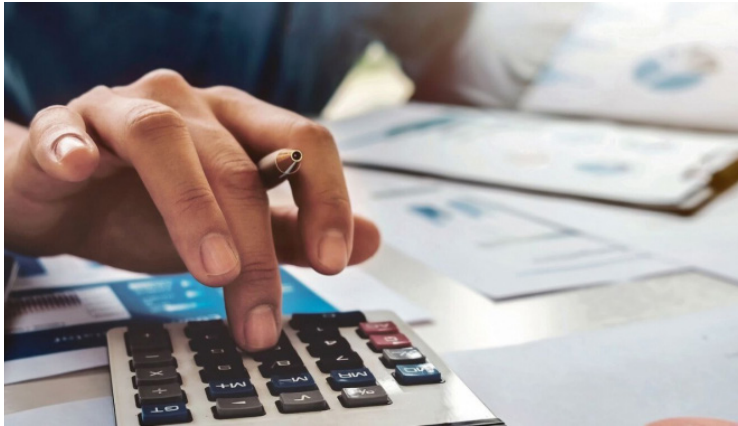
Shriram Finance Q1FY27 profit jumps 60%, asset quality steady; NIM at 9.04%

Mumbai: Shriram Finance reported Q1FY27 profit at Rs 3,444.56 crore, up 59.79% year-on-year (YoY) from Rs 2155.73 crore reported in Q1FY26. Shriram Finance's Q1FY27 interest income stood at Rs 12,909.97 crore, up 15.54% YoY from Rs 11,173.22 reported in Q1FY26.

On sequential basis revenue of Shriram Finance grew by 6.81% and profit increased 14.30%. Its net interest margin (NIM) stood at 9.04%, compared with 8.11% a year earlier and 8.61% in the preceding quarter.

Shriram Finance Q1FY27-Key highlights

The non-banking financial company (NBFC) Total income increased 16.2% YoY to Rs 13,412.11



crore in the first quarter from Rs 11,541.76 crore a year earlier. The company's assets under management (AUM) rose 15.26% YoY to 3.14 trillion rupees, led by growth in commercial vehicle, passenger

vehicle and MSME loans Shriram Finance's net interest income — the difference between interest earned on loans and paid on borrowings — rose 33.67% to Rs 8056 crore, reflecting strong lending

growth and improved margins. The company's gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratio stood at 4.64% at the end of June 2026, compared with 4.53% a year ago. Its net NPA ratio improved to 2.33% from 2.57% in the corresponding period last year.

The provision coverage ratio also improved to 50.99% from 44.31%, while the capital adequacy ratio strengthened to 34.17% from 20.79%. MUFUG investment proceeds utilised The company said it utilised Rs 37,451.22 crore out of the Rs 39,617.98 crore raised through the preferential allotment to Japan's MUFUG Bank during the quarter. The remaining Rs 2,166.76 crore has been invested in liquid mutual funds.

Hindustan Zinc Q1FY27 profit jumps 1.45 times, revenue surges 77%; EBITDA more than doubles

New Delhi: Hindustan Zinc Q1FY27 results: Net profit surged 145% YoY to Rs 5,469 crore, while revenue jumped 77%. Here's a detailed look at the company's June quarter earnings, EBITDA, expenses, and share price reaction. The June quarter earnings season (Q1FY27) of Indian companies is gathering pace, and Hindustan Zinc has joined the list of companies reporting their financial performance for the first quarter of FY27.

The mining and metals company delivered a sharp rise in both revenue and profit compared with the same period last year. According to the company's exchange filing, consolidated revenue from operations rose to Rs 13,747 crore in the June quarter from Rs 7,771 crore a year ago. This represents a 76.9% year-on-year increase. Total income also climbed sharply to Rs 14,063 crore, compared with Rs 8,050 crore in the corresponding quarter last year, registering

growth of around 74.7%. At the same time, total expenses increased to Rs 6,749 crore from Rs 5,065 crore, a rise of nearly 33.2% The company's net profit also surged to Rs 5,469 crore, up from Rs 2,234 crore reported in the June quarter of FY26. The profit was 145% higher year-on-year. Another key highlight was operating performance. Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) nearly doubled to Rs 8,050 crore, compared with Rs 3,859 crore in the same quarter last year, a growth of about 108.6%. The stock has delivered mixed returns across different time periods. Over the last five trading sessions, it has gained around 1%. However, on a six-month basis, the stock is still down nearly 27%. Looking at the longer-term trend, the stock has generated a 19% return over the past one year. So far in 2026, however, it has declined around 13%.

Mphasis Q1 profit rises 11%; FY27 guidance unchanged

New Delhi: The IT services company has maintained its FY27 guidance, expecting high single-digit to low double-digit revenue growth despite an uncertain macroeconomic environment. It also retained its operating margin guidance of 14.75%-15.75% and expects to convert nearly 80% of its net income into operating cash flow. Mphasis reported its Q1FY27 net profit at Rs 489.51 crore, up 10.82% year-on-year (YoY) from Rs 441.71 crore reported in Q1FY26.

The company's pipeline also reached a record level, growing 8% sequentially and 28% year-on-year, supported by broad-based demand across industries and service lines. Mphasis reported an operating margin of 14.8% in the June quarter, remaining within its guided range despite acquisition-related costs.

Mphasis reported strong performance across major verticals Its trailing 12-month TCV crossed



\$1.8 billion, while 63% of the new deal wins were AI-led, highlighting the growing contribution of artificial intelligence to its business.

Among industry verticals, the Technology, Media and Telecom (TMT) business delivered the strongest performance, growing 16.4% sequentially and 13.6% year-on-year.

The Banking and Financial Services (BFS) segment grew 0.8% se-

quentially and 9.4% annually, while the insurance business rose 17.8% year-on-year. The "Others" category, which includes retail, increased 5.2% sequentially, supported by new deal wins. Revenue from operations stood at Rs 4,384.05 crore in Q1FY27, up 17.46% YoY from Rs 3,732.49 crore reported in Q1FY26. On a sequential basis, Mphasis' net profit declined 3.95%, while revenue increased 3.33%.

Nykaa plans to increase consumption beyond metros via digital, bespoke push

New Delhi: The beauty market may have been built in the metros, but Nykaa believes its next phase of growth will come from smaller towns, where rising incomes, greater digital adoption and changing aspirations are creating a new generation of beauty consumers.

Unlike most e-commerce companies chasing Bharat through logistics and faster deliveries, the omnichannel retailer is betting that deeper store networks, AI-powered personalisation and wider product availability will expand beauty consumption itself. The strategy underpins Nykaa's ambition of building a \$5-billion beauty and lifestyle business by FY30.

Nykaa targets deeper reach in smaller cities

The company is no longer focused on entering new markets as much as deepening its presence in ones it already serves. Having established a footprint across the country's top 99 cities, Nykaa now plans to increase store density in Tier-2 and Tier-3 locations, expanding to more than 600 stores by FY30 from 313 beauty stores currently. "We're already covering the top 99 cities. Now, it's more about increasing the density of our store network in tier two, tier three towns



to get to maybe anywhere from two to five stores per city," Vishal Gupta, chief executive, eB2B at FSN E-Commerce, said during a recent analyst call. Morgan Stanley estimates that Tier-2 and Tier-3 markets already contribute around 60% of Nykaa's beauty revenues, underscoring the growing importance of these markets. The company has also introduced differentiated retail formats, with Nykaa On-Trend stores targeting mass and masstige consumers in smaller cities while premium formats such as Nykaa

Luxe continue to cater to larger urban centres.

Nykaa is also using technology to overcome one of beauty retail's biggest barriers outside metros: the absence of expert advice. AI-powered tools such as Skin Scan, Virtual Skin Analyser and personalised recommendation engines are designed to replicate in-store consultations and improve product discovery online. The company believes these capabilities, along with omnichannel investments, will help expand its beauty consumer base to

100 million by FY30 from around 45 million today. Analysts at Kotak Institutional Equities say Nykaa's focus on improving affordability, awareness and accessibility is aimed at attracting first-time beauty users, Gen Z, Gen Alpha and aspirational consumers in Tier-2 and Tier-3 markets, where demand for premium products is steadily increasing. The company's strategy extends beyond consumers

Through Superstore by Nykaa, its B2B distribution platform that supplies neighbourhood beauty retailers across underserved markets. The business has grown nearly four-fold over the past three years to a GMV of Rs 1,187 crore, supported by almost 493,000 registered retailers and over 220 brands. Citi expects the platform to expand its reach from about 12,500 PIN codes to around 19,000 and from roughly 1,250 cities to about 3,500 over the medium Nykaa's physical stores,

AI-led digital experiences and B2B distribution network reflect a strategy that goes beyond improving access. The company is betting that the next phase of growth in Bharat will come from creating new beauty consumers, not merely serving existing ones.

Bharat Taxi goes live in Mumbai, Pune: What are the fares and how does the app work

New Delhi: If you live in Mumbai or Pune and regularly book rides through Ola or Uber, you may have experienced sharp fare hikes during festivals, heavy rain, or peak hours. Drivers, too, often complain about high commission charges deducted by ride-hailing platforms. To address these issues, the Maharashtra government has launched Bharat Taxi, a new cooperative-based ride-hailing service. The app was officially launched by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at the Navi Mumbai International Airport. Through a single mobile app, passengers can book car, auto-rickshaw and bike taxi services.

Speaking at the launch, Fadnavis said the new platform aims to provide commuters with safe and reasonably priced travel while ensuring drivers receive a larger share of their earnings.



The Bharat Taxi will follow the fare structure of Mumbai's black-and-yellow taxis. The fare has been fixed at ₹31 for the first 1.5 km and ₹21 per kilometre after that, making it a more affordable option for commuters. How does the Bharat Taxi app work? Bharat Taxi works like other

app-based cab services. Passengers can download the Bharat Taxi app, register with their mobile number, enter their pickup and drop locations, and choose between a car, auto-rickshaw or bike taxi. The app shows the estimated fare before booking, allowing users to confirm the ride. Once a driver accepts the request, passengers can track the vehicle and complete the trip through the app. The first phase of the Bharat Taxi service has started with 600 taxis. The government plans to increase the fleet to more than 1,000 taxis in the coming months before expanding the service to other parts of Maharashtra. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the initiative is expected to create new employment opportunities, especially for local youth and project-affected families in the Navi Mumbai International Airport area.

NHAI imposed total Rs 2,732 Cr penalties on delayed projects

New Delhi: The government has imposed cumulative penalties of around ₹2,732 crore on contractors and concessionaires for delays in National Highway projects over the last three financial years. Out of this, nearly ₹780 crore has already been recovered. Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari shared the information in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha on July 23.

He said the penalties were imposed on contractors or concessionaires responsible for delays in project execution, as per the terms of their contracts. The minister's reply also provided details on the number of ongoing highway projects across the country, the status of NH-39 in Madhya Pradesh, and the steps being taken by the government to improve project monitoring and ensure timely completion. ₹780 crore recovered from delayed

projects

The minister said three concessionaires were initially engaged for different sections of NH-39 in Madhya Pradesh. However, all three concession agreements were terminated due to persistent failure to meet contractual milestones and poor performance.

The projects were later re-awarded on the EPC model. While the Bameetha-Satna and Satna-Bela sections have been completed, the Sidhi-Singrauli section had to be re-awarded again in FY 2026-27 after another contractor failed to perform. The revised completion deadline for this section is May 8, 2028.

According to Gadkari, penalties worth around ₹2,732 crore have been imposed on contractors and concessionaires over the last three financial years for delays in National Highway projects.

Donald Trump hits Australian exports to US with new higher trade tariff over claims of ‘forced labour’

Australia: Donald Trump has hit Australian exports with new trade tariffs, claiming the country is not doing enough to combat forced labour, but the Albanese government has demanded he remove them immediately.

The United States announced on Friday morning (AEST) that many Australian exports now attract a new 12.5% tariff as part of a broader regime affecting dozens of countries. However the Albanese government says Australia’s three largest export categories – including beef and gold – will avoid the tariff hit.

In a statement, the US trade department said Australia was on a list of 54 economies it deemed as having “failed to impose and effectively enforce a prohibition on the importation of goods produced with forced labor”. Other countries facing a 12.5% tariff include Brazil, China, Egypt, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Russia and Singapore. Economies on a separate list – including the UK, India, Indonesia, Canada and Mexico – will be subject to a lower 10% tariff after the US claimed they had

only failed to “enforce” forced labour prohibitions.

Friday’s news followed through on an earlier threat from the Trump administration to level such tariffs, which came after the US supreme court earlier this year struck down Trump’s 10% global tariffs.

Trump had responded to that court ruling by immediately announcing temporary trade sanctions, which were due to expire today.

Australian government sources had previously told Guardian Australia they believed the forced labour-related tariffs had been levelled as a replacement for the tariffs struck down by the courts.

US congresswoman Linda Sánchez, a California Democrat, has denounced the pretext for the new tariffs as a sham.

“President Trump isn’t serious about combating forced labor. He’s trying to make an end-run around the Supreme Court and Congress to reimpose his illegal tariffs,” Sánchez wrote on social media.

The American trade action



document claims “the United States is the only country in the world to adopt, and effectively enforce, a ban on imports made with forced labor”.

“President Trump is asking all trading partners to join the United States in eliminating forced labor from global supply chains.”

In total the tariffs apply “to the top 60 U.S. trade partners covering 99.4% of U.S. imports”, according to a trade department statement.

The Australian trade minister, Don Farrell, immediately called for the US to change

the US, for our leadership.”

In a subsequent press conference, Farrell said Australian exports to the US had increased since Trump’s so-called “liberation day” tariffs, and that while he would strongly protest for the removal of the trade barriers, many of Australia’s biggest exports to Australia would not be affected.

“It’s beef, it’s gold and it’s copper... I don’t see any reason to think that’s not going to continue,” he said. The deputy prime minister, Richard Marles, told ABC radio the US actions “make no sense”.

“Forced labour is definitely something which needs to be combated around the world, so we support that objective,” he said. “But we have laws, which are amongst the strongest in the world, and we’ve been making that point to the Trump administration.” The US trade action document that sets out the new tariffs includes exemptions for a range of goods including beef; agricultural products such as vegetables and fruits; aircraft parts; certain coal, oil, mineral

and chemical products; some metal and steel products; timber products; and machinery.

The shadow trade minister, Matt Canavan, claimed the Albanese government had “failed” exporters by not securing lower tariffs, like the UK or Canada.

“Australia is subject to a 12.5% tariff rate, the same rate as Russia, China and Venezuela,” the Nationals’ leader said.

Canavan said the government had “failed to take meaningful action against forced labour in international supply chains, despite years of warnings”.

“Labor’s failure to act has weakened our trade position, which Australian farmers, exporters and manufacturers will now pay the price for.”

The document says it will broadly apply to goods entering from 12.01am US eastern time on 24 July (2pm Aest).

The action, as it pertains to Australia specifically, states that after an investigation, “the Trade Representative has determined to impose 12.5 percent tariffs on products of Australia” except for a limited number of exemptions.

Zelenskyy fires Ukraine’s army chief and offers Fedorov ‘prominent position’

Ukraine: Volodymyr Zelenskyy has fired Ukraine’s commander-in-chief Oleksandr Syrskyi and offered a “prominent position” to the defence minister he sacked last week in a move that sparked nationwide protests.

In a late-night TV address, Zelenskyy said he was appointing Mykhailo Drapaty, a popular and innovative general, as the new head of Ukraine’s armed forces. Drapaty would oversee a reorganisation of the army’s command structure, Ukraine’s president said.

Zelenskyy said he was bringing Mykhailo Fedorov back into government after his removal as defence minister prompted thousands of people to demonstrate in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, in one of the biggest political crises since Russia’s 2022 invasion.

Ukraine’s president paid tribute to Syrskyi and credited him with leading the defence of Kyiv and launching a counter-invasion of Russia’s Kursk province in summer 2024, in which foreign tanks rolled on to Russian territory for the first time since the second world war. “We have come a long way. The defence of Ukraine continues. And every soldier deserves to be



treated with respect,” Zelenskyy said, adding that he was grateful to Syrskyi and to “every one of our soldiers” fighting on the frontline.

Zelenskyy will be hoping that his radical reshuffle of the army’s leadership will assuage protesters who have taken to the streets demanding Syrskyi’s removal. They had given a deadline of Friday for Fedorov to be reinstated and promised “indefinite protests” if their request was ignored. Fedorov welcomed Drapaty’s appointment. “This brings a breath of fresh air and new hope to the struggle of free people for freedom and justice. It is a voice for change that could not be ignored,” he said. He added: “The

high expectations of the Ukrainian people must be met with a clear vision for ending the war for independence, a strong team and decisive actions aimed at saving the lives of our soldiers, automating the frontline, delivering asymmetric strikes and crippling the Russian economy.” Drapaty, the new commander-in-chief, is well-regarded within Ukraine’s army and is liked by the public. He is viewed as an ally of Fedorov, whose attempts to reform the military and force it to adopt modern technology and data led to a bitter clash with the old-school Syrskyi. A major general, Drapaty is commander of Ukraine’s joint forces group. He has been fighting Russia since

its covert attempt in 2014 to take over the eastern Donbas region. He became famous nationally when he drove an infantry fighting vehicle over a barricade set up by pro-Russian militants in the city of Mariupol. The Ukrainian media outlet Babel described Drapaty as one of Ukraine’s most capable battlefield commanders. It said his new job would be fundamentally about reforming a large institution rather than commanding troops in combat.

Zelenskyy said he and Drapaty agreed that Ukraine’s long-range drone attacks on targets in Russia such as oil refineries would continue. “Our programme of precision strikes will be implemented with absolute

precision,” he said, promising a smooth and coordinated handover following Syrskyi’s departure.

He also said the new commander-in-chief would be tasked with updating the country’s defence strategy and reforming its structure. Another pressing issue is mobilisation, at a time when after nearly five years of full-scale war few Ukrainians are ready to volunteer.

It is unclear what Fedorov’s new role will be, amid reports that he was insisting on being given his old job back as defence minister. This has now been filled by Yevhen Khmara, a former special operations commander. Zelenskyy said he met Fedorov on Tuesday. “I offered Mykhailo a prominent position within the government that would enable him to unify the technological sector of our state and ensure its development,” he said, without giving further details.

Zelenskyy added: “Our shared wish is one – victory over the enemy and conditions at the front and in pressure on Russia that would force Russia toward peace.” He said “a significant path has been travelled, the defence of Ukraine continues, and every warrior deserves dignified treatment”.

Iran Warns Trump Over Use of Frozen Assets, Says Move Could Set Dangerous Global Precedent



Tehran: Iran has strongly reacted to US President Donald Trump’s statement regarding the use of frozen Iranian assets to compensate for damages caused to ships in the Strait of Hormuz, warning that such a move could set a dangerous precedent for the international order.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi cautioned that seizing a country’s assets in this manner would have serious consequences and undermine global financial stability.

According to Iran’s Fars News Agency and Türkiye’s state-run Anadolu Agency, Araghchi said in a post on social media platform X that confiscating another country’s assets to cover potential and unrelated claims in the future would be a highly provocative action.

He warned that if governments begin treating the seizure of foreign assets as a normal practice, no country’s property around the world would remain secure.

“Those who welcome or benefit from such confiscated assets should remember that once this practice begins, no one’s property will remain safe. The chaos resulting from this will neither serve global stability nor contribute to peace,” Araghchi said.

Trump had earlier announced that any damage caused to ships, cargo, or related assets in and around the Strait of Hormuz would be paid for using frozen Iranian funds held and controlled by the United States. However, he did not specify which particular funds would be used for the purpose.

Billions of dollars in Iranian assets have remained frozen for years under US sanctions. Trump’s remarks have further intensified tensions between Washington and Tehran, which have already been strained by ongoing military actions and retaliatory strikes in the region.

The latest development has raised fresh concerns over security and stability in the Middle East, where tensions between the United States and Iran continue to escalate.

Nicaragua’s congress announces ‘work plan’ to suspend elections

America: Nicaragua’s congress, controlled by the country’s long-serving president, Daniel Ortega, has announced a “work plan” to implement the authoritarian leader’s order that the country should no longer hold elections.

Daniel Ortega in a red jacket and navy cap waves his hand at an evening event with colorful lights behind him.

Nicaragua’s president says country will not hold any more elections. Although the Ortega-Murillo regime has already overseen a profound erosion of democracy – marked by the violent suppression of protests, the imprisonment of thousands of people and the forced exile of nearly 1 million Nicaraguans – Sunday’s announcement marked a significant rhetorical escalation that is now being put into practice by congress.

On Wednesday, the UN high commissioner for human



rights, Volker Türk, called on the Nicaraguan authorities to “reopen civic space, and restore the rule of law. People of all political viewpoints must be allowed to vote and run for office, in line with the state’s international human rights obligations.”

Aerial view of a canal with deep concrete banks either side of a conduit dug into semi-arid land.

The US secretary of state, Marco Rubio, who refers to the country’s government as the “Murillo-Ortega dictatorship”, said in a statement on Tuesday that “the Nicaraguan people have the right to choose their own leaders

through democratic elections” and the US “calls on the international community to join forces” against the regime.

Ortega’s uninterrupted period of almost 20 years in office is not his first spell in power. He led the junta that took office after the Sandinista revolution and, in 1984, was elected president, remaining in office until 1990.

His current term, to which he was elected after he outlawed opposition parties and jailed all opposition presidential hopefuls before the 2021 election, had been due to end next November. However, last year’s constitutional changes extended the presidential term from five to six years.

Despite the National Assembly’s announcement, it remains unclear whether the 2027 elections will be scrapped altogether or whether Ortega and Murillo will run unopposed.

Canada cancels joint bridge-opening celebration with US amid trade tensions

Canada: A planned joint US-Canada ceremony on Friday celebrating the opening of the Gordie Howe International Bridge connecting Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, is no longer expected to take place after Donald Trump announced a 50% tariff on most Canadian goods.

In announcing the tariffs, the president accused Canada of unfairly discriminating against US automobiles, alcohol and dairy products, escalating tensions with one of the United States’ closest allies.

“In light of trade action threatened by the United States earlier this week, it would be inappropriate to proceed with a celebratory event between the two coun-

tries,” said Jenna Ghassabeh, a spokesperson for Canada’s infrastructure minister, Gregor Robertson, in an emailed statement.

The move came after US and Canadian officials reached an agreement earlier this month to open the Gordie Howe International Bridge after delays tied to disagreements between the two countries.

Canada now plans to hold its own ceremony on Friday. It is now unclear whether the United States will hold a separate ceremony.

Two US officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations said they still expected the bridge to open to traffic on 27 July but were less cer-

tain than they were before.

“We remain committed to opening the bridge on July 27th, and to celebrating this milestone among Canadians on July 24th,” said Ghassabeh.

The 1.5-mile-long (2.4km-long) bridge spans the Detroit River and connects Detroit with Windsor. A ribbon-cutting ceremony had initially been scheduled for 12 June but was abruptly postponed after officials said the United States and Canada were still working to resolve “outstanding issues”.

Canada financed construction of the bridge under an agreement allowing it to recover the cost through toll revenue. The Trump administration had sought changes to

that arrangement. The Mark Carney government had been tight-lipped on the details of the agreement. But late on Tuesday, it shared the terms of the deal after criticism was levelled by members of parliament from opposition parties, who accused the government of being obfuscatory.

The agreement states that Canada will share 50% of net bridge and crossing-related revenues with an economic development fund that is controlled by the US government.

Those terms seem to contradict statements the prime minister had previously made about the deal. On 16 July, the prime minister said at an unrelated press conference that toll revenues would not

be split until Canada was repaid.

The project, negotiated under former Michigan governor Rick Snyder, has been under construction since 2018 and cost nearly \$4.4bn.

The bridge is named after the Canadian hockey great Gordie Howe, who spent 25 seasons with the Detroit Red Wings. It is expected to become another major economic artery between Canada and the United States.

In February, Trump demanded in a social media post that Canada give the US government at least half ownership of the bridge and agree to other unspecified demands, part of his broader clashes with Canada over trade.

Don't Rub Ice on Your Face

Skin icing is an easy beauty technique that can potentially diminish puffiness, soothe the skin, and provide your face with a revitalized look. However, improper use of ice can lead to adverse effects rather than benefits. Skin icing has become a popular beauty ritual, thanks to its ability to reduce puffiness and give the skin a fresh, healthy-looking glow. While rubbing an ice cube on your face may seem simple, doing it the right way can help you get the most benefits while avoiding irritation. Wash your face with a gentle cleanser before icing. This removes dirt, oil and make-up, allowing the cold therapy to work directly on your skin.

Wrap the ice cube in a clean, soft cotton cloth or use an ice roller. Applying ice directly for too long can irritate the skin or even cause a mild ice burn, especially if you have sen-

sitive skin. Gently glide the ice over your face using circular or upward motions. Avoid holding it in one spot for more than a few seconds, as prolonged exposure to cold can damage the skin.

Spend a little extra time around the under-eye area, cheeks and jawline if you're trying to reduce morning puffiness.

Be gentle around the delicate skin under the eyes. You don't need a long session to see results.

One to two minutes is usually enough to cool the skin and refresh your face. Once you've finished icing, gently pat your face dry and apply your serum or moisturiser. Some people find that skincare products absorb better after a quick ice facial. For most people, icing the face two or three times a week is enough. Daily icing may work for some, but



if you notice redness, irritation or discomfort, reduce the frequency or stop using it. Avoid icing if you have open wounds, severe rosacea, eczema flare-ups or extremely sensitive skin. If you have a skin condition, it's best to consult a dermatologist before trying skin icing.

How to pick jewelry that goes well with the shape of your face



The appropriate piece of jewellery can accomplish more than merely completing an outfit; it can elegantly highlight your features and improve your natural proportions. Although personal style is paramount, selecting jewellery that suits your face shape can contribute to a harmonious and refined appearance. The fundamental principle is straightforward: your jewellery should complement your facial structure rather than replicate it. Regardless of whether your face is round, square, oval, heart-shaped, or rectangu-

lar, a few careful styling decisions can significantly impact your overall look. Dishi Somani, the founder of Dishis Designer jewellery, has provided a guide for selecting jewellery that accentuates your natural features and face shape.

Round face

According to Dishi Somani, if your face has soft curves with the cheekbones being the widest point, opt for jewellery that creates the illusion of length. Long drop earrings, geometric designs, and slim teardrops help elongate the face, while

V-shaped pendants or layered necklaces draw the eye downward. Avoid oversized hoops, round studs, and tight chokers, as they can make the face appear wider. Square face

A strong jawline and angular features pair beautifully with jewellery that introduces softness. Dishi Somani advises considering hoops, oval earrings, curved teardrops, and rounded pendants to help balance sharp lines, while collar-length necklaces and chokers with gentle curves create a harmonious look. It's best to avoid square or highly geometric designs that can accentuate angularity. Oval face

With naturally balanced proportions, oval faces are the most versatile. Almost every earring and necklace style works well, from studs and hoops to chandeliers and layered necklaces. However, extremely long, narrow earrings may make the face appear longer, so adding a little width with hoops or cluster earrings helps maintain balance. Heart-shaped face

Dishi Somani highlighted that heart-shaped faces feature a broader forehead that tapers to a narrower chin.

Earrings that are wider at the bottom, such as teardrops, chandeliers, or chandbalis, help balance facial proportions. Short necklaces, princess-length chains, and delicate chokers also soften the chin area. Avoid pointed earrings that mimic the shape of the chin.

Long or rectangular face

For faces that are noticeably longer than they are wide, the goal is to add width rather than length. Medium hoops, button studs, clustered earrings, and shorter necklaces or chokers create visual balance. Long, linear earrings and deep V-shaped pendants can further elongate the face and are best avoided. Style it your way

"Face shape is a useful styling guide, but it shouldn't restrict your choices. The most flattering jewellery is the one that creates balance while reflecting your personal style and confidence," said Dishi Somani. By selecting pieces that complement your natural features and suit your outfit, hairstyle, and occasion, you can effortlessly elevate every look and let your jewellery enhance, not overpower, your unique beauty.

An expert discusses how to treat acne without drying out your skin too much

Acne is a prevalent skin issue that impacts individuals across all age groups. While it may be appealing to resort to potent cleansers, alcohol-laden toners, or to apply several acne treatments simultaneously, such practices can frequently result in dry, flaky, and irritated skin.

Ironically, excessively drying the skin can exacerbate acne by compromising the skin barrier and stimulating increased oil production. The essential approach to achieving clearer skin lies in discovering the appropriate balance, effectively addressing breakouts while ensuring adequate hydration. Here's how you can manage acne without stripping your skin of its natural moisture. Consultant Dermatologist, Dr Shweta Manchanda, Aakash Healthcare, tells HT Shop Now, "Acne treatment often comes with an unintended problem- excessive dryness, peeling, redness and irritation. Many people use a combination of several acne-fighting products at the same time, scrub their skin vigorously or wash their face multiple times trying to get rid of pimples fast". She warns that this can damage the skin barrier, leading to increased irritation and breakouts. She further says that good acne care is not about drying the skin out as much as possible. "The aim is to manage excess oil and clogged pores while preserving the skin's natural protective barrier", she mentions. "Acne-prone skin doesn't mean you have to remove all natural moisture from the skin. Using too many harsh cleansers, scrubs, or multiple active ingredients can cause dryness and irritation, and can make acne harder to control", she said. She says that acne sufferers should start with a basic skin care routine. The face should be washed gently, usually twice a day and after heavy sweating, with a mild non-abrasive cleanser. Harsh scrubbing with brushes, exfoliating tools or rough towels can irritate the skin and potentially make the acne worse. "Patients often think that more product means faster acne clearance. Actually, using too much or too many active ingredients can cause redness, burning and peeling. "The more you follow the recommended frequency, the more you give the treatment time to work," says Dr Manchanda. "Patients should not automatically give up on acne treatment if a product causes significant dryness. Reducing the frequency of application may help your skin acclimate, depending on the product and your individual skin sensitivity. Some acne medications, for example, may need to be used less often at the beginning, but any change in prescription medication should be discussed with a dermatologist", she further clarifies. Dr Manchanda says you don't need a compromised skin barrier for

clearer skin. The key to managing acne without over-drying the skin is balance: cleanse gently, don't scrub unnecessarily, moisturise regularly with an acne-friendly product, introduce active ingredients carefully and stay consistent with treatment. Start with a gentle cleanser

A good skincare routine begins with cleansing. Choose a mild, sulfate-free cleanser that removes dirt, oil, and impurities without making your skin feel tight. Harsh face washes can damage the skin's protective barrier, leading to redness and increased sensitivity. Wash your face twice a day, once in the morning and once before bedtime. Avoid scrubbing your skin aggressively, as friction can irritate active acne and slow down the healing process. Choose acne-fighting ingredients wisely

Not all acne treatments are equally drying. Instead of using multiple products with strong active ingredients, focus on one or two effective treatments.

Some of the best acne-fighting ingredients include:

Salicylic Acid: Penetrates deep into pores to remove excess oil and dead skin cells. It is especially beneficial for oily and acne-prone skin. Benzoyl Peroxide: Helps kill acne-causing bacteria but should be used in lower concentrations if your skin is sensitive. Niacinamide: Reduces redness, regulates oil production, and strengthens the skin barrier without causing excessive dryness. Azelaic Acid: Helps treat acne, reduces post-acne marks, and is generally well tolerated by sensitive skin. Introduce active ingredients gradually. Start by using them two or three times a week before increasing the frequency if your skin tolerates them well. Never skip moisturiser

Many people with acne believe moisturisers make breakouts worse, but this is a common misconception. Moisturising helps restore the skin barrier and prevents dehydration caused by acne treatments. Look for lightweight, oil-free, non-comedogenic moisturisers containing ingredients such as Hyaluronic Acid, Ceramides, Glycerin, Panthenol, and Squalane. These ingredients provide hydration without clogging pores and help reduce irritation from acne medications.

Exfoliation removes dead skin cells, but doing it too often can damage your skin barrier. Avoid using physical scrubs with rough particles, as they can inflame acne and cause micro-tears. Instead, use a gentle chemical exfoliant containing salicylic acid or lactic acid once or twice a week. This helps keep pores clear while maintaining healthy skin. Protect your skin with sunscreen

Sun exposure can worsen acne marks and make inflamed skin more sensitive.



Some acne treatments also increase your skin's sensitivity to UV rays. Choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher that is lightweight, non-greasy, and non-comedogenic. Gel-based or fluid sunscreens work particularly well for oily and acne-prone skin. Applying sunscreen every morning helps prevent pigmentation and supports overall skin health.

Resist the urge to pick pimples

Picking or squeezing acne can push bacteria deeper into the skin, increasing inflammation and the risk of scarring. Instead, allow pimples to heal naturally or use hydrocolloid acne patches to protect blemishes while reducing the temptation to touch them. Hands also carry bacteria, so avoid touching your face unnecessarily throughout the day.

Keep your routine simple

More products do not necessarily mean better results. Layering multiple acne treatments can overwhelm your skin and lead to irritation. A simple routine often works best. Like cleaning your face with a gentle cleanser in the morning, applying a lightweight moisturiser, and backing it up with sunscreen. At night, you need to cleanse your face again with a gentle cleanser and apply a lightweight or gel-based night cream or serum, preferably rich in salicylic acid. Stay hydrated and eat a balanced diet

Healthy skin starts from within. Drinking enough water helps maintain hydration, while a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins supports skin repair. Some people notice acne flare-ups after consuming excessive sugary foods or high-glycemic diets. While diet affects everyone differently, paying attention to personal triggers can be helpful. Getting enough sleep and managing stress are equally important, as stress hormones can contribute to acne breakouts. Most acne products require at least six to eight weeks of consistent use before noticeable improvements appear. Switching products too quickly or using multiple treatments simultaneously may cause unnecessary irritation.

Monsoon self-care has evolved, and domestic beauty brands are setting the standard



The Indian monsoon has consistently required a unique approach to beauty routines. However, this season, the focus is transitioning from merely coping with humidity to adopting skincare and body care tailored specifically for it. Local brands are not only reacting to the rains but are also creating products centered around them, demonstrating that self-care can be both environmentally aware and luxurious.

For years, monsoon beauty advice followed a familiar script: wash your face more often, avoid heavy creams, and hope your hair cooperates. But India's beauty landscape has evolved. Today's consumers are looking beyond seasonal hacks and gravitating towards routines that understand what living through an Indian monsoon actually feels like.

It's a subtle but significant shift, one that's putting homegrown beauty brands at the centre of the conversation.

Unlike global formulations created for broader markets, Indian brands are designing products around local realities: relentless humidity, sweat-induced breakouts, clogged pores, fungal concerns, scalp congestion and skincare that has to perform in temperatures that can hover above 30°C even during heavy rain. The result? Monsoon self-care is becoming less about reacting to problems and more about building routines that anticipate them.

From Seasonal Fixes To Climate-Conscious Beauty

The biggest advantage Indian beauty brands have isn't simply proximity,

it's perspective. Rather than adapting existing formulations for India, many are developing products from the ground up, keeping Indian weather patterns, skin types and everyday lifestyles at the core of product development. Consumers, too, are becoming more discerning. They're looking for products that understand their environment instead of asking their skin to adapt to formulas created for completely different climates. In a country where humidity levels, pollution and temperatures vary dramatically across regions, beauty is no longer a one-size-fits-all conversation. Performance Meets Pleasure: Why Body Care Is Getting An Upgrade

For Dhruv Mukhija, Co-Founder, The Bare Bar, monsoon self-care shouldn't feel like seasonal damage control. "The monsoon changes what people need from their self-care routines. Increased humidity and sweat make efficacy more important, but that does not mean the experience has to become purely functional. People still want products that smell beautiful, feel good on the skin and bring a sense of indulgence to the everyday." It's an approach that's reshaping body care. Performance matters, but so does pleasure. Instead of forcing consumers to choose between effective formulas and luxurious experiences, brands are increasingly combining both, creating products that address body odour, excess sweat and skin comfort while still feeling sensorial and indulgent. As Mukhija explains, that's where Indian brands naturally stand apart. "We are closer to the climate, lifestyles and preferences we are creating for, which

allows us to solve local concerns without losing the joy of self-care."

For brands like The Bare Bar, monsoon beauty isn't about fixing seasonal problems, it's about creating rituals that feel elevated every single day. Less Product, Better Routine: The Rise Of Intentional Skincare

Interestingly, monsoon skincare isn't becoming more complicated, it's becoming more intentional. Rather than encouraging consumers to buy endless products, experts say the season calls for smarter edits. According to Megha Asher, Co-founder & COO, Juicy Chemistry, monsoon beauty is about adapting your routine, not expanding it. Higher humidity, pollution and frequent exposure to rain can leave skin congested while weakening its natural barrier. The answer isn't layering multiple products but choosing lightweight formulations that work with the season instead of against it. That means gentle enzyme cleansers that remove excess oil without stripping the skin, refreshing rose water that rebalances the complexion throughout the day, lightweight water-based serums that target pigmentation without feeling sticky, and sunscreen that remains essential despite cloudy skies because UVA rays continue to penetrate through cloud cover. Haircare deserves equal attention, too. Increased humidity can contribute to scalp buildup and weakened roots, making lightweight, water-based scalp treatments more suitable than heavier formulations during the rainy season. Asher believes today's consumers are also driving a larger shift. People are increasingly seeking ingredient-led,

certified organic and climate-relevant solutions that feel tailored to Indian lifestyles. The emphasis is moving away from lengthy routines and towards products that are simple, effective and rooted in nature. One Country, Hundreds Of Monsoons

Perhaps the biggest misconception about monsoon skincare is that India experiences one kind of rainy season. It doesn't. Mumbai's relentless humidity bears little resemblance to Bengaluru's cooler rains or Delhi's muggy post-showers. These differences have a direct impact on how skin behaves—and increasingly, on how products are formulated.

As Divya Malpani Maheshwari, CEO & Founder, Skinvest, points out, India isn't defined by one monsoon but by hundreds of microclimates. This is why products designed for generic global weather often struggle to address local skin concerns. Instead, Skinvest focuses on formulations tested specifically for Indian humidity, from sweat-resistant sunscreens that don't pill under humid conditions to barrier-repair formulas that account for the way monsoon weather disrupts skin's moisture balance. The focus also extends to concerns global brands rarely prioritise, including fungal-prone skin, sweat-triggered breakouts and lightweight textures that remain comfortable even in extreme humidity.

It's a philosophy that reflects a broader movement across Indian beauty. Rather than adapting Western skincare for Indian consumers, homegrown brands are increasingly creating products with Indian weather as the starting point. Why Homegrown

Brands Understand Indian Skin Better

If there's one thread connecting today's homegrown beauty brands, it's that they're solving problems from lived experience rather than laboratory assumptions. They understand that Indian consumers don't just battle humidity, they navigate crowded commutes, pollution, unpredictable rainfall, fluctuating temperatures and diverse regional climates. That insight allows them to formulate products that address local concerns while delivering the sensorial experience modern consumers increasingly expect.

Whether it's body care that tackles sweat without compromising on fragrance, skincare that protects the skin barrier without feeling heavy, or sunscreens tested for real Indian humidity, homegrown brands are proving that beauty performs best when it's built around the people who use it.

The biggest takeaway from this year's beauty conversation is that monsoon self-care is no longer about fixing seasonal problems after they appear. Instead, it's about building routines that respect the environment you live in. Fresh textures replace heavy creams. Lightweight hydration replaces excessive layering. Functional ingredients coexist with luxurious fragrances and sensorial experiences. And skincare is no longer separated from climate. In many ways, the monsoon has become the ultimate test for beauty products in India. The brands that understand it best aren't necessarily the biggest, they're often the ones built closest to it. And that's exactly why homegrown beauty is having its moment.

ENTERTAINMENT

‘Chennai Love Story’ review: bold performances shine through a flawed narrative



Chennai : After the phenomenal success of Baby, which struck a chord with audiences through its emotionally layered female protagonist, Chennai Love Story attempts to tread a similar path. This time, the makers present a heroine battling heartbreak, depression, and alcoholism, hoping to offer a fresh take on modern relationships. While the premise is unconventional and Sri Gouri Priya delivers a sincere performance, the film struggles to translate its bold idea into a compelling emotional experience.

The story revolves around a young woman (Sri Gouri Priya) whose world comes crashing down when her fiancé abandons her on their wedding day. Devastated, she relocates to Chennai, moves in with a friend, and gradually slips into alcoholism, spending sleepless nights trying to escape her emotional scars. Life takes a hopeful turn when she meets an aspiring filmmaker (Kiran Abbavaram), who enters her life with warmth and compassion. Just as she begins to heal, another tragedy strikes, pushing her back into the

depths of despair. Whether she finds the strength to embrace love again forms the crux of the story. The film deserves credit for placing a flawed female protagonist at its centre. However, director Ravi Namburi equates boldness with self-destructive habits like drinking, whereas true strength lies in resilience, self-belief, and confronting life's challenges. The intention is novel, but the emotional execution isn't fully convincing. Kiran Abbavaram delivers a restrained and likeable performance as

the soft-spoken lover, lending dignity to his character. However, it is Sri Gouri Priya who shoulders the film with a subtle, emotionally charged portrayal. She convincingly depicts pain, vulnerability, and loneliness, making her character the film's biggest strength.

Mani Sharma's music and background score effectively elevate several emotional moments and add depth where the screenplay falls short. Director and writer Sai Rajesh, who earned acclaim for Baby, once again explores the complexities of love and emotional conflict. While the story contains an interesting twist, it lacks the emotional soul and narrative impact that made Baby memorable. A fresh idea goes awry. Director Ravi Namburi fills the screenplay with romance, heartbreak, possessiveness, and depression, but the emotional beats often feel repetitive and fail to generate the desired impact. Definitely, Telugu makers want to break barriers and showcase stronger women and deserve a pat,

Saanvie Tallwar details past on-set altercation with co-star Karan Kundrra

Mumbai : Actress Saanvie Tallwar left everyone shocked when she recently claimed that Karan Kundrra had sexually harassed and assaulted her during the shoot of Yeh Kahan Aa Gaye Hum. However, fans are also surprised to learn that Ekta Kapoor apologised to Saanvie on Karan's behalf and told her that the show must go on.

In a conversation with FilmiBeat, Saanvie Tallwar claimed, "It started from the beginning only. He (Karan) was interested in me. Karan ke saath jab main scenes karti thi toh ek ladki ko samajh aata hai ki saamne wale ke mann main kya chal raha hai ya uska touch kaisa hai. Bolte nahi hai, yeh alag baat hai, but sab kuch pata lagta hai ki kya chal raha hai." Saanvie mentioned that she and Karan were supposed to shoot a kissing scene for the show. The scene required Saanvie Tallwar to slap Karan Kundrra after he kissed her. "But what actually happened was that scene hua hi nahi. Director ne action nahi bola, and he kissed



me, and I slapped him," Saanvie claimed, "Aap meri permission ke bagair mujhe kaise touch kar sakte ho?" She alleged that while Karan didn't react instantly, he approached her 15 minutes later and slapped her in front of everyone. "Main zameen par giri hoon aur uske baad unhone mujhe abuse kiya," she claimed. The actress alleged that Karan hurled abuses at her family and her upbringing as well. She said that no one on set supported her or spoke up for her.

Saanvie continued, "Phir Ekta (Kapoor) ma'am ne mujhe message kiya aur mere se baat ki. Mujhe Karan ke behalf pe sorry bola and she's

like... meri one-to-one conversation hui thi, main milne gayi thi ma'am ke saath office main. She's like, 'Saanvie, show must go on, main show ko band nahi kar sakti.' Kyunki show ko shuru hue 1 mahina hi hua tha."

"Unhone kaha ki... Bohot supportive hain Ekta ma'am, bohot zyada supportive hain. Mere case main, she was always supportive for me," Saanvie mentioned. Ekta Kapoor has yet to react to this controversy. Saanvie has spoken to multiple publications, but Karan Kundrra has not yet responded to these claims. Karan's fiancée and actress Tejasswi Prakash has also not reacted to the allegations yet.

Ibrahim Ali Khan expresses solidarity with protesting students

Mumbai : Saif Ali Khan's son Ibrahim Ali Khan has voiced his concern over the ongoing CJP protest. He expressed solidarity with students and families affected by the unrest.

Stressing the importance of safety and peaceful dialogue, he said no one should have to live in fear while pursuing education or participating in peaceful, lawful protests. Sharing his thoughts on Instagram, Ibrahim hoped that those involved would be heard peacefully and that the situation would be resolved without causing any further harm. The 'Nadaaniyan' actor posted an image of the national flag and wrote, "It's difficult to see students and families caught up in unrest. No one should have to face fear or uncertainty while simply trying to pursue their education, let alone peaceful,



legal protests. Whatever our individual opinions are, I hope everyone stays safe, that people are heard peacefully, and that the situation is resolved without more harm. Wishing everyone affected strength and hoping for a constructive way forward. Jai Hind."

The Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) 'Chalo Sansad' march towards Parliament turned tense after police reported-

ly stopped protesters from moving forward. According to reports, security personnel used violence to disperse the crowd, while several students were detained. The protest was organized over alleged irregularities in the NEET medical entrance examination, with demonstrators also demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Inside the controversy: how Abhijeet Bhattacharya stood by Udit Narayan

Mumbai : When singer Udit Narayan found himself at the centre of a controversy after kissing a fan during a live performance last year, singer Abhijeet Bhattacharya was among those who stood by him. Looking back at the incident, Abhijeet revealed why he chose to defend his longtime friend publicly and shared the advice he gave Udit as the controversy made headlines.

Recently, Abhijeet joined Subhojit Ghosh on his YouTube channel, where he looked at the kiss row. Abhijeet revealed that he advised Udit not to deny the incident, which sparked widespread criticism last year. Instead, he urged the singer to acknowledge what had happened, accept it, and move on. He said, "I stood by Udit even after

he had given up. I told him, 'Just say yes, I kissed because someone kissed me. Say it openly that yes, I'll do it too. If my fans come and kiss or hug me, I'll do that too.' I even spoke in his support. I told him, 'You're Udit Narayan. If people won't kiss you, then who will they kiss? If 50 people kiss you and you kiss one of them back, what's the big deal? Just say, 'Yes, I did.'"

Talking about his friendships within the industry, Abhijeet shared, "When I consider someone a friend, I stand by them wholeheartedly, and it has always been one-sided. No one speaks up for me; I'm always the one speaking up for them." Last year, Udit Narayan found himself at the center of a controversy following a viral clip from one of his concerts. The internet



erupted in outrage after the 69-year-old singer was seen returning kisses from fans during his performance of Tip Tip Barsa Paani, from 1994 film Mohra. At one point, he allegedly even kissed a female fan on the lips as she was about to kiss him on the cheek.

At that time, Udit defended his actions in an interview with Hindustan Times, saying, "Fans itne deewane hote hain na. Hum log aise nahi hain,

hum decent log hain. (Fans are crazy. We aren't like that. We are decent). Some people encourage this and show their love through this. There are so many people in the crowd, and we have bodyguards present too. But fans think they are getting a chance to meet, so someone extends their hands for a handshake, some kiss the hands... yeh sab deewangi hoti hai. Uspe itna dhyaan nahi dena chahiye.

Yash reflects on the ambition and vision driving the 'Ramayana' team

Mumbai : Star Yash, who is representing Ramayana at San Diego Comic-Con, has spoken about the effort that went into bringing the epic to the big screen and said it was the "right intent" that was the driving force behind the film.

"I think intent is the most important thing. You have the right intent and right team. When we have started with the right intent, everything will fall in place," Yash said in a statement. He added, I think this story itself has got

so much of aspects where we have started with the right intent and we started figuring out so many aspects of life while making this film. And technically, yes, it was demanding."

"Like make-up to looks, there were so many challenges. But I think eventually, when you are trying to tell a story, that's why we all are here. We love stories, and we give it all to bring that story most authentically." "I think we have been able to do that



in a quite good manner, is what I believe."Yash will be seen as demon king Ravana

in Nitesh Tiwari's upcoming two-part epic "Ramayana." The ambitious adaptation features Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Rama, Sai Pallavi as Sita, and Rakul Preet Singh as Surpanakha. The film is planned as a two-part release, with the first instalment arriving during Diwali 2026, followed by the second part scheduled for Diwali 2027.

The grand trailer launch of 'Ramayana' took place in Delhi on July 18. I think the star-studded event was at-

tended by Ranbir Kapoor, Sai Pallavi, Ravi Dubey, director Nitesh Tiwari, producer Namit Malhotra, Kunal Kapoor, Rakul Preet Singh, Vivek Oberoi, Arun Govil, Ajinkya Deo, Shobhna, sitar maestro Rishab Rikhiram Sharma, Swami Ramdev, Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, Karan Johar, Apoorva Mehta, among others. Up next, Yash will be seen in Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups, which is set to release in theatres on August 26.



Rupali Ganguly backs student demands, warns against political hijacking of protests



Mumbai : Actress and politician Rupali Ganguly has spoken up on the ongoing protests at the Jantar Mantar in the national capital. The actress, who joined BJP in 2024, took to her X, formerly Twitter, and penned a long note, as she shared her opinion on the protests, and put forth the narrative of protests being hijacked.

She wrote, "Those who take the law into their own hands, vandalize public property, and attack the police cannot be called students. Such actions only weaken a legitimate cause. The demand for justice

over paper leaks is valid. Students deserve a fair examination system, accountability, and strong safeguards to ensure that such incidents never happen again. In recent paper leak cases, governments and investigating agencies have launched probes, arrested suspects, and initiated legal action against those allegedly involved." She further mentioned, "At the same time, efforts have been announced to strengthen the examination process and prevent future leaks. Unfortunately, when violence replaces peaceful protest, genuine stu-

dent concerns risk being overshadowed. If anti-national or politically motivated elements exploit student movements for their own agenda, it harms the very students seeking justice. India stands with its students. India stands with its people. The fight should be for transparency, accountability, and better reforms—not for violence or destruction. To every student and every citizen: protest peacefully, stay united, and do not let anyone hijack your movement or manipulate your emotions for political or ideological agendas. Your future is too important to become someone else's tool. Peaceful, democratic action is the strongest way to bring lasting change."

The political atmosphere in the country is fast spiralling with protests now spreading to tier 1 cities from metros. The situation is tense and volatile in the national capital with ripples being felt across cities like Mumbai and Kolkata. The protests intensified after Sonam Wangchuk was forcibly removed by Delhi Police from the protest site at Jantar Mantar in the early hours of July 18 after completing 21 days of an indefinite hunger strike.

Vijay's final film 'Jana Nayagan' takes off with ₹41 Cr India opening

Mumbai : Thalapathy Vijay's final film, Jana Nayagan, finally hit theatres on Thursday, July 23. The film had been embroiled in quite the controversy over its certification, and as such, Vijay's fans have celebrated the release like a festival. As per Sacnilk, the film's total worldwide opening day collection stands at Rs 78.27 crore.

According to the tracker, Jana Nayagan's box office collection on opening day in India (gross) is Rs 48.27 crore and net is Rs 41 crore. The film is well on its way to enter the Rs 100 crore club, and may even achieve this feat in three days. Given its Thursday release, the film is expected to witness a jump in numbers over the weekend. On opening day, Tamil theatres witnessed the most



footfall and the net Jana Nayagan box office collection totalled Rs 36.50 crore. The film earned Rs 2.75 crore net from Telugu and Rs 1.75 crore net from Hindi audiences. Fans were seen flocking to theatres with garlands, offering milk to Vijay's posters. They also danced in the theatres and took to social media to laud Vijay's title card.

"While the message is clear, the screenplay occasionally

feels designed around Vijay's demigod-cum-vigilante image rather than building a layered narrative. The dialogues are powerful in isolation, but some moments feel more like curated political speeches than organic conversations between characters. But if you're in it for the theatrics, you won't be disappointed," the review also mentioned.

It's rooted in familiar and predictable commercial cin-

ema. Vijay plays Vetri Kondan, a leader and upright cop who rises against corruption, systemic injustice and political manipulation, positioning himself as the voice of ordinary people. Locking horns with him is a ruthless, authoritarian and polyonymous businessman, who goes by John Himmler, Amrith Poojari and Phoenix.

He wields manipulation like a sword. When these forces collide, ideologies clash. What acts as the catalyst here is a child's trauma that reignites an old, dormant conflict. The result? Ex-cop Vetri begins a larger-than-life crusade for truth and to empower the community. Jana Nayagan makes a statement on democracy and governance, which makes it a socio-politically charged, relevant narrative.

PM’s Message To Sonam Wangchuk Following A Quick End “Follow Medical Advice”

New Delhi, July 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi encouraged activist Sonam Wangchuk to heed medical advise and recover his health only hours after he concluded his 26-day hunger strike.PM Modi said, “I urge Sonam ji to follow the doctors’ advice in his daily routine and regain his old weight as soon as possible,” in a post on X. I ask God to provide him good health. After the government promised not to prosecute the Jantar Mantar demonstrators, Sonam Wangchuk, who had been on a hunger strike since June 28, broke his fast in Gurugram’s Medanta Hospital. Wangchuk was accompanied at the time by Union politicians JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh, prominent leaders of the Apex Body of Leh Ladakh, medical professionals, and family members. Images show the politicians assisting the climate activist in breaking his fast by taking a sip from a cup. ”I’m grateful and happy to break my fast.

Thank you,” Wangchuk said while holding the hands of Nadda and Singh. Turning to his wife, he then said, “Gitanjali has always been by my side. I don’t want to thank you but express my feelings.”In the clip, Nadda was also seen reading out the government’s assurances.“The government is positive about not registering cases against those protesting peacefully at Jantar Mantar in Delhi and those participating in the march to the Parliament on July 20, 2026. The government has already assured its discussions to find solutions to paper leaks and educational reforms for exams in the Parliament. Besides,



the government is also positively considering suitable compensations for the suicide victims of recent NEET paper leaks,” the minister said. Abhijeet Dipke, the founder of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), said that he was “relieved” and “grateful” that Wangchuk ended his fast.Thanking him for his “extraordinary courage and sacrifice”, Dipke wrote in a post on X: “By putting your own life on the line, you awakened the conscience of an entire nation. Your life is far too precious to this country.”“The Cockroach Janta Party’s peaceful protest at Jantar Mantar will continue until Dharmendra Pradhan resigns,” he further added. PM Modi, in a video statement last night, promised more action in paper leak cases amid the protest in Delhi’s Jantar Mantar led by Cockroach

Janta Party (CJP).“Friends, I know that paper leak is not an ordinary issue. It is very painful for the lakhs of students and their families. That is why many steps have been taken in the last two and a half months,” he said. ”The offenders have been apprehended and are incarcerated,” the PM said. Making ensuring kids don’t squander a year was our first priority. I instructed the departments for the fast-track court that it was crucial to take the tests right away.Additionally, PM Modi proposed that the Cabinet explore fast-track courts.It will be given its final shape following the cabinet members’ recommendations. The PM stated in the video, “And starting on Monday, when the second week of Parliament begins, we will try to get that bill passed as soon as possible.”

Sachin Tendulkar During Student Protests “Failure Okay, Cheating Is Not”

New Delhi: In a lengthy tweet on Thursday, the legendary Indian cricket player Sachin Tendulkar called on everyone to “shape a culture” where kids’ efforts are acknowledged. Tendulkar’s post coincides with student demonstrations over the NEET exam paper leak in New Delhi’s Jantar Mantar. At a time when students “feel disappointed that their hard work hasn’t been rewarded,” the former India star—who is widely regarded as the best cricket player—added that everyone should work together to make sure that such a situation never occurs again. ”My father was a professor. He was a mentor and guide to many young students. One lesson that he instilled early on was, ‘Failure is okay, cheating is not. Never take shortcuts.’ As adults in society, we have the responsibility of shaping culture. A society which prioritises outcomes over effort will seek shortcuts over meritocracy. Today, when students feel disappointed that their hard work hasn’t been rewarded, it is understandable. Collectively, we should all work together towards ensuring they don’t feel this way again,” Sachin Tendulkar wrote in a post on X.“Young India is full of dreams and energy. They are the fuel to our success. As a society, all of us, including parents, teachers, friends, relatives, schools, and administrators, have a massive responsibility and different roles to play in ensuring our youth remain encouraged and energised.” Tendulkar said he is



hopeful of a solution coming through and stressed on the need to promote a culture which rewards honesty and in which merit wins.“We must create a culture where hard work is rewarded, honesty is encouraged, and merit wins. I am certain we will all find solutions that strengthen our children’s future and safeguard their aspirations. Jai Hind!” he wrote.Students have been protesting in Delhi over the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak issue and examination irregularities, demanding accountability and reforms to restore confidence in the examination system. The demonstrations at Jantar Mantar have drawn participation from students, parents and supporters from across the country.On Thursday Prime Minister Narendra Modi issued a statement to say that fast track courts would be set up to ensure

speedy trials of those accused of leaking the exam papers. Earlier Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra also voiced support for strengthening India’s education system. In a post on social media, Bindra wrote:“I have never considered myself a political person. But I do believe that some issues belong to all of us, regardless of where we stand. Education is one of them. The measure of a nation is found not only in its economy or its achievements, but in the opportunities it creates for its young people. An education system that inspires confidence, rewards merit and nurtures curiosity is one of a nation’s greatest strengths.”“I hope we can all unite and work together to continually strengthen our education system, so that it remains a source of opportunity, innovation and hope for generations to come.”

Group A for India’s Men’s and Women’s Kabaddi Teams at the Asian Games 2026

Japan: The group-stage drawings were verified on Thursday, and India’s men’s and women’s kabaddi teams have been assigned to Group A for their respective events at the next Asian Games 2026 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. The Aichi prefecture of Japan will host the Asian Games 2026 from September 19 to October 4. The Tokai Citizens Gymnasium will host the kabaddi competitions from September 21 to September 26. Ten teams, split into two groups of five, will play for the men’s kabaddi championship. According to Olympics.com, eight teams will be split into two groups of four for the women’s competition. The Indian men’s team will compete against Bangladesh, South Korea, Chinese Taipei and hosts Japan in Group A. Group B comprises Nepal, Thailand, Pakistan, Malaysia and Iran, keeping the two traditional kabaddi powerhouses, India and Iran, apart in the opening stage, according to Olympics.com. In the women’s event, India have been drawn in Group A alongside Iran, Japan and Bangladesh, while Group B features Sri Lanka, Thailand, Chinese Taipei and Nepal.As per the format followed since the 2006 Asian Games, the top two teams from each group at the end of the round-robin stage will advance to the semi-finals.



After winning the match, Mayank Yadav, India’s 156.7 kmph star, talks about his two-year absence from the team

Zimbabwe: Mayank Yadav, an Indian bowler, said that facing repeated defeats at the age of 22 or 23 put his mental toughness to the test and called his two-year injury-induced sabbatical from international cricket the most challenging period of his young career. The injury-prone speedster turned up the tempo right away in his first match for India

since October 2024 against Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports Club on Thursday. He claimed that during the challenging recuperation phase, his desire to represent the nation kept him going. ”It was very difficult. The two-year gap was very challenging for me as a person... I was only 22-23 years old at that time, so that always affected me

that I had to go through so much at such a young age,” Mayank said at the post-match press conference after helping India win the opening T20I comfortably.“But at the same time, the motivation to play for the country is every player’s childhood dream. That was the motivation for me – to come back for the country and perform.” The Delhi speedster

said the conditions in Harare suited his style of bowling and helped him make an immediate impact on his return.“I had heard a lot about Zimbabwe, that there is good help for the fast bowlers here. This is my first time playing in Harare and it felt great. I was getting a lot of help from the wicket and I think that helped me contribute to the team.”

India Has Another Day at the ISSF World Cup in Hangzhou Without Winning a Medal



Hangzhou: While countries like Qatar, Sweden, and Norway opened their accounts in Hangzhou on Thursday, Indian shooters suffered their second consecutive day without a medal at the ISSF World Cup (rifle, pistol, and shotgun). In what is essentially its last significant warm-up before the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya later this year, India’s campaign continued the dismal pattern from the first day with no indication of improvement. The only bright spot was Vidarsa Vinod, who advanced to the women’s 50m rifle three-position final before placing sixth. Seonaid

McIntosh of Great Britain, ranked third in the world, won gold, Han Jiayu of China won silver, and Jenny Stene of Norway won bronze. Vidarsa had qualified seventh with a score of 587 to make the eight-shooter final. The remaining Indians struggled. Ashi Chouksey shot 585 to finish 23rd in qualification, while Tilottama Sen managed only 580 to end up 40th, adding to India’s underwhelming start in the final global competition before the AsianGames in September-October.There was some fightback in the men’s skeet event as Gurjoat Khangura produced two

flawless rounds of 25 to finish qualification with 121/125. He won a shoot-off against Kuwait’s Mohammad Alawaad to grab the eighth and last place in the final but could not capitalise, eventually finishing sixth. Abhay Singh Sekhon ended 20th with 119/125, while 53-year-old veteran Parampal Singh Guron finished a disappointing 81st with 107/125 in a field of 86 shooters, a result that is likely to raise fresh questions over the National Rifle Association of India’s (NRAI) selection policy. India’s women skeet shooters also failed to make the final. Ganemat Sekhon was the best-placed Indian in 23rd with 113/125, followed by Yashasvi Rathore (110) in 28th and Darsha Rathore (109) in 34th.In the men’s 25m rapid fire pistol, Bhavesh Shekhawat kept India’s hopes alive by ending Stage 1 in ninth place with 292. World Championship silver medalist Anish Bhanwala was 21st with 288, while Omkar Singh was tied for 23rd on the same score.Stage 2 will be held on Friday, after which the top eight shooters will qualify for the final.China are leading the table with two gold, three silver and two bronze, while the United States are second with one gold and one silver. Great Britain and Qatar have one gold each. A total of 15 medals have been decided so far in five events.

Meet Naresh Pal Gangwar, Selected to Become the New Secretary of Education Despite CJP Protests

New Delhi, July 24: In a major bureaucratic reorganization, IAS officer Naresh Pal Gangwar was named Secretary of the Department of Higher Education.His appointment coincides with increasing scrutiny on the Ministry of Education because to the ongoing scandal surrounding the NEET-UG paper leak. Additionally, demonstrators, including the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), have demanded that Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan quit due to suspected irregularities in competitive exams and accusations of student suicides associated with the problem. Gangwar, a 1994-batch Rajasthan-cadre IAS officer, will replace

1992-batch IAS officer Vineet Joshi. Joshi has been appointed Secretary in the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and will assume charge following the retirement of incumbent secretary Vivek Bhardwaj on July 31. Naresh Pal Gangwar is a member of the 1994 IAS class and passed the UPSC civil services test in 1993. He has held a number of significant posts in the national and Rajasthani governments throughout the years. Gangwar, who was born in Nainital on October 21, 1970, earned an M.Tech in Communication and Radar after completing a B.Tech in Electronics and Communication Engineering. In addition, he has a master’s degree in eco-

nomics. During his tenure in Rajasthan, Gangwar served as district collector in several districts.He was appointed Collector of Tonk in 2001. He later served as Collector of Sawai Madhopur, Jhalawar in 2004, Jodhpur in 2006, Bharatpur in 2008, and was subsequently appointed again as Collector of Jodhpur in the same year.His administrative experience across multiple districts helped establish him as one of the senior officers in the Rajasthan cadre. Additionally, Gangwar has held a number of significant roles in the Rajasthani administration.He was named Secretary of the Rajasthani government’s School Education Department in 2014.

Inside Story How Sonam Wangchuk’s Hunger Strike Was Ended by Center

New Delhi, July 24: Following promises from the Center, activist Sonam Wangchuk completed his 26-day hunger strike on Thursday night. At the Medanta Hospital in Gurugram, Wangchuk broke the fast in front of senior Union Ministers Jitendra Singh and JP Nadda.After a day of intense government negotiations, the breakthrough was made. that Home Minister Amit Shah met with Health Minister JP Nadda and Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office Dr. Jitendra Singh for four hours as student demonstrations grew more intense and worries over Sonam Wangchuk’s health grew. According to insiders, the administration made the decision to prioritize Sonam Wangchuk’s health and well-being while responding positively to his demands. As instructed by the Home Minister, Dr. Jitendra Singh called with Gitanjali Angmo, the wife of Sonam Wangchuk, and reassured her that the government was dedicated to resolving the activist’s issues. He also urged Angmo to convince Wangchuk to end his hunger strike. Later in the evening, JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh met Wangchuk at Medanta Hospital and personally handed him the government’s assurance letter.The Union Ministers also conveyed that the government would invite the CJP delegation for talks at a neutral venue on Friday as part of the engagement process,



sources stated.The CJP leadership had on Thursday declined the Centre’s offer for talks at JP Nadda’s residence or his office and insisted on talks either at Jantar Mantar or at a neutral venue. Sonam Wangchuk also called for a discussion between the Center and the demonstrators. According to further sources, Wangchuk received assurances during the conversation that a new bill within the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) framework will be presented in Parliament the following week. Cabinet ratification of the idea is anticipated today.The administration has also stated that it is prepared to comply with other demands, such as refraining from taking legal action against students who are demonstrating. ”The government is positive on not registering cases against those protesting peacefully at Jantar Mantar in Delhi and those who participated in the march to Parliament on July 20, 2026,” Nadda stated while reading Wangchuk the government’s promises

in front of his wife Gitanjali Angmo and other hospital staff. The Union Health Minister further said that the government has already assured discussions in Parliament on paper leaks and education reforms for exams.“Besides, the government is also positively considering suitable compensation for the suicide victims of the recent NEET paper leaks,” Nadda added, referring to another demand by Sonam Wangchuk.After Wangchuk announced the end of his hunger strike, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X, “I urge Sonam ji to follow his daily routine as advised by the doctors and regain his weight as soon as possible.”“I pray to the Almighty that Sonam ji remains healthy,” the Prime Minister added. Sonam Wangchuk said he wanted to go back to Ladakh after breaking his fast.Sources claim that Wangchuk also promised the visiting ministers that he would interact with students and movement supporters prior to his return to Ladakh.

According to a report, Lionel Messi has decided to retire Plan for the Upcoming Months Unveiled

New Jersey: It was generally anticipated that Lionel Messi’s final match wearing an Argentina shirt would be the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Messi stunned everyone with his masterful on-field performances at the age of 39, finishing the season as the tournament’s second-highest scorer with eight goals and four assists. However, Messi declined to discuss his future plans after Argentina’s heartbreaking final loss to Spain. The legend’s retirement timetable has finally been revealed by sources in the Argentine media, but manager Lionel Scaloni maintained the

door open for him on the national squad. According to several reports in Argentina, the former Barcelona star hopes to continue representing the national team over the next few months to ensure a smooth transition for the squad. However, it is clear that another World Cup campaign for La Albiceleste is no longer in his plans. Instead, Messi is preparing to bring a formal end to his illustrious international career in the near future. It has further been reported that the Argentine Football Association is actively planning to organise a special, high-profile farewell match

for Messi. This event will allow fans across the nation to bid a grand farewell to arguably the greatest player ever to grace the pitch for Argentina, a report in BeIN Sports said. Messi’s international career has taken several unexpected turns. Messi guided Argentina into one of the most prosperous periods in football history after facing years of severe criticism after a series of devastating final defeats. Argentina won the 2021 Copa América, the 2022 Finalissima, the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the 2024 Copa América, and this year’s World Cup final thanks to Messi

Tendulkar Urges Merit-Based Culture Amid Ongoing NEET Paper Leak Protests



Mumbai : Legendary Sachin Tendulkar urged society to uphold honesty, hard work and merit amid the ongoing youth-led Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protests in Delhi demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the alleged NEET-UG 2026 paper leak. In a post on X, recalling his father's lesson that "failure is okay, cheating is not," Tendulkar on Thursday said stu-

dents' disappointment over their hard work not being rewarded is understandable. He called on parents, teachers, schools, administrators and society to create an environment where integrity is encouraged, merit is rewarded, and young people remain motivated to pursue their aspirations."My father was a professor. He was a mentor and guide to many young students. One lesson that he instilled early on was,

'Failure is okay, cheating is not. Never take shortcuts.' As adults in society, we have the responsibility of shaping culture. A society which prioritises outcomes over effort will seek shortcuts over meritocracy. Today, when students feel disappointed that their hard work hasn't been rewarded, it is understandable," Tendulkar said in a post. "Collectively, we should all work together towards ensuring they don't feel this way again. Young India is full of dreams and energy. They are the fuel to our success. As a society, all of us, including parents, teachers, friends, relatives, schools, and administrators, have a massive responsibility and different roles to play in ensuring our youth remain encouraged and energised.

Commonwealth Games 2026: Three IIS Boxers Enter Ring To Continue India's Bright Start

Mumbai: Indian boxing has made an encouraging start to its Commonwealth Games campaign, with Lovlina Borgohain already assured of a medal after progressing directly to the women's 75kg semi-finals. Attention now turns to the next set of Indian contenders, with IIS-supported boxers Sachin Siwach, Preeti Pawar and Kapil Pokhariya. Sachin Siwach will be the first of the IIS trio to step into the ring, opening his men's 60kg campaign on 25 July, according to a press release. One of India's most accomplished amateur boxers, the 26-year-old enters Glasgow in exceptional form after creating history as the first Indian male boxer to win gold at the 2025 World Boxing Cup Finals. He has continued that momentum this year with gold medals at the Grand Prix Usti nad Labem in the Czech Republic and the BOXAM Elite Interna-



tional Tournament in Spain, before claiming silver at the 2026 Asian Boxing Championships. Known for his technical precision and ring control, Siwach will be among India's strongest medal contenders in Glasgow. Preeti Pawar will begin

her women's 54kg campaign from the Round of 16 after receiving a first-round bye. The Paris Olympian arrives at the Commonwealth Games on the back of the finest season of her career, having won gold at the 2026 Asian Boxing Champi-

onships, where she defeated a three-time world champion in the final, while also topping the podium at the World Boxing Cup Finals and the EUBC Gold Grand Prix earlier this year. The 22-year-old from Bhiwani will look to carry that rich vein of form into Glasgow. Kapil Pokhariya will also begin his Commonwealth Games campaign in the men's 90kg Round of 16. The IIS-supported heavyweight has steadily emerged as one of India's leading names in the division, winning silver at the Grand Prix Usti nad Labem and gold at the National Games before earning selection for both the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games this year. With one medal already guaranteed, India will hope the trio can continue the country's strong start and strengthen its medal haul as the boxing competition gathers pace in Glasgow.

Joshua Bishop Earns Maiden Test Call-Up In West Indies Squad For Pakistan



New Delhi : Pace spearhead Alzarri Joseph has been left out of the West Indies squad for the upcoming two-match ICC World Test Championship series against Pakistan, with the hosts announcing a notable omission ahead of the home assignment. Joseph, one of the West Indies' standout performers with the ball during the current ICC World Test Championship cycle, will miss the two-match series,

which begins in Trinidad on Saturday, due to personal reasons, as per the ICC website. Joseph's absence has opened the door for left-arm spinner Joshua Bishop, who has earned a place in the 15-member squad after impressing in domestic cricket. Top-order batter Kirk McKenzie also returns to the side following a string of strong performances for Jamaica in first-class cricket. Bishop, a left-arm orthodox

spinner, has an impressive first-class record, claiming 119 wickets in 25 matches at an average of 23.90. Bishop, a left-arm orthodox spinner, has an impressive first-class record, claiming 119 wickets in 25 matches at an average of 23.90. The 26-year-old has also been the leading wicket-taker across the last three West Indies Championship seasons, picking up 91 wickets during that period.

Skipper Roston Chase will once again lead the side during the series alongside vice-captain Jomel Warrican, with fast bowler Anderson Phillip losing his place in the squad after he played the most recent Test for the West Indies against Sri Lanka. The West Indies drew that match in Antigua to ensure they registered a 1-0 series triumph over Sri Lanka, with the Caribbean side rising to eighth place on the World Test Championship standings as a result. West Indies squad: Roston Chase (c), Jomel Warrican (vc), Joshua Bishop, Tegenarine Chanderpaul, Joshua Da Silva, Justin Greaves, Kavem Hodge, Shai Hope, Amir Jangoon, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Kirk McKenzie, Keemo Paul, Kemar Roach, Jayden Seales."- Yeah, it is a big loss. Mr Joseph has declined selection. That's the reality of the situation," Sammy said during a press conference ahead of the opening Test at the Brian Lara Stadium in Tarouba, according to Cricinfo.

India's China Open Campaign Ends As Sindhu, Sen And Shetty Crash Out

Hyderabad : PV Sindhu's campaign at the China Open 2026 ended on Thursday after she lost 16-21, 22-20, 21-18 to home favourite Chen Yufei in the women's singles round of 16 in Changzhou, China. India's campaign at the BWF Super 1000 tournament also concluded later in the day, with Lakshya Sen and Ayush Shetty exiting in the second round of the men's singles competition, according to Olympics.com. Ranked world No. 12, Sindhu went down 16-21, 22-20, 21-18 to world No. 4 Chen Yufei, who recovered from a game down to secure a place in the quarter-finals. Chen made a strong start to the contest, opening up a 12-6 lead in the first game. Sindhu responded brilliantly, drawing level at 16-16 before winning five of the next six points to take the opener. The Indian continued her impressive form in the second game and looked set for victory after earning four match points at 20-16. However, Chen mounted a remarkable comeback, saving all four match points by claiming six straight points to force a deciding game. Sindhu held the advantage during the early stages of the decider, but Chen took control in the closing exchanges to seal victory after an intense one-hour-and-29-minute battle. The defeat marked Sindhu's ninth loss in 16 career meetings against



Chen Yufei. In the men's singles, world No. 23 Ayush Shetty also suffered a narrow defeat, losing 21-15, 13-21, 20-22 to Ireland's world No. 24 Nhat Nguyen. Shetty appeared on course for victory after leading 19-15 in the deciding game but was unable to convert his advantage. Lakshya Sen, ranked world No. 14, was beaten in straight games by Canada's world No. 8 Victor Lai, 21-19, 21-11. Despite holding a 15-9 lead in the opening game, Lakshya could not maintain the momentum as Lai fought

back to take control of the match. The Indian shuttlers will next compete at the BWF Super 300 Taipei Open, which begins on July 28. India's Ayush Shetty has enjoyed a breakthrough year and is quickly becoming one of the country's brightest men's singles prospects. The 20-year-old from Karnataka won the US Open Super 300 title in 2025, his first BWF World Tour title, before producing an even bigger statement by reaching the final of the 2026 Badminton Asia Championships.

Why 10 Sports Were Axed From Glasgow 2026 Games



New Delhi: When the curtain rose at the OVO Hydro on July 23 to mark the opening of the 2026 Commonwealth Games, the overarching mood across the global sporting fraternity was equal parts relief and existential intrigue. Commonwealth Games 2026 Opening Ceremony: HIGH-LIGHTS Just three years ago, the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) was staring into an abyss. In July 2023, the Australian state of Victoria abruptly abandoned its hosting rights after projected costs spiralled from AUD 2.6 billion to an eye-watering AUD 7 billion. Left without a host on short notice, the 96-year-old movement faced the very real prospect of total cancellation. Step forward

Glasgow. 12 years after successfully staging the 2014 Games, the Scottish city stepped into the breach as an emergency savior, but strictly on its own non-negotiable terms. What has emerged over the banks of the River Clyde this week is not the lavish, multi-billion-pound extravagance of Birmingham 2022, but a lean, hyper-pragmatic, and radically scaled-down "Lite" edition. It is an austerity experiment designed to answer a single, existential question: can major multi-sport events survive in a modern era defined by fiscal conservatism? To pull off a major international event in under two years without burdening local taxpayers, Commonwealth Games Scotland enforced

a strict operational framework. The entire 2026 edition is running on a modest budget of roughly £150 million—funded largely by the financial settlement extracted from Victoria's cancellation, supplemented by commercial revenues. The logistical compromises are uncompromising: Organisers refused to lay a single brick of permanent new construction, relying entirely on venues already in place from 2014. Athletes and officials are housed across local hotel corridors and university accommodations rather than a custom-built village. Every event is strictly confined to just four venue complexes across Glasgow, eliminating costly inter-city transport networks.

Italy Approached Carlo Ancelotti For Manager Role Before Pep Guardiola

New Delhi: Italy's search for a new national team coach began with an approach to Carlo Ancelotti before the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) turned its attention to former Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola. Technical director Paolo Maldini confirmed the development as the Azzurri continue their hunt for a successor to Gennaro Gattuso. The four-time world champions have been without a head coach since Gattuso stepped down after Italy failed to qualify for a third successive FIFA World Cup, prompting a major overhaul within the federation. Speaking to reporters after a meeting with Serie A clubs on Thursday, Maldini revealed that the FIGC first sounded out Ancelotti before opening discussions with Guardiola, describing the duo as the best candidates available. "We cannot hide the fact that we also spoke to Carlo Ancelotti before talking to Pep. Frankly, it seemed right to start with those we considered the best in the world, to see their general availability," Maldini said. Maldini added that while the federation is eager to appoint a new coach soon, it is prepared to wait for its preferred candidate rather than rush the decision. "Honestly, today we can't give news about what's happening.



You've identified one of our targets. The best thing would be to announce the new coach this week, but even more to wait for the person we really want. So there's urgency, but not so much inside us." Ancelotti remains committed to Brazil after signing a contract extension until the 2030 World Cup, while Guardiola has been out of work since leaving Manchester City fol-

lowing a trophy-filled 10-year spell. With Ancelotti unavailable, Italy shifted its focus to Guardiola, who left Manchester City at the end of last season after winning six Premier League titles and the Champions League during a decade in England. Maldini and special advisor Leonardo reportedly travelled to Barcelona to hold talks with the Spaniard about taking over the national team.

Reports in Italy have suggested Guardiola is seeking an annual salary of around €20 million, substantially higher than the FIGC's offer. His desire to spend more time with his family in Barcelona has also been cited as a factor complicating negotiations, although the federation remains hopeful of making an appointment in the coming days. Italy's coaching search follows

one of the darkest periods in the country's football history, with the Azzurri missing a third consecutive World Cup after a playoff defeat to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The setback led to Gattuso's resignation and sweeping changes within the federation, including Paolo Maldini's appointment as technical director under new FIGC president Giovanni Malag.