

BTC, ABSU observe 39th Bodoland martyrs' day

Kokrajhar, June 13: The All-Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and the BTC authority today jointly observed the 39th death anniversary of martyr Sujit Narzary, the 1st Bodoland movement martyr, as Bodoland Martyr's Day at his birthplace in Bhatipara, near Kokrajhar. The statue of martyr Sujit Narzary and memorial park were unveiled by the Deputy Chief of BTC Rihon Daimary in the presence of ABSU president Kwrwmdao Wary, president of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) Gopinath Borgoyary, former Deputy Chief of BTC Kampa Borgoyary, former MP SK Bwiswmuthiary and other dignitaries.

Addressing the gathering as the chief guest, BTC Deputy Chief Rihon Daimary said martyr Sujit Narzary became the 1st martyr of the Bodoland movement on 12 June 1987, at the age of 15. He said the Bodos reached this stage through the sacrifices of Sujit Narzary and thousands of Bodos for the cause of Bodoland. "We cannot forget the sacrifices of movement martyrs for whom the Bodoland Council came into being," he said, adding that the Bodos will get united in any critical situation. He also said the BTC will pay respect to all martyrs and will take care of their families. ABSU president Kwrwmdao Wary, in his speech, said that the Bodos achieved the theme of Bodofa UN Brahma – 'Unity through struggle' – and this call reminded them to work together under the principle of Bodofa. He called upon the youth to emulate the sacrifices of martyrs and their dedication to the cause of Bodoland, urging them to move forward with a nationalist spirit while keeping the inspiration of these martyrs in mind. He said the ABSU suspended the statehood movement after the BTC Accord in 2003 but resumed it due to the government's failure to implement all clauses of the accord and again suspended the movement after the BTR Accord in 2020.

Kaziranga study confirms healthy greater hog badger population



Kaziranga, June 13: Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve has released the first-ever scientific assessment report on the Greater Hog Badger (Arctonyx collaris), locally known as "Mati Gahori", revealing a healthy and widely distributed population of the globally Vulnerable species within the park.

The study, conducted by Kaziranga's Tiger Cell in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Trust and researcher Tiasa Adhya of The Fishing Cat Project, analysed camera trap images originally collected during the All India Tiger Estima-

tion exercise. The assessment estimates at least 60 Greater Hog Badgers across nearly 1,100 sq. km of the Tiger Reserve, indicating a viable population spread across diverse habitats. Protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, the Greater Hog Badger is a nocturnal and elusive mammal whose global population is believed to be declining due to habitat loss and hunting pressure. Conservationists note that India, particularly Assam and the Northeast, now holds some of the most important remaining populations of the species.

Welcoming the findings, Assam's Minister for Environment & Forest, Jayanta Mallabaruah, took to X and stated, "The healthy presence of this elusive species reflects the strength of Kaziranga's ecosystems. Every species, big or small, plays a vital role in maintaining ecological balance and biodiversity."

Dr. Sonali Ghosh, Field Director of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, highlighted the broader significance of the study, stating, "Kaziranga is a biodiversity treasure trove, and scientific documentation of lesser known species by the Assam Forest Department will help strengthen their conservation and further our understanding of the park's rich ecological heritage." Beyond its conservation value, the Greater Hog Badger contributes significantly to ecosystem health through its burrowing and foraging behaviour, which helps aerate soil, redistribute nutrients and support habitat diversity.

Mizoram fast-tracks hydropower, corporatisation for energy independence

Aizawl, June 13: In a major push toward energy self-reliance, the Mizoram government has resolved to fast-track the long-delayed 132 MW Tuivai Hydroelectric Project and accelerate the corporatisation of the state's Power and Electricity (P&E) Department.

The decisions were finalised during a high-level review meeting chaired by State Power Minister F. Rodinglana. The session focused on follow-up strategies following recent discussions between Chief Minister Lalduhoma and Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar regarding the state's energy infrastructure. It may be mentioned that, Mizoram currently faces a steep deficit in power production. While the state's peak electricity demand stands at 182 MW, and is projected to climb to 213 MW by 2030, local generation accounts for a mere 10% of total consumption. This forces the state government to spend approximately ₹649.54 crore annually on



external power purchases.

To complement these infrastructure upgrades, the government is intensifying the unbundling and corporatisation of the P&E Department to improve operational efficiency.

According to P&E Engineer-in-Chief Ngursailova

Sailo, the department is currently transitioning into three separate state-owned entities handling generation, transmission, and distribution. Sailo noted that department employees broadly support the restructuring, provided it safeguards the interests of both the public

and the workforce.

The state administration is also reviewing progress on the Tuirini Hydroelectric Project and infrastructure rollouts under the Centre's Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) to further modernise Mizoram's grid.

Mizoram congress says ZPM failed on clean governance promise

Aizawl, June 13: Mizoram's opposition Congress on Friday launched a scathing attack on the ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), accusing it of failing to deliver on its commitments to clean and transparent governance and systemic reforms.

Addressing a political session at the Congress Bhavan here, senior Congress vice president Lalnunmawia Chuaungo said that the previous Mizo National Front (MNF) government headed by Zoramthanga was rejected by voters in the last Assembly elections in 2023 because people were dissatisfied with its handling of public funds. The ZPM came to power in the Assembly elections after it promised transparent and accountable governance and administrative reforms, he said. "The ZPM, however, failed to deliver on those commitments and instead continued the bad practices it had earlier criticised during the MNF government," the former state Chief Secretary said. He alleged that the practice of issuing tenders only after deciding who should



receive contracts and the excessive use of restricted tenders have continued and even intensified under the present ZPM administration.

Chuaungo further alleged that depart-

mental works and contracts awarded through work supervisors to favoured individuals have become increasingly common. He also alleged that the ZPM government has attempted to weaken an-

ti-corruption mechanisms by changing provisions related to the Mizoram Lokayukta Act and granting general consent to the CBI, issues which the Congress had previously raised.

The Congress leader further accused the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) of concentrating powers to approve all restricted tenders and major contracts, which, according to him, could create more problems than improve governance.

Highlighting Mizoram's financial dependence on central transfers, Chuaungo said the state has benefited significantly from the Centre, receiving substantial funds every year for development. He pointed out that Mizoram's budget estimate for 2026-27 stands at Rs 17,496.91 crore, which is over Rs 9,458 crore higher than the Rs 8,038.39 crore estimate in 2016-17.

However, he said the state's own revenue contribution remains limited, with only Rs 2,759.75 crore, less than 16 per cent of the total budget, expected to come from state-owned tax revenues and other

internal resources.

The remaining funds are largely sourced from the state's share of central taxes, Finance Commission allocations, central grants, and Centrally Sponsored Schemes, he said. Claiming that Mizoram has been a major beneficiary of central tax devolution, the Congress leader said the state received the equivalent of Rs 56,000 per person from the state's share of central taxes in 2025.

He also claimed that for every Rs 100 Mizoram contributes to the Centre in direct taxes, the state receives approximately Rs 3,583 in return, making it a major beneficiary of central transfers. "Chief Minister and ministers are only custodians of public money. The funds entrusted to them do not belong to them and must be used fairly and according to law. They cannot be used for personal gain or to favour selected individuals," Chuaungo said. He claimed that the Congress party is committed to fighting corruption and establishing a government that ensures people receive their rightful benefits.

Meghalaya seeks centre's aid for Shillong medical college boost



Guwahati, June 13: The Meghalaya government has sought assistance from the Union Health Ministry and the Parliamentary Consultative Committee to strengthen infrastructure for the Shillong Medical College and Hospital. Health Minister Wailadmiki Shylla said on Friday that the department has already placed the project requirements before the committee as part of the brownfield development plan. He explained that the upcoming medical college will require an administrative building, hostels for students, and laboratory facilities, all

of which are expected to be ready within the next year.

According to him, the state has formally requested central support to complete the work. Shylla added that the government is waiting for confirmation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding a possible date for the inauguration of the Shillong Medical College.

He also said that construction of the Tura Medical College has been almost completed, with around 95 per cent of the work finished.

However, he acknowledged that filling teaching positions

has been a challenge due to limited interest in faculty recruitment. Apart from infrastructure expansion in medical education, the state is also seeking Institute of National Importance (INI) status for the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS).

The minister said that the proposal has support from both the administration and staff of the institute, as the upgrade would help NEIGRIHMS expand its healthcare services and operate more efficiently at full capacity.

Rijiju hails 12 years of Modi rule for transforming India

Itanagar, June 13: Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday said India had undergone significant transformation under Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the past 12 years, citing advances in infrastructure, connectivity, welfare, manufacturing and national security.

Addressing reporters in Itanagar, Rijiju said more than 8 lakh km of rural roads had been built under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, with nearly half constructed during the last 12 years. He highlighted projects such as the Sela Tunnel, Nechiphu Tunnel and the proposed Frontier Highway in Arunachal Pradesh.

He said railway electrification had reached 99.6

per cent of the broad-gauge network and noted that 164 Vande Bharat trains had modernised rail travel. He added that the number of operational airports had increased from 74 before 2014 to around 164.

Rijiju said welfare schemes had led to the construction of over 12 crore toilets and provided tap water connections to more than 16 crore rural households. He also highlighted the expansion of banking access through the Jan Dhan Yojana and India's emergence as a major manufacturing hub.

On national security, he said indigenous defence production and exports had reached record levels, laying the foundation for a developed and self-reliant



CM Khandu seeks special policy support for Arunachal at NITI meet

Itanagar, June 13: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has advocated for special policy interventions and enhanced support mechanisms to address the State's unique developmental and strategic challenges.

Addressing a high-level interaction of the Chief Ministers of the North Eastern States convened by the NITI Aayog in New Delhi on Friday, Khandu thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his continued support towards the development of the North East and for implementing the Act East Policy which, he said, has transformed connectivity, infrastructure and public confidence across the region. Highlighting Arunachal Pradesh's vast geographical expanse and strategic importance, the Chief Minister stressed the need for dedicated infrastructure support to overcome challenges posed by difficult terrain and dispersed settlements. He noted that despite being India's largest State in the North East in terms of area, Arunachal Pradesh continues to face



unique development constraints that require special consideration. Khandu said that the State has set a target of generating 40,000 MW of hydropower by 2047 and sought coordinated support from the NITI Aayog and concerned ministries to sustainably harness its vast hydropower potential. He also stressed the need for skilling local youth and promotion of ancillary industries to maximize employment opportunities.

Drawing attention to funding constraints faced by sparsely populated but geographically large States, Khandu urged the NITI Aayog to review popula-

tion-based funding criteria. He pointed out that existing allocation mechanisms often place Arunachal Pradesh at a disadvantage despite its vast area, difficult terrain and strategic importance. He urged the NITI Aayog to evolve alternative criteria that better reflect ground realities and developmental requirements. On rural connectivity, the Chief Minister also called for the expansion of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana to cover villages with populations of 250 and above, noting that many remote settlements still lack road connectivity despite progress under the Vibrant Villages Programme.

Naga political groups oppose energy exploration agreement before final peace settlement

Kohima, June 13: A conglomerate of seven Naga political organisations has opposed the recently signed tripartite agreement between the Centre and the governments of Assam and Nagaland for energy exploration and extraction, saying such activities should not be carried out until a final political settlement of the Naga issue is reached.

The Working Committee of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG) expressed its objections a day after the agreement was signed to facilitate energy exploration and extraction in areas along the Assam-Nagaland border. The organisation said ownership and control over natural resources form an important part of the 'Agreed Position' signed between the NNPG and the Government of India in 2017.

In a statement, the committee maintained that any attempt to explore or extract natural resources in Naga areas before the conclusion of a formal political settlement would go against



the understanding reached during the ongoing peace process. It argued that the rights over natural resources are intrinsically linked to the larger political issue that has remained unresolved for decades.

The NNPG stated that it would ensure that no national or international company is allowed to extract crude petroleum from Naga soil until a final political settlement is officially concluded. The organisation

described any move to undertake oil exploration or extraction before resolving the Naga political issue as a violation of Naga rights and interests. The committee also rejected the concept of a revenue-sharing arrangement between Nagaland and Assam. According to the group, the area under discussion is historically and legally part of the Naga homeland, and therefore questions of resource ownership should be addressed

within the framework of a final political agreement. The Working Committee of the NNPG, comprising seven Naga political groups, has been engaged in negotiations with the Centre for several years.

The committee signed the Agreed Position agreement with the Government of India on November 17, 2017, outlining broad principles for a political settlement. Parallel peace talks have also been taking place between the Centre and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim-Isak-Muivah, which entered into a ceasefire agreement in 1997. The two sides later signed the Framework Agreement in 2015 as part of efforts to advance the peace process. Although the Centre's interlocutor for the Naga peace talks announced in 2019 that negotiations had been concluded, a final settlement has yet to be reached. Differences continue to remain over key issues, including the NSCN-IM's demand for a separate Naga flag and constitution.

JAC ultimatum to Arunachal govt over fisheries scam

Itanagar, June 13: The Joint Action Committee (JAC) has given the Arunachal Pradesh government a deadline of seven days to act on its demand for a fair and time-bound probe into the alleged financial irregularities in the fisheries department.

It warned of a democratic movement if its demands are not met within the timeframe. The JAC alleged that crores of rupees were siphoned off through the creation of non-existent or incomplete fishery projects across the state.

Addressing a press conference, JAC secretary Takam Chacha expressed dissatisfaction over the pace of action despite the registration of an FIR and an ongoing investigation into the alleged large-scale financial irregularities and loss to the state exchequer.

There have been allegations that more than Rs 300 crore was siphoned off through fictitious projects and unauthorised transactions. According to the Joint Action Committee (JAC), the alleged scam reportedly involved the creation of "ghost ponds" and non-existent fisheries projects to divert public funds.

Addressing a press conference, JAC secretary Takam Chacha expressed dissatisfaction over the pace of action de-



spite the registration of an FIR and an ongoing investigation into the alleged large-scale financial irregularities and loss to the state exchequer.

According to members of the JAC, irregularities amounting to approximately Rs 183 crore in Kra Daadi district and over Rs 100 crore in Lower Subansiri district have been detected.

The alleged scam reportedly involved the creation of "ghost ponds" and non-existent fisheries projects to divert public funds.

The matter is currently under investigation by the Special Investigation Cell (SIC-Vigilance), Itanagar, with the case reportedly dating back to the period between 2018 and 2024. (EOM)

Meghalaya TMC MLAs Welcome in BJP, Final Decision Pending: Shantanu Thakur

Shillong, June 13: Union Minister of State Shantanu Thakur declined to confirm reports that five Trinamool Congress (TMC) MLAs from Meghalaya are planning to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), stating that any decision on the matter would be taken by the party's central leadership. Speaking to reporters, Thakur said, "This is not my decision."

BJP is a large party and the leadership will decide what needs to be done. I cannot comment on it at this stage." However, he added that the BJP's doors remain open for the TMC legislators. The minister attributed the TMC's electoral set-



backs to alleged corruption within the party, saying that

internal issues were responsible for its declining polit-

ical fortunes. He suggested that any potential defections

should be viewed as a consequence of the party's own shortcomings rather than BJP's efforts. While refusing to confirm any negotiations, Thakur said elected representatives are always welcome to attend government programmes when invited.

He noted that whether the MLAs ultimately join the BJP is a matter for the party leadership to decide. Speculation over possible defections has intensified in Meghalaya, although neither the BJP nor the concerned TMC MLAs have made any official statements.

Political observers believe that leaders of both parties are carefully assessing the

implications of any such move. Highlighting the BJP's development-focused approach, Thakur said the party aims to earn public trust through sustained work rather than short-term political campaigns.

He also emphasized the Narendra Modi government's focus on the Northeast, claiming that the region has witnessed significant development and attention under the NDA government. Acknowledging the BJP's slower growth in Meghalaya, Thakur cited geographical and communication challenges but expressed confidence in the commitment of party workers in the state.

Alleged Rs 300-crore fisheries scam triggers scrutiny in Arunachal Pradesh

Itanagar, June 13: Allegations of large-scale financial irregularities in Arunachal Pradesh's Fisheries Department have sparked a major controversy, with activists and former officials claiming that more than Rs 300 crore may have been misappropriated through fictitious projects, unauthorized transactions and fabricated records over several years.

The alleged scam, which is currently under investigation by the Special Investigation Cell (SIC-Vigilance) in Itanagar, is said to have occurred between 2018 and 2024. According to members of the Joint Action Committee (JAC) on the Fisheries Scam, irregularities amounting to around Rs 183 crore have been detected in Kra Daadi district alone, while another Rs 100 crore-plus is alleged to have been siphoned off in Lower Subansiri district. Activists have alleged that public funds meant for fisheries development were diverted through the creation of so-called "ghost ponds" and non-existent fisheries projects. They claim that several transactions were carried out without proper approvals and were supported by fabricated documentation. Former Fisheries Minister and current Chairman of Science and Technology, Tage Taki, described the allegations as "most unfortunate and painful." He alleged that certain District Fisheries Development Officers (DFDOs), acting in collusion with

treasury officials, siphoned off substantial amounts of public money without the knowledge of the minister, secretary or commissioner concerned. Taki said that during his tenure as Fisheries Minister from 2019 to 2024, the department generally received less than Rs 20 crore annually, excluding central government schemes.

He said reports indicating expenditures of Rs 183 crore in a single district raise serious concerns and require a comprehensive investigation. "If documents uncovered during audits show such expenditure in one district, a thorough probe is necessary and strict action must be taken against those found responsible," he said. The issue has gained further attention after student activist and JAC member Takam Chacha alleged that unauthorized financial transactions were carried out by departmental and treasury officials in Kra Daadi district, particularly in the Palin and Jamin areas. According to him, the alleged irregularities point to a systematic misuse of government funds meant for development activities. Former minister Tage Taki has denied any involvement in the alleged scam and said he is ready to cooperate fully with investigators. As the SIC-Vigilance probe continues, the alleged fisheries scam is emerging as one of the most significant financial controversies in Arunachal Pradesh in recent years.

From Rescuing a Baby Civet to a CBSE Textbook: Kamrup Family's Inspiring Story Earns National Recognition

Nagaon, June 13: A remarkable story of compassion, wildlife conservation, and family dedication from Assam's Nagaon district has found a place in a CBSE English textbook, bringing national recognition to nature lover Dharani Saikia and his family.

The story, titled "Baby Bhakat," revolves around a baby Asian palm civet that was rescued by Saikia's family in 2009 in Tetelishara village of Kamrup.

At the time, Dharani Saikia, known locally for his passion for wildlife conservation, was living

with his wife Anjali Saikia and their two sons, Pulin and infant Gibbon.

One day, villagers discovered a baby asian palm civet that had fallen from a tree and informed Saikia. Hoping its mother would return, he waited throughout the day.

When no adult civet appeared, he brought the helpless animal home with the help of his elder son.

The family then faced the challenge of caring for the newborn civet, whose eyes had not yet

opened. After much consideration, Anjali Saikia agreed to nurse the animal with her own milk, effectively taking on the role of its foster mother. Soon, the baby civet became an inseparable part of the family. It shared meals, slept alongside the children, and grew up surrounded by love and care.

The unusual story attracted the attention of conservation photographer Rommel Shunmugam, who travelled from Delhi to Kamrup and spent several days documenting the family's unique bond

with the rescued animal. Years later, the story resurfaced in an unexpected way. Gibbon Saikia, now a Class X student at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Dhing, was reading his CBSE English textbook when he came across a chapter titled "Baby Bhakat."

To his surprise, the lesson featured photographs and details of his own family. Even more astonishing was the realization that the infant pictured alongside the rescued civet was none other than himself.

The discovery brought immense

joy to Gibbon and his parents, who described the inclusion of their story in a national textbook as a proud and emotional moment. Residents of Nagaon have also welcomed the recognition, viewing it as an inspiring example of wildlife conservation and compassion.

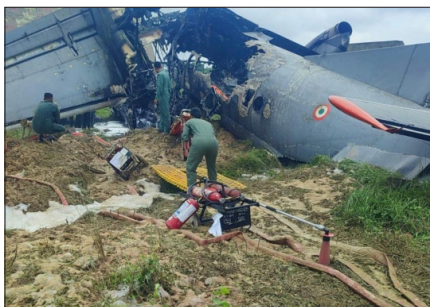
For Dharani Saikia, who has spent decades rescuing animals and protecting nature, the inclusion of "Baby Bhakat" in the CBSE curriculum stands as one of the most meaningful acknowledgements of his life's work.

Indian Air Force's AN-32 aircraft crashes in Jorhat, pilot feared dead

Jorhat, June 13: A military aircraft crashed at the Air Force Station in Jorhat, Assam, during landing on Saturday. June 13: An AN-32 transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force crashed at the Jorhat Air Force station in Assam on Saturday, the Indian Air Force said as it shared the initial inputs about the incident. It is feared that the pilot may have lost his life in the crash. The military aircraft crashed at the Air Force Station during landing.

"Further details are awaited as rescue and investigation efforts continue at the site," an IAF official said. Initial visuals from the crash spot showed IAF ground personnel around the wreckage of the crashed transport aircraft. The visuals show the plane, broken into two, with smoke still billowing out of the front part of the aircraft. An IAF official said firefighting operations are underway at the accident site.

A defence spokesperson said the AN-32 aircraft was landing at the IAF's airbase in the Rowrah area of Jorhat when the incident occurred. "Senior IAF officials have rushed to the area, and casualty, if any, is yet to be ascertained," the spokesperson said. The Antonov



AN-32 is a Soviet-origin, twin-engine tactical light military transport aircraft designed by the Antonov Design Bureau in Ukraine.

Developed specifically to meet the requirements of the IAF, the aircraft is derived from the older An-26 model but features significantly more powerful engines positioned above the wings. This unique design allows it to perform exceptionally well in extreme tropical and high-altitude mountain environments. What led to Saturday's incident is not clear so far, but the weather in Jorgat was quite gloomy this morning, so it is to be seen whether it had anything to do with the crash.

An earth mound collapses during soil collection in Tripura, leaving two dead and one critically injured

Agartala, June 13: Two youths lost their lives and another sustained critical injuries after a landslide occurred while they were collecting soil from a hillock in the Chakmaghat Muslim Slum area of Khowai district on Saturday, June 13 morning.

According to reports, the incident took place around 7:00 a.m. when three residents of Kunjamura James Jamatia (20), Asha Hari Jamatia (30), and Amulya Dhan Jamatia (30) arrived at the location in a vehicle to collect soil for house-related work.

"While they were cutting and gathering soil from the hillock, a massive mound of earth suddenly collapsed,

burying all three individuals beneath it. Local residents rushed to the scene immediately after witnessing the accident and began rescue operations without waiting for the administration to arrive. Their efforts led to the rescue of Amulya Dhan Jamatia, who suffered severe leg injuries.

He was first taken to Teliamura Sub-Divisional Hospital and was later referred to GB Hospital in Agartala due to his critical condition," police said. Police said personnel from the Fire and Emergency Services were the first responders to reach the spot. Firefighters, along with personnel of the TSR 12th Battalion, joined the rescue



operation and continued efforts to recover the trapped victims.

"After an extensive search, James Jamatia and Asha Hari Jamatia were

pulled out from beneath the debris and rushed to Teliamura Sub-Divisional Hospital. However, the attending doctor declared both of them dead on arriv-

al. Following the incident, police recovered the bodies and sent them to the morgue for post-mortem examination," police added.

As about 900 residents start to relocate, the Dharavi project gains momentum

Mumbai, Jun 12:The Dharavi Redevelopment Project is advancing with the BMC issuing eviction notices to Shahunagar residents for redevelopment. This follows prior notices for families in Sector 6 to prepare for temporary relocation. The goal is to clear land for rehabilitation and expedite the construction of permanent homes. The Maharashtra Government aims to transition the project from planning to execution, responding to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' directive to make 10,000



homes available by 2028. Approximately 900 BMC tenants in Shahunagar will need to relocate temporarily, with options for transit

accommodation in MHADA buildings, which offer larger, better-quality living spaces. Agreements will outline terms for relocation and re-

habilitation entitlements. Residents in units up to 275 sq ft will receive a monthly rent allowance of Rs 22,000, while those in 375 sq ft units will get Rs 30,000, alongside a one-time shifting allowance of Rs 15,000. Each family will be promised homes with a minimum carpet area of 500 sq ft or 1.35 times their current area. Efforts are being made to ensure a smooth relocation process aimed at minimizing inconvenience while enabling timely construction and delivery of new homes.

MoS Margherita said that school dropouts are a concern

Guwahati, Jun 11: Pabitra Margherita, the Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles, expressed worry over school dropouts and emphasized the importance of ensuring high-quality education and keeping every child in the educational system.On Wednesday, Margherita chaired a review conference in Likabali, Lower Siang district, where she examined the execution of state and federal flagship programs and talked about how to make them better. According to him, development initiatives are essential to the future of Arunachal Pradesh and must be regularly evaluated. Deputy Speaker Kardo Nyigyor brought attention to issues with road connectivity during the meeting, especially along the Akajan-Likabali-Bame road. Meanwhile, Nari Koyu MLA Tojir Kadu requested more allocations under rural housing projects. The minister was also informed by department heads and district officials on welfare issues, infrastructural needs, and developmental accomplishments.

A model was arrested for smuggling marijuana worth Rs 11.82 crore from Bangkok to Mumbai

Mumbai, Jun 12: After arriving in Mumbai, a 28-year-old model was immediately arrested for transporting more than 11 kg of premium “hydroponic marijuana.” The model, named as Harsha Sunny, was stopped at the Mumbai airport while traveling from Bangkok after authorities saw strange behavior in her routine surveillance. Customs officials claim that on the evening of June 10–11, Harsha Sunny took Air India aircraft TG-351 from Bangkok to Chha-

trapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai. Noting Sunny’s behaviour, officials from the Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) and the Customs Department stopped her. Upon searching her trolley bag, officials found 12 vacuum-sealed plastic packets full of “green substance.” An on-the-spot chemical test using a Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) kit confirmed the substance to be high-quality ‘hydroponic marijuana.’ Follow-

ing this, the Customs Department arrested Harsha Sunny under the NDPS Act for smuggling banned narcotics.The ‘hydroponic marijuana’, weighing over 11 kg, is valued at Rs 11.82 crore.Harsha Sunny, a former ‘Mrs Kerala’ 2025 contestant, was produced before the Fort Court which remanded her to judicial custody.The investigation is underway to ascertain where in Mumbai or other parts of the country this consignment was intended to be delivered.

The governor calls an assembly, and the Assam budget session will start on July 6

Guwahati, Jun 12: The Budget Session of the Sixteenth Assam Legislative Assembly has been called by Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya to meet on July 6, 2026. The Assam Legislative Assembly Secretariat has officially announced that the meeting will start on Monday, July 6 at 9:30 am in the Assembly Chamber in Dispur.According to the notification, the Governor

used the authority granted by Article 174(1) of the Indian Constitution to issue the order on June 10. ”In exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 174 of the Constitution of India, I, Shri Lakshman Prasad Acharya, Governor of Assam, hereby summon the Budget Session of the Sixteenth Assam Legislative Assembly to meet at 9.30 A.M. on Monday, the 6th July, 2026

at the Assembly Chamber in Dispur,” according to the order.Rajib Bhattacharyya, the Assembly’s Secretary-in-Charge, signed the notification, which was released by the Assam Legislative Assembly Secretariat. It is anticipated that the state’s financial proposals, governmental policies, and other legislative matters will be discussed during the next Budget Session.

Why Aizawl is referred to as a “Silent City” by Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma

Aizawl, Jun 12: Aizawl’s distinctive civic culture is one of the main factors contributing to the state’s rising tourism appeal, according to Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma, who has described the capital as a “silent city” with almost no needless honking.Lalduhoma told India Today NE that tourists are frequently impressed by Aizawl’s tranquil atmosphere and orderly traffic culture.”Horns will never be heard in Aizawl unless they are absolutely essential. The chief minister remarked, “It’s known as a silent city.” Lalduhoma claims that the city’s serene streets and well-behaved citizens are a reflection of Mizoram’s overall social climate, which he characterized as India’s most tranquil state. The existence of unattended stores that operate on trust, where goods are left without salespeople and customers make voluntary payments, is another element that captivates tourists, he continued.The chief minister’s comments coincide with a notable increase in the number of visitors to the state. He stated that almost eight lakh tourists visited Mizoram in 2025 and expressed optimism that

Aizawl is becoming one of the top travel destinations in the Northeast.Lalduhoma credited the state’s tranquil surroundings, robust socioeconomic indicators, and better connectivity—especially the train connection that was opened last year—for the tourism surge. He pointed out that Mizoram has recently emerged as the nation’s ginger capital and as India’s first entirely literate state.According to the chief minister, the state’s standing as one of the safest locations for women has increased its allure to both local and foreign tourists.

According to Lalduhoma, tourism growth is anticipated to continue in the future, with places like Thenzawl developing into popular tourist destinations. In addition to an international-standard golf course, paragliding facilities, a ropeway project, and access to some of Mizoram’s most picturesque natural attractions, the town is being developed into a Peace City.The chief minister stated, “Aizawl’s distinct identity as a silent city is becoming one of the state’s strongest attractions as tourism continues to grow.”

Allegations of a Rs 300-crore fisheries fraud rock Arunachal; according to JAC, “ghost ponds” were used to drain money

Itanagar, Jun 12: Allegations of widespread financial irregularities in the Fisheries Department have sparked a major controversy in Arunachal Pradesh. Activists and former officials claim that over Rs 300 crore may have been embezzled through unauthorized transactions and fictitious projects.

Members of the Joint Action Committee (JAC) on the Fisheries Scam claim to have discovered violations of over Rs 100 crore in Lower Subansiri district and about Rs 183 crore in Kra Daadi district. In order to steal public monies, the accused scheme allegedly involved the construction of “ghost ponds” and fictitious fisheries initiatives. The matter is currently under investigation by the Special Investigation Cell (SIC-Vigilance), Itanagar, with the case reportedly dating

back to the period between 2018 and 2024.Speaking to India Today, former Fisheries Minister and current Chairman of Science and Technology, Tage Taki, termed the allegations “most unfortunate and painful.” He alleged that certain District Fisheries Development Officers (DFDOs), in collusion with treasury officials, siphoned off large sums from the state exchequer without the knowledge of the minister, secretary, or commissioner concerned.

Taki stated that during his tenure from 2019 to 2024, the Fisheries Department generally received less than Rs 20 crore annually, apart from central schemes. He said documents reportedly uncovered during audits indicating expenditures of Rs 183 crore in a single district warrant a thorough inves-

tigation and strict action against those found responsible.Meanwhile, student activist and JAC member Takam Chacha alleged that the scam involved unauthorized financial transactions carried out by departmental and treasury officials in Kra Daadi district, particularly in the Palin and Jamin areas.

Political attention has also been brought to the matter, as local MLA and Urban Affairs Minister Balo Raja has publicly responded to growing concerns over how such large sums of money were being distributed without ministerial consent.Local NGOs, student organizations, and public watchdog groups have alleged that money intended for the development of fisheries was misappropriated through fictitious projects and false docu-

mentation. According to reports, a number of transactions might have been carried out without the required permissions from the commissioner, secretary, or minister.

The Joint Action Committee recently sent a memo to Pema Khandu, the chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, requesting an open and prompt investigation. Additionally, the committee has threatened democratic protests in the event that individuals found guilty do not face severe punishment.Tage Taki, a former minister, has said he is willing to fully help with any investigation and denies any role in the alleged scheme.

The suspected fisheries fraud is becoming one of Arunachal Pradesh’s biggest financial scandals in recent years as the SIC-Vigilance investigation moves on.

Sharad Pawar, Mamata Banerjee, and Leaders Advocate for the “Akhand” Congress



New Delhi, Jun 12: Will Sharad Pawar’s Nationalist Congress Party (NCP-SP) and Mamata Banerjee’s Trinamool Congress rejoin the Congress? In the midst of the Trinamool Congress’s current turmoil, there is a lot of conjecture in political circles regarding the parties’ intentions to rejoin the Congress.While KC Venugopal, the general secretary of the Congress Organization, dismissed the Trinamool merger talks as “baseless rumours” on Thursday, Nana Patole, the party’s senior leader in Maharashtra, gave a strong indication that the move might be underway. Patole has said that the “like-minded parties” are preparing to merge with the Congress.

“Sharad Pawar and Mamata Banerjee are making up their mind for a merger with the Congress,” Patole told reporters insisting that it will not be an alliance, but a merger. Patole went on to claim that a proposal for NCP-SP’s merger has already been made by Sharad Pawar and is in the works. “Pawar Saheb’s NCP plan was previously presented, but it was postponed for several reasons. However, given the current situation of the nation’s politics, I believe that all parties with secular, pluralistic views should come together to prevent the widespread division of votes,” he said.Patole asserted, “This process has now started at the national level, and whether it is

the Trinamool Congress or Pawar Saheb, all are now showing the willingness to merge with Congress.” Sanjay Raut, the head of the Shiv Sena UBT, expressed a similar view a few days ago when he called on Sharad Pawar to “take the lead” in reuniting the minor parties that emerged after breaking away from the Congress with the Grand Old Party.”Leaders of smaller parties that emerged from it must comprehend the situation, and Congress must be strong,” Raut had stated. Supriya Sule, the daughter of Sharad Pawar and leader of the NCP-SP, called it a “good proposal” and stated that only time would tell what would happen next. She had responded cryptically, “Let it rain first, then we’ll see whether to take an umbrella or a raincoat,” without turning down Raut’s suggestion. Ashok Gehlot, a senior Congress leader and former chief minister of Rajasthan, has added to the political discourse by urging the minor parties to unite with the Congress and acknowledge Rahul Gandhi as their leader.There is truth to what Sanjay Raut said. The moment has arrived. Gehlot stated that all parties that split from the Congress and established regional parties have to rejoin and fully embrace Rahul Gandhi as their leader.

Six Naga civilians were killed, and the Native Peoples’ Committee wants an independent investigation



Imphal, Jun 12: The Native Peoples’ Committee, Manipur (NPCM) has called for an impartial inquiry into the circumstances behind the kidnapping and killings of six Naga citizens, whose remains were just found.The organization expressed sorrow over the deaths of the six people—Kenpibou, Phenrongwi Thiumai, Rev. Dr. Manu Thiumai, Dilip

Thiumai, Kaliwangbou Abonmai, and Ch. Phenrilung of Konsakhul village in Kangpokpi district—in a statement released by its Information and Publicity Committee.

The NPCM called the incident a serious violation of human rights and claimed that the victims were tortured before being slain. According to the organization, pastors and other church officials were among the dead.

The committee stated it stands in solidarity with those impacted by the tragedy and offered condolences to the grieving families and the larger Naga community.Concerns about how the government handled the hostage situation were also voiced by the organization. It asked for explanation on the events leading up to the six Naga civilians’ murders and the release of the fourteen Kuki captives, as

well as if enough attempts had been taken to achieve their release. NPCM stated that the situation had raised public concerns and demanded that the government and security services provide an open explanation.

The committee demanded accountability and demanded an unbiased, independent, and timely investigation into the kidnapping and murder of the six citizens.

It called on authorities to find and prosecute everyone involved and to look into the involvement of any people or organizations that might have had information regarding the whereabouts of the hostages.

The group also aimed to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the activities of all local actors purportedly involved in the holding, transportation, or hiding of the hostages.

The Meghalaya government is awaiting a policy assessment of the alternative coal mining proposal

Shillong, Jun 12: Before bringing up the issue with the Center for a review of the current mining framework, the Meghalaya government stated that it was awaiting an alternate mining plan from coal dealers and stakeholders.

According to Deputy Chief Minister Snaibhlang Dhar, the government spoke with East Jaintia Hills coal traders and requested that they submit their ideas to the Department of Mining and Geology and the Directorate of Mineral Resources. He stated that after hearing the plan, Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma would call a joint meeting with mining associations.

According to Dhar, stakeholders expressed concerns about the size of mining re-



gions and the high expense of open-pit mining, and they told the government that the current scientific mining model was not

practical in some parts of Meghalaya, especially in Jaintia Hills.

According to him, the government would review

their recommendations and pursue the issue with the Indian government in compliance with current legislation.

Home Minister: COBRA deployment to bolster security in Manipur

Guwahati, Jun 11: On June 11, Manipur Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam stated that the state’s law and order situation would be improved by the recent deployment of two CRPF Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA) troops. After meeting the relatives of six Naga civilians whose bodies were being held at the mortuary for official procedures, Konthoujam told reporters at the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences that although there were few security forces in the state, the arrival of the specialized battalions would support operations. “Our security forces are really little. However, I believe things will get better now that two COBRA battalions have been deployed,” he stated. The Central Reserve Police Force’s COBRA troops are elite groups with training in jungle combat and guerrilla warfare.Nonetheless, the minister

emphasized that public cooperation was still essential to bringing about peace.In order to prevent any violence, we, along with the chief minister, have consistently urged residents of the valley and the hills to work with the state government. Without public cooperation, security personnel cannot accomplish much, even with increased deployment,” he stated.Konthoujam called the murder of six individuals a “unprecedented and heinous crime” and promised to prosecute the perpetrators. ”

We are committed to arresting the perpetrators and taking action against those who have no humanity,” he stated.He also applauded the release of 14 Kuki people who were purportedly held captive by armed Naga factions, calling the event a sign of humanity. The state police chief’s attempts to locate the missing Naga citizens were also commended by the minister.On

Wednesday, Y Khemchand Singh declared that the government will not continue to be a “mute spectator” to such violent crimes. The chief minister promised to take severe measures against the killers in an official statement.The state administration will not stand by while these crimes are committed. The murderers will be apprehended and prosecuted in accordance with the law, Singh declared. On May 13, the six victims were kidnapped from Leilon Vaiphei village in the Kangpokpi area.

Their bodies were found the day after 14 Kuki people who had been kidnapped by armed groups in Senapati district about a month earlier were freed on June 9.Concerns about security in the hill districts have increased as a result of the killings, and authorities are hopeful that more specialized personnel and public assistance would help stop more violence.

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SpaceX IPO highlights Indian market gaps

SpaceX's \$75-billion stock listing in the US on Friday shattered several records. With a valuation of \$1.77 trillion, the reusable rocket company surpassed Saudi oil company Aramco's 2019 public offering as the world's biggest and made its largest shareholder Elon Musk the world's first trillionaire. Two other American tech giants—Claude maker Anthropic and

ChatGPT maker OpenAI—filed for IPOs this month and are likely to tap the market later this year with valuations of over \$1 trillion each. Such significant fundraising comes when India and several other emerging markets are witnessing persistent foreign capital outflows. India's IPO market is also buzzing, but as a Reuters study showed, rather than raising dollars.

Legislature awaits legal clarity

Calcutta High Court's Justice Krishna Rao on Thursday posed a pertinent question on whether West Bengal Assembly Speaker Rathindra Bose was right in recognising Ritabrata Banerjee as Leader of Opposition in the House without the consent of the Trinamool Congress after his expulsion from the party. He was hearing Trinamool's challenge to the recognition of Ritabrata as LoP instead of the official Mamata Banerjee group's nominee, Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay. Ritabrata had the numbers—58 of the Trinamool's 80 legislators—but had been expelled by 'Didi' a day before the rebel group propped him as its legislative leader. Justice Rao also sought to know if the Speaker had issued any formal order recognising the LoP, and adjourned the matter to June 16, two days before the Assembly is due to convene. The judge's poser stemmed from a Supreme Court case law set in the Shiv Sena split verdict. Writing for a five-judge Constitution bench in 2023, the then Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud ruled that it is the political party—and not the legislature party—that is authorised to appoint the leader and the whip in the House. Assuming the 2023 verdict holds ground, it could arrest similar defections and put a question mark on the merger of seven out of AAP's 10 Rajya Sabha members with the BJP. Besides, there is little clarity on the split in the Trinamool parliamentary party. Meanwhile, Trinamool national general secretary and Mamata's nephew Abhishek Banerjee is in a pickle, as at least seven rebel MLAs complained to the Assembly Secretariat alleging their signatures had been forged on the party's resolution appointing Sobhandeb as LoP. Abhishek was on Thursday grilled by the state Criminal Investigation Department in the signature forgery case. Widespread discontent against Abhishek's authoritarian leadership is the focal point of Trinamool's dramatic disintegration, which is also blamed on the ruling BJP's intimidation, coercion and inducement. However, Mamata continues to command respect, including from the rebels. It's up to her to quickly take corrective action to stem the

legislative haemorrhage. Her exploratory exercise at the INDIA bloc meeting in Delhi—where Congress leader Sonia Gandhi offered a warm hug—was the starting point of repairing the bridges she had burnt during her long tenure as chief minister.

The battle for control of the Trinamool Congress's legislative wing is set to move to the courts, with the party deciding to challenge the West Bengal Assembly Speaker's recognition of rebel leader Ritabrata Banerjee as Leader of the Opposition. The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee on Friday evening, where senior leaders reviewed the fallout of a rebellion by a section of the party's MLAs that has plunged the organisation into its deepest crisis since its formation. Party MP Kalyan Banerjee said the TMC would approach the Calcutta High Court on Monday, arguing that the Speaker's decision violated established parliamentary procedures. "We have decided to move court against the decision of the Speaker. We think the decision is against established norms and parliamentary procedures. Rules have been violated," Kalyan Banerjee told reporters after the meeting. The legal challenge comes against the backdrop of an unprecedented split within the TMC. On June 3, the party suffered the first formal division in its 28-year history when 58 rebel MLAs broke ranks, elected expelled leader Ritabrata Banerjee as Leader of the Opposition, wrested control of the legislature party and secured recognition from Assembly Speaker Rathindra Bose. The development marked the most serious challenge yet to Mamata Banerjee's authority and plunged the party into its gravest internal crisis since its inception. Ritabrata Banerjee, however, dismissed the TMC's allegations and insisted that his faction had complied with all constitutional and procedural requirements. "All norms have been followed. Today, there was a meeting convened by Mamata Banerjee. Please go and see how many legislators attended that meeting," he told reporters, claiming that the majority of elected representatives remained with the rebel camp.

The strategic stalemate: A deep look at the ongoing United States-Iran conflict

President Donald Trump's decision to back off from striking Iran, just hours after threatening to seize the country's Kharg Island, underscores the dilemma he faces in dealing with Tehran. Mr. Trump, who launched the conflict with his ally Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel on February 28, now wants to end it through talks. But Iran, which survived 40 days of U.S.-Israeli bombing and now controls the Strait of Hormuz, appears unwilling to hand him a diplomatic victory. Caught between an uncontrollable Israel, whose bombing of Lebanon threatens the fragile U.S.-Iran ceasefire, and an emboldened Iran that has become increasingly defiant and intransigent, Mr. Trump reverted to his familiar playbook of using military pressure to alter Tehran's negotiating position. On Wednesday he ordered strikes on Iran after confirming that a U.S. Apache helicopter had been shot down over the Strait of Hormuz. Iran retaliated by striking U.S. bases in Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan. After two nights of tit-for-tat strikes, Mr. Trump backed off on Thursday, claiming progress in talks. Over the past two months, he has claimed dozens of times that a deal with Iran was within reach. In the war's escalation cycle, Mr. Trump takes one step forward, two steps back. When Mr. Trump dispatched his "armada" to Iran's shores in February, he wanted to force Tehran into submission through military pressure. The U.S. and Israel had an ambitious list of demands, including dismantling Iran's nuclear programme, degrading its missile capabilities and ending its support for non-state militias. When the U.S. and Israel launched the war, they wanted regime change in Tehran. More than three months later, the war, which failed to achieve any of its declared objectives, has hardened



Iran's positions. If Iran was willing to make concessions on its nuclear programme on February 27, it now insists that any discussion on the nuclear file can take place only after the U.S.-Israeli hostilities cease and the blockade is lifted. The war has fundamentally altered the strategic reality of the region. Yes, Iran has absorbed significant military and economic costs, but it has emerged strategically stronger by taking control of the Hormuz Strait and effectively trapping the U.S. in a costly stalemate. Rather than chasing a delusional Iranian surrender, Washington should adopt a phased, realistic diplomatic approach. The priority should be to enforce and extend the ceasefire in good faith and lift the blockade in exchange for Iran reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Once stability is restored, both sides can return to substantive talks on Iran's nuclear programme and work towards a durable end to the conflict. The geopolitics

of the Middle East have been pushed into uncharted and highly volatile territory following the outbreak of the 2026 Iran War. What began in late February as a devastating, coordinated military campaign by the United States and Israel—code-named Operation Epic Fury—has devolved into a complex, multi-layered strategic stalemate. Despite an initial wave of high-intensity airstrikes that fundamentally altered Iran's leadership structure, the conflict has reached a critical impasse where neither side can claim total victory, nor can they easily retreat. The theater of war has shifted from overt, full-scale bombardment to a high-stakes game of brinkmanship, economic blockades, and volatile diplomatic negotiations. As both Washington and Tehran stick to uncompromising positions, the international community watches with mounting anxiety, acutely aware that this fragile truce could collapse into regional chaos at

any moment. The current crisis erupted on February 28, 2026, following months of soaring tensions regarding Iran's accelerated nuclear enrichment and its severe crackdowns on domestic protests. In a dramatic escalation, U.S. and Israeli forces launched a massive wave of nearly 900 airstrikes within the first 12 hours. The primary objective of Operation Epic Fury was decapitation of the regime and the structural degradation of Iran's military capability. The opening strikes successfully targeted and killed Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, along with dozens of top military and government officials. From a purely tactical standpoint, the initial phase achieved significant objectives: air defenses were dismantled, missile silos were shattered, and the core of Iran's command structure was thrown into disarray. However, the assumption that a sudden, devastating blow would force an immediate Iran-

ian capitulation proved to be a severe miscalculation. Instead of fracturing, the remaining Iranian state apparatus—predominantly consolidated under the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)—quickly securitized and centralized its power. Rather than retreating, Iran launched an asymmetric, wide-reaching counter-strategy designed to make the war too economically and politically costly for the West to sustain. Iran's most potent retaliatory move was the immediate, de facto closure of the Strait of Hormuz—the world's most vital energy artery, through which 20 to 30 percent of global oil shipments pass. By utilizing extensive naval mining, drone swarms, and shore-to-ship ballistic missiles, Iran effectively halted commercial maritime transit. The closure triggered an immediate global fuel crisis, spiking energy prices and disrupting international supply chains. Simultaneously, Iran and its regional proxies, most notably Hezbollah in Lebanon, unleashed hundreds of missiles targeting Israel, U.S. military installations across the Gulf Arab states, and regional shipping lanes. In response to the economic strangulation of the Strait, the United States established a rigid naval blockade of its own, isolating Iranian ports and choking off Tehran's maritime oil exports. This "dual blockade" has left thousands of global sailors stranded and created an economic zero-sum game. The United States holds clear political and conventional military superiority, but Iran holds the leash to a chokepoint that can plunge the global economy into recession. By early April 2026, the immense toll of the conflict forced both sides to the negotiating table, resulting in a precarious, interim ceasefire mediated primarily by Pakistan.

Supreme Court rejects Meenakshi Natarajan's plea over Rajya Sabha nomination cancellation

The rejection of Congress leader Meenakshi Natarajan's nomination for the Rajya Sabha election from Madhya Pradesh raises questions of institutional integrity and procedural fairness, going beyond the fate of a single candidate. Party MP Kalyan Banerjee said the TMC would approach the Calcutta High Court on Monday, arguing that the Speaker's decision violated established parliamentary procedures. "We have decided to move court against the decision of the Speaker. We think the decision is against established norms and parliamentary procedures. Rules have been violated," Kalyan Banerjee told reporters after the meeting. The legal challenge comes against the backdrop of an unprecedented split within the TMC. On June 3, the party suffered the first formal division in its 28-year history when 58 rebel MLAs broke ranks, elected expelled leader Ritabrata Banerjee as Leader of the Opposition, wrested control of the legislature party and secured recognition from Assembly Speaker Rathindra Bose. The development marked the most serious challenge yet to Mamata Banerjee's authority and plunged the party into its gravest internal crisis since its inception. Ritabrata Banerjee, however, dismissed the TMC's allegations and insisted that his faction had complied with all constitutional and procedural requirements. "All norms have been followed. Today, there was a meeting convened by Mamata Banerjee. Please go and see how many legislators attended that meeting," he told reporters, claiming that the majority of elected representatives remained with the rebel camp.



cluding Ms. Natarajan. The RO's decision to use this as grounds for the rejection of the nomination reeks of extreme arbitrariness, and even a conspiracy. The law regarding the disclosure of cases is unambiguous. Section 33A of the Representation of the People Act requires disclosure only of those cases that carry a punishment of two years or more and, above all, only of those cases in which charges have been framed. Framing of charges is a judicial step, which follows the filing of a charge sheet. The RO's position that material facts had been concealed and the nomination papers were incomplete is not merely a misinterpretation of the law, but an insult to common sense. Going by that logic, a candidate could be disqualified for failing to list notices of traffic violations too. The disclosure regime has been designed to ensure trans-

parency regarding candidates' criminal antecedents and pending cases. What makes Ms. Natarajan's case starkly arbitrary is that in the same election cycle, another candidate was asked by the RO to amend the affidavits to meet mandatory requirements. The Election Commission of India has the sacred constitutional duty of ensuring free and fair elections. It is failing in that duty, damaging democracy in the process. The capture of a Rajya Sabha seat by the ruling BJP in complete disregard for the law is a severe setback for election integrity. The integrity of democratic institutions does not collapse in a single, cataclysmic event; rather, it chips away through the subtle, systemic erosion of procedural fairness. The shock cancellation of senior Congress leader Meenakshi Natarajan's nomination for the June 2026 Rajya

Sabha election in Madhya Pradesh stands as a grim case study of this erosion. What should have been a routine legislative selection devolved into a bitter battle over institutional neutrality, legal semantics, and administrative overreach. When the Returning Officer (RO) rejected Natarajan's candidacy based on a hyper-technicality raised by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), it set off a chain reaction. The subsequent dismissal of her urgent appeal by the Supreme Court effectively handed all three of Madhya Pradesh's Rajya Sabha seats to the ruling BJP unopposed. This rapid sequence of events bypasses the spirit of fair electoral competition and raises uncomfortable questions about the state of regulatory impartiality in the world's largest democracy. The controversy erupted during the scrutiny phase of the nomination papers.

Acting on a formal complaint filed by Mahesh Keat, the BJP's third candidate, the Returning Officer disqualified Natarajan on the grounds that she had deliberately suppressed material information regarding a pending criminal matter in Telangana. The affidavit (Form 26) submitted by candidates requires the disclosure of criminal antecedents. The RO ruled that Natarajan's omission rendered her affidavit incomplete. However, a closer examination of the legal reality reveals a vast gulf between the RO's interpretation and established jurisprudence: The "criminal case" in question was actually a private, pre-cognisance complaint filed in 2025 by a former political worker before a magistrate court in Hyderabad. The complaint was not even directly aimed at Natarajan for committing an offense; rather, it named her as a respondent in her administrative capacity as the then-AICC in-charge of Telangana, alleging that she failed to act against another worker accused of inappropriate behavior. Crucially, no First Information Report (FIR) had been registered against Natarajan by the Telangana Police. The magistrate court had merely issued a preliminary notice under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) to seek her response and determine whether there were even grounds to initiate a formal case. No judicial mind had taken cognisance of

an offense, and no charges had been framed. The law regarding what an election candidate must disclose is highly unambiguous. Section 33A of the Representation of the People Act mandates that a candidate must declare pending criminal cases only under specific conditions: By weaponizing a preliminary inquiry notice as an undisclosed "criminal case," the Returning Officer did not merely stretch the law; they fundamentally upended it. Under such an expansive and distorted rationale, an individual could be disqualified from public office for failing to declare a standard notice for a minor traffic violation, a civil tax query, or a frivolous neighborhood dispute. The disclosure regime was enacted by the Supreme Court to filter out hardened criminals from the legislative halls, not to provide partisan actors with a procedural tool to eliminate political rivals. What transformed this bureaucratic misinterpretation into a severe democratic concern was the apparent lack of procedural equity. In the exact same election cycle, other candidates facing technical discrepancies or omissions in their affidavits were reportedly granted an administrative window to rectify their paperwork. The Election Commission's guidelines explicitly encourage Returning Officers to grant candidates a reasonable opportunity to fix curable defects, ensuring that democratic contests are decided technical dismissals.

Six developers driving Pune’s

Mumbai: Pune has quietly become one of India’s most competitive real estate markets. Once driven largely by affordability and IT-led housing demand, the city is now witnessing a race among developers to deliver larger townships, premium communities, commercial hubs and lifestyle-led projects.As buyers become more discerning and infrastructure reshapes growth corridors, the battle for market leadership is increasingly being decided by scale, execution, design quality and customer trust. An assessment of the city’s leading developers shows that Pune has got several reputed names, but few names are dominating Pune’s growth story on a larger scale.

At the centre of this growth story are six developers—VTP Realty, Godrej Properties, Panchshil Realty, Lodha Developers, Vilas Javdekar Developers and Kolte-Patil Developers—each playing a distinct role in shaping Pune’s urban landscape. Panchshil Realty continues to set benchmarks in premium living and commercial real estate. From luxury residences to landmark office parks and hospitality assets, the company remains synonymous with high-end design and institutional-grade developments. VTP Realty has emerged as the most dominant residential player by scale and market reach. With projects spread across major growth corridors including Kharadi, Mahalunge, Baner and Hinjawadi, the developer has built one of the city’s largest residential footprints, perhaps in the shortest time in Pune’s history. Godrej Properties, backed by a strong national brand, has rapidly expanded its presence across Pune’s key residential micro-markets with projects spread across major growth corridors including Mamurdi, Keshav Nagar, Mundhwa, Pimpri Chinchwad, Kharadi and Mahalunge.In last few years, Lodha Developers as well has rapidly started expanding in Pune in Markets like Kharadi, Baner, Wakad and Hinjewadi, and they are actively leveraging their positioning in the premium housing segment.When it comes to delivery discipline, Vilas Javdekar Developers stands out. The company has earned a reputation for timely handovers and consistent execution, an increasingly important differentiator in today’s competitive housing market. Kolte-Patil Developers, meanwhile, remains one of Pune’s most established names, leveraging decades of local expertise and strong customer trust.

SpaceX stock price jumps 19%, closes at \$161 on day 1



Mumbai: SpaceX’s share price surged over 33% on its Nasdaq debut, raising its valuation to over \$2 trillion and positioning it as the seventh most-valuable company globally. SpaceX (SPCX) stock was listed at \$150, marking an 11% increase from its IPO price of \$135, after a price discovery process that lasted over 2 hours. On day 1 of trading, SPCX shares closed at \$161, over 19% higher than the IPO price.

Now, the million-dollar question is: should investors buy SpaceX stock after listing, a week later, 12 months down the line — or give it a pass altogether?Experts are divided, but most urge caution.Subho Moulik, Founder & CEO of Appreciate, says investors should be cautious against chasing listing-day excitement, suggesting they may benefit from waiting for initial market volatility to settle before considering an investment. Many people are drawing comparisons to Meta, which was a flop of an IPO. The stock price went from about \$38 down to \$18 and closed out the year well below the offering price. Tengler understands the concern that this is a lofty priced IPO and that the fundamentals may not fully support the valuation. But she says this is not a name you’re buying based on fundamentals. At roughly \$75

billion raised on a \$1.75 trillion-plus valuation, this implies somewhere around 109 to 116 times trailing revenue — an extraordinary multiple, even by hyperscaler standards. Shah says: “We’re not saying don’t participate; we’re saying go in clear-eyed about what’s being priced.”First-day pops on hyped tech IPOs frequently give back a chunk in the following weeks. For a deal this anticipated, the calmer entry is often a few sessions or even a quarter in, rather than chasing the open.For Indian investors specifically, the LRS limits and TCS at remittance, LTCG at 12.5% after 24 months of holding, US estate-tax exposure on US-domiciled assets above \$60,000, and ITR disclosure on foreign holdings are all important considerations. For most Indian portfolios, Shah’s view is that SPCX is a single, concentrated, high-volatility position — exciting, but to be sized accordingly, not treated as a core holding. Lazarus points to academic research. A study by the University of Florida analysed 44 years of every IPO in the USA. It showed that IPOs underperform the market over three years from listing day onwards. The only market-beating route is to get an allocation in the IPO itself and then sell on day one. The first-day pop is real. After that, not so much.Her analogy is Amazon — a company that changed the way we live. If you go back and look at Amazon since its IPO, the stock is up more than 243,000%. The question becomes: what’s your time horizon, and do you believe in the technology? So if the IPO comes out at \$135 and the stock drops to \$100, that’s not ideal, but it wouldn’t change her long-term view. Of course, if it opens at \$250, that would give her pause.On the shareholder base, Elon has a rabid base of shareholders who generally don’t transact in the stock. Many of them have become millionaires. It’s amazing to see the economic ecosystem that has formed around Tesla shareholders. That’s how the pay package got approved — it was the retail shareholders, certainly not the institutions. This is a wise strategy Elon has identified and adopted — feeding the retail shareholder base. If anything, retail investors dampen volatility. It’s the institutions, hedge funds, and traders you have to worry about if you’re concerned about volatility.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds unveils globally inspired Nuwa diamond collection

Mumbai: Malabar Gold & Diamonds has launched NUWA, a new natural diamond jewellery collection that combines inspiration from nature with global design influences, underscoring the growing internationalisation of trends in the luxury jewellery industry.

The collection celebrates modern luxury through natural diamonds and draws inspiration from nature’s finest creations, including the intricate patterns of stripes, honeycombs, fluid formations and organic structures shaped by the earth. Designed to appeal to contemporary consumers, NUWA interprets these natural elements through sophisticated craftsmanship and modern aesthetics.Crafted in 18kt and 14kt gold, the collection features natural diamonds complemented by coloured gemstones, ceramic colour enamelling and multi-tone rhodium finishes. The blend of materials and finishing techniques reflects global design trends while maintaining a timeless appeal.According to the company, the collection is

aimed at women who appreciate understated luxury, meaningful design and versatile jewellery suited for different occasions.

Each piece combines intricate detailing with fluid forms, creating a distinctive expression of modern diamond jewellery.Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan continues as the face of NUWA, representing the collection’s themes of individuality, confidence and enduring sophistication.

Commenting on the launch, M. P. Ahammad, Chairman of Malabar Group, said the collection was inspired by the subtle patterns and textures that shape the natural world.

He said NUWA seeks to transform that beauty into contemporary jewellery that is sophisticated, versatile and relevant to today’s woman.

With the launch, Malabar Gold & Diamonds continues to strengthen its natural diamond portfolio through design innovation, craftsmanship and contemporary luxury, aligning with evolving global consumer preferences in the premium jewellery market.

US Justice Dept clears path for \$111 billion Paramount-Warner mega merger



Mumbai: Executives from Paramount defended the merger during the review process. Chief Legal Officer Makan Delrahim told Politico that the deal would increase competition by creating a stronger rival to streaming leaders such as Netflix. He said that the merger would expand film production and theatrical releases.Opposition from parts of Hollywood continues despite the federal clearance. Industry groups and workers worry about job cuts and consolidation. They expect cost savings targets to affect employment and reduce opportunities for creators.Paramount executives estimated over \$6 billion in cost savings within three years. The company said most savings would come from non-labour

areas, reported Politico. Critics said that large mergers in media often reduce staffing and centralize decision-making power

Paramount accused Netflix of opposing the deal through lobbying efforts. Netflix rejected that claim and called it inaccurate. The dispute added political pressure around the review process.The deal still requires final approvals before completion. If it closes, it would bring together major media assets including CNN, HBO Max, and Paramount+, reported Politico. A Paramount spokesperson welcomed the decision. The company said the merger would create a stronger competitor against large technology platforms, reported Politico. It also said the new structure

would improve competition for audiences, talent, and investment. The company now focuses on closing the transaction.What does DOJ decision change for deal?

The federal approval removes the biggest national-level challenge to the merger. It allows Paramount Skydance and Warner Bros. Discovery to proceed with integration planning. However, the deal still faces state-level review.California Attorney General Rob Bonta continues to examine the transaction. His office said the investigation remains open. He still holds the option to challenge the deal in court, even after federal approval. The US Justice Department’s Anti-trust Division on Friday (US time) cleared Paramount Skydance’s

\$111 billion bid for Warner Bros. Discovery.

The approval allows the companies to move closer to combining their film, television, and streaming operations under one group. According to a report by Politico, officials reviewed the deal for about eight months before concluding that the merger did not harm competition in a way that required legal action.

The department did not demand any asset sales, restrictions, or conditions. It said the evidence did not show likely harm to consumers or rivals, reported Politico. The deal brings together two major Hollywood studios. It combines the Warner Bros. film and TV studio business, CNN and the HBO Max streaming service with Paramount’s assets, including Paramount+.

The merged platform would target roughly 200 million subscribers. The companies expect stronger scale in streaming and content production A spokesperson for the Antitrust Division told Politico that investigators reviewed over 2 million documents, held depositions, and coordinated with state attorneys general.

The statement said the review found that the merger “is not likely to result in harm to competition or American consumers.” It also said the combined company could strengthen competition in streaming, television, and film.

Nestle India rejects Maggi infestation allegations



Mumbai: FMCG major Nestle India has rejected allegations circulating on social media regarding the alleged presence of infestation in Maggi noodles, asserting that laboratory tests on a batch and market samples confirmed that products met all quality and food safety standards. In a clarification submitted to stock exchanges, the company said it was made aware of the complaint through the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) following concerns raised by an unverified account on social media platform X.‘We categorically reject allegations’: Nestle India

“We categorically reject allegations circulating on media basis an unverified account regarding the presence of infestation, allegedly on MAGGI noodles,” said Nestle India in response to a query from the NSE and the BSE on a media report published on June 12.

Tata Sons board skips thorny issues again The company added that it had conducted quality analysis on both batches and market samples and that the laboratory report confirmed compliance with quality standards, including the absence of infestation of any nature.Nestle India said it has already submitted a detailed representation

to competent authorities, including quality records, batch and market sample data, and test reports. “A detailed representation, supported by all relevant facts, quality records from batch and market samples, test reports, has already been submitted to FSSAI in reference to their fact-finding query,” Nestle India said.

The company reiterated that it maintains stringent quality and food safety standards across its manufacturing operations and remains fully transparent with regulators

Nestle India has denied Maggi infestation claims, saying laboratory tests confirmed compliance with quality and food safety standards. “We are confident that the facts and evidence will conclusively establish the truth of the matter,” it said.

The company said it is “yet to receive” any sample from the complainant for assessment, and did not receive any response from them while the social media account remained unreachable. “

As part of standard procedure, the reference sample of the same batch was sent for testing to an independent FSSAI-notified and NABL-accredited laboratory, which found the sample to be free of any infestation,” Nestle India said.

Tata Sons board skips thorny issues again

Mumbai: Tata Trusts, through various entities, collectively holds about 66% stake in Tata Sons and exercises significant influence over the governance of the conglomerate.

The Tata Sons board meeting on Friday stayed away from contentious governance issues and focused on approving the holding company’s annual accounts for FY26, people familiar with the matter said.The meeting at Bombay House, the group headquarters in Mumbai, began around 10.30 am and concluded shortly after 1.30 pm. It was attended by all six directors on the board — Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran, Tata Trusts Chairman Noel Tata, Tata Trusts Vice-chairman Venu Srinivasan, Independent Directors Anita George and Harsh Manwani, and Tata Sons CFO Saurabh Agarwal. Another issue that continues to remain under the spotlight is the long-pend-



ing question of a potential Tata Sons listing. While the company has applied to be deregistered as an upper-layer core investment company, a classification that carries a mandatory listing requirement, the proposal remains subject to regulatory approval, and no final decision has been announced. The board also did not carry forward any discussions around the Tata Group companies which presented performance reports and business plans during its previous meeting on May 26.

Hyundai Motor Expects Production at Chennai Plant 1 to Return to Normal

Mumbai: Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL), the Indian subsidiary of South Korean automobile manufacturer Hyundai Motor Company, expects production at its Chennai Plant 1 to return to normal by June 22 after operations were temporarily disrupted by a fire at a supplier’s facility.In a regulatory update filed with the stock exchanges on Wednesday, Hyundai Motor India stated that the production disruption at Chennai Plant 1 was caused by a fire that broke out on the afternoon of May 31 at the facility of supplier Mobis India Limited, located in Irungattukottai in Tamil Nadu’s Kanchipuram district. The company said the disruption is expected to be fully re-



solved by June 22 and will have no impact on retail sales.HMIL said

the interruption has been largely confined to Chennai Plant 1, while

operations at its Pune plant and Chennai Plant 2 have experienced only minimal impact. Production activities at Chennai Plant 1 are expected to normalize by June 15, with all manufacturing units projected to resume full-scale operations by June 22.

The company noted that it is still assessing the overall operational impact of the fire at Mobis India. However, Hyundai expects that most of the production losses resulting from the disruption will be recovered during the next quarter. Hyundai Motor India also reassured investors and customers that the temporary disruption is not expected to have any significant impact on retail sales in the near term.

“World Cup of Exclusion”: Games Begin Amid U.S. Visa Restrictions, High Ticket Costs & Iran War

New Work: The FIFA World Cup kicks off today with two games in Mexico. This will be the biggest World Cup in history, with teams from 48 countries playing over 100 games in 16 host cities across Canada, Mexico and the United States. With a new FIFA pricing system in place, tickets are significantly more expensive for this World Cup than for previous tournaments. And Trump’s harsh immigration policies are having another chilling effect on the games. Out of the 39 countries under either a full or partial U.S. travel ban, four — Iran, Haiti, Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal — are expected to play in the World Cup. Players from the latter three countries received visa exemptions, while the Iranian team must train in Tijuana, Mexico.

“This World Cup is shaping up to be one of extreme exclusion,” says author and former professional soccer player Jules Boykoff. “Working-class fans basically have no chance of buying a ticket to these games ... and you have people who have chosen not to come to the United States because they fear getting scooped up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This is Democracy Now! I’m Nermeen Shaikh in New York, with Amy Goodman in Sheffield, England.The FIFA Men’s World Cup kicks off today with two games in Mexico. Mexico plays South Africa in Mexico City, and South Korea takes on the Czech Republic in Guadalajara. This will be the biggest World Cup in history, with teams from 48 countries playing over a hundred games in 16 host cities across three countries — Canada, Mexico and the United States. This is also the first time a host nation is at war with a participating country, the United States and Iran. Policies from the Trump administration, as well as the football federation FIFA, are making the people’s game more inaccessible than ever. There’s already the most expensive World Cup in history, this is. And Trump’s harsh immigration policies are having a chilling effect on the games. There are 39 countries that are under either a full or partial travel ban, four of which — Iran; Haiti; Côte d’Ivoire, the Ivory Coast; and Senegal — are expected to play in the World Cup.Earlier this week, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani commented on the mounting barriers faced by the World Cup fans and soccer players from countries facing Trump’s travel ban and visa restrictions.

MAYOR ZOHRAN MAMDANI: The World Cup is supposed to be a celebration of the world as a whole. And some of the decisions that we’ve seen been taken by



the federal administration, be it the denial of visas for journalists from certain countries or the rejection of a visa for a coach of a team, as well as single-day visas for specific foreign national teams, this is anathema to what this tournament is supposed to be about. If we cannot even allow the players, the teams and the journalists covering those teams to come into this city and this country, then it begs a larger question about our commitment to the spirit of this tournament. Among those affected are at least 15 officials and support staff for the Iranian team, forcing the team to train in Tijuana, Mexico, instead of in the U.S., and the Somali referee Omar Artan, who was denied entry into the United States. He was going to be the first Somali referee to officiate in a World Cup game. But there’s this breaking news: Canada has invited him to referee in Canada for the World Cup.

For more on all of this, we’ll be joined by three guests. As thousands of protesters are expected to disrupt the opening game of the World Cup in Mexico City, we’ll be joined there by José Luis Grana-dos Ceja of Drop Site News. And amidst rising fears of administration raids in cities hosting the World Cup, we’ll be joined from Philadelphia by Nelini Stamp of the Working Families Party and Our Copa. But first to Paris, France, where we’re joined by Jules Boykoff, author of Red Card: The 2026 World Cup, Sportswashing, and the FIFA Greed Machine, as well as Kicking, a memoir about his former life as a professional soccer player. He represented the U.S. on the men’s U-23 national soccer team in international competition

Jules, welcome back to Democracy Now! Why don’t you just introduce us to this first day of the game and the contradictions we see between the people’s game and the

massive sums people have to pay for tickets, the fact that it’s the first time that a host country is at war with a participating country, and the restrictions the U.S. has put on Iran, ICE? Lay it out for us. The 2026 World Cup arrives wrapped in a paradox. On one hand, there will be more teams participating than ever before, 48 countries from around the world. On the other hand, this World Cup is shaping up to be one of extreme exclusion. Working-class fans basically have no chance of buying a ticket to these games because of the exorbitant prices. You’ve got people from countries like Iran, Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, Haiti, who have absolutely zero chance of getting a visa for this tournament. And you have people who have chosen not to come to the United States because they fear getting scooped up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.So, this is a tournament that’s supposed to bring the world together, but instead, what we’re seeing in the lead-up to this game is that you have a tournament of fear, you have a World Cup of exclusion, and you have a World Cup of chaos. And the two main chaos agents to be aware of here are, one, President Donald Trump of the United States — he has made it absolutely clear that this World Cup is key to his political legacy, and he’s used sports to his political advantage more than any president in recent history. The second culprit that’s injecting chaos here is FIFA and its president, Gianni Infantino. FIFA has cranked up the prices for this, essentially putting it out of the reach of many ticket buyers, trying to squeeze as much money as possible out of world soccer fans around the world. And essentially, FIFA is treating Canada, Mexico and the United States like its own private cash machine. And this has placed a real pall over this event, that is supposed to be festive and happy.

And it’s also made this the most politically combustible World Cup in recent memory, and that’s really saying something.NER-MEEN SHAIKH: And, Jules, this is the first World Cup to be held in the U.S. in 32 years. If you could explain how World Cup host countries are selected? And in this case, there are three. And also, the fact of this ticket pricing, which is really, truly, as you said, exorbitant, who sets the prices of the tickets?JULES BOYKOFF: OK, so, for starters,to get the World Cup, you have to put forth a bid. And you can access the bid that the United States, Canada and Mexico put forth. And when you read it, it’s all rainbows and unicorns and free transportation to people at these matches in the United States. Obviously, much has changed since then. And that’s kind of an ingrained problem with these events, is that these bids come, arrive with all sorts of promises that aren’t actually delivered

In terms of the prices for tickets, there’s two markets to be aware of. The first one is controlled by FIFA entirely. And they’re using something called dynamic pricing to assign value to these tickets. “Dynamic” kind of sounds nice, right? It’s not nice if you’re buying a ticket to the World Cup. That means they’re trying to extract the maximum that they can out of the ticket buyer. And that’s why you’re seeing, for the World Cup final, tickets in the range of like \$11,000, whereas only four years earlier the highest-price ticket for the final in Qatar was \$1,600. On the secondary market, so when somebody buys a ticket and resells it, in the United States, there’s no limit what they can charge. And FIFA loves this, because FIFA snatches 15% from the seller and 15% from the buyer for every ticket sold. So, I saw a ticket online recently going for \$11 million. Now I’m not saying they’re going to sell that for that price, but if they did, FIFA would walk away with some \$3.5 million for one ticket alone. And so, if you think about the ticket pricing, it’s a really good example of the FIFA greed machine in action.AMY GOODMAN: Jules, also, if you can talk about the Iran team having to stay in Mexico? And then — in Tijuana, that’s where they’re training. President Sheinbaum has said that they can sleep there. And what deal was worked out with the United States, who said they can’t stay in the United States? And also, this Somali referee, the significance of him coming into Miami and being turned back? He ends up back in Mogadishu. And now the latest news: Canada says, “Oh, you can ref up here.

U.S. Continues to Strike Iran



Lebanon: The U.S. has struck Iran for a second day in a row, and President Trump is threatening more strikes as hopes for an imminent deal to end the war are fading. In retaliation, Iran said it launched missiles at the U.S. Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, as well as air bases in Kuwait and Jordan. Iran has also declared the complete closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Iran’s Foreign Ministry says the U.S. strikes have rendered the ceasefire “practically meaningless.” On Wednesday, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth threatened more strikes.Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth: “President Trump, he’s willing to go back and fight as necessary, but has given Iran an open hand to make this deal. It’s right there. They have that chance. They’re choosing to play games. They’re choosing to tap. If they want to tap, then — then the president will turn to the War Department. If we need to negotiate with bombs, we’ll negotiate with bombs. And we’re very good at it.”Hegseth was speaking during a visit to Guantánamo, the U.S. military base in Cuba. During his visit, Hegseth also said the Pentagon is “postured for any possible contingency” in Cuba, which is facing escalating threats from the Trump administration. A U.S. attack on a tanker off the coast of Oman has killed three Indian sailors. U.S. Central Command said the ship was targeted for attempting to transport oil from Iran in violation of the U.S. blockade. The U.N.’s International Maritime Organization condemned the U.S. strike. The father of one of the sailors spoke to a reporter in India after learning his son had been killed after being at sea for over eight months. Amnesty International has accused Israel of ethnic cleansing as part of a “brutal campaign to forcibly displace Palestinians and expand its control over land in the West Bank.” Amnesty described the campaign as state-led and not just driven by rogue settlers. Amnesty is calling on nations to halt trade, cooperation and investment relations that enable what it describes as Israel’s “unlawful occupation, apartheid and ethnic cleansing.”on American-Islamic Relations condemned the arrests as an attempt to “chill speech on campuses.”

In Northern Ireland, police in Belfast deployed water cannons to quell a second night of anti-immigration riots. Sixteen people were arrested. Twelve police officers were injured. The unrest began earlier this week after an asylum seeker from Sudan was charged with attempted murder in a stabbing attack.

In recent days, masked men have been seen attempting to burn families out of their homes. In one incident, four masked men reportedly chased a nurse of color into the Ulster Hospital. Hilary Benn, the U.K. Northern Ireland secretary, condemned the violence as “racist thuggery.” Benn said a “sense of terror and fear” has spread among immigrant families in the area.

Public control of water energy at heart of Burnham agenda



Lebanon: A spokesperson for Burnham would not comment further on his policy plans. With Labour figures increasingly confident of victory in next week’s Makerfield byelection, senior Burnham allies are now beginning to turn their attention to how to turn his political vision into concrete policies.While the Manchester mayor spends his time knocking on doors in the run-up to polling day, a small group of people close to him have been collating ideas for government.Those feeding in ideas include Josh Simons, the outgoing Makerfield MP, and Miatta Fahnbulleh, the former energy minister. Neither of the two would comment, though friends of Fahnbulleh have said she is doing her own policy thinking which Burnham could use rather than doing it on his behalfAt the heart of the agenda, according to those briefed, is a proposal to bring utilities back under public control, starting with the stricken Thames Water.Burnham told the Guardian last week: “Public ownership is absolutely an option. I would say for Thames Water, that is what should be done.”His allies want the government to take the company into special administration rather than accepting a deal offered by creditors which would write off up to £1bn in environmental fines.They said the government could then take over the company, though at a cost to taxpayers given administrators are likely to insist creditors get some compensation. The government has argued such an action would cost £100bn, but some legal experts have said it could be done much more cheaply if administrators agreed that creditors should take little or no compensation.After that, a Burnham government is likely to take over water companies as they either fail or their franchises come up for renewal, his supporters have said.The model for this would be the government initiative with the railways, which are being taken under public ownership via a plan first launched by Louise Haigh, Burnham’s campaign manager, when she was transport secretary. Over the course of about

10 years, they claim, the entire sector could be put in public control. They argue the British sector should be modelled on utility companies in Berlin orThey would include grid operations as currently carried out by National Grid and distribution, which is done by smaller companies which operate on a regional level. However, it is unlikely to include taking over power generation or selling electricity to consumers, which would remain in private hands.Critics say plans such as this would come at a heavy price to the taxpayer, something Burnham can ill afford given he has promised to stick to the government’s existing borrowing rules and not to raise income tax, VAT or national insurance.

He has also said he would consider cutting some employers’ national insurance contributions, and proposed a cut to business rates for pubs and small businesses.The Manchester mayor has already had to backtrack over one policy in recent days, having pledged to support the Waspı women, who say they have been unfairly hit by changes to the state pension age, before clarifying he would not back paying them compensation.Should he become prime minister he would also face immediate calls to raise the defence budget after the row over the defence investment plan which led to John Healey’s resignation as defence secretary this week.Some close to the mayor also want him to announce a package of measures to reduce the cost of living should he become prime minister. In one plan he would announce three significant measures: a one-year freeze on private rents, a cap on bus fares, and the removal of green levies from electricity bill, which would instead be paid for by taxes.Combining all three proposals would reduce inflation by 0.6 percentage points, according to its backers, and could be paid for in part by increasing capital gains tax as advocated by Wes Streeting, the former health secretary and one of Burnham’s most likely challengers for leadership.

Tropical heron spotted in UK for first time as more exotic birds arrive to thrill birdwatcher

Lebanon: Tropical heron spotted in UK for first time as more exotic birds arrive to thrill bird-watchers

Appearance of a western reef heron in north Wales is unlikely to be the last, as heating temperatures mean species can survive Britain’s winter, say expertsIt is a tropical bird typically encountered between west Africa and India, but last week a western reef heron arrived in north Wales in what is believed to be the first ever sighting in the UK.The heron was first spotted in Foryd Bay at the weekend before flying to nearby Caernarfon harbour where it fed among the boats.While the sighting has excited birdwatchers nationwide, experts said it also demonstrated how changing climate conditions have altered the bird’s range.“The fact that they are getting here in the first place, and then surviving, is likely to be because of increasingly mild winters,” said Nick Moran, training manager at the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).“It’s much easier to survive in the winter now than it was 50 years ago because we don’t see shallow water bodies freezing over with any regularity. These herons and egrets typically feed in relatively shallow water.

A squacco heron, another rare tropical bird typically found in southern Europe and north Africa, was also drawing birdwatchers to Lincolnshire this week. According to the BTO, the bird is only seen in the UK a few times a year. Alexander Lees, reader in biodiversity at Manchester Metropolitan University and chair of the British Ornithologists’ Union records committee, said the herons were the latest of “what were formerly largely tropical species whose distributions are shifting north with climate change”

“We are seeing a shift and a readjustment for biodiversity,” he said. “For instance, last year we had the first breeding record of zitting cisticola. It’s a Mediterranean small warbler, and that bird has moved north with climate change. The reason that species didn’t historically breed here is because it’s very sensitive to harsh winters. It couldn’t survive because if we had a prolonged cold spell, they all die. But we no longer get those prolonged cold spells.” Other notable tropical sightings in the UK over the last few years include the black-winged kite, which first visited in 2023 and has been delighting birdwatchers in Norfolk this year, the brown booby in 2019 and the white-rumped swift, which first colonised Spain from north Africa in the 1960s, spotted in Britain for the first time in 2018. The bird seen in Wales is an adult and likely to have arrived from Europe rather than directly from Africa, although it was impossible to say without tracking the bird’s route. “It could even be a bird that hatched in Europe,” Moran said

While Moran cautioned against expecting a sudden influx of the species, he said more sightings



were likely. “I don’t expect we’ll have dozens of records by this time next year, but I strongly suspect we’ll get more.”Find more age of extinction coverage here, and follow the biodiversity reporters Phoebe Weston and Patrick Greenfield in the Guardian app for more nature coverage

In 2022, the RSPB said that sightings of European bee-eaters, commonly seen in Africa and southern Europe, were an “unmissable sign” that the nature and climate emergency had reached Britain

Western reef herons have increasingly been recorded in southern Europe, including Spain and France, and had been expected to be sighted in the UK, Lees said.Simon Hugheston-Roberts, who first spotted the bird in Wales, told the BBC he was on a walk when he “was lucky to see a small dark heron flying over me on the shore”. Western reef herons have increasingly been recorded in southern Europe, including Spain and France, and had been expected to be sighted in the UK, Lees said.Simon Hugheston-Roberts, who first spotted the bird in Wales, told the BBC he was on a walk when he “was lucky to see a small dark heron flying over me on the shore”.

He added: “I’ve spent time birdwatching in

Africa and the Middle Eastso I’m familiar with a variety of different types of herons, as well as this species.”So, I applied my knowledge and years of experience of observing birds to inform a process of identification.

An adult tern with grey plumage and black cap sits with a fluffy chick on sandy ground with pebbles

Big gains for little terns: how Lindisfarne reserve is helping a rare birdsurvive tourism

Read more

Ian Lycett, who travelled to north Wales to see the bird, told BirdGuides: “That I would be watching a stunning new species for Britain, with the imposing Caernarfon Castle as a backdrop, was not what I initially expected to be doing at the weekend

“It was a long drive up from London on Sunday morning, but well worth the effort, as the heron offered fantastic views as it fed in the harbour at close range.”While the western reef heron is similar in size and structure to the common little egret, its blue-grey plumage sets it apart. “They’re very striking,” said Moran. “Unlike anything else we have here in the UK.”

June Super New Moon 2026: Approaches and remedies for ancestral healing



The Super New Moon has historically been regarded as a potent opportunity to reconnect with one’s heritage and pay tribute to the ancestors who preceded us. In Vedic traditions, Amavasya holds particular im-

portance for Pitru Tarpanam, a revered practice aimed at honoring and expressing appreciation for one’s forebears.

This year, the Super New Moon is further supported by the presence of exalted Jupiter

and Venus in Cancer, creating a favourable atmosphere for ancestral healing, family blessings, and emotional release. It offers an opportunity to reflect on inherited patterns, seek peace within your lineage, and

strengthen your connection with your family roots.

According to astrologer Sidh-harrth S Kumaar of NumroVani, here are some simple yet meaningful rituals and remedies you can follow during this power-

ful lunar phase. Take an energy-cleansing bath

Start your day with a purifying bath by adding a handful of black sesame seeds and 4-5 drops of Patchouli essential oil to your bath water. Black sesame seeds are traditionally associated with karmic cleansing, while Patchouli is believed to promote grounding and emotional stability. As you bathe, set a clear intention to release stagnant ancestral patterns and invite peace, healing, and harmony into your lineage. Perform Pitru Tarpanam

Offer water mixed with black sesame seeds while remembering your ancestors with gratitude. This ritual is a way of acknowledging the sacrifices, blessings, and life experiences that have contributed to your existence. Donate food and daily essentials

Amavasya is considered one of the most auspicious days for acts of charity performed in the name of ancestors. You may donate cooked food, grains,

black sesame seeds, clothing, or household essentials to someone in need. The act of giving without expecting anything in return is believed to generate positive merit that can be lovingly dedicated to your ancestral lineage. Feed crows, cows, and stray animals

In many traditions, feeding crows on Amavasya is consid-

ered a symbolic offering to the Pitrus, or ancestors. You can also feed cows, dogs, birds, or other animals during the day. Perform Pitru Tarpanam

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In many traditions, feeding crows on Amavasya is considered a symbolic offering to the Pitrus, or ancestors. You can also feed cows, dogs, birds, or other animals during the day. Light a sesame oil lamp

In the evening, light a sesame oil diya and spend a few quiet moments remembering your ancestors. Offer a simple prayer for peace, healing, and liberation. A heartfelt prayer spoken

with sincerity is often considered more meaningful than rituals performed mechanically.

Chant Vishnu Sahasranama The conjunction of Jupiter and Venus in Cancer creates a supportive energy for the worship of Lord Vishnu. Reciting the Vishnu Sahasranama during the day is believed to bring mental peace, spiritual balance, and a sense of inner calm. Make offerings to a peepal tree

Offer water mixed with milk and jaggery near the roots of a Peepal tree while praying for the well-being and harmony of your ancestors. The Peepal tree holds deep spiritual significance in Sanatan traditions and is often associated with protection, continuity, and ancestral remembrance. Practice forgiveness

Not every ancestral remedy requires a ritual. Sometimes, the most meaningful healing begins within. Choose one family grievance that you no longer wish to carry forward. Avoid conflicts, let go of resentment, and make a conscious effort to break an emotional pattern that may have been repeating across generations. Often, the greatest offering you can make to your ancestors is not another ceremony, but the willingness to heal what has remained unresolved and create a healthier path for the future.

Six methods to maintain a stylish and comfortable appearance



Denim is an essential component of any wardrobe, encompassing staples such as jeans and waistcoats. However, during the summer and transitional seasons, styling denim necessitates a more thoughtful approach, all while maintaining your personal style. The good news is that denim is highly versatile, and with the right combinations, you can achieve a polished summer look with smart casual essentials.

Hear from an expert on how to style denim this season. Amol Kadam, general manager design, at Spykar, shared with us how to carry denim this summer.

Styling is where most people get stuck, especially when denim starts to feel too heavy for the season. What is the rule? The designer outlined, “Summer

dressings is all about staying comfortable without compromising on style, and denim remains one of the easiest wardrobe staples to build looks around. The key lies in choosing relaxed silhouettes, breathable pairings, and lighter washes.” What does this mean? To put it simply, your goal should be to look for outfits which are not too uncomfortable, but look well-coordinated and put-together. This is where denim comes in, acting as an easy base for outfits. 1. Pair loose-fit denim with relaxed shirts

Easy-fit denims such as straight or loose silhouettes work best with linen, seer-sucker, or oversized cotton shirts. Half-sleeve shirts in neutral shades create an effortless, vacation-ready look while improving breathability. 2. Opt for lighter washes

and softer fabrics Mid-blue, faded, or vintage-inspired denim feels lighter visually and suits summer aesthetics.

Softer, lightweight denim fabrics offer better movement and comfort during warmer months. 3. Keep layering minimal

Swap heavy jackets for sleeveless overshirts, open shirts over tanks, or lightweight shackets.Minimal layering adds depth without making the outfit feel bulky.

4. Focus on comfortable footwear and clean styling Loose denim paired with simple sneakers, sandals, or loafers creates a balanced silhouette. Keeping accessories minimal allows the outfit to feel modern and versatile for everyday wear.

5. Try denim-on-denim, but keep it balanced Double denim continues

to stay relevant, especially when mixing different washes like light blue jeans with a darker denim shirt or overshirt. Relaxed fits and softer fabrics prevent the look from feeling heavy, making denim-on-denim ideal for casual summer styling.

6. Add pastel topwear and comfort-fit T-shirts Pastel shades such as sage green, off-white, dusty pink, powder blue, butter yellow, and muted beige complement denim effortlessly. Pairing loose or comfort-fit graphic tees, oversized crews, or relaxed polos with denim creates an easy, youthful summer look rooted in comfort.

This season, denim moves beyond rigid styling toward comfort-first dressing where relaxed fits, breathable fabrics, softer colours, and versatile silhouettes define everyday fashion.

Eight sophisticated selections for every type of festive appearance

When considering the styling of Indian attire, jewellery tends to capture the majority of the focus. Earrings, bangles, necklaces, and rings are frequently viewed as the final embellishments; however, there is one accessory that warrants greater recognition: the watch. The right watch can quietly elevate a saree, kurta set, anarkali, or lehenga look without taking away from the traditional charm. In fact, modern Indian dressing is all about mixing classic and contemporary elements, and a beautifully designed watch fits perfectly into that balance.

While chunky sports watches may not always complement festive outfits, delicate dials, bracelet straps, rose gold finishes, pearl details, and elegant designs blend beautifully with Indian silhouettes.

Whether you are dressing up for Diwali, weddings, family gatherings, or festive lunches, these watches can add that polished final touch.

8 watches that pair well with Indian wear

1. SALTY Analog Watch for Women: Designed with a feminine and elegant aesthetic, this SALTY analog watch makes a pretty addition to festive wardrobes. The delicate dial and stylish strap give it a jewellery-like feel, making it easy to pair with traditional outfits. It works especially well with pastel sarees, embroidered kurta sets, and flowy festive dresses where you want accessories to feel graceful rather than overpowering. Style it with: Pearl earrings, soft glam makeup, and pastel ethnic wear for a sophisticated festive look.

2. Titan Analog Rose Gold Dial Women’s Watch: Rose gold has become a favourite in both fashion and jewellery, and this Titan watch brings that same modern elegance to your wrist. The warm metallic tones complement Indian fabrics beautifully, especially silk, chiffon, and organza textures. Its classic dial keeps the design timeless, making it a watch you can wear beyond festive occasions too. It works equally well with office kurtas, wedding guest outfits, and everyday ethnic looks.

Style it with: Gold-toned jewellery, a silk saree, or a heavily embroidered kurta set.

3. ORSGA Clover Dial Bracelet Watch: This bracelet-style watch sits somewhere between an accessory and a timepiece. With its rose gold finish and decorative dial, it adds a jewellery-inspired touch to ethnic outfits. The delicate bracelet strap makes it a



great choice for occasions where you want your watch to blend seamlessly with your bangles and other accessories. Style it with: Stacked bangles, a statement ring, and festive outfits in jewel tones.

4. TEAL BY CHUMBAK Round Dial Watch: For those who like playful accessories, this TEAL BY CHUMBAK watch adds a fun personality to traditional dressing. The printed strap and colourful design make it different from classic metallic watches while still keeping the look elegant. It is ideal for daytime celebrations, casual festive gatherings, and modern ethnic outfits.

Style it with: Printed kurtas, cotton sarees, and minimal jewellery for a relaxed festive vibe.

5. ORSGA Fleur Bracelet Watch: Inspired by floral details, this bracelet watch brings a soft romantic element to ethnic dressing. The decorative design gives it a delicate charm that pairs beautifully with feminine silhouettes. Whether you’re wearing an anarkali or a floral saree, this watch adds a subtle finishing touch without competing with the outfit. Style it with: Floral ethnic wear, soft curls, and delicate earrings.

6. Sonata Quartz Analog White Dial Watch: A classic white dial watch is one of those wardrobe staples that never feels outdated. This Sonata design keeps things clean and elegant, allowing your outfit to take centre stage. Its simple silhouette makes it perfect for people who prefer understated accessories with ethnic wear.

Style it with: Linen sarees, cotton suits, and everyday silver jewellery.

7. Kashmiri Gold-Plated Ethnic Bracelet Watch: This piece leans more towards traditional jewellery than a regular watch. With gold tones, crystal detailing, and pearl-inspired elements, it complements festive outfits that need a little extra sparkle.

It is ideal for occasions where your accessories are meant to be part of the statement. Style it with: Heavy sarees, festive suits, and traditional jewellery sets.

8. TEAL BY CHUMBAK Elephant Collection Watch: This watch adds a cultural, artistic touch through its elephant-inspired design. It brings personality to your look while keeping the styling youthful and contemporary. It is a great choice for everyday ethnic dressing where you want something unique but not too heavy.

Style it with: Handloom sarees, printed kurtas, and boho-inspired jewellery. How to pick the right watch for Indian wear?

For heavily embroidered outfits, choose simpler watches that won’t compete with the detailing. For minimal outfits, bracelet-style watches or decorative dials can become the highlight. Gold and rose gold tones generally pair well with festive colours, while silver and neutral designs work beautifully with cooler palettes and everyday ethnic wear. The best ethnic wear accessories are not always the loudest ones. Sometimes, a beautifully chosen watch is all you need to make your look feel complete.

Dhamaal 4 trailer: Ajay Devgn leads hilarious treasure hunt adventure



Mumbai : The wait is finally over for fans of the Dhamaal franchise. The makers of Dhamaal 4 have unveiled the much-anticipated trailer, and it promises bigger laughs, crazier adventures, and absolute chaos. The trailer reunites the beloved Dhamaal gang as they embark on the biggest treasure hunt of their lives. The trailer showcases the return of the Dhamaal boys as they set off on the biggest treasure hunt of their lives. But a mountain of gold comes with a mountain of trouble, as the gang finds itself caught in a whirlwind of hilarious mis-

adventures, unexpected twists, and series of endless hurdles in a race to claim the treasure first. Who among them will emerge as the smartest and luckiest of all remains a mystery that will unfold on 10th July. Until then, one thing is guaranteed, unlimited laughs and non-stop madness! Dhamaal 4 brings together a powerhouse ensemble cast featuring Ajay Devgn, Arshad Warsi, Riteish Deshmukh, Jaaved Jaaferi, and Sanjay Mishra, along with Esha Gupta, Sanjeeda Shaikh, Anjali Anand, Upendra Limaye, Vijay Patkar and Ravi Kishan.

This eclectic line-up sets the stage for unrestrained madness, comic chaos and non-stop laughs. Known for its trademark humour, larger-than-life characters and wildly entertaining situations, Dhamaal 4 is gearing up to be a complete family entertainer and one of the most anticipated comedy releases of 2026. Gulshan Kumar and T-Series present, in association with Devgn Films, a T-Series Films, Maruti International, Panorama Studios production. DHAMAAL 4 is directed by Indra Kumar and produced by Ajay Devgn, Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Ashok Thakeria, Indra Kumar, Anand Pandit, and Kumar Mangat Pathak. Dhamaal 4 to release in cinemas on 10th of July 2026. The actor will be next seen in Drishyam 3. According to the latest reports, the much-awaited thriller franchise has now entered the post-production stage and is gearing up for its theatrical release on October 2, 2026. As reported by 123 Telugu, the Hindi version has achieved a major milestone, as the makers have officially wrapped up the shoot. The film has now entered the post production phase and is on track for its theatrical release on October 2, 2026.

Salman Khan seeks stay on Kala Hiran; Katrina Kaif eyes comeback with Chandni Bar 2

Mumbai : Salman Khan has moved the Delhi High Court seeking an immediate stay on the production, promotion and release of the film Kala Hiran: Battle for Legacy. The actor has alleged that the film, which is inspired by the 1998 blackbuck case, violates his personality rights. In his plea, Salman has accused the makers of Kala Hiran of using a lookalike and making him wear his signature bracelet. He also accused them of promoting the movie using his name. Besides this, the Bollywood superstar has also claimed that the release of the film could prejudice ongoing legal proceedings and harm his image. Katrina Kaif, who has been missing from the big screen for a long time, is now reportedly planning to make a comeback. If a latest report by Filmfare is to be believed, the actress is in talks with filmmaker



Madhur Bhandarkar for the sequel to his 2001 movie, Chandni Bar. Reportedly, Katrina is in the final cast list of Chandni Bar 2, which will be directed by Ajay Bahl. A source close to the film told the entertainment portal that the film will also star Tabu in the lead and will be based on a theme similar to its original one. While details about the storyline remain under wraps, the insider also claimed that the new Chandni Bar film will also be based on "the red light area and crime ecosystem." An official confirmation from the

makers regarding Chandni Bar and its cast is awaited. The tensions between Farhan Akhtar and Ranveer Singh continue to escalate after the Dhurandhar actor's alleged abrupt exit from Don 3. From legal notices to FWICE directives, the feud is playing out like a movie itself. Now, in an interesting development, FWICE's chief adviser, Ashoke Pandit, has revealed that many Bollywood insiders, including Aamir Khan, have personally tried to pacify these tensions. Ashoke Pandit told Hindi Rush, "Many people

from the industry, including Aamir Khan, had been trying to resolve the issue before it came to us. That also didn't work. Today it's Ranveer Singh. Tomorrow it could be someone else. This is what Excel is going through. If it was someone else, they would have gone to hell." Actress and politician Kangana Ranaut is back with her new movie, Bharat Bhagya Viddhaata. The film hit theatres today, on June 12, and it has already been receiving good reactions from the audience. Ahead of the release, Kangana spoke to the media during the promotions. Now, a clip of hers has been winning hearts online in which she can be seen speaking about the legacy of iconic actresses across generations and said that every era has its own defining faces. Interestingly, her reply had Deepika Padukone's name, which has impressed the netizens.

Roy Kapur films confirms Jaspal Rana biopic in emotional tribute

Shooter's legacy inspires biopic development



Mumbai : Roy Kapur Films has mourned the passing of legendary shooter and coach Jaspal Rana, who died at the age of 49 following a cardiac emergency. The production house, which was working closely with Rana on developing a script based on his life, shared an emotional tribute remembering his contribution to Indian sport and the generations of athletes he inspired. Taking to social media, Roy Kapur Films shared a heartfelt note for Rana, calling him a "true champion" and one of the architects of India's sporting excellence. The tribute read, "We mourn the passing of Jaspal Rana, a true champion, an extraordinary coach, and one of the architects of India's sporting excellence. His achievements on the shooting range brought glory to the nation, but perhaps his greatest legacy lies beyond the medals in the countless young

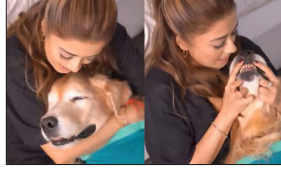
athletes he inspired, mentored, and shaped through his unwavering dedication to the sport he loved. Throughout his life, he embodied discipline, perseverance, and a relentless pursuit of excellence, devoting himself to nurturing the next generation of Indian champions." The note reflected not only the grief of losing a sporting icon but also the personal bond that the production house had built with him while working on his story. In the same post, Siddharth Roy Kapur's production house revealed that the team had been working with Rana on a film script inspired by his life. The banner shared that, during the process, they were deeply moved by his passion for Indian sport and his commitment to helping young athletes reach their full potential. The post further read, "As we worked together with him on developing his incredible story for celluloid, we were

deeply moved by his passion and singular commitment to helping his students realize their full potential and always being focused on the future of Indian sport. Yet beyond his achievements and dedication, what we will cherish most is his irreverence, his dry sense of humour, and his remarkable ability to keep everyone around him laughing. No matter the situation, he had us in splits with his stories, wit, and infectious spirit, bringing joy to every interaction." For Roy Kapur Films, Rana's life represented the kind of story the banner has often gravitated towards: one built on grit, discipline, sacrifice and quiet national pride. His journey as an athlete and mentor was not only about medals but also about the many lives he shaped away from the spotlight. Jaspal Rana had reportedly returned from the ISSF World Cup in Munich before his

health deteriorated. According to reports, he experienced chest discomfort during his return journey. After landing in New Delhi, he was admitted to Max Hospital in Saket, where medical examinations revealed a cardiac blockage. A stent was inserted, and there were initially signs of stability. However, his condition later worsened, and he passed away on Friday morning. Rana's death has left the Indian sporting community in shock. Known as one of India's finest shooters, he later became a high-performance coach and played a crucial role in mentoring young shooting talent. Jaspal Rana's contribution to Indian sport extended far beyond his own achievements as a shooter. Over the years, he became a guiding force for aspiring athletes, helping them understand the discipline, pressure and focus required to compete at the highest level. Those who knew him remember him not only as a champion and coach but also as a man of humour, warmth and relentless commitment to the future of Indian shooting. With Roy Kapur Films revealing that a biopic script was in development, Rana's life and journey may still find a larger cinematic expression someday. For now, the tribute stands as a reminder of a sporting figure whose influence will continue to live through the athletes he trained and the legacy he leaves behind.

Tina Datta mourns pet Bruno

Mumbai : Television actress Tina Datta has shared an emotional note after the passing of her pet dog, Bruno. The actress revealed that Bruno died on June 10 after spending 12-and-a-half years with her. Calling him her "first child," Tina said he had been at the centre of her world and had taught her what motherhood felt like. Taking to Instagram, Tina shared a heartfelt video and remembered the years she spent with Bruno. The actress wrote, "He was my first child, and he always will be. I understood what motherhood felt like because of Bruno. My entire world revolved around him. Every plan, every schedule, every decision somehow began and ended with my precious boy." Tina also opened up about Bruno's final days and admitted that the last phase had been difficult. She said those days were "rocky" and that, deep down, she knew his time was nearing an end. However, she felt that Bruno stayed a little longer for her, as if he was not ready to leave her side. The actress also shared that she would often sing to Bruno while feeding him, and over the years, one particular song had become his favourite.



Aamir Khan mediates Don 3 feud, reveals FWICE's Ashoke pandit



Mumbai : The controversy around Don 3 has been one of the most talked-about topics in Bollywood recently, based on the fallout between Ranveer Singh and the film's makers, Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani of Excel Entertainment. While the situation eventually reached the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE), leading to a non-cooperation directive, which has since been revoked, new details have emerged about efforts to resolve the conflict behind the scenes. Ashoke Pandit, the chief advisor of FWICE, recently revealed that several prominent industry figures attempted to mediate the dispute before it escalated to the federation. Notably, among

those who tried to intervene was Aamir Khan. Speaking to Hindi Rush, Ashoke Pandit shared, "Many people from the industry, including Aamir Khan, had been trying to resolve the issue before it came to us. That also didn't work. Today it's Ranveer Singh. Tomorrow it could be someone else. This is what Excel is going through. If it was someone else, they would have gone to hell. They would have sold their house. You may have ten valid reasons for not doing a film. But if money has been spent because you committed to the project, then those losses should be reimbursed." The dispute begun from Ranveer's sudden exit from the project shortly before filming was set to start. Reports say that

the filmmakers had already invested approximately ₹45 crore in pre-production. Farhan's Excel Entertainment sought compensation for these financial losses, arguing that the Ranveer's exit caused significant disruption. Pandit talked about the need for accountability in the industry, stating that it does not matter how big a star someone is, as no one should be allowed to back out of a committed project at the last minute without consequences. He also mentioned that while there were rumours suggesting Salman Khan had intervened due to his close ties with the Akhtar family, those claims were dismissed entirely, clarifying that Salman had no involvement in the matter.

Amitabh Bachchan films 12 shorts in one day



Mumbai : Megastar Amitabh Bachchan shared that he shot for 12 short films

and finished two still shoots in a single day before penning the blog for his fans,

whom he lovingly calls his extended family or EF. The icon took to his blog, where

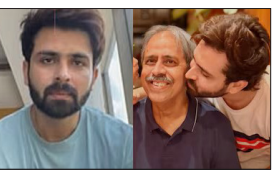
he mentioned that "work is work," and added that the process of staying connect-

ed should never stop. "Work is work .. work is work .. work is work .. !!! 12 short films today shot .. 2 still shoots done .. and now working on you. this process of the connect without further ado, is the work of the day. Baaki sab toh chalta rahega! Teh nahi rukna chahiye!! (sic)." An avid blogger, the octogenarian stated that one must continue to study diligently and never compromise despite changing circumstances. "Studying assiduously , even after days of preparation before the day of work: .. and never be compromised by circumstances .. and stance despite the air conditioned pyjamas ... !!!! (sic)." Big is currently keeping busy "Kalki 2898 AD" sequel helmed by Nag Ashwin. The film is an epic mythological science fiction, which also stars

names such as Kamal Haasan, Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, and Disha Patani. The first installment is set in a dystopian future in the year 2898 AD in the city of Kashi, the story follows a group on a mission to protect lab subject SUM-80's unborn child, believed to be Kalki, the final incarnation of Vishnu. Big B was last seen on screen Vettaian in the action thriller film directed by T. J. Gnanavel. The film stars an ensemble cast of Rajinikanth, Amitabh Bachchan Fahadh Faasil, Rana Daggubati, Manju Warrier, Ritika Singh, Dushara Vijayan, Rohini, Rao Ramesh, Abhirami and Ramesh Thilak. The film follows a senior police officer who accidentally shoots an innocent person during an encounter killing, while investigating the murder of a teacher.

Dipika Kakar's father-in-law out of ICU, recovering well

Mumbai : Shoaib Ibrahim's father was recently admitted to the hospital after suffering a brain haemorrhage. Since then, he has been in the ICU, but finally, there are signs of relief for the Ibrahim family. The actor took to his YouTube channel and, in a vlog featuring him and his wife, Dipika Kakar, gave an update on his father's health, revealing that he is "out of the ICU now." Sharing the update in his vlog, Shoaib Ibrahim said, "Everything is fine now. The CRP levels are also normal now. Yesterday, Papa was finally shifted from the ICU to a ward. I haven't been able to give any updates or shoot anything properly since then because it has been a new experience for Papa." Revealing a scary moment when his father wasn't responding to his calls, Ibrahim shared,

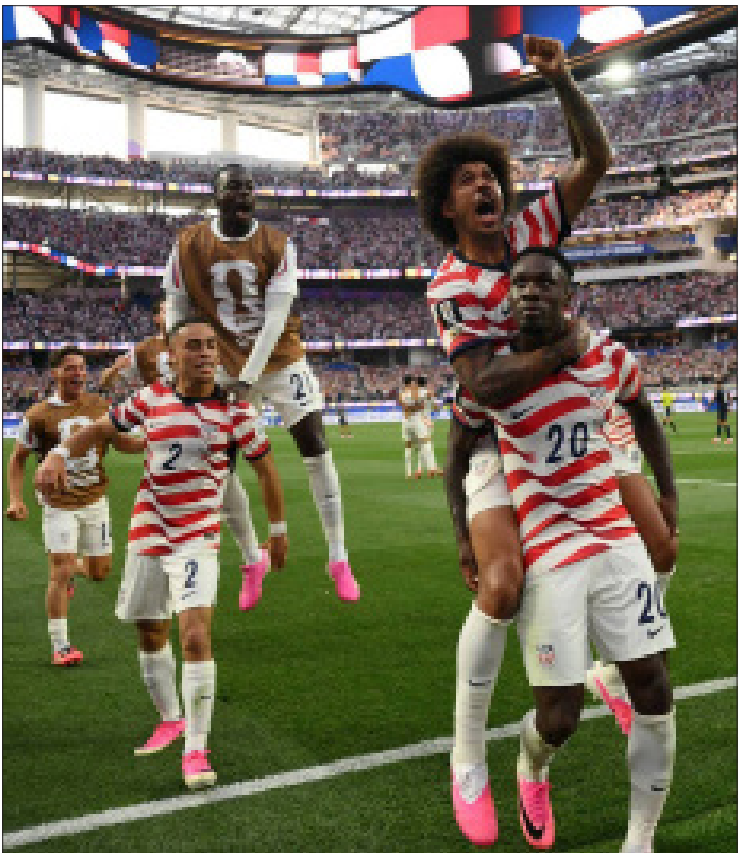


"At one point yesterday, I got scared. I was calling out to him, saying, 'Papa, Papa,' but he wasn't responding. Then, when I called out loudly again, he said he was feeling sleepy. I told him to go to sleep, and since then, he has been sleeping a lot." Ibrahim further shared that his father's physiotherapy and rehabilitation have also started. Revealing that his wife, actress Dipika, came to meet his father today, he said, "She had told me to inform her whenever Papa was shifted, and she would come." The actor also shared that his son has been suffering from a viral fever for the past two days and said, "He is better now."

Los Angeles conjures up irresistible spectacle as USA sparkle in opening act

Los Angeles: The ball is magic, remember. Just keep watching the ball. On a lovely soft powder blue night in Los Angeles the World Cup produced an opening act on its US front that might have been conjured by the whirling hands of Gianni Infantino himself, a Fifa president who increasingly has the air and the mannerisms of an elite celebrity stage magician. Or at the very least, of a man who appreciates the power of the show!It turns out California really does know how to put on one of those. There was even a moment before kick-off that seemed to capture the cosmically strange nature of the entire Fifa multiverse. A little later the headline act Katy Perry would appear in a silver bustle and perform on a podium alongside a 10-year-old TikToker. Before that we got the Korean pop sensation Lisa, who has 105 million Instagram followers, or 102.5 million more than the USMNT, backed by a troupe of men performing surprisingly sexualised hip thrusts and groin grabs that no doubt express, on some deeper level, the value of international team sport.

Adjacent to this a man in a tracksuit appeared holding aloft a golden ball, like some ancient deity hoisting God’s gonad on his shoulders. At which point an enormous golden Fifa sign appeared, all four letters at least 50ft high, winched down out of the ether like a vision of divine grace – if not the most ludicrous sporting spectacle of all time, then surely the most ludicrous yet.What is the vast golden Fifa sign even supposed to signify? Behold: the acronym of an administrative organisation! What power is it expressing, what legitimacy? How should we worship it? How do we escape its wrath?The Fifa sign did eventually re-reascend, grudgingly. And by the end of the night a USA team that came into this tournament with fingers crossed had run all over a disappointing Paraguay, scoring three times in the first half en route to a breezy 4-1 win. Every World Cup needs its hosts to start well. Even more so in the US, where there is always the lurking fear the president might decide to sulk or lose interest, like an



angry toddler overturning his train set. Mainly Fifa needed it, at a World Cup that has been stretched thin and made strange, converted into a politicised public leisure-tainment product, in a nation that seems to be constantly at war with itself.A single fun, distracting day on the Pacific coast might still turn out to be the equivalent of turning up the music to mask the sound of the neighbours arguing through the wall. But we know how the spectacle works. And this was irresistible in a Los Angeles kind of way, on one of those nights when even the air seems to turn soft and blue.Before kick-off the main rump of USA fans had come sweeping down the boulevards in a rush of flares and pageantry, like the massed reserves in a civil war re-enactment. There is a slight misconception these fans see themselves as hard core ultras. In reality this is more like a costume party, an Uncle Sam-ish show of Americana, stars and stripes dungarees, twirling flags, pom-poms, straw hats, bow ties that spin around.The

stadium here is stunning, all swooping lines, cooling fountains and funnelled breezes, a place that looks like it was designed by people in robes on some far-flung Star Trek planet. It really should be staging the final, even if it will still cost you a scandalous \$23.50 for a beer on the concourse. Fireworks flared. There were deafening roars of “Yoo Ess Ay”. Mauricio Pochettino appeared on his touchline in a blue grey suit and white trainers, hair rakishly long, looking like a 1980s cop whose work takes place exclusively on speedboats filled with diamonds. And the USA started in a whirl of high pressing and forward movement, impressively fearless on a day that represents the biggest moment in any of these players’ international careers. The opening goal was made by Weston McKennie’s driving run and a cutback deflected into his own net by Damián Bobadilla. Paraguay had beaten Brazil and Argentina in qualifying. Here they spent the opening hour in a sullen defensive crouch, fulfilling Gustavo

Álvarez’s brief to become “the team no one wants to face”, if only because this involves watching them play.Folarin Balogun got the second on the half hour mark. And there is a significant point here, even a note of grace through the fog. A certain version of America is being punted around the place right now. This vast democracy, a place of immigrants and liberty, has been rattling down its fences, pursuing its own citizens, parroting a divisively insular rhetoric.This USA team does represent something else. It is a hugely mixed and diverse group of dual nationals, people with roots in places from Liberia to Croatia. Balogun, the decisive presence on the pitch, is of Nigerian descent, a place Trump has insulted, bombed and excluded. And here that diverse and spirited team did the thing sport does, modelling an ideal of harmony and fellowship, making a stadium and wider sporting nation happy. Moments like this don’t solve anything. But sport is always trying to tell you something, if you can be bothered to listen. Balogun got the third too, leaving two defenders played on the turf and spanking the ball into the top corner as the crowd cooed and gurgled and tumbled over itself. There was time to cheer the celebrity reel on the giant screen, David Beckham and Tom Cruise beaming like a nuclear-grade twin celebrity megalith, IShowSpeed gurning and gesturing, excited to a preternatural level just to see himself reflected in a camera lens, startled every time to find he still exists.Trump was absent here, and replaced by Marco Rubio in the seat next to Infantino, who looked a little grudging and sad, like that scene in Goodfellas where Henry Hill is forced to endure a double date, then rushes off before the coffee comes.Perhaps Rubio can now stay on for the next game here, which features Iran, and a dramatic gear change into war, dissent and geopolitics.But this strange, bloated three-part tournament did at least take on some kind of shape in California, the place where the land ends and America fades into the blue. And suddenly the next five weeks do at least look and feel a little more like a World Cup.

In a USA win for the history books, what stood out most was the ‘fun’ and free nature of it

To find a precedent for the United States’ win over Paraguay, one must return to a time when World Cup teams were forced to drop out due to the Great Depression, and the ones who did make it arrived via ship, playing with a leather ball held together by seam and laces.

The dominant 4-1 win matched a 96-year-old landmark – the largest margin of victory for the USA in a men’s World Cup game (they won 3-0 twice in the inaugural 1930 tournament, against Belgium and, in a neat bit of symmetry, Paraguay).

Friday’s four-goal romp also marked the most goals scored by the USA at a men’s World Cup. It featured a 3-0 first-half blitz that matches the previous most unexpected 45 minutes of World Cup soccer played in the modern history of the program: the 3-0 lead built in 2002 against Portugal, a result the ESPN commentator Jack Edwards famously guaranteed was “stopping traffic all over Europe”.

The result will live on in the record books for these reasons. But it will hold a special place in the hearts and minds of US fans because of the ethereal, less-fungible stuff.

“I think we are winning a lot of fans, and adding fans for this sport,” Mauricio Pochettino said of his side’s performance. “I think it was a great match; was amazing for our fans to see this type of game.” No longer were the USA the same workman-like outfit that had featured at previous World Cups, white-knuckling through on the strength of their grit and grind (though they showed some of that too, not letting a second-half Paraguay goal knock them off course).

The iconic element of the



USA’s opening victory was the very manner of it. Combinations flowed freely in midfield, defenders were split and dragged with alacrity. Neat finishes off moves well-worked enough to make the opening Paraguay-an own goal an afterthought. Oohs and aahs stirred in the sold-out crowd of 70,492 at Los Angeles Stadium.

“It’s pretty special to watch,” said Christian Pulisic, who was on a heater of his own before being pulled at half-time due to a knock picked up in the first half, and later brushed off as nothing serious. “It’s fun to look around and know that there’s different guys that can pull off these different skills and moves and things going on. It’s great. I feel like there’s such a good connection between us right now.”

The USA midfielders tied Paraguay’s defensive unit in knots with rotations, in a manner that the Paraguay manager, Gustavo Alfaro, compared with “floating”. “This is a team that is complex, because they have answers to every element you throw at them,” Alfaro said. “We knew they were a very complex rival. We knew they have coordination, broadness, triangulations, and we were not ready ... They dominated technically, tactically and physically

as well.” One could call it, by some distance, the best World Cup performance ever by a USA men’s team. And it contained within it two of the best individual performances by US players at a World Cup.

Pulisic became USA’s leader for World Cup assists and was dangerous throughout his 45 minutes. And in Folarin Balogun’s double, the US has its first multi-goal scorer in a single World Cup game since 1930 – that year again – when Bert Patenaude put three past, you guessed it, Paraguay.

But in the same breath as he praised Pulisic and Balogun, Pochettino emphasized the collective nature of the performance, naming every starter on the pitch in quick succession, calling their performances “amazing”. “You want to push me to talk about names, and it’s about the team ... the collective approach,” he said. “Of course, we have talented players that you can observe ... but one thing we need to praise is the collective effort.”

It was a collective approach that led to what Balogun called a “dreamy night” in Southern California. “I felt like it was a real statement.”But was it the best of all time?“I’m not one to speculate,” Pulisic said. “I haven’t seen all of them.”

Notices to food brands over consumer complaints

New Delhi, June 13: The food safety standards authority of India (FSSAI) has issued notices to several food business operators, including Nestlé India, KFC and Flipkart, over allegations of selling contaminated product and operating in unhygienic conditions after taking cognisance of social media complaints, according to people familiar with the matter. “It is true that notices have gone to several food businesses. The notices have been issued based on social media complaints raised by consumers on compliance issues by certain food businesses and brands that recently went viral on social media,” said a senior official in the food safety and standards authority of India, requesting anonymity.

According to reports, the notices have been issued to Nestlé India for Maggi, KFC, Flipkart and food brand Open Secret for alleged lapses. The apex food regulator acted suo motto after at least three separate complaints were made that were widely circulated online.

The notice to Nestlé has been reportedly on allegations that insects were found inside a packet of Maggi noodles, for which FSSAI has sought Action Taken Report that includes details of the vendor, internal quality-check logs for the said batch, corrective measures taken to remove affected product from the supply chain and steps being implemented to prevent a recurrence of the issue. Nestle refuted these claims, saying, “We categorically reject the allegations circulating on media basis an



unverified account regarding the presence of infestation, allegedly on MAGGI noodles. We are yet to receive the complaint sample from the complainant as the account is unreachable. A detailed representation, supported by all relevant facts, quality records from batch and market samples, test reports, has already been submitted to the competent authorities.

The notice to KFC was issued to one of its outlets in MVR Mall in Andhra Pradesh’s Eluru, after there were allegations made that the outlet was operating in unhygienic conditions. The regulator has sought details of deficiencies related to hygiene, sanitation, food handling, storage, waste management, pest control and employee hygiene, along with documentary evidence of corrective and preventive measures in this regard.

The third notice has been served to Open Secret’s product—“Unjunked Dates”— over allegations that the product that was delivered through Flipkart Minutes, contained insects. FSSAI has sought internal quality-control records, details of corrective actions taken to remove the product from the supply chain and measures aimed at preventing similar incidents from both concerned parties, according to people familiar with the matter.

SIT will reply to court on new Dharmasthala claims: Minister

Bengaluru, June 13: Karnataka home minister Priyank Kharge said on Friday that investigators probing allegations linked to the Dharmasthala case would respond before the Karnataka High Court, after a writ petition by the key accused,CN Chinniah, introduced allegations of a conspiracy involving funds aimed at discrediting the temple town. Kharge declined to comment on the substance of the allegations, saying the matter was now before the court and that the Special Investigation Team’s (SIT) response would be submitted through judicial proceedings rather than debated publicly.

“It is a court monitored probe. The court has asked the SIT certain questions, and the SIT chief will reply to them. It cannot be discussed publicly. Once the reply is given to the court, it will be known,” he told reporters in Bengaluru.

The minister was responding to questions about a writ petition filed by Chinniah before the Karnataka High Court. Chinniah, whose earlier allegations led to the formation of the SIT, has now claimed that he was drawn into a larger effort to malign Dharmasthala and has sought



directions for investigators to complete their probe and proceed against those allegedly involved. Media reports have also cited claims in the petition that large amounts of money were used to support the purported conspiracy. Kharge said those assertions remained unverified.

“There are media reports that a submission has been made in court. ₹200 crore is being alleged, which is not a small amount. How much of it is true is not known,” he said.

“He is the same person who had claimed about multiple murders, rapes and burials. It needs to be

verified whether he is telling the truth.”

According to details emerging from the petition, Chinniah allegedly named activist Mahesh Shetty Timarodi, Girish Mattanavar, Vitthal Gowda and Jayant, among others, accusing them of coordinating a campaign against Dharmasthala.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj has issued notices to the state government and the SIT and directed investigators to submit a status report by June 29. The petition also reportedly refers to actor Prakash Raj and includes allegations regarding a telephone con-

versation. Asked about the actor’s name appearing in the filing, Kharge said the mere mention of an individual in court documents should not be treated as evidence of wrongdoing.

“Just because a name is mentioned, one cannot be considered a criminal. The court has sought a reply from the SIT chief. Let him reply. Before that, these matters cannot be discussed in the media,” he said.Prakash Raj later said he would address the issue publicly within the next few days.

“It has come to my attention that some news and discussions about me are being circulated in the media and on social media regarding the Dharmasthala case. Since this is an extremely sensitive matter that has affected the faith of millions of devotees, it is my duty to respond to these doubts and questions,” he said in a post on X.

“I am currently away. In the next couple of days, I will personally return and address the media. Until then, please do not believe rumours or the exaggerated and fabricated stories that some malicious individuals are trying to attach to this news.”

The developments triggered fresh demands from the BJP for

greater transparency in the investigation. Senior BJP leader Sunil Kumar called on the government to release the SIT’s findings and disclose who was behind the allegations that led to the inquiry. State BJP president BY Vijayendra alleged that a conspiracy had been mounted to damage the reputation of Dharmasthala and sought an investigation into the alleged flow of funds mentioned in recent claims.

“It is now being revealed that hundreds of crores are involved in this,” Vijayendra said. “Who was behind this? Who invested? Why did the then CM turn a blind eye and give it to the SIT? The people of the country and Hindus want the truth to come out in all this.” The controversy dates back to allegations made by Chinniah last year that he had buried multiple bodies over a period of two decades in Dharmasthala, including the remains of women who he claimed had been subjected to sexual assault. Those allegations led the state government to constitute a Special Investigation Team. Investigators later excavated several locations identified by Chinniah near the Netravathi River and recovered skeletal remains at two sites.

Establish Multi-layered security during Amarnath Yatra

New Delhi, June 13: Union home minister Amit Shah on Friday directed security agencies to establish a multi-layered, impregnable security grid along the Amarnath Yatra route and at major tourist destinations in Jammu and Kashmir to ensure a safe and peaceful pilgrimage, statement issued by the Union home ministry said.

Chairing a high-level review meeting on security and logistical preparations for the Yatra in Delhi, Shah said the traditional security apparatus should be further

strengthened through the extensive use of drones, CCTV monitoring, surveillance systems and other modern technologies.

He also instructed senior officers of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Jammu and Kashmir Police to remain stationed at camp sites and continuously monitor arrangements on the ground.The annual yatra is scheduled to be held from July 3 to August 28.“The home minister directed that an integrated and impregnable security cover be put in place through close co-

ordination among the Jammu and Kashmir Police, CAPFs and other security agencies. The traditional security framework should be further strengthened through the extensive use of modern technologies such as drones, CCTV surveillance, advanced monitoring systems and other technological tools,” a home ministry spokesperson said, citing directions issued by the home minister during the meeting.

The meeting was attended by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, Jammu and Kashmir Lt

Governor Manoj Sinha, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Intelligence Bureau Chief Tapan Kumar Deka, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Director General GP Singh, besides other senior security and administrative officials.

The home minister also emphasised that adequate arrangements should be ensured for essential services, including pilgrim registration, accommodation, healthcare facilities and disaster management.

He further directed that the

movement of pilgrim batches be regulated strictly in accordance with prevailing weather conditions and forecasts, the statement said.

Shah also stressed the need for robust security arrangements at major tourist destinations beyond the pilgrimage route, so that pilgrims can safely enjoy their visit. During the meeting, officials informed Shah that arrangements had been made for the registration of local persons and animals associated with the yatra. QR code-enabled identity cards will be issued to them, while health exam-

ination and fitness assessment camps will be organised for animals engaged in yatra-related activities, the statement said.

The 57-day pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in the Himalayas requires a massive security deployment, with the Central and Union Territory agencies working in close tandem.Pilgrims will travel through the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district.

PV Sindhu knocks out of Australian Open after semifinal defeat against Akane Yamaguchi

Sydney: India's ace shuttler PV Sindhu's quest for her first major title in the ongoing 2026 season continued as she went down to reigning world champion Akane Yamaguchi in the semi-finals of the Australian Open 2026 in Sydney on Saturday. The world No. 10 lost 22-20, 21-12 to world No. 3 Yamaguchi in a 43-minute clash in the BWF Super 500 tournament, according to Olympics.com This was Sindhu's second semi-final finish on the 2026 BWF World Tour. Earlier, she had reached the last four at the Malaysia Open Super 1000 in January, where she was defeated by China's Wang Zhiyi. The two-time Olympic medallist's most recent title on the BWF circuit came at the Syed Modi International in Lucknow in 2024. In a closely fought opening game, Sindhu made a strong start and held a slim advantage at the mid-game break. After the restart, Yamaguchi surged back with a six-point streak to take control,



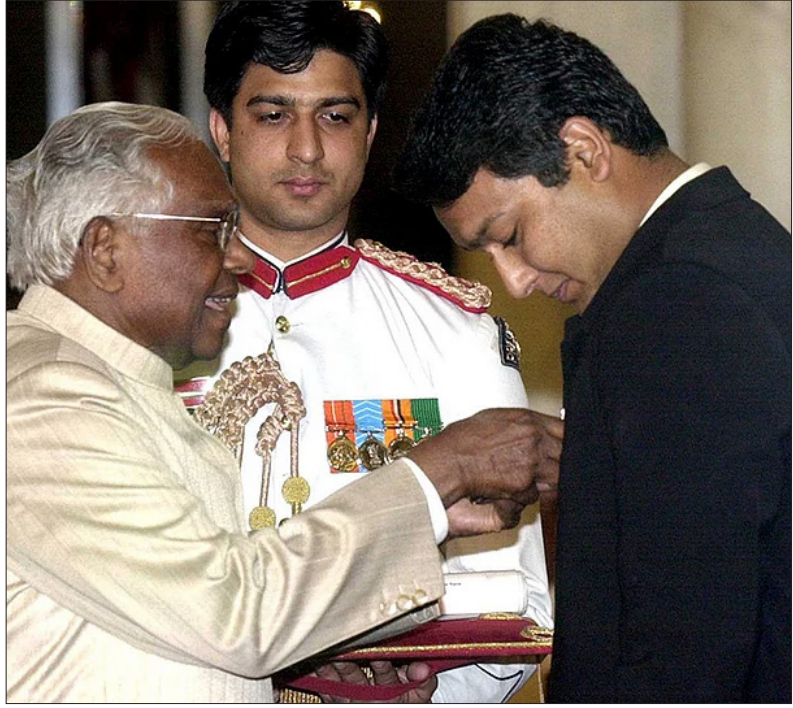
before Sindhu responded to regain momentum and edge ahead once again. The game went down to the wire, with Sindhu saving a match point at 20-19, but she eventually conceded the opener. In the second game, Yamaguchi dominated from the outset, racing to a 13-6 lead with a run of seven consecutive points and maintaining control to seal the match. With this defeat, Sindhu's campaign at the tournament came to an end, marking the exit of all Indian players from the Australian Open. India's men's doubles challenge

had ended earlier after MR Arjun and Hariharan Amsakarunan retired from their quarter-final match, while none of the Indian men's singles players progressed beyond the opening round. Hailing from Coimbatore, and trained by R Manoj Kumar served up quite the performance in front of a packed house, as she saw off the challenge from Mei Yamaguchi in the Quarter-final with a scoreline of 6-4, 3-6, 6-2, a Mumbai Open release said. Maaya's win means she is now the only Indian to still be in contention for the top prize in the singles

draw at the ongoing Mumbai Open WTA 125 Series. Maaya will now take on Jil Teichmann in the semi-final on Saturday. Maaya had a rocky start, trailing 1-3 after four games played in the first set. But, she made an incredible comeback and won the last three games on the trot to claim the first set 6-4. The second set saw Mei Yamaguchi fight hard for every point in an extremely tight contest. The score was 3-3 after which the Japanese moved through the gears quickly, to bring the contest to level pegging. Mei continued her winning ways in the first game of the final set but the narrative and momentum changed quite quickly. Maaya stunned her opponent winning the next five games on the bounce to take a commanding lead. Maaya scored five aces and saved seven of her 12 break points during the course of three sets. Her cross shots and swift movement on the baseline stood out as she clinched the game after winning the final set 6-2.

Jaspal Rana: From top marksman to legendary master coach, an extraordinary sporting journey ends

New Delhi: Jaspal Rana is no more. The maverick shooter who went on to become the focal point of Indian pistol team's successes, passed away in Delhi on Friday. He underwent a procedure where a stent was inserted after a blockage was detected at Saket's Max Hospital. As per the doctors attending to him, Jaspal was scheduled to be discharged on Friday after recovering from a heart attack. However, he suffered a cardiac rupture and passed away in his sleep. The maverick shooter's demise at only 49 has shocked the shooting community. Even political leaders were taken aback by his sudden death. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and defence minister Rajnath Singh and a host of political leaders condoled his death. Jaspal's life mirrors his career. As a young star, Rana shot into the limelight by winning the gold medal at the World Shooting Championships in 1994 and the Asian Games gold medal in the center fire pistol event. It peaked during the 2006 Asian Games in Doha, where he won three gold medals. Yet he knew he could have delivered many more medals, including at the Olympics. How else can one explain that Rana took part in only one Olympic Games, in 1996 Atlanta, US. He knew the answer. "We were not aware of a lot of things when I started shooting. Lack of discipline and good coaching was one of the reasons why we were not consistent enough," he had said to this correspondent some



years ago. Discipline became a cornerstone of his coaching philosophy when he was charged by the then National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) president Raninder Singh to lead India's junior shooting programme. Results came quickly; Manu Bhaker, Anish Bhanwala, became junior World Champions as Indian juniors began climbing the medals tally. However, Jaspal never compromised on discipline. Once he

openly shouted at Bhanwala for breaking the national camp's discipline. His fault was an untucked India T-shirt. Never to back down, Jaspal had several fallouts with his young trainees, including with Manu, before the Tokyo Olympics. Jaspal was pitching for the inclusion of Chinki Yadav in the squad as he reckoned Manu, as a first-time Olympian, though World No. 1 ranked, should not be tasked to shoot in three competitions.

New Zealand batting great Kane Williamson retires from all international cricket



Wellington: New Zealand's most prolific run-scorer and arguably greatest-ever batsman Kane Williamson announced his immediate retirement from international cricket on Friday. The 35-year-old former skipper announced his exit ahead of the second Test against England at The Oval next week. He played in the Black Caps' defeat in the first Test at Lord's, making 0 and 18. "I've thought about it for a while, but over the last few days it's become clear now is the right time," he said. "I've always felt a strong drive and hunger for international cricket, and I take pride in knowing I've given it my all in every match I've played for New Zealand. Continuing with anything less wouldn't be right and I

feel fortunate to step away on my own terms. I leave feeling optimistic about where this group is heading," he added. "There's a huge amount of talent and a real desire to do something special with this New Zealand team." Williamson made his international debut in 2010 and played 378 games for his country, finishing as New Zealand's all-time leading run-scorer with 19,346 including 48 centuries and six double-centuries. He played 110 Tests, smacking 33 centuries, in his way to 9,515 runs at an average of 54.06. His leadership style was much admired as he captained the side in all three formats during a golden period from 2016 to 2024. During that time, they made two World Cup finals, three

semi-finals, and won the inaugural World Test Championship in 2021. England wrapped up a 115-run victory over New Zealand before lunch on Day 4 of the first cricket test at Lord's on Sunday, marking a positive start to its "Bazball" reset after the Ashes humiliation Down Under. Resuming on 55-5 and requiring 254 for an unlikely win, New Zealand lost its remaining five wickets inside the first two hours of play and was dismissed for 138. England pacer Gus Atkinson finished with team-best figures of 5-30 on a challenging, bowler-friendly surface at the home of cricket that saw 24 batters out bowled or lbw. It was fitting that the match ended with the middle stump flattened after Atkinson clean-bowled Kiwi tail-ender Matt Henry. That left Glenn Phillips stranded at the other end on 44 not out, making him New Zealand's top scorer of a disappointing test for the tourists. "You've got to play what's in front of you, you've got to identify the conditions as a team and understand what you think is the best way for you to go out there and win," England captain Ben Stokes said of the conditions in a match that lasted just 166 overs. "And we did that better than New Zealand this week." This first test series of the summer has been regarded as a fresh start for England.

USA thrash Paraguay four-one to kick off World Cup campaign in style

New Delhi: The United States could not have asked for a better start to their home FIFA World Cup campaign, defeating Paraguay 4-1 in their Group D opener at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, on Friday. Playing a World Cup match on home soil for the first time since 1994, the hosts took control from the outset and rarely looked troubled. An early own goal from Damian Bobadilla set the tone before Folarin Balogun struck twice in the first half to put the Americans firmly in command. Paraguay pulled one back through Mauricio in the second half, but the result was never in doubt as Gio Reyna capped an impressive night with a stunning stoppage-time strike to seal a convincing victory for Mauricio Pochettino's side. Balogun thought he had doubled the lead shortly before the half-hour mark, only for the effort to be ruled out for



offside. The striker did not have to wait long for his goal. In the 31st minute, Pulisic again proved the creator, slipping a precise pass through the Paraguay

defence for Balogun to finish first time. The Monaco forward struck again in first-half stoppage time with the goal of the match. Receiving Malik Tillman's

pass on the right edge of the penalty area, Balogun cut inside two defenders before curling a superb effort into the top corner to make it 3-0 at the break.

Can Carlo Ancelotti end Brazil's twenty-four-year wait, or is the World Cup a different game?



New Delhi: There are few jobs in football that arrive with more expectations than managing Brazil, and there are few managers better equipped to handle expectation than Carlo Ancelotti. The Italian has spent the last three decades collecting trophies across Europe, winning league titles in five countries and Champions Leagues almost wherever he

has gone, yet even he admits there is something different about standing on the touchline with the weight of an entire football nation resting on his shoulders. That responsibility officially begins against Morocco later today, when Ancelotti takes charge of Brazil in a World Cup match for the first time. This is a man whose career has included enough Champions

League nights to fill an entire Netflix series, so a World Cup group game should theoretically be just another Saturday at work. Ancelotti's pre-match remarks, however, suggested even he knows this job comes with a different level of noise. "Fear is an important part of life," Ancelotti said in the most Ancelotti way in the pre-match press conference. The 67-year-old

knows Brazil arrive at this tournament carrying the expectations that always follow the yellow shirt, but also the reality that the most successful nation in football has spent the last two decades searching for another World Cup triumph. Brazil's last title came in 2002. Since then, there have been quarter-final exits, managerial changes, and numerous moments of

pain, none bigger than the 7-1 defeat to Germany in 2014. So Ancelotti has history posing at his biggest opponent on Day 1 of the World Cup as the Brazil boss. Brazil's opening opponents are Morocco, the team that became the first African nation to reach a World Cup semi-final in Qatar and spent the tournament dismantling even heavyweights like Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal.

Which means Ancelotti's first World Cup assignment is far from a gentle introduction. Brazil are still loaded with talent, of course. They always are. Even in a phase of uncertainty, there is enough quality here to make opponents carve out special tactical plans. Vinicius Junior enters the competition as one of the most dangerous attackers in world football, capable of turning a game in the space of two touches. Raphinha has quietly become one of the most productive forwards around, while Casemiro and Marquinhos provide the kind of experience that tends to become invaluable once tournaments move into knockout football.

Ex-champion shooter and legendary coach Jaspal Rana leaves behind a massive legacy



Chennai: Jaspal Rana didn't know the subtlety of camouflaging bitter truth with sweeteners. His words usually seemed difficult to swallow but like his shooting skill, they were never off the mark and more often than not hits the target. Fiery in nature with a strict demeanor, Rana was considered a tough taskmaster and an iconoclast. But once you build the trust, it's difficult to live without him. And of course, he was a man who knew nothing about re-treating. But there was softness in his heart. The non-chalant attitude came across as affront to some, especially officials of the sport. But Jaspal never cared. There were times when the entire posse

of shooting officials slighted him. No matter how hard he was pushed around he found ways to bounce back. He always called spade a spade. Jaspal was quite outspoken and straight forward too. He always used to say that what ever he used to do was for the sport and its future. This very trait of his used to bring him in direct confrontation with the authorities. He suffered and suffered but he never complained nor back down. He never cared. Now, he never will. British singer Ozzy Osbourne's song echoes the sentiments: "Leaving, I hate to see you cry/Grieving, I hate to say good-bye/Dust and ash forever, yeah/Though I know we must be parted/As sure as

stars are in the sky/I'm gonna see when it comes to glory/ And I'll see you, I'll see you on the other side..." Ask double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker, who considered him as a father figure. Weeks before the Paris Olympics, during a casual conversation, Manu admitted to The New Indian Express, "When I see him (her coach Jaspal Rana) around, I get courage." Rana, later in Chateauroux, venue for the Paris Games shooting, said, "If you believe in someone you just don't need to talk. That happens with any coach and a ward I think." When Manu won the bronze, he quietly left. And emerged only after the spotlight shifted from Manu.