

Meghalaya CM urges mandatory traditional attire one day weekly in Assembly

Shillong, Aug 24: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma has proposed a weekly dress code for state lawmakers, urging Speaker Thomas A. Sangma to make wearing traditional indigenous attire mandatory for at least one day during every legislative session. Sangma pitched the cultural initiative on the opening day of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly’s autumn session to promote regional handloom, support indigenous weavers, and highlight the state’s cultural heritage.

Demonstrating the concept himself, the Chief Minister attended the House wearing a shirt crafted from Ryndia—Meghalaya’s traditional, eco-friendly, and cruelty-free organic Eri silk. Sangma announced that he intends to wear Ryndia garments throughout the entire five-day autumn session. Addressing the Assembly, he emphasized that adopting indigenous textiles in public office serves as a direct boost to local farmers, sericulture workers, and rural handloom artisans who depend on the cottage industry.

Urged the Assembly Speaker to designate one specific sitting day—such as a Tuesday or Thursday—where all elected members wear traditional attire representing Khasi, Jaintia, or Garo cultures.

Highlighted that institutional adoption of local fabrics like



Ryndia provides economic incentives for rural weaving clusters across the state. Stated that introducing traditional

dress into formal parliamentary proceedings reflects state pride and presents a vibrant showcase of Meghalaya’s heritage. Promoted Eri silk (Ryndia) as an eco-conscious model of sustainable textile production that aligns with global green manufacturing standards. The Chief Minister noted that the initiative would transform the visual identity of the House while generating sustained market demand for local handloom products. The proposal received positive attention from assembly members, with the Speaker expected to consider the logistics of integrating the designated day into future parliamentary calendars.

Nagaland confirms African Swine Fever in New Pangsha, Noklak

Kohima, Aug 24: The district administration of Noklak, Nagaland, has formally declared New Pangsha village as an “Infected Zone” following official confirmation of an African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak. The declaration was issued by Deputy Commissioner P. Mono Khiamniungan under standard government biosecurity protocols to halt further transmission of the highly contagious viral disease.

Laboratory confirmation was established after tissue samples collected from pig mortalities in New Pangsha village tested positive for ASF at the Animal Health Centre, North Eastern Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (NERDDL) in



Khanapara, Guwahati. Following reports of pig deaths across the region, immediate containment measures have been enforced to safeguard livestock populations. An area within a 1-kilometer radius of New Pangsha village has been classified as an “Infected Zone,” while an extended 10-kilometer radius beyond the boundary is designated as a “Surveillance Zone”. The slaughtering, purchase, sale, and inter-district transportation of live pigs, pork, and related products are strictly prohibited within the declared zones until further notice.

Nagaland to revamp schools, launch emergency teacher drive

Kohima, Aug 23: The Nagaland government has announced a comprehensive restructuring plan for its public education sector, incorporating the closure and amalgamation of low-enrolment schools, the creation of composite institutions, and an emergency drive to recruit science and mathematics teachers.

Addressing the General Conference of the Nagaland Government Higher Secondary School Employees Association (NGHSS-SEA) in Kohima, Advisor for School Education Dr. Kekhrielhoulie Yhome outlined the reform package aimed at boosting enrolment, optimizing resources, and strengthening governance across state-run institutions.

The Department of School Education will merge low-enrolment institu-



tions and set up composite schools—integrating classes from elementary through higher secondary levels on single premises to offer continuous learning pathways and boost retention.

To address acute shortages in technical subjects—specifically mathematics, physics, and chemistry—the state Cabinet has approved emergency recruitment of graduate teachers. Dr. Yhome noted that the government may consider recruiting qualified candidates from outside Na-

Minister Ojing Tasing meets Land Resources Secretary, pitches for PMKSY 3.0 funds

Itanagar, Aug 23: Arunachal Pradesh Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Ojing Tasing met with the Secretary of the Union Department of Land Resources in New Delhi to discuss expanding watershed development projects across the frontier state. During the high-level meeting, Tasing made a strong pitch for higher financial allocations and increased project sanctions for Arunachal Pradesh under the upcoming Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY 3.0) phase.

Highlighting the complex topography and ecologically sensitive landscape of the Himalayan state, the Minister emphasized that watershed management is

critical for preventing soil erosion, rejuvenating natural springs, and bolstering rural livelihoods. He pointed out that while WDC-PMKSY 2.0 successfully covered extensive land areas across multiple districts in Arunachal Pradesh, the state’s difficult terrain and remote habitations require enhanced unit-cost norms and expanded coverage under the next iteration of the central flagship scheme. Tasing urged the central ministry to consider flexible funding frameworks that cater to mountainous regions, ensuring higher central share assistance for rainfed and degraded land development.

The Land Resources Secretary assured the Minister of the Union Government’s continued support for sus-



tainable land management and rural infrastructure projects in the Northeast. The meeting concluded with both sides agreeing to closely coordinate project plan-

ning and technical implementation to ensure timely execution and maximum benefits for agrarian communities across Arunachal Pradesh. Furthermore, the Minister highlighted that integrating advanced geospatial technology, satellite mapping, and spring-shed management under WDC-PMKSY 3.0 will be pivotal for restoring degraded land and securing water sources in rainfed agrarian pockets across the state. Tasing underscored that enhanced financial assistance will directly empower local Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by supporting micro-enterprises, crop diversification, and sustainable soil conservation practices in remote border villages.

CSU rejects EoT plea, cites poor NH-29 progress hardship

Dimapur, Aug 24: The Chümoukedima Students’ Union (CSU) has strongly opposed any further extension of time (EoT) for the contractor engaged in the four-lane expansion of National Highway-29, citing prolonged delays, poor progress, and mounting public inconvenience. In a statement issued on Monday, the CSU said the project’s physical progress stood at only 44.3 percent, despite multiple extensions granted since its commencement. The union expressed frustration that the slow pace of work has severely affected commuters, traders, and residents along the vital Dimapur–Chümoukedima stretch, which serves as Nagaland’s main gateway to Assam.

The students’ body alleged that the contractor’s



inefficiency and lack of accountability have turned the highway into a “permanent construction zone,” causing traffic congestion, dust pollution, and frequent accidents. “The public has endured enough hardship. Another

extension would only reward negligence,” the statement read.

CSU leaders urged the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) and the State Public Works

Department (PWD) to take immediate corrective measures, including penal action against the contractor for failing to meet deadlines. They also demanded that the government deploy additional technical teams to monitor

progress and ensure transparency in project reporting.

The union further highlighted that the NH-29 project, sanctioned under the Dimapur–Kohima four-lane initiative, was originally scheduled for completion in 2024 but has faced repeated delays due to poor planning and resource mismanagement. The CSU warned that continued inaction could lead to public demonstrations if authorities fail to address the issue promptly.

Local residents echoed the union’s concerns, noting that the incomplete highway has disrupted daily life and economic activity. Transporters and business owners have reported rising maintenance costs and declining productivity due to prolonged detours and uneven road conditions.

Tawang boosts water source protection amid pollution concerns

Itanagar, Aug 24: The Tawang District Administration today announced a comprehensive initiative to safeguard drinking water sources across the region, responding to growing concerns over pollution and depletion of natural reserves.

The district, which relies heavily on glacial streams, springs, and rain-fed reservoirs, has faced increasing challenges due to rapid urbanization, tourism pressures, and improper waste disposal. Local communities have reported rising sedimentation, plastic waste, and untreated sewage entering water channels, threatening both public health and ecological balance. Fencing and demarcation of vulnerable catchment areas. Deployment of monitoring teams to check illegal dumping and encroachment. Installation of filtration units and chlorination systems at



key supply points.

Awareness campaigns urging residents and tourists to adopt eco-friendly practices. Deputy Commissioner Kesang Ngurup Damo emphasized the urgency of the measures, stating: “Protecting water sources is critical for Tawang’s future. Pollution not only endangers public health but also undermines the district’s tourism potential. These steps are designed to ensure safe, reliable drinking water for all.” The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) has

been tasked with conducting regular water quality tests, while emergency funds have been allocated to repair pipelines and strengthen reservoirs. Civil society groups and NGOs have welcomed the initiative, stressing the importance of community participation in sustaining long-term results. Environmental experts believe the program could serve as a model for other Himalayan districts facing similar challenges, particularly as climate change alters rainfall patterns and glacial flows.

Nagaland sends four-member contingent to Asian Games 2026

Kohima, Aug 24: Nagaland has officially dispatched a four-member contingent to represent the state at the Asian Games 2026, marking a proud moment for its sporting community. The team, comprising athletes and officials, will participate in select disciplines where Nagaland has shown growing promise in recent years. State Sports Department officials confirmed that the contingent includes two athletes, one coach, and one team manager.

The athletes will compete in archery and athletics, disciplines where Nagaland has steadily built a reputation through grassroots training and national-level performances.

Speaking at the send-off ceremony in Kohima, Sports Minister Temjen Imna Along said, “This is a historic opportunity for Nagaland. Our athletes carry the hopes of the state and will showcase the talent and resilience of our youth on the international stage.”

He added that the government has extended logistical and financial support to ensure smooth participation.

The Nagaland Olympic Association (NOA) expressed confidence that the contingent would make a mark at the Games. Officials highlighted the rigorous training camps held in Dimapur and Kohima, where athletes were mentored by national coaches. The NOA also acknowledged the role of local clubs



and communities in nurturing talent despite limited infrastructure. Family members and supporters gathered at the ceremony, cheering the athletes as they departed for the Games. One of the athletes, visibly moved, said, “Representing Nagaland at the Asian Games is a dream come true. We will give our best and make our people proud.”

Observers believe the participation will inspire more young people in Nagaland to pursue sports professionally.

With the state government pledging to expand training facilities and scholarships, the Asian Games contingent is seen as a stepping stone toward greater representation in national and international competitions.

As the four-member team heads to the Asian Games 2026, Nagaland celebrates a milestone in its sporting journey, hopeful that this effort will pave the way for future achievements on the global stage.

The temporary lifting of the Umiam blockade Assam tourist taxis are now operating in Meghalaya



Guwahati, Aug 24: Assam-registered tourist taxis have started entering Meghalaya again after the blockade at Umiam was temporarily lifted on Monday, August 24. The decision followed discussions among representatives of tourist taxi associations in Meghalaya, offering immediate relief to passengers and operators caught in the inter-state transport dispute. As tensions between cab operators from Assam and Meghalaya

increased, the Umiam section became a major source of disturbance. Tourist cars heading from Guwahati to Shillong and other locations in Meghalaya were impacted by the blockade, which caused travelers inconvenience and uncertainty for transportation providers. Tourist cars from Assam may now travel into Meghalaya thanks to the route's temporary opening. It is anticipated that the development will bring some nor-

malcy back to tourism, especially for travelers who begin their journeys to the neighboring hill state from Guwahati. The most recent development does not, however, mean that the conflict is over. The fundamental dispute regarding the transit and operation of tourist vehicles from the two states has not been settled, and the blockade has only been temporarily lifted. The prolonged standoff has also raised concerns among tourism and transport stakeholders, as Assam and Meghalaya share strong road connectivity and a significant flow of tourists. Any disruption along key routes can directly affect visitors, drivers, travel agencies and other businesses dependent on tourism. Following violent episodes connected to the conflict, the situation is still being closely monitored. Police have identified five masked persons who are suspected of being involved in the violence on August 19, and up to 15 FIRs have been filed in relation to the occurrences. For the time being, Assam tourist taxis are operating again thanks to the restoration of the Umiam road. Whether the short-term easing turns into a long-term resolution to the continuing Assam-Meghalaya transit dispute would depend on further discussions between the relevant parties.

The governor of Arunachal Pradesh calls for further conservation efforts to save the state's extraordinary



Itanagar, Aug 24: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lieutenant General K.T. Parnaik (Retd) emphasized the state's great floral diversity, which includes over 5,000 flowering plant species and about 600 orchid species, and advocated for stepping up conservation efforts alongside development initiatives on Sunday. The governor emphasized that coordinated efforts

must be made to safeguard these priceless natural resources while pursuing development in the state, noting that Arunachal Pradesh is home to hundreds of medicinal plants and more than 75 varieties of rhododendrons. On Sunday, Kanad Das, the director of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI), paid Governor Parnaik a visit at Lok Bhavan in Itanagar. The Gover-

nor proposed a special Rare, Endangered and Threatened (RET) Species Recovery Program that would involve GIS mapping, population monitoring, seed banking, and habitat restoration in cooperation with the Forest Department and local communities during a conversation with the BSI Director. They talked about present conservation efforts, future plans for bolstering botani-

cal conservation in the state, and Arunachal Pradesh's abundant biodiversity, especially its extraordinary plant diversity. Governor Parnaik highlighted Arunachal Pradesh's position as one of the world's richest biodiversity hotspots by expressing gratitude for the state's frequent discovery of new plants and animals. He emphasized the necessity of using scientific research, sustainable livelihoods, community involvement, and long-term ecological security to protect the state's exceptional botanical wealth. The governor emphasized the importance of conducting thorough botanical surveys throughout the state's less-traveled and isolated locations, especially those that were previously inaccessible because of poor road connectivity. He recommended hiring more scientists to do methodical research and documentation.

Among the eight militants detained by security authorities is a Manipur



Imphal, Aug 24: Eight militants from various banned groups, including a declared absconder and extremist commander, have been apprehended by Manipur's security forces in separate combined operations across several districts over the past 24 hours, officials reported here on Sunday. According to a police spokesperson, the Manipur Police, Assam Rifles, and other Central forces coordinated operations to capture the eight militants in the districts of Thoubal, Kakching, Tengnoupal, Imphal East, and Imphal West. The detained militants are members of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which is outlawed, as well as the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF), People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), and Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP). The spokesperson stated that the detained militants were allegedly involved in a number of crimes and illicit operations, such as kidnapping, forced "subscription" collecting, attacks on individuals, and recruiting young people into outlawed groups. Two of the eight militants who were detained were identified as self-styled PLA Captain Thiyam Boycha Singh, also known as Balin, 28, and self-styled KYKL Captain Chongtham Lukhoi, also known as Rakesh, 45. According to the police spokesperson, it was discovered during questioning that Thiyam Boycha Singh was a member of the group that ambushed six people, including members of the Assam Rifles, at Behiang in the Churachandpur area on November 13, 2021. According to the official, he is a declared absconder and the third accused in the case under investigation by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Arms and ammunition, a number of incriminating documents, subscription receipts, cash, seals, letterheads of the prohibited outfits, and other items were found by security personnel in the hands of the detained militants. In the meantime, security forces made up of the Manipur Police and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) have been conducting massive counter-insurgency operations in the state's peripheral, mixed-population, and other sensitive areas. These operations include search operations and area-domination drills. As part of the intensified security measures, 111 nakas and checkpoints have been set up across the valley and hill districts to monitor the movement of militants, anti-social elements and suspicious vehicles. The security forces have also been providing armed escorts to trucks and other vehicles carrying essential commodities along the strategically important Imphal-Jiribam National Highway (NH-37).

CM informs Assembly that Meghalaya has formed a SIT to look into violence at the KSU rally

Imphal, Aug 24: The Meghalaya government has formed a special investigation team (SIT) to identify and prosecute those responsible for the violence that broke out during a Khasi Students' Union (KSU) rally in Shillong on August 19, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma told the Assembly on August 24. The SIT, headed by the Inspector General of Police (Law and Order), will investigate the violence, with particular focus on attacks against vehicles registered in Assam. Making a statement on the opening day of the Assembly's autumn session, Sangma said the team had been directed to identify those involved and ensure that they face legal action. The KSU bike rally, organised as part of the students' body's agitation over a five-point charter of demands, turned violent as incidents of stone-pelting, vandalism and assaults were reported from different parts of Shillong. According to East Khasi Hills Superintendent of Police Vivek Syiem, 31 vehicles were damaged, 18 people were injured and two vehicles were set ablaze during the violence. Eight of the damaged vehicles were registered in Assam. Sangma said the rally had been granted permission by the East Khasi Hills deputy commissioner after the KSU gave an undertaking that it would remain peaceful. "However, during the rally, some miscreants indulged in violent acts," including attacks on vehicles and bystanders, the chief minister said. He said all those



injured were taken to Shillong Civil Hospital for treatment. According to East Khasi Hills Superintendent of Police Vivek Syiem, 31 vehicles were damaged, 18 people were injured and two vehicles were set ablaze during the violence. Eight of the damaged vehicles were registered in Assam. Sangma said the rally had been granted permission by the East Khasi Hills deputy commissioner after the KSU gave an undertaking that it would remain peaceful. "However, during the rally, some miscreants indulged in violent acts," including attacks on vehicles and bystanders, the chief minister said. He said all those injured were taken to Shillong Civil Hospital for treatment.

teen FIRs have been filed so far" over the August 19 violence, Sangma said, adding that five masked individuals had been identified in connection with the attacks, particularly those involving Assam-registered vehicles. One of them has been arrested. Three senior KSU leaders — president Raymond Kharjana, vice-president Pynkmenlang Sanmiet and general secretary Reuben Najjar — were also arrested and later remanded to 14 days' judicial custody. Sangma said the government would pursue the investigation and ensure that those responsible were brought justice. Outside the Assembly, Sangma said the government had formally invited the KSU for discussions on its five-point charter. "We have written to KSU today and asked them to come for discussion. We may get some response by this evening or tomorrow, and we will discuss all five agendas," he said. The government was expecting a response from the students' organisation by Monday evening or Tuesday, the chief minister added. The KSU's demands include implementation of the Meghalaya Residents Safety and Security Act, changes to recruitment through the Meghalaya Public Service Commission and District Selection Committees, and tighter regulation of migrant workers. The talks offer a possible route towards addressing the issues behind the ongoing agitation, even as the government proceeds with its investigation into the August 19 violence.

Gaurav Gogoi raises concerns about illegal mining and questions the Assam government

Guwahati, Aug 24: Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi on Monday strongly criticised the Assam government's decision to reduce the Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) around Kaziranga, questioning the move in the backdrop of alleged illegal mining activities in the state. Gogoi questioned the government's choice to designate Tuliram Ronghang and Debolal Gorlosa as "Eminent Conservationists, Ecologists, and Environmentalists" for the State Wildlife Board in

a statement. Gogoi raised allegations against Debolal Gorlosa, stating that he and his wife were named in an FIR related to alleged illegal rat-hole mining at Kala Mati/3 Kilo in Umrangso, Dima Hasao. The case was registered following a mining tragedy in which nine people reportedly died. He also referred to another case involving allegations of threats against a key witness. Turning to Tuliram Ronghang, Gogoi highlighted his position as Chief

Executive Member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and raised concerns over mining permissions issued by the council. Gogoi cited findings of the Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC), which had reportedly flagged the issuance of mining permits by KAAC officials. According to him, the CEC observed in 2019 that mining permits were being issued "without any authority of law." He further said that in 2025, the CEC directed the

KAAC not to issue new mining settlements, leases or permits in areas draining into Kaziranga until the watersheds were scientifically delineated. Gogoi also referred to the CEC's observations in March 2026, alleging that the KAAC appeared "oblivious" to measures required to safeguard the ecology and wildlife of the region. He questioned why mining leases had been sanctioned in ecologically sensitive areas despite the concerns raised by the committee.

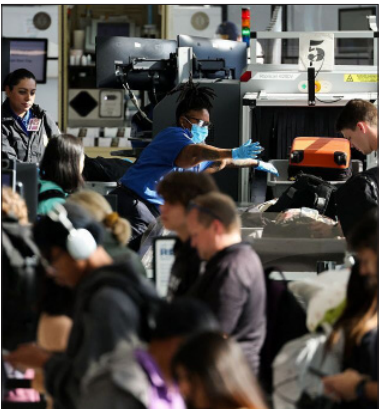
Elections the CAG identifies flaws in Sikkim panchayats' complete



Gangtok, Aug 24: Only 15 of the 29 topics required by the Constitution have been devolved by the State, according to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), indicating that Sikkim's Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) still lack complete authority. With the current panchayats' five-year terms coming to an end, the findings are released ahead of the next round of panchayat elections, which are anticipated in 2027. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment envisages panchayats as institutions of self-government and provides for the devolution of functions, powers and responsibilities relating to the 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule. These include agriculture, health, education and rural development. According to the CAG audit, 14 of the 29 subjects have not yet been devolved to the PRIs. As a result, State government departments continue to exercise control over planning, funding and implementation in several areas, leaving elected panchayat bodies with limited decision-making power. The audit also flagged gaps in the financial autonomy of Gram Panchayats. Though they have legal powers to levy local taxes, fees and

other charges, the panchayats largely did not exercise these powers, with only isolated instances recorded. Fund transfers from State departments to PRIs also lacked a consistent pattern, the CAG noted. The irregularity in fund flow made it difficult for panchayats to plan and execute expenditure with certainty from one year to another. The audit further pointed to shortcomings in legislative oversight. Earlier audit findings relating to PRIs had not been taken up for discussion by a legislative committee, weakening follow-up and accountability on the issues raised. Under Article 243E of the Constitution, panchayats have a five-year term. The Sikkim State Election Commission, which is constitutionally responsible for conducting panchayat elections, is yet to announce the schedule for the next polls. The CAG findings raise questions over the extent of administrative and financial authority that will be available to the newly elected panchayat bodies when Sikkim goes to the polls. While regular elections have ensured the continuation of elected local institutions, the audit underscores that the devolution of functions and financial powers remains incomplete.

Congress Calls Out Security Vulnerabilities and Demands Quicker Airport Development



Shillong, Aug 24: Deborah C. Marak, the working president of the Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee, urged

the state government to accelerate the development of airport facilities in order to lessen Meghalaya's reliance on Assam while denouncing the recent violence and purported security breaches. Vehicle vandalism, tourist-related incidents, and the ensuing blockade at Jorabat, according to Marak, have shown weaknesses in the state's connectivity infrastructure and may have an impact on its tourism-dependent economy. She questioned the government's readiness, asking why, in view of the potential for unrest, sufficient police forces had not been stationed along the rally route and other susceptible areas. In addition, she urged for preventive steps to safeguard people and visitors and questioned the

state's intelligence and security systems. According to Marak, before tensions increased, the administration ought to have interacted with civil society organizations and student organizations. She urged the governments of Meghalaya and Assam to protect the safety and dignity of persons traveling between the two states, cautioning that protracted delays could harm Meghalaya's tourism industry, which supports thousands of people. In order to significantly lessen the state's reliance on Assam for aviation connectivity, Marak also encouraged the Meghalaya government to accelerate the development and improvement of airport facilities.

Chief Minister Discusses Security and Border Management with Assam Rifles Officials



Imphal, Aug 24: During a meeting with senior Assam Rifles personnel on Sunday at the Chief Minister's Sec-

retariat in Babupara, Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh discussed the state's current security sit-

uation. Major General Inderjit Singh Bhinder, Inspector General of the Assam Rifles (East), and Brigadier Anshu-

man Tripathi, Deputy Inspector General of the 22 Sector Assam Rifles, met with the Chief Minister. Border control, operational readiness, and counterinsurgency operations were all discussed. The Assam Rifles' civic action projects to assist communities and aid in the restoration of normalcy in Manipur were also discussed at the conference. Khemchand Singh expressed gratitude to the Assam Rifles for their unwavering dedication to upholding the state's peace, stability, and normalcy.

During repair efforts, debris falls inside the Silkyara tunnel in Uttarakhand

New Delhi, Aug 24: During rectification work on Friday, debris fell inside the under-construction Silkyara-Barkot tunnel, which made headlines in 2023 when 41 workers were stranded there for 17 days in Uttarakshi, Uttarakhand, officials said on Monday. A portion of the concrete liner inside the 4.5-kilometer tunnel, which is a part of the Char Dham all-weather road project, collapsed in July, killing a 22-year-old worker.On Friday, there was no damage and no injuries, according to officials. The debris fell when work was being done to correct the tunnel’s distorted shape, according to Ravi Kant, general manager (projects) of Navayuga Engineering Company Limited,



the executing agency. With only around 100 meters remaining, the job is almost finished, and the geology in that area is likewise bad. We were correcting the geometry in accordance with the authorized drawing. There are a few such places, and this is a loose section. Such events are typical during the tunneling and rectification process,

he said.The debris was a little bigger than normal, he said. “A bigger, loose section opened up.” We are filling the space and creating a rim around it. In the past, similar occurrences have happened during correction work.For about ₹1384 crore, Navayuga Engineering Company Limited is building the tunnel on behalf of the National

Highways and Infrastructure Development Corp Ltd. Two of the four hallowed Hindu sites in Uttarkashi, Gangotri and Yamunotri, will now be 26 kilometers closer.

A portion of the tunnel collapsed due to a landslide in November 2023, trapping 41 workers inside for 17 days. In a last-ditch effort to remove the last 12 meters of the 57-meter-thick wall of debris trapping the workers, a team of 12 rat-hole miners was roped in.

The rescue effort was plagued by numerous obstacles.When the contemporary auger machinery failed, the rat-hole miners used shovels, spades, hammers, and drills to save their lives while working nonstop for over twenty-four hours.

The governor of Arunachal Pradesh calls for further conservation efforts

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The governor emphasized that coordinated efforts must be made to safeguard these priceless natural resources while pursuing development in the state, noting that Arunachal Pradesh is home to hundreds of medicinal plants and more than 75 varieties of rhododendrons. On Sunday, Kanad Das, the director of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI), paid Governor Parnaik a visit at Lok Bhavan in Itanagar. The Governor proposed a special Rare, Endangered and Threatened (RET) Species Recovery Program that would involve GIS mapping, population monitoring, seed banking, and habitat restoration in cooperation with the Forest Department and local communities during a conversation with the BSI Director.

They talked about present conservation efforts, future plans for bolstering botanical conservation in the state, and Arunachal Pradesh’s abundant biodiversity, especially its extraordinary plant diversity. Governor Parnaik highlighted Arunachal Pradesh’s position as one of the world’s richest biodiversity hotspots by expressing gratitude for the state’s frequent discovery of new plants and animals.He emphasized the necessity of using scientific research, sustainable livelihoods, community involvement, and long-term ecological security to protect the state’s exceptional botanical wealth.

The governor emphasized the importance of conducting thorough botanical surveys throughout the state’s less-traveled and isolated locations, especially those that were previously inaccessible because of poor road connectivity.He recommended hiring more scientists to do methodical research and documentation.

The Governor suggested creating a dedicated botanical garden, community orchid conservation areas, and increasing ex-situ conservation through tissue culture and orchid rescue programs, referring to Arunachal Pradesh as India’s “Orchid Paradise,” which is home to nearly 40% of the nation’s orchid diversity.

Days after being found at her boyfriend’s house, a young girl was discovered dead in Muzaffarnagar

New Delhi, Aug 24: A 16-year-old girl was discovered hanging at her maternal uncle’s home in Kawal village in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, according to police on Monday. The girl was rescued from her boyfriend’s Roorkee home after allegedly eloping with him. The girl’s body was sent for a post-mortem examination, according to Circle Officer Rishika Singh, and an in-

quiry was under progress. About a month ago, the girl allegedly ran away from her parents’ house near the Sikheda police station with her boyfriend Raju.

Police filed a case against Raju for kidnapping a juvenile girl after receiving a complaint from her relatives. Four days ago, authorities in Roorkee retrieved the girl from Raju’s possession while conducting an in-

ry. The girl was given to her maternal uncle after refusing to go back to her parents, while Raju was detained and imprisoned, according to the police.

According to the officer, the girl was discovered hanging from the ceiling at her maternal uncle’s home in Kawal village on Sunday.The circumstances surrounding her death are being looked into by the police.

Rain has left Gurugram flooded, causing traffic disruptions and an orange alert

New Delhi, Aug 24: On Monday, Gurugram had heavy downpours that flooded a number of major thoroughfares, residential areas, and highways.Gurugram is under an orange alert, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Additionally, it predicted moderate to extremely heavy rains in some areas of Haryana.Ankle-to-knee-deep water on roads was recorded in several locations of the city. Sector 10 near Euro International School, South City-1, Sector 69’s Tulip Chowk and 60-meter road, Narsinghpur, sectors 9, 14, and 45, DLF

Phase 3’s V Block, Ardee City approaching Sector 52, Sector 52A, Sector 5, and the Airia Mall stretch on Sohna Road were all reported to have waterlogging.One of the most severely impacted regions was the Sector 52A market, where commuters were seen wading through knee-deep water. Additionally, reports of waterlogging were made in the vicinity of Club Palms, Sector 29, and the main road close to DLF Super Mart. The city’s traffic flow was also negatively impacted by the rain. Major thoroughfares, including as Rajiv Chowk, Sector 15 Part

2, Main Gujjar Road in Sector 67, Old Railroad Road, the Mini Secretariat stretch, NH-48, IFFCO Chowk, Sohna Road, and several areas of Old Gurugram, were reported to have slow-moving traffic.Teams of traffic police were stationed at strategic points to control traffic flow.In order to control vehicle movement, traffic teams have been stationed there, and local police stations have also provided support.

ACP traffic (headquarters and highways) Satyapal Yadav stated, “We will take up route diversions wherever necessary.”

Student protests in Delhi: SC rejects a separate investigation into allegations of sexual assault

New Delhi, Aug 24: The Supreme Court clarified on Monday that since the matter has been referred to and prioritized by a five-member committee led by its former judge R Subhash Reddy, there is no need to start separate suo motu proceedings to investigate claims of sexual assault against female protesters during the July 20 student protests in the nation’s capital.The high-powered inquiry committee (HPEC), which was established last week to carry out an independent investigation into claims of violence during the protests, was specifically instructed to look into complaints of targeted violence, harassment, molestation, and secondary victimization of women protesters on priority, according to a bench made up of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi, and V Mohana. Senior attorney Shobha Gupta requested the bench to take suo motu cognizance of alleged sexual assault of female demonstrators during the July 20 demonstrations, which prompted the clarification.Gupta argued that there were well-publicized claims that police officers had sexually attacked and molested women, and she requested a different system

for looking into these claims.The bench stated that the matter had been expressly given to the committee and cited its August 18 order establishing the HPEC. According to the CJI, the committee was instructed to look into the accusations as soon as possible and provide an interim report. Gupta expressed worries about how female demonstrators could file complaints with the committee.The judgment noted that the committee chairperson had the authority to designate nodal officers, after which the process for filing complaints would be announced.The HPEC was established to carry out an impartial and independent investigation into conflicting claims resulting from the student protest on July 20, including requests regarding violence against police officers and the protest’s legality as well as petitions alleging excessive force by the police. Justice (retired) Ravi Shankar Jha, a former chief justice of the Punjab and Haryana high court, Justice (retired) Shalinder Kaur, a former judge of the Delhi high court, Rishi Kumar Shukla, a former director of the Central Bureau of Investigation, and LR Bishnoi, a retired director general of police from Meghalaya, are among

the other members of the committee. Its mandate goes beyond the immediate accusations of aggression by police. The committee has been asked to investigate the following: the use of pellet guns, electric batons, lathis, and tear gas; the proportionality of police action; the use of blanket prohibitory orders; the surveillance of protesters; and the application of Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which criminalizes actions that jeopardize India’s sovereignty, unity, and integrity. The committee has also been requested to look into claims that demonstrators have injured security workers, damaged public property, and used violence against police officers.In addition to evaluating the medical and other assistance given to victims and the potential for temporary compensation, the court expressly instructed the panel to investigate instances of targeted violence in relation to the accusations involving female protestors.The Supreme Court ordered the authorities to provide the committee with CCTV and drone footage, body-worn camera recordings, videography, wireless communication records, and PCR call reports pertaining to the protests.

BJP leaders arrested while marching to Vidhan Soudha to demand the dismissal of Minister B Nagendra



New Delhi, Aug 24: In an attempt to remove Minister B Nagendra from the cabinet due to his alleged involvement in the Valmiki Corporation scandal, BJP leaders B Y Vijayendra, R Ashoka, and others were placed under preventive arrest on Monday as they marched to lay siege to the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru.Workers from various sections of Bengaluru and other regions have been mobilized by the BJP and its ally JD(S) for the protest.To stop the demonstrators from entering the Vidhana Soudha, the police had sealed the building and stationed officers at its gates.When the demonstrators, led by BJP politicians such MLC N Ravikumar and C T Ravi, tried to enter the Vidhana Soudha through the Vikas Soudha gate, they pushed and jostled with the police. A BMTC bus was prepared to carry those arrested, and a number of demonstrators were brought

into prison.Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy led the BJP’s parallel demonstration at Freedom Park, where party activists and employees chanted anti-Congress slogans and called for Nagendra’s resignation. According to the BJP, Nagendra should not have been re-inducted into the cabinet after resigning as a minister in 2024 due to purported irregularities in the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Corporation Ltd.

Following the purported movement of Corporation monies to many bank accounts, the alleged swindle came to light. Following the recovery of a note and the suicide of Corporation P Chandrasekharan’s accounts superintendent, the issue attracted more attention.After looking into the matter, the CBI prepared a charge sheet that included Nagendra’s name. The BJP has demanded that the Governor be removed from the cabinet, citing both the charge sheet and a letter from the CBI. In the midst of the storm, Nagendra had previously resigned as minister. After D K Shivakumar was appointed Chief Minister, he was re-inducted into the government.Speaking to the demonstrators, Vijayendra retaliat-

ed against Shivakumar for calling them “goondas” and charged that the Congress government was “trying to suppress” the BJP’s agitation.As the voice of the Dalits and those without a voice, the BJP and JD(S) are currently engaged in combat. The Congress government is attempting to quell our movement at this moment, according to Vijayendra.Vijayendra stated, “Shivakumar, you are the hooligan,” in reference to Chief Minister D K Shivakumar’s remarks referring to the opposition as “hooligans.” We don’t need to be taught what hooliganism is. You are attempting to put an end to our demonstration today.” “He ought to come and step down if he has any honor or respect. “He ought to clarify whether or not the Dalits were deceived, as well as the reasons behind his arrest and dismissal,” Ashoka stated.Rather, they are continuously rewarding him with bonuses. We won’t let him off because you all shared the money,” he declared.

The BJP leaders declared that the movement would carry on until Nagendra was kicked out of the cabinet and accused the administration of shielding individuals suspected of corruption.

Governor of Tripura Indra Sena Reddy Nallu Motivates Volunteers and Scouts to Serve Society



Agartala, Aug 24: Don Bosco School and Vani Vidyapeeth Girls Higher Secondary School in Ramnagar were visited by Tripura Governor Indra Sena Reddy Nallu. He engaged with pupils and Scouts and Guides volunteers at both schools.The governor stated at Don Bosco School that the younger generation

is essential to creating a responsible, peaceful, and forward-thinking society. He claimed that Tripura’s Scouts and Guides had helped the state advance and were actively involved in the effort to eradicate drugs from the area. The Governor spoke with them and heard about their experiences. When the Gov-

ernor arrived at Don Bosco School, the Scouts and Guides welcomed him with a guard of honour.

An interaction session followed at the school auditorium. At the programme, the principal of the school, Father Surajit Tigya, delivered the welcome address. Among those present were the Director of the Youth Affairs and Sports Department, L. Darlong; State Secretary of Tripura Scouts and Guides, Rev. Ramendra Reang; and Scouts Master and teacher of Don Bosco School, Abhijit Chakraborty. After that, the governor went to Vani Vidyapeeth Girls Higher Secondary School and spoke with students and volunteers from the Scouts

and Guides. He planted a seedling on the school grounds after visiting the NSS unit. The Governor urged the pupils to preserve qualities like accountability, leadership, discipline, teamwork, and service. He claimed that the future generation was essential to the development of Viksit Bharat and that students needed to work together to accomplish the goal.Director of Youth Affairs and Sports L. Darlong, Director of Secondary Education Dr. Samit Roy Chowdhury, State Secretary of Tripura Scouts and Guides Rev. Ramendra Reang, and Headmistress of Vani Vidyapeeth School Dipti Debbarma also attended the function.

Congress Calls Out Security Vulnerabilities and Demands Quicker Airport Development in Meghalaya

Shillong, Aug 24: Debrah C. Marak, the working president of the Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee, urged the state government to accelerate the development of airport facilities in order to lessen Meghalaya’s reliance on Assam while denouncing the recent violence and purported security breaches.Vehicle vandalism, tourist-related incidents, and the ensuing blockade at Jorabat, according to Marak,

have shown weaknesses in the state’s connectivity infrastructure and may have an impact on its tourism-dependent economy.

She questioned the government’s readiness, asking why, in view of the potential for unrest, sufficient police forces had not been stationed along the rally route and other susceptible areas. In addition, she urged for preventive steps to safeguard people and visitors and questioned the state’s



intelligence and security systems. According to Marak, before tensions increased, the administration ought to have interacted with civil society organizations and student organizations.She urged the governments of Meghalaya

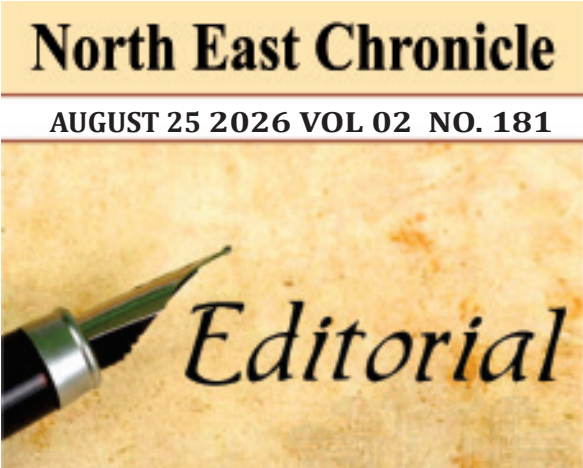
and Assam to protect the safety and dignity of persons traveling between the two states, cautioning that protracted delays could harm Meghalaya’s tourism industry, which supports thousands of people. In order to significantly lessen the state’s reliance on Assam for aviation connectivity, Marak also encouraged the Meghalaya government to accelerate the development and improvement of airport facilities.

KSU Refuses to Allow Shillong Sit-In Due to Tighter Security



Shillong, Aug 24: The East Khasi Hills district government has once again refused to allow the Khasi Students’ Union (KSU) to stage a sit-in protest in Shillong on August 24, citing the need to maintain peace and order and the current security situation. With five companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and one company of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) deployed in addition to increased patrolling, the decision coincides with heightened security measures around the city.The administration had apologized to the KSU for not allowing the planned protest, according to East Khasi Hills Deputy Commissioner Abhilash Baranwal. He insisted that the immediate goal was to protect public safety and rebuild residents’ trust in the wake of the recent law-and-order situation. Talking to media persons, Baranwal said, “We have basically expressed regret to the organisation (KSU) that we will not be able to give them permission to have the demonstration on August 24.” According to him, the increased security deployment was intended to reassure people living in Shillong and East Khasi Hills that sufficient precautions were being taken to keep them safe. He claimed that as part of the administration’s security plan, a lot of patrolling had been done and more CAPF and RAF personnel had been sent in.”The district adminis-

tration’s overall commitment is to ensure and give a sense of safety and security to all citizens and residents of Shillong and East Khasi Hills,” the DC stated. “A lot of patrolling is going on and five companies of CAPF and one company of RAF have been called.” Baranwal stated that the administration would keep a close eye on the situation and that the increased security presence would stay in place until locals felt comfortable and secure.He continued, “So, that’s why you see all this patrolling and the significantly larger presence of security deployment across the city, and we will continue to do that until the citizens of Shillong feel safe and secure.”In an effort to reassure tourists and visitors from outside of Meghalaya, the Deputy Commissioner stated that the administration had received messages from all across the nation cautioning people against visiting Shillong in light of the recent tragedy. He emphasized that Shillong was still accessible to tourists and advised them not to judge the entire city based on a single incident. He said the people of Shillong and East Khasi Hills continued to welcome tourists and that the administration was committed to providing them with a safe environment. He also highlighted Shillong’s growing profile as a tourism destination and said the authorities wanted visitors to continue coming to the city. Baranwal stated that the administration would offer help where needed and that the Tourism Department had also set up a special helpline for travelers. He stated that, especially in light of the start of the Assembly session and the High Court hearing on the subject, security measures will be kept consistent with those implemented on August 21. He continued by saying that the administration will take the required actions to make sure that the issue did not impact the city’s law and order.



Super El Niño risks global crop security

Climate change is no longer confined to scientific laboratories, rising ocean temperatures or melting glaciers. Its consequences are increasingly being felt in one of the most fundamental sectors of human life—agriculture and food production. The possibility of an exceptionally strong El Nino developing in 2026 has added a new dimension to these concerns. If the ongoing climatic signals intensify as anticipated, the agricultural sector could face a complex combination of heat stress, rainfall irregularity, water scarcity and crop losses. The critical question, therefore, is not merely whether El Nino will occur, but how severely an exceptionally strong El Niño could affect agriculture—and how prepared we are to deal with its consequences. El Nino is not an ordinary weather event. It is a large-scale climate phenomenon associated with unusual warming of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. This warming alters atmospheric circulation and consequently affects rainfall, temperature and wind patterns across different parts of the world. Its impacts, however, are not uniform. While some regions may experience drought-like conditions, others may receive excessive rainfall.

For agriculture, this uncertainty itself is a major threat. Indian agriculture remains significantly dependent on the southwest monsoon. Consequently, any major alteration in the monsoon system can have serious implications for agricultural production. Research has repeatedly indicated that El Nino years can influence the amount and distribution of monsoon rainfall over India, although the relationship is neither absolute nor uniform across the country. This distinction is important. El Nino does not automatically mean drought throughout India. Its agricultural consequences depend on the strength and timing of the event, regional climatic conditions, the Indian Ocean Dipole, local geography and the broader effects of climate change.

A farmer needs rain not merely in sufficient quantity, but at the right time and in the right amount. Rainfall arriving too late can delay sowing and transplanting. A prolonged dry spell during crop growth can reduce yields. Conversely, intense rainfall within a short period can cause waterlogging, erosion, crop lodging and flooding. Thus, the agricultural consequences of an exceptionally strong El Nino cannot be understood simply as a shortage of rainfall. Changes in the timing, intensity and distribution of rainfall may prove equally damaging.Rice occupies a central position in India’s food system and kharif agriculture. Its productivity depends heavily on water availability, particularly during transplantation and crucial stages of crop growth. If rainfall is inadequate during transplantation, farmers may

India’s space leaps signal growing momentum

This National Space Day (August 23) feels especially celebratory given India unlocked a key space capacity private-sector orbital launch. Skyroot Aerospace’s success with the lift-off of Vikram-1, an orbital-class launch vehicle, and the deployment of multiple payloads into low Earth orbit (LEO) made India the third country in the world to have private launch capacity, after the US and China.

The mission, called Aagaman (Sanskrit for “arrival”) was Skyroot Aerospace’s follow-up to its 2022 sub-orbital Vikram-S flight, which made it India’s first private company to reach space. For India, the July launch was the dawn of a new space era, as a Skyroot commentator put it.It was also, in many ways, a payoff of a decade-long bet made by India on space policy reforms.Today, there are more than 400 space startups and companies in the country, working on everything from satellites, components, space engineering, traffic management and even rocket engines. The diverse payloads that Skyroot’s Aagaman dropped off in orbit included a nano-satellite pathfinder from Grahaa Space, a robotic arm built by Cosmoserve Space to capture space debris, and Skyroot’s own satellite. Six years ago, all of this would not have seemed possible, that is, if the Department of Space hadn’t opened up the sector to privatisation. Till

2019, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was India’s only State-run space programme. It was the designer, manufacturer, launcher, owner and operator of virtually every Indian space asset. Private companies like Ananth Technologies (founded 1992) or MTAR Technologies (founded 1970) built hardware and core components to ISRO’s specifications. For a private company, there was no path to owning a satellite, operating a launch vehicle or selling a space-based service commercially.

This changed in 2020, when the government ended ISRO’s monopoly by opening up the sector and launching IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre), which became a single-window regulator and facilitator for private companies to set up spacetech shops. The same year, ISRO created NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a company whose aim was to transfer ISRO-developed technology into private hands. Through NSIL, ISRO has executed 118 technology transfer agreements with private companies in the last five years.The other important policy shift was opening the doors to ISRO’s testing centres and facilities. Startups didn’t have the capex to build testing chambers from scratch. Instead, ISRO provided launch pad, motor casting, and liquid engine testing facilities at steep dis-

counts so companies could get their technology tested, validated, and simulated. Another action that worked in the space industry’s favour was encouraging strong academic research and industry collaborations inside top institutions in the country. IIT Madras, for example, is alone responsible for incubating and supporting 11 space-tech startups, including Agnikul Cosmos and GalaxEye.

Another regulatory framework, the Indian Space Policy 2023, offered clear operating guidelines, zoning rules, and a degree of regulatory certainty, enabling venture capitalists to make bets on space ventures. In 2024, the government allowed up to 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in startups working on satellite components and ground equipment, about 74% FDI for satellite manufacturing and operations, and 49% FDI to build launch vehicles and spaceports, opening up the sector to further capital bets. Thanks to these policy and regulatory changes, as well as ISRO’s active support, private sector participation has blossomed.However, this leap has also brought with it the pressures of a maturing market. In 2021, about 21 space startups in India raised \$43 million, according to the India SpaceTech Report by Tracxn. By mid-2026, this has become 440 companies and \$871 million in cumulative funding. Just ahead of its own rocket

launch, Skyroot raised \$50-60 million through private venture capital, putting its valuation past \$1.1 billion and making it India’s first space-tech unicorn.

This consolidation is part of a classic sign of a decreasing risk appetite. Over 60% of all capital invested in space went to safe bets:Skyroot Aerospace (\$150 million), Pixxel (\$96 million), AgniKul Cosmos (\$76 million) and Digantara (\$67 million). Out of 285 startups that Tracxn Data tracked, only 72 have been successfully funded, the rest falling by the wayside. Considering that space hardware requires immense upfront capital expenditure, long R&D cycles, and rigorous regulatory clearances, this is, to a degree, understandable from capital’s vantage. But it also means that more needs to be done to add width, along with depth, to the space sector. This could very likely prove challenging, as both the US and China also seem to be struggling here. In the US, SpaceX and OneWeb alone account for more than half of the capital raised by the top ten space companies. China has more startups by headcount, and though the underlying private capital is shaky, the country has patient State funding to support its space ambitions. This global space race also comes with new challenges for India’s star-performer ISRO, which has been so far the bulwark of the private industry. There are only two operational launch pads in India, both at Sriharikota, both prioritised for ISRO’s own missions. This leaves private players scrambling or waiting for a long while for tests or launch slots — sometimes as long as 18-24 months. Most startups can’t afford to fund that long a runway before blast-off. ISRO has been unable to increase their launch frequency. In 2025, ISRO launched only five rockets from Sriharikota, against roughly 165 orbital launches by SpaceX. Fewer launches mean fewer opportunities to catch quality issues, slower institutional learning and a longer wait for indigenous startups to send their payloads into LEO.

India’s reusable launch vehicle programme, called Soorya, also lags behind. It received ₹8,240 crore of Cabinet approval in September 2024, but will not take first flight before 2032. This means that for the next five years, India will spend more on expendable rockets while rivals, including SpaceX and some Chinese operators, are already using reusable rocket fleets.This pressure to deliver is likely showing up in ISRO’s recent performance. In January 2026, ISRO lost its reliable RSLV-C62 along with 15 international payloads, causing India’s commercial space-ride-share partners, such as Nepal and Brazil, to cancel future bookings.And, most importantly, it is the very opening up of the private space sec-

tor that has caused a recent headache for ISRO, a high attrition rate. Over the recent months, around 100-120 senior scientists have resigned or taken early voluntary retirement. There have been 80 resignations from the UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC) in Bengaluru, which handles satellite design and integration, while Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), ISRO’s primary rocket-building facility, has seen at least 20 personnel resign. Both Skyroot Aerospace co-founders, Pawan Kumar Chandana and Naga Bahrath Daka, are former ISRO scientists from VSSC.

Though a thriving private sector is a healthy sign of a competitive economy, in an industry like space, senior scientists leaving can cause State projects to be delayed. This has led the Department of Space to issue an order in July last month, tightening resignation rules for personnel on critical projects.But it is clear that, despite these challenges, India’s space ambitions have skyrocketed, not only amongst players, but also amongst the citizens who have come to associate a particular pride on the global stage with the country’s space capabilities. In the coming years, Skyroot plans to launch Vikram-2, ISRO is aiming to send a crewed flight into space, while India’s Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS-1) will be ready by 2028. There are also plans for a manned lunar mission by 2040.

The economic stakes of delimitation: why India’s financial future is at risk

The debate around delimitation has been vociferous given the government’s plan to address the issue head on by expanding the number of seats in parliament proportionately while the opposition has countered it with their own concerns of demography, electoral map redistribution and other implications. Yet the underlying essence of the story why delimitation matters as a concept seems to be missing. Besides the constitutional obligation for delimitation, what is its economic rationale? The current governance structure in India is in need of reform. There is an urgent need for representation aligned with India’s economic geography and a precondition for the responsive, accountable governance that sustained economic success requires. When political representation systematically diverges from where value is created, the result is a persistent misallocation of public capital.

India’s urban areas, particularly its metros, are key engines of agglomeration and productivity growth yet they remain highly under-represented in the electoral map. For instance, India’s urban population is expected to grow from 410 million in 2014 to 814 million by 2050. India is projected to add 416 million urban dwellers by 2050 more than any other country in the world. Urban India makes up roughly 37 per cent of the country’s population, yet the largest, most heavily urban constituencies such as Malkajgiri, Bangalore North, the Delhi-NCR seats, at 30–38 lakh elector, carry the same single

vote in Parliament as constituencies a fraction of their size such as Lakshadweep with just about 50,000 electors. Urban voters are therefore structurally underweighted. This leads to a situation where urban economic issues are not represented adequately and are given less electoral weight by politicians. Furthermore, since the urban population is more educated and demands greater accountability on economic issues such as housing, transit, and municipal finance that directly affect productivity, the case for increasing their political voice is an important shift in the economic story of India. Another important economic factor that warrants change is the importance of decentralized governance. Ironically, even though delimitation might shift some political weight towards the more populated parts of the country, it might also ensure that decentralized governance takes place more effectively. Greater public representatives per capita can mean that local issues get more attention.

Many developed countries such as the United States and Japan all pair large populations with empowered subnational units that deliver local public goods and compete to attract capital, and ensure effective business governance due to greater attention to issues raised by society. This could be an important factor in boosting ease of businesses especially in constituencies which have excessively large populations. The empirical literature is clear that quality of governance, which correlates highly with per

capita of public representatives at the state and central level, and political stability are significant determinants of sovereign risk premia (Bekaert et al.; the sovereign-spreads literature). As such, providing incentives for long term investment, channeling growth for more inclusive goals which can be achieved effectively by credible and effective governance from the district level to the central administration ensure that risks for investing in the country for foreign investors is being reduced. This also will ensure greater accountability among politicians and eventually lead to more refined political class. Therefore, it can play an important role in reducing long term risk premia for investors investing in the country.Lastly, the aggregate impact at the level of the central government could be better and might lead to data systems that allow improved fiscal planning and alignment with the states. For instance, does it make sense for us to measure inflation of today using a basket of goods that were used in the 1970s? Similarly, how does it make sense to use the political representation from the 1970 census as a benchmark for electoral representation the core of data driven public policy making in 2026?Greater representation per capita along with better governance would ensure that more accurate population and boundary data feed into resource allocation, welfare targeting, and planning. Better data can further reduce leakage and mismatches in how funds reach people. Therefore, all of this could lead to better state

and central fiscal planning and coordination due to more effective representation of the people’s wishes. Several of the structural reforms that economists have been urging governments to do could be addressed through the redesign of the governance pillars of the country. This provides an important opportunity for transparency and reforms for the delimitation exercise to engage with so as to ensure structural governance reforms are implemented by design and not necessarily by stealth and through legislative arduousness. These provide an important opportunity to ensure economic growth is accelerated through ease of governance at scale across the country.

Yet, given the importance of such a reform, it must be a consensus driven initiative which most of the political class is in agreement with. There are various challenges including issues of north-south divide, population-based representation, reservations from some affected states among others. These issues should be sorted through diplomatic efforts and a collective spirit for the larger cause of the nation.Postponing the exercise due to its complexity and the need to make hard decisions is not doing justice to the aspirations of the youngest population in the world. The debates should be about how effective and inclusive the design of delimitation should be rather than questioning the importance of the exercise itself. A consensus driven delimitation exercise would be an important anchor for a developed India.

Fiscal drag and foreign entanglements: trump risks America’s stability

The American midterms are not far away and US President Donald Trump will be heading into them with more defeats than victories to show in his foreign policy, more failures than successes on the economic front too as high process remain a worry and fights on the tariff front in which the supreme court has reined in his impulsive forays into trade wars. No recent President’s ratings have been lower than Mr Trump’s in his second term, which has led him into revealing his fears that he could be impeached and even imprisoned if he loses the mid-terms. As the only US President to be impeached twice — only to be acquitted by the Senate — Mr Trump knows what risks the November polls carry for him much more than even his party.

While such a doom scenario is unlikely to fructify because the Republicans may still hold on to a slender majority in the Senate as the seats heading to midterm polls are mostly from

Red states, it is, however, certain that the grand old party may lose its narrow majority in the House of Representatives. The setbacks have been more prominent in his 15 months in office after he returned to the White House in January 2025 with the promise of playing global peacemaker. He seemed preoccupied with making claims for the Nobel Peace Prize as he kept averring that he had brought the Gaza war to an end and boasted of stopping India and Pakistan from escalating exchanges into a full-blown war. Mr Trump’s greatest folly, especially for a self-confessed peacemaker, was to agree to wage war against Iran on the prompting of his friend Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Since his February 28 launch of bombing attacks on Iran, including its nuclear fuel enrichment site, he has been bewildered by Iranian resistance and resilience in withstanding the aerial onslaught and precipitating a global oil crisis by threatening the passage of ships through the Strait of

Hormuz.The inability to win was not only on the military front. The state of turmoil of the US economy as the bond market yields took off and the government intervened was highlighted in the fact that the gross national debt crossed \$40 trillion for the first time. Coming on top of Iran war expenses and the generous tax cuts that the Republicans effected last year, the United States has been pushed into crossing a portentous milestone with interest payments alone to touch \$2 tn a year. To conclude that it is all America’s problem might be understating the issues as any trouble that the world’s largest economy faces will have serious repercussions down the line in an interconnected world. The recklessness of Mr Trump’s economic and military moves is what is most worrisome. It is quite another matter that his family has gained enormously from his time in the White House, gathering a cool \$2 billion and more in cryptocurrency profits even as most other investors lost.

Rupee Strengthens Against Dollar as Softer US Currency Supports Early Trade

Mumbai: The Indian rupee gained 7 paise against the US dollar in early trading on Monday, supported by weakness in the American currency, although persistent importer demand for dollars and elevated crude oil prices limited the domestic unit’s advance.

The rupee opened at 95.68 against the dollar and strengthened to 95.64 during early interbank trading. The currency had closed 3 paise higher at 95.71 on Friday, August 21. Currency market analysts said the softer US Dollar Index provided some support to the rupee, while gains remained capped by demand for the greenback from importers and concerns over elevated international crude prices. The Dollar Index, which measures the US currency against a basket of six major currencies, stood



at 98.82, up 0.03 per cent. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 1.32 per cent to \$93.14 a barrel in futures trading. However, the elevated level of crude prices continued to remain a concern for the Indian currency because of the country’s dependence on imported oil. Market participants remained cautious ahead of an expected announcement by Washington on addition-

al sanctions targeting Iran’s oil trade, banking activities and maritime shipping channels. The prospect of wider restrictions raised concerns over potential disruptions to international trade and energy flows. Domestic equity markets opened higher alongside the rupee. The BSE Sensex rose 202.42 points to 77,744.15, while the NSE Nifty gained 55.35 points to reach 24,309 during ear-

ly trading. Foreign institutional investors, however, remained net sellers in the domestic equity market. They off-loaded shares worth Rs 542.71 crore on a net basis on Friday, adding to the pressure on the rupee through foreign fund outflows. India’s external liquidity position remained strong, with Reserve Bank of India data showing that the country’s foreign exchange reserves increased by \$9.905 billion to \$716.907 billion during the week ended August 14. The rupee’s near-term movement is expected to remain influenced by global currency trends, crude oil prices, foreign investment flows and developments surrounding geopolitical tensions and potential sanctions on Iran.

Foreign Investors Return to Indian Equities with Rs 23,544-Crore August Inflow



New Delhi: Foreign Portfolio Investors remained net buyers in Indian equities for the second consecutive month, investing Rs 23,544 crore in August through Sunday, as improving corporate earnings, relative currency stability and positive expectations for the broader market encouraged overseas allocations. The latest inflow followed an investment of Rs 20,200 crore in July, marking a shift in foreign investor sentiment after four consecutive months of withdrawals during the first half of 2026. Depository data showed that overseas investors had pulled out Rs 49,340 crore in June, Rs 32,963 crore in May, Rs 60,847 crore in April and Rs 1.17 lakh crore in March. They had recorded net purchases of Rs 22,615 crore in February. Despite the return of foreign buying in July and August, cumulative

FPI withdrawals from Indian equities in 2026 remained around Rs 2.3 lakh crore. The figure was significantly higher than the Rs 1.66 lakh crore net outflow recorded during the entire 2025 calendar year. Market analysts linked the renewed foreign investment to several factors, including an improvement in first-quarter corporate earnings and expectations of stronger domestic economic growth. A shift in global investor preferences away from semiconductor and artificial intelligence-re-

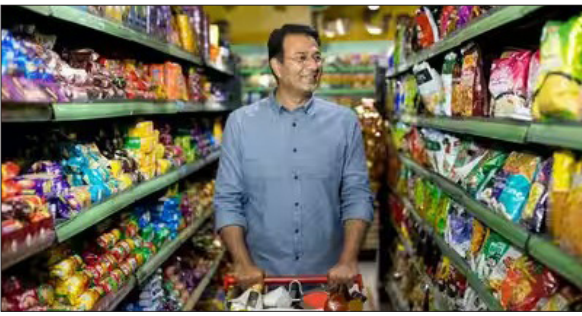
lated trades also encouraged greater interest in other markets and sectors. However, foreign buying remained selective rather than broad-based. Institutional investors showed greater interest in mid-cap stocks despite relatively high valuations, while exposure to large-cap banking and information technology companies remained limited. The changing allocation pattern indicated that overseas investors were increasingly seeking segments where earn-

ings growth appeared stronger and valuations offered relatively better opportunities. Improving corporate performance was seen as an important factor behind the renewed interest in Indian equities. Foreign investors adopted a mixed approach towards Indian debt markets during the same period. They invested Rs 852 crore in debt securities through the Fully Accessible Route, while withdrawing Rs 995 crore under the general investment limit. The return of foreign buying has provided some support to domestic equities after a prolonged period of heavy outflows. However, the large cumulative withdrawal recorded during 2026 indicated that overseas investor sentiment remained sensitive to global market conditions, valuations, currency movements and the relative attractiveness of Indian assets.

India Set to Surpass China in Affluent Consumer Population by 2036

Mumbai: India is expected to overtake China in the number of affluent consumers by 2036, with the country projected to have 10.8 crore people in the high-spending category compared with China’s estimated 10.3 crore, according to a joint study by NielsenIQ and World Data Lab.

The study defines affluent consumers based on daily spending rather than income or accumulated wealth. Individuals spending more than \$90 a day are included in this category. India is estimated to have 2.6 crore affluent consumers in 2026 and is projected to add another 8.2 crore over the following decade, representing the largest expansion among individual countries covered by the study. China, by comparison, is expected to add around 6.2 crore affluent consumers during the same period. India’s broader consumer base is also substantial, with an estimated 64.9 crore people classified as “core consumers” in 2026, based on daily spending between \$13 and \$90. The United States is projected to retain the world’s largest affluent consumer population



by 2036, with an estimated 23.1 crore people in the category. Germany is expected to have 3.2 crore affluent consumers, followed by Japan with 3 crore, the United Kingdom with 2.7 crore and Brazil with 2.3 crore. Globally, the affluent consumer population is projected to rise from 65.7 crore in 2026 to 102.5 crore by 2036. The increase of 36.9 crore people highlights the rapid expansion of high-spending consumer segments across major economies. India’s projected growth is being driven by an expanding middle class and favourable demographic trends, positioning the country as one of the world’s most significant volume-growth consumer markets. The expanding affluent population is expected to create opportunities across consumer goods, retail, ser-

vices and other discretionary categories. The study also pointed to a growing balance between affordability and premium products. Global fast-moving consumer goods prices increased by 26 per cent between 2021 and 2025, influencing purchasing decisions and making value an important consideration even as consumers increasingly seek higher-quality products and greater convenience. Among consumers identified as upgrade buyers, 60 per cent prioritised value for money, while 46 per cent said they were willing to spend more for convenience. The findings indicate that India’s evolving consumer market could combine strong demand for affordable products with increasing appetite for premium and convenience-led offerings.

Sensex, Nifty End Lower as Financial Stocks Drag; BLS International Plunges 10.5%

Mumbai: Indian equity benchmarks ended lower on Monday as selling in banking and financial stocks, along with weak global cues, kept investors cautious. Losses across the broader market also reflected the subdued sentiment. The BSE Sensex declined 0.22 per cent to close at 77,370, while the NSE Nifty 50 fell 0.14 per cent to settle at 24,219. The weakness extended beyond the headline indices, with both the Nifty Midcap 100 and Nifty Smallcap 100 ending the session in negative territory. Banking stocks faced notable selling pressure, with Bank of Baroda falling 2.4 per cent to lead losses among public sector lenders. Canara Bank declined 2.2 per cent, while weakness in automotive and fast-moving consumer goods stocks added to the pressure on the benchmark indices. BLS International Services emerged as the biggest loser in the Nifty 500 universe, plunging 10.5 per cent to Rs 242 amid reports alleging visa fraud. Aegis Logistics declined 5.4 per

cent to Rs 1,342, while Schneider Electric fell 5 per cent to Rs 1,155. The latter extended its losing streak to four sessions and touched its lowest level in more than two months. Gabriel India also remained under pressure for a fourth consecutive session, dropping 4.3 per cent to Rs 1,359. Other stocks that declined more than 3 per cent included Balrampur Chini Mills, Tenneco Clean Air, Coromandel International, CreditAccess Grameen, Godrej Industries, KPR Mill, Five-Star Business Finance, Co-hance Lifesciences, Tata Technologies, Poonawalla Fincorp and Zee Entertainment. Several stocks, however, bucked the broader market weakness. Vishal Mega Mart surged 9.4 per cent after Gunender Kapur was reappointed as managing director and chief executive officer. IDBI Bank gained 7 per cent to Rs 88.50, breaking out of a five-week consolidation range. Gold financier Muthoot Finance advanced 5.6 per cent to Rs 3,199 as bullion prices strengthened. Urban

Company climbed 6.46 per cent to Rs 168, extending its recent gains and reaching a 10-month high, while PTC Industries rose 5 per cent to Rs 21,670. Other notable gainers advancing more than 3 per cent included Capri Global Capital, HFCL, Hexaware Technologies, Engineers India, Siemens, Zyklus Wellness, Redington, Wellspan Corp and Prime Focus. Investor sentiment remained cautious amid elevated sovereign bond yields and uncertainty surrounding potential US sanctions on Iran’s energy trade, banking sector and maritime routes. The developments kept crude oil prices near one-month highs despite a moderate decline during the session, adding another layer of concern for equity investors. The combination of global uncertainty, higher yields and sector-specific selling kept the domestic market under pressure, although gains in select stocks provided some support and prevented a sharper decline in the broader market.

11 Financial Stocks Get Buy Calls on Strong Earnings, Improving Margins



Mumbai: Brokerage firm Mirae Asset Sharekhan has issued buy recommendations on 11 stocks across the banking, financial services and insurance sectors for long-term investors, citing stronger loan growth, improving margins and lower credit costs during the first quarter of 2026-27. The brokerage said non-banking financial companies and asset management companies delivered strong operational performances during the June quarter. Diversified lenders, vehicle financiers and gold loan companies were among the strongest performers, while housing finance companies also reported notable improvements in their operations. Diversified financiers recorded a 25 per cent year-on-year and 6.6 per cent quarter-on-quarter increase in assets under management. Pre-provision operating profit grew 27 per cent year-on-year, while lower provisioning costs helped profit after tax rise 33 per cent from a year earlier.

Net interest margins among diversified financiers improved by 21 basis points year-on-year and six basis points sequentially. The improvement was supported by a favourable product mix and an increasing contribution from higher-yielding segments to overall assets under management. The insurance sector delivered a mixed performance during the quarter. Life insurers maintained steady growth, supported by demand for protection-oriented products, while general insurers faced pressure from weakness in fire insurance portfolios and adjustments to reserves following court directions. The brokerage also flagged a potential risk for some lenders from the Reserve Bank of India’s proposal to restrict revolving credit facilities. Such a move could create selective pressure on financial insti-

tutions that have greater exposure to revolving credit lines. Among the 11 recommended stocks, Can Fin Homes has the highest projected upside of 36 per cent. The brokerage assigned a target price of Rs 1,100 against the stock’s previous close of Rs 810.10. Life insurance companies also featured prominently among the top recommendations. HDFC Life Insurance Company has a target price of Rs 715, while ICI-Prudential Life Insurance Company has a target of Rs 660, representing potential gains of up to 29 per cent. Max Financial Services has a target price of Rs 2,000, implying an estimated upside of 27 per cent. The other buy recommendations include L&T Finance with a target of Rs 380, indicating 20 per cent potential upside, and Bajaj Finserv with a target of Rs 2,380, representing 19 per cent upside. Bajaj Finance has a target of Rs 1,250, implying 16 per cent potential gains. Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company has been assigned a target of Rs 2,100, offering an estimated 14 per cent upside. Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services carries a target of Rs 420, implying 11 per cent potential gains, while ICICI Lombard General Insurance has a target of Rs 1,800, also representing 11 per cent upside. Nippon Life India Asset Management rounds out the list with a target price of Rs 1,315, indicating a more modest 5 per cent potential upside from its previous close. The brokerage’s recommendations reflect expectations that improving credit conditions, stronger loan growth and margin expansion could continue supporting financial-sector earnings, although regulatory changes and segment-specific pressures remain key factors for investors to monitor.

Centre Removes Wheat Flour Export Curbs, Opens Overseas Trade With Immediate Effect

New Delhi: The Union government has lifted the export prohibition on wheat flour and related products, including maida, semolina, wholewheat atta and resultant atta, with immediate effect, moving their trade status from “Prohibited” to “Free” as stronger domestic production provides greater room for overseas shipments. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued notifications amending the export policy for wheat flour and related products classified under ITC (HS) Code 11010000. The revised policy also permits unrestricted exports of wheat and durum wheat under specified HS codes, marking a significant relaxation of restrictions that had remained in place since 2022. The government had initially prohibited wheat exports on May 13, 2022, amid concerns over domestic supplies and rising food prices. Restrictions were subsequently extended to wheat flour and derivative

products in August 2022. The measures were introduced after international grain prices surged by nearly 40 per cent following disruptions to Black Sea shipping routes during the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The export restrictions were aimed at ensuring adequate domestic availability and containing the impact of rising food prices. The government had maintained the curbs for several years while monitoring domestic production, stock levels and consumer prices. Earlier in 2026, the Centre began a gradual relaxation of the export restrictions by introducing an annual export ceiling of 5 million tonnes. Specific allocations were also permitted in February as domestic availability improved. The latest decision represents a broader reopening of India’s wheat trade and follows a record agricultural output during the 2025-26 crop year. India’s total foodgrain production reached an all-time high of 376.56 million tonnes,



marking a 5.3 per cent increase from 357.73 million tonnes recorded in the preceding year. Wheat production also reached a new record of 120.66 million tonnes during the 2025-26 crop year. This was 2.71 million tonnes higher than the 117.95 million tonnes produced in 2024-25, strengthening domestic supply conditions and improving the availability of

wheat for both domestic consumption and exports. The stronger production outlook has provided the government with greater flexibility to reopen international trade while maintaining adequate domestic stocks. The availability of larger reserves is expected to reduce the risk of supply shortages as exporters resume overseas shipments. The policy change is also expected to benefit Indi-

an wheat processors, flour mills and exporters by giving them greater access to international markets. Products such as maida, atta and semolina can now be shipped overseas without the earlier prohibition, potentially widening market opportunities for domestic producers. The removal of restrictions comes at a time when global grain markets remain sensitive to geo-

political developments, weather conditions and disruptions to major trade routes. India’s improved production position could allow domestic producers to participate more actively in international trade while retaining sufficient supplies for the domestic market. The move is therefore aimed at balancing two objectives: supporting India’s agricultural and food-processing exports while ensuring that domestic availability and consumer price stability remain protected. The record foodgrain and wheat output has given the government greater confidence to make the export policy more liberal. With the export status now shifted to “Free”, traders and exporters will be able to undertake overseas shipments subject to the applicable regulatory and customs requirements. The decision is expected to provide greater predictability to the wheat-processing and export industry after several years of policy restrictions.

Guinea Landfill Collapse: Death Toll Rises to 30, 22 Injured

Conakry: At least 30 people have died and 22 others were injured after a massive pile of waste collapsed at a landfill in Guinea’s capital, Conakry, following heavy rainfall. Six of the injured are in critical condition, while 16 others sustained minor injuries. The incident occurred at around 2 a.m. on Sunday in the Gbessia area.

British newspaper The Guardian and China’s state-run Xinhua news agency, citing government officials, reported that a large section of accumulated waste suddenly collapsed following torrential overnight rainfall, burying tents, makeshift settlements and poorly constructed homes located nearby. Rescue workers have been using excavators and other heavy machinery to search for people trapped beneath the debris.

Sire Diallo, who lost all five of her children in the disaster, told reporters, “I have lost all my children. Now I can only put my trust in God.”



The disaster occurred only days after the government announced plans to shut down the landfill. Regional Administration Minister Zenabou Toure Camara said on Thursday that the site had become unsafe and that waste being brought there would be transported to another loca-

tion outside Conakry.

During the rainy season, densely populated cities across West Africa face an increased risk of landslides and flash floods. Poor infrastructure and unplanned settlements often exacerbate the loss of life and property in such disasters. Guinean

Prime Minister Amadou Oury Bah visited the site on Sunday. He assessed the damage and monitored ongoing relief and rescue operations. The Prime Minister urged residents to remain calm, maintain solidarity and follow instructions issued by rescue teams and the relevant

authorities. Rescue workers were using excavators and other equipment to clear the debris and search for survivors. Witnesses at the scene said the volume of debris was so large that it could have buried an apartment building along with several vulnerable homes.

A woman at the site said that all five of her children had been killed in the disaster. “I have lost all my children. Now I can only put my trust in God,” she said.

According to a World Bank report published in April, around 3.7 million people out of Guinea’s population of approximately 15.1 million live on less than \$4.20 (Rs 401.70) a day.

Guinea has the world’s largest bauxite reserves and some of the richest untapped iron ore deposits at Simandou, where a major mining project was launched in November. Despite its substantial mineral wealth, the West African nation continues to face widespread poverty and inadequate infrastructure.

On Thursday, Regional Administration Minister Zenabou Toure Camara announced that the government was closing the landfill because it had become unsafe and that waste would be transported to another site outside Conakry.

South Korean Military Sees No Sign of Immediate New North Korean Troop Deployment to Russia



Seoul: The South Korean military has found no indications of an immediate new deployment of North Korean troops to Russia, although Pyongyang continues to prepare for the possible dispatch of additional personnel.

According to South Korea’s Yonhap News Agency, opposition People Power Party lawmaker Yoo Yong-won cited a military report on Sunday, saying that the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) had assessed that North Korea was continuing preparations for another deployment, but had detected no activities indicating that additional troops were about to be sent to Russia.

The South Korean intelligence assessment comes amid a recent claim by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that Russia was preparing to deploy around 30,000 additional North Korean troops to its southwestern border region to support its war effort against Ukraine.

South Korean military officials have confirmed that North Korea is making internal preparations for the possibility of sending additional troops. However, no on-the-ground activity has so far been detected that

would indicate an imminent deployment.

Kim Yo-jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, dismissed Zelenskyy’s claim about the possible deployment of additional troops as completely unfounded last week.

International concern over North Korea’s military support for Russia has intensified since military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow expanded, including the reported provision of troops and weapons to the Russian military.

According to estimates by South Korea’s Defense Intelligence Agency, North Korea has sent more than 16,000 troops to Russia since October 2024. A significant number of those personnel are believed to have been killed or wounded.

The DIA has also assessed that North Korea has supplied Russia with more than 15 million artillery shells. The latest assessment by the South Korean military indicates that North Korea is preparing to maintain its military cooperation with Russia, although there are currently no concrete signs of another large-scale troop deployment.

Photo of Disraeli among missing parliamentary works of art, Fol request finds

UK: A photograph of Benjamin Disraeli, an engraved portrait of William Wilberforce and a cartoon of Barbara Castle have all been misplaced by the UK parliamentary authorities, a freedom of information (FoI) request has revealed.

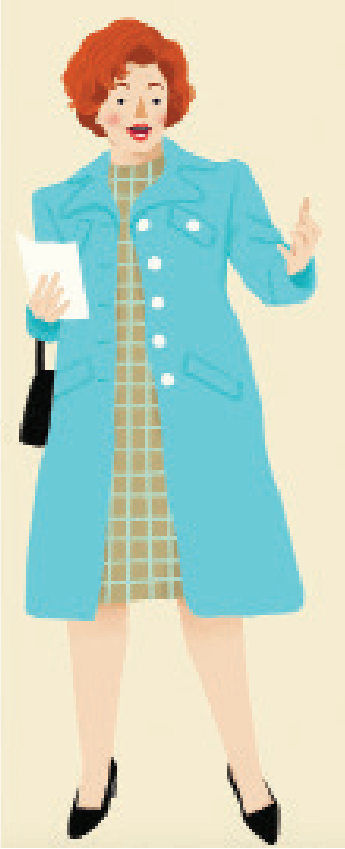
The Press Association has been given a list of more than 65 works of art that have been missing since 2024. They also include a photograph of Margaret Beckett, the UK’s first female foreign secretary and the first woman to lead Labour, and a satirical cartoon by Martin Rowson from the Conservative leadership battle of 1995.

A parliamentary spokesperson said it was a working collection, which meant that objects moved around frequently. None of the works had been permanently written off, they said.

The photograph of Disraeli, Queen Victoria’s favourite prime minister, was taken by John Jabez Edwin Mayall. Mayall was a prolific Victorian portrait photographer who captured the images of many of the era’s best known figures.

Art UK, which catalogues Britain’s publicly owned art, lists 212 Mayall works in UK collections including portraits of Charles Dickens, Karl Marx, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the soprano Anna Bishop, the scientist Michael Faraday and the explorer David Livingstone.

Mayall also made a fortune photographing Victoria and the wider royal family with his carte de visite portraits feeding the 19th-century “cartomania” collecting craze.



The misplaced Disraeli photograph is likely to be the same as one in other collections, including the Royal Collection, showing a tired, heavy-lidded Disraeli in his 60s.

The missing print of Wilberforce, the most celebrated campaigner against the slave trade, was made by the printmaker William Holl and his brother Francis. The Rowson cartoon is from the 1995 Tory leadership campaign when John

Major resigned as party leader, telling opponents to “put up or shut up”. It shows Major seeking to lance the literal “boil” of the contest, as his deputy Michael Heseltine and challenger-apparent Michael Portillo look on. Rowson said the issue of cartoons going missing was not uncommon. He said a cartoon of the Foreign Office Christmas party in 2004, sent to the then junior minister Denis MacShane at his department, “never got beyond

reception”.

Rowson said: “It’s a shame but it’s hardly the crown jewels – and the point about cartoon originals is that they’ve been published already: the artefact is probably the impression in the newspaper, as that’s its ticket to posterity.

“The original is the modern equivalent to one of Hogarth or Gillray’s copper plates used to create the – reproduced – satirical print. That’s why we belong more

properly to journalism than art.”

He said the misplaced work was “small beer compared to one of my cartoons which was part of a touring exhibition of work by members of the British Cartoonists’ Association, all of which were destroyed by a Nato airstrike in the Serbian public library it had reached on its British Council sponsored tour in 1998.” The missing satirical cartoon of Barbara Castle depicts her as Florence Nightingale.

The number of works involved is much fewer than the 224 reported missing after a similar FoI request in 2018. At the time it included portraits of William Pitt the Younger, and a wartime oil painting by William John MacLeod of the scene after parliament was bombed.

A parliamentary spokesperson said: “There is little evidence of works of art going permanently missing from the Parliamentary Art Collection. As a working collection, artworks are frequently moved between their recorded locations and are often subsequently found, meaning none of the items currently recorded as missing have been written off or are considered a financial loss.

“Parliament continues to reduce the number of artworks recorded as missing through ongoing audits.”

They said five of the “missing” works had been found this year. The art collection is one of four parliamentary heritage collections, which contain 26,000 objects including furniture and decorative arts.

We would like to speak to people who have been homeless in England



UK: Andy Burnham has called on local leaders to offer all rough sleepers in England a route off the streets by Christmas, as he pledges another £100m to end street homelessness.

The prime minister has promised he will mount a Covid-style campaign to get everyone off the streets this winter, arguing that rough sleeping has become so common it now “feels like part of the scenery”. Tackling homelessness is a cen-

tral policy for Burnham’s government.

We would like to speak to people who have been homeless in the past. What helped you get off the streets and into accommodation for good? Was it a government initiative? Support from charity? Help from friends or family? Or perhaps it was a combination of some or all of these? We would also like to hear about your experience of homelessness and how you look back on that time.

GCSE results: almost one in four boys in England get top grades in maths

UK: Almost one in four boys in England received top grades in maths while results in English improved across the board, helping to propel improved GCSE results for this year’s cohort of 16-year-olds.

The stronger performances in maths helped pupils taking GCSEs in year 11 reach a record level for higher grades in England outside the Covid pandemic years, when exams were replaced by teacher assessments.

The overall results for 16-year-olds nudged slightly higher compared with last year, with the proportion receiving grades 7, 8 and 9 – equivalent to grades A and A* – rising by 0.1 of a percentage point to 23.1%. The proportion of nearly 700,000

16-year-olds in England who got a grade 4 or better – equivalent to a C or higher – also rose to 70.7%, compared with 70.5% in 2025.

Some of the strongest performances appeared to come in the compulsory subject of maths, where 22.3% received 7s or better, including 24% of boys and 20.5% of girls. But girls did worse than last year in lower grades, dropping from 71% awarded 4 and above to 70.7%, while boys improved further to 72.8%. Richard Harry, the executive director of qualifications and assessment at the Welsh exam board WJEC, said the maths results for 16-year-old boys in England “may be the highest in recent years”.

Coming after last week’s A-levels also showed stron-

ger results in maths, Harry said it was difficult to know what was driving the improvement: “Since coming out of the pandemic we’ve been maintaining the standard in maths at both GCSE and in A-level and I think we’re confident that the outcomes we’re seeing this year reflect the level of attainment that learners have achieved.”

Girls continue to outperform boys at GCSE, but the gap is closing and is now 2.9 percentage points lower than it was in 2019. Harry urged caution, however. “The gap is only very slightly narrower this year – it’s a very small change. I think it would be difficult to speculate too much around the differences for such small changes.” In English, the other compul-



sory subject, results bounced back after dipping last year, with 66.1% of boys getting 4s and above while girls improved to 76.8%.

Many of the pupils receiv-

ing GCSE results this summer were in year 5 when schools were largely closed due to Covid-19 restrictions, disrupting their final years of primary schooling.

Pepe Di’lasio, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: “It should be remembered that these young people experienced significant

disruption earlier in their education ... That so many have done so well in their GCSEs and other level 2 qualifications is an example of triumph over adversity both for them and for their schools.

“However, a significant proportion of students continue to fall short of a grade 4 GCSE pass in English and maths both at the age of 16 and in subsequent resits in post-16 education where most face the miserable experience of falling short once again.

“This limits their education and career options and is very likely to be a factor in the large number of young people who end up not in employment, education or training (Neet).” The results

came as more than a million candidates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland received their grades on Thursday morning. Scotland published its equivalent results earlier this month.

Twenty-two per cent of UK entries were awarded the top grades of 7 or A and above this year, up by 0.1 percentage points on last year. That was higher than in 2019, the last year before the pandemic, when 20.8% of entries achieved the top grades.

Myles McGinley, managing director of the Cambridge OCR examination board, noted that alongside maths many more pupils were taking business studies, with the number of entries rising by a third in five years.

Is it possible for rainwater to damage your skin and result in acne and breakouts

The first drops of rain typically offer a brief respite from the sweltering summer temperatures, yet they also bring back a common discussion: is rainwater genuinely detrimental to your skin? Certain people argue that it can result in acne, rashes, and fungal complications, whereas others maintain that it is inherently clean and possibly even helpful. The actual answer probably exists in a gray area.

Dermatologist, Dr Nupur Warke, Derma Elite Clinic, tells “Rainwater itself is not inherently harmful. Yet, the kind of elements present in the atmosphere along with the factors following rainfall might have an impact on the well-being of your skin”. She further says that during monsoon, high humidity, excessive sweating, wet clothes, and exposure to pollutants create ideal conditions for various skin problems.

She insists that by understanding the difference between myths and medical facts can help people enjoy the season without compromising their skin.

Rainwater itself does not automatically cause skin infections, and the common belief that simply getting wet in the rain means that bacteria or fungi will immediately begin infecting the skin is largely a misconception. According to Dr Warke, the real concern lies in what happens to the skin after exposure to rain, particularly in urban environments where rainwater may collect dust, pollutants and airborne particles before reaching the skin or ground. While these contaminants do not necessarily cause an infection on their own, prolonged exposure can contribute to irritation, especially when rainwater remains on the skin for an extended period and mixes with sweat and natural oils. This can be particularly problematic for people who already have sensitive skin or an existing skin condition, as the combination of moisture, sweat, oil, environmental pollutants and friction can weaken the skin barrier and aggravate irritation. Another important concern during the monsoon is prolonged exposure to damp clothing and footwear. Remaining in wet clothes for hours or continuing to wear damp socks and shoes can create a warm and moist environment that encourages the growth of fungi, increasing the likelihood of fungal infections, particularly in areas where moisture tends to become trapped, such as skin folds and the spaces between the toes. This is why simple post-rain hygiene can play an important role in protecting the skin. Dr Warke recommends showering with clean water after getting drenched and changing into dry clothes as soon as possible, as these habits can help remove accumulated pollutants, sweat and other irritants while reducing the amount of time the skin remains exposed to dampness. Keeping footwear dry, changing wet socks and paying attention to areas such as the feet, underarms and other skin folds can also be helpful during the rainy season. Another common misconception is that monsoon acne develops because rainwater touches the face, but Dr Warke clarifies that rain itself is not the direct cause of acne. Instead, the increased humidity that accom-

panies the monsoon is a major factor behind the increase in breakouts experienced by many people. When the air contains more moisture, the skin may produce more oil, and when this excess sebum combines with sweat, dirt and everyday environmental pollution, pores can become congested more easily. This combination can create conditions that make existing acne-prone skin more vulnerable to breakouts. The problem can also be aggravated by habits that people may develop when they are caught in the rain, such as repeatedly touching, wiping or rubbing the face. Frequent contact with the hands can transfer dirt, oil and microorganisms to the skin, while repeated rubbing may cause additional irritation and make already inflamed areas feel worse. People with naturally oily or acne-prone skin may therefore notice more frequent or persistent breakouts during the monsoon, although this does not mean that rainwater itself is responsible for causing acne. Maintaining the right skincare routine can help minimise these seasonal changes without excessively stripping the skin. Dr Warke recommends using a gentle cleanser twice a day to remove excess oil, sweat, dirt and pollutants while preserving the skin’s natural balance. Over-washing the face should be avoided because cleansing too aggressively or too frequently can irritate the skin and potentially disrupt its protective barrier, which may make the skin feel dry, sensitive or uncomfortable. Heavy cosmetics may also be best avoided when the weather is particularly humid, especially for individuals whose skin is prone to clogged pores, as lightweight skincare and makeup products may be more comfortable during the season. At the same time, keeping the face clean does not mean constantly washing or scrubbing it throughout the day; instead, a consistent and gentle routine is generally more beneficial. Together, these facts highlight an important distinction between the myths surrounding monsoon skincare and the actual factors that influence skin health during the rainy season. Rainwater does not simply introduce an infection onto healthy skin, nor does touching the face with rainwater directly create acne. Rather, the increased humidity, excess oil and sweat, environmental pollutants, prolonged dampness, wet clothing and footwear, and repeated touching or rubbing of the skin can contribute to irritation, clogged pores and certain infections when appropriate hygiene is neglected. Taking a few practical precautions can



according to Dr Warke, individuals with existing conditions such as eczema, rosacea or allergic dermatitis may be more vulnerable to flare-ups, particularly when their skin barrier is already compromised. During the monsoon, increased humidity, pollution, sweat and prolonged exposure to dampness can contribute to irritation and make certain skin conditions more difficult to manage, which is why maintaining a simple and consistent skincare routine becomes especially important. Dr Warke recommends applying a suitable moisturiser before heading outdoors to help support the skin barrier and cleansing the skin after returning home to remove accumulated sweat, dirt, pollutants and other irritants, noting that these simple measures can genuinely help reduce irritation. At the same time, people should not ignore persistent redness, itching, swelling, rashes or other unusual changes in the skin, and instead of relying solely on home remedies, they should seek professional evaluation when

symptoms continue or worsen. Most common monsoon-related skin concerns can improve with appropriate hygiene and regular skincare, but some problems may require specialised dermatological treatment, particularly when they become persistent or recurrent. According to Dr Warke, concerns such as pigmentation that remains after inflammation, stubborn acne marks, repeated fungal infections and chronic redness may need a proper medical assessment to determine their underlying cause and the most appropriate course of treatment. Modern dermatology provides several evidence-based options for managing different skin concerns, and technologies such as the Harmony XL Pro can be used by dermatologists to address concerns including pigmentation, vascular blemishes, acne scars and certain specific skin conditions with a high degree of precision. However, treatment should never be selected simply because a particular technology is available, as the most suitable approach depends on the individual patient’s diagnosis, skin type, severity of the condition and clinical findings. A consultation with a qualified dermatologist is therefore important before proceeding with any specialised procedure, particularly for people who have persistent, recurring or unexplained skin symptoms. Beyond professional treatments, everyday habits can also make a significant difference to skin health during the rainy season. Cleansing the skin after spending time outdoors, choosing breathable fabrics that reduce excessive sweating and friction, keeping the feet clean and dry, avoiding the sharing of towels and personal items, and continuing to apply sunscreen even on cloudy days can all help minimise seasonal skin problems. People should also pay attention to areas that remain damp for long periods, as moisture trapped against the skin can encourage irritation and create favourable conditions for certain infections. Ultimately, healthy skin during the monsoon is less about completely avoiding rain and more about protecting the skin barrier, maintaining good hygiene and responding appropriately when symptoms appear. As Dr Warke explains, the monsoon does not need to be feared, because rainwater itself is rarely the main culprit; rather, the combination of high humidity, environmental pollution, sweat, prolonged dampness and poor skin hygiene is often what contributes to skin trouble during the season. By understanding the difference between common monsoon myths and genuine dermatological concerns, people can continue to enjoy the rainy season without unnecessary restrictions while taking practical steps to protect their skin. For those with sensitive or pre-existing skin conditions, the key is not to avoid rain completely but to understand their individual triggers, maintain a consistent skincare routine, keep the skin clean and moisturised, and consult a dermatologist whenever symptoms become persistent, severe or difficult to control.

If you have dry skin, never remove these ingredients from your skincare regimen



Dry skin often presents a sensation of tightness, roughness, and discomfort, particularly following a shower or during the colder, drier seasons. Furthermore, selecting a body lotion involves more than merely considering its scent or consistency. The composition of the ingredients is equally important. An effective moisturizer for dry skin should ideally incorporate components that draw in moisture, substances that smooth the skin, and elements that assist in minimizing moisture loss. According to Dermatologist Dr Vaishnavi Verma of Yatharth Super Speciality Hospital, tells HT Shop Now, “For dry skin, the focus should be on restoring and protecting the skin barrier rather than simply adding moisture. Ingredients such as ceramides, hyaluronic acid, glycerin, squalane and shea butter can be particularly helpful”.

She also says that ceramides support the skin barrier and reduce moisture loss, while humectants like hyaluronic acid and glycerin attract and retain water in the skin. Squalane and shea butter act as emollients, helping soft-

en rough, flaky skin and improving overall comfort.

Dr Verma further mentions, “For very dry or sensitive skin, fragrance-free formulations are preferable, as perfumes and harsh active ingredients may worsen irritation. It is also important to avoid over-cleansing and very hot water, both of which can strip natural oils from the skin”.

As per Dr Verma, your skincare ritual must include a gentle cleanser followed by a moisturiser on slightly damp skin, which can help lock in hydration. “If dryness is persistent, associated with redness, itching, cracking or inflammation, it is advisable to consult a dermatologist to rule out conditions such as eczema or contact dermatitis”, she says.

Ingredients to look for when you have dry skin

Cocoa butter for deep nourishment: Cocoa butter is one of the classic ingredients for dry skin. It is a rich emollient that helps soften rough skin and leaves it feeling smoother. Because it forms a protective layer over the skin, it can also help reduce moisture loss. Almond oil to soften rough

skin: Almond oil is another ingredient worth considering if your skin feels dry or lacks softness. It is an emollient oil that helps smooth the skin and can make it feel more supple. It also gives body lotions a nourishing texture without necessarily making them feel extremely heavy.

Glycerin to attract moisture: Glycerin can be used for everyday hydration. It is a humectant, which means it helps attract and hold water in the skin. Unlike richer butters and oils, glycerin does not simply sit on the surface. It helps support the skin’s hydration levels. Niacinamide for the skin barrier

Niacinamide is best known for its skincare benefits, but it can also be useful in a body moisturiser. It supports the skin barrier and can help improve the appearance and feel of dry, rough skin with regular use. Shea butter for rich moisturisation

Shea butter is another excellent ingredient for dry skin because it is rich in fatty acids and acts as an emollient. It helps soften the skin while reducing the feeling of tightness. Shea butter is best for areas that tend to become extremely dry, such as the feet, hands, elbows and knees. Ceramides for barrier support

Ceramides are naturally occurring lipids found in the skin barrier. When the skin barrier is compromised, it can lose moisture more easily, leaving the skin dry and sensitive.

Body moisturisers containing ceramides can therefore be a good choice when your main concern is persistent dryness. Hyaluronic acid for hydration

Hyaluronic acid is another humectant that can help attract water to the skin. While it is more commonly associated with facial serums, it can also be useful in body care. For dry skin, it is most useful when combined with richer moisturising ingredients rather than used as the only hydrating ingredient.

Five components that can significantly enhance the condition of your skin

People’s doubts and skincare shelves are at an all-time high. Every season offers a new chemical that promises to change your skin, but not every popular component should be a regular part of your regimen. According to Nagaveni K.S., Research Scientist, Personal Care R&D, Himalaya Wellness, it makes more sense to know what each component is truly meant to achieve and make decisions based on that knowledge. These five have different functions in a thoughtful skincare regimen, ranging from everyday sun protection to chemicals often used for breakouts, hydration, shine, and pigmentation.

Sunscreen: The Step That Makes Everything Else Work

You can have the most carefully curated skincare routine, but daily sun protection remains fundamental. UV exposure contributes to premature skin ageing, pigmentation and other forms of photodamage. Sunscreen helps protect the skin from this cumulative damage, making it an essential part of any routine, not simply the final product you apply before stepping outside. Apply sunscreen generously and reapply when appropriate, particularly after sweating, swimming or spending extended periods outdoors.

Neem: For Breakouts That Won’t Quit

Long before neem be-



came a popular skincare ingredient, it had a place in traditional Indian beauty practices. Neem is known for its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties, which can make it useful in formulations designed for blemish-prone skin. For skin experiencing breakouts, managing inflammation can be just as important as addressing the blemish itself. The formulation matters, too. Neem-based products should be designed to support the skin without excessively stripping away its natural moisture. Aloe Vera: The Quiet Workhorse of Hydration

Aloe vera has long been associated with soothing irritated or sun-exposed skin, but its usefulness extends beyond the occasional cooling gel. Rich in water and naturally occurring polysaccharides, aloe vera can help support skin hydration while providing a lightweight, soothing feel. That makes it particularly appealing for people who want moisture without a heavy or greasy finish. In hot and humid weather, lightweight hydration can be especially comfortable for the skin. Turmeric: For That Elusive Glow

Few ingredients have as strong a connection to Indian beauty traditions as turmeric. From traditional haldi ceremonies to modern skincare formulations, the golden ingredient has travelled a long way. Turmeric contains curcumin, a compound with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. In skincare, these properties are of interest for supporting a calmer, more even-looking complexion. The objective isn’t to alter the skin’s natural colour.

Rather, a healthy-looking glow comes from skin that is well cared for and less affected by visible dullness and inflammation. One challenge remains: turmeric’s intense natural colour. Modern formulation therefore focuses on incorporating the ingredient effectively without leaving unwanted yellow residue on the skin. Vitamin C: Brightening With a Purpose

Vitamin C has earned its status as a skincare staple for good reason. As an antioxidant, it helps protect skin from oxidative stress while supporting collagen production. Topical vitamin C is also widely used to address the appearance of pigmentation and uneven skin tone, helping the complexion look brighter and more even.

But the ingredient comes with a catch: vitamin C can be unstable, particularly when exposed to air, light and unsuitable conditions. That means the formulation, concentration and packaging can be just as important as the ingredient itself.

And brightening should not be confused with skin lightening. The goal is to improve the appearance of uneven pigmentation and dullness while preserving the skin’s natural tone.

Kriti Sanon posts Kabir Bahia pic amid raksha bandhan ad backlash

Mumbai : Kriti Sanon has found herself at the centre of an online debate after her appearance in a Raksha Bandhan advertisement drew criticism from a section of social media users. While some objected to the actress’ outfit for the festive campaign, others questioned a scene showing her tying a rakhi to a dog.

Kriti has not directly responded to the criticism. Instead, the actress returned to Instagram with a collection of personal photographs, sharing moments from her travels and time spent with people close to her. Amid the discussion surrounding the advertisement, Kriti posted several photographs offering a peek into her life away from work. The photo dump included vacation pictures as well as glimpses featuring her sister Nupur Sanon. Kabir Bahia, who has been romantically linked to Kriti for some time, also featured among the memories shared by the actress.

The post did not contain any reference to the controversy surrounding her recent advertisement. Kriti has also not issued a statement addressing the reactions to the campaign so far. Her social media update, however, arrived while the advertisement continued to generate



discussion online, particularly over how the festival was represented.

For the Raksha Bandhan campaign, Kriti was dressed in an off-white ensemble featuring a bralette-style blouse, a cape and a draped skirt. The contemporary styling became one of the biggest talking points after the advertisement surfaced online. A section of users felt the outfit was inappropriate for a campaign centred around a traditional Indian festival. Several comments questioned why the actress had been styled in the particular ensemble for a Raksha Bandhan advertisement. One social media user went as far as describing the choice as “extremely shameful.” The criticism, however, wasn’t restricted to Kriti’s clothes.

Another moment from the campaign showed Kriti interacting with a dog who barks at her. She then ties a rakhi

around the dog’s neck, bringing the pet into the Raksha Bandhan celebration. The sequence was seemingly intended to portray the dog as part of the family, extending the festive sentiment beyond the conventional brother-sister relationship. That interpretation didn’t work for everyone.

Some social media users objected to the idea of tying a rakhi to a dog and accused the campaign of trivialising an Indian festival. Others questioned the creative decision behind the scene and argued that the traditional meaning of Raksha Bandhan should not have been altered for an advertisement. The campaign consequently triggered two separate conversations, one surrounding Kriti’s styling and another about the depiction of the festival itself.

Despite the criticism circulating online, Kriti has chosen not to engage publicly with the comments. Her latest Instagram post instead focuses entirely on personal memories, including holidays and candid moments with Nupur and Kabir. Kriti and Kabir have repeatedly fuelled dating speculation through their appearances together, though the two have not publicly confirmed their relationship.

GV Prakash steps into the spotlight as lead in action-thriller ninja

Agency : Just days after announcing that he would take over as the lead of Ninja, GV Prakash has officially begun work on the film. The Murugu directorial, which was earlier announced with Bhaarith as its protagonist, went on floors on Monday with an official pooja ceremony.

The change in casting also brings about an interesting shift behind the camera. GV Prakash, who was originally attached to the project as its composer, has now moved into the lead role, with Sean Roldan taking over music duties. The makers are yet to reveal further details about the film’s genre, plot and extended cast, keeping much of Ninja under wraps for now. Images from the pooja ceremony have also confirmed that Prathana Nathan will continue as the female lead. Posters featuring



the actor were part of the ceremony, reiterating her association with the project after she was announced as the heroine earlier.

Interestingly, the promotional material released for Ninja so far has placed a dog at the centre of its first-look imagery and other stills. While the significance of the animal to the story remains unknown, its prominent presence suggests that it could have an important role in the narrative. The film is backed by Soldiers Factory and Learn and Teach Productions. KS

Sinish and S Sai Devanand are producing the project, with S Sai Venkateshwaran serving as co-producer.

Ninja also marks another collaboration between GV Prakash and Prathana Nathan. The actor previously appeared in a small role in Happy Raj, where she played the protagonist’s former lover. She has since been part of films including Thalaivar Thambi Thalai-maiyil, Parking and Love Today. For GV Prakash, the project adds another dimension to an already busy phase of his career. Having

established himself as one of Tamil cinema’s prominent contemporary composers, he has increasingly balanced music with acting. His decision to take over as the lead of Ninja makes the project particularly interesting, given that he was initially associated with it in a completely different capacity.

The actor was last seen in Happy Raj and is now gearing up for the release of Immortal, which is scheduled to arrive in theatres on September 4. Directed by Mari Selvaraj, the film is among his upcoming acting projects. His acting lineup also includes Vekkai, Mental Manadhil, Kadhalikka Yarumillai and Idimuzhakam, among others. At the same time, he continues to remain active as a composer, with projects such as Mandaadi and DQ41 in his music slate.

Krushna Abhishek breaks silence on Govinda-Sunita controversy

Mumbai : Krushna Abhishek was snapped at Mumbai airport, where he addressed the ongoing feud between his mama Govinda and his wife, Sunita Ahuja, over the actor’s alleged affair with co-star Komal Rani Swarnakar. While speaking to the media, he shared that people are talking about a matter that doesn’t concern them and added that he likes

to keep family matters private.

The actor, while reacting to the ongoing controversy between Govinda and Sunita, shared, “Ghar ki baat ghar mein rehni chahiye. Mujhe bilkul pasand nahi hai ki baaki log itni baat kar rahe hain, pata nahi kyun. Woh mere mama hain, toh main apni taraf se ye baat kabhi nahi karunga. I love my

mami too much, definitely mama bhi. Bas Bhagwan kare sab solve ho jaaye. (Things within the family should stay within the family. I really don’t like the fact that other people are talking about it so much; I don’t know why. He is my maternal uncle, so I would never talk about this from my side. I love my aunt very much, and definitely my uncle too.

I just hope God resolves everything.” Govinda and Sunita Ahuja tied the knot on March 11, 1987, in a private ceremony. At the time, Govinda was at the peak of his career and was therefore advised to keep his marriage secret to protect his image as an eligible bachelor and his female fan following.

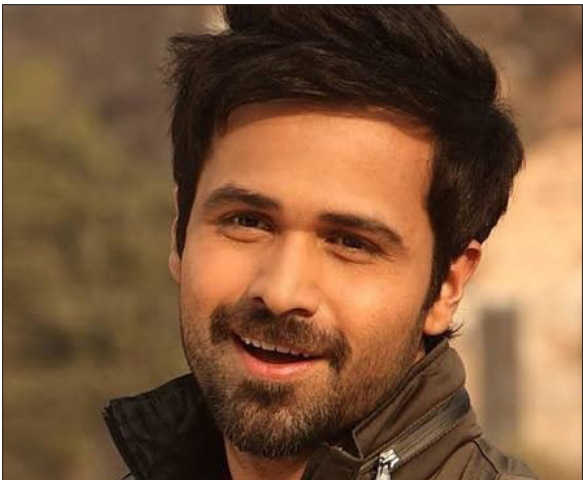
As a result, Govinda continued to be presented pub-

licly as an eligible bachelor even though he was already married to Sunita. The couple kept their marriage away from the spotlight for around two years. Their relationship became publicly known in 1989, when their daughter Tina, now known as Narmada Ahuja, was born. The latest controversy began after Sunita’s conversation with Rakhi Sawant, in which she

explained why she had withdrawn her divorce petition. Sunita claimed that she took back the case after learning that Govinda was planning to marry actress Komal Rani Swarnakar. Govinda’s manager, Shashi Sinha, has denied the claim and said there was no second marriage in the offing. He also maintained that Sunita remained Govinda’s wife.



Emraan Hashmi teases gunmaster G9 first look amid Awarapan 2 box office surge



Mumbai : Emraan Hashmi’s theatrical run has received a major boost in 2026, and the actor is already moving towards his next big-screen outing. Following the box office performance of Awarapan 2, the makers of Gunmaster G9 have confirmed that the film’s first teaser will be unveiled tomorrow.

The upcoming film brings Emraan together with Genelia Deshmukh

and Aparshakti Khurana. The teaser will mark the first major glimpse of the project for audiences. With Awarapan 2 continuing its run in theatres, attention is now shifting to Emraan’s next release. The team behind Gunmaster G9 has announced that the film’s first promotional asset is ready to arrive.

The teaser is scheduled to drop tomorrow, offering audiences their first proper

look at Emraan’s character and the world of the film. Details surrounding the plot and the roles played by Genelia and Aparshakti remain limited for now. The timing of the teaser is significant for Emraan, who is currently enjoying renewed attention at the box office. Gunmaster G9 will look to build on that momentum as its promotional campaign gets underway.

Meanwhile, Awarapan 2 has emerged as a major theatrical success for Emraan. The film has reportedly collected Rs 192.80 crore worldwide within 10 days of its release. It now requires a little over Rs 7 crore to cross the Rs 200 crore mark globally.

The sequel also carried a strong nostalgia factor because of the popularity of the original Awarapan, which was released in 2007. Emraan’s return to the character and fran-

chise brought longtime fans back to theatres, with the sequel’s commercial performance giving the actor one of his strongest box office results in years. The success comes after a period in which several of Emraan’s theatrical releases struggled to make a substantial impact at the ticket windows.

Instead of allowing a long gap after Awarapan 2, Emraan now has Gunmaster G9 lined up to capitalise on the renewed audience interest around him. The presence of Genelia Deshmukh and Aparshakti Khurana also gives the film an interesting combination of actors who have largely occupied different spaces on screen. For now, the makers are keeping most details about Gunmaster G9 under wraps. The teaser should provide the first indication of the film’s genre, scale and Emraan’s new avatar.

Akshay Kumar goes on floors with Samuk, reuniting with Vipul Amrutlal Shah

Hyderabad : Akshay Kumar is heading into territory he has rarely explored on screen. The actor has begun shooting for Samuk, a survival-action thriller that will pit its characters against an alien creature while combining large-scale action with a more grounded approach to survival.

Directed by Kanishk Varma and produced by Vipul Amrutlal Shah, the film has reportedly been in development for more than two years. The project also brings Akshay and Vipul back together after a gap of 13 years. Samuk will see Akshay step into a world built around survival, horror and alien mythology. While the makers are yet to reveal details about his character or the film’s central conflict, production has now commenced.

The project had been in the works for some time. A Pinkvilla report in May 2026 had stated that Akshay was expected to begin shooting for the film in August. The same report suggested that the makers were assembling an international technical crew for the ambitious production. Rather than treating the alien element merely as a visual-effects spectacle, Samuk is reportedly being designed around physical danger and survival. The idea is to give the action a realistic texture even as the story ventures into sci-



ence-fiction territory.

The film is also being envisioned as a pan-India theatrical project with ambitions to reach audiences beyond the domestic market. A major part of Samuk’s appeal will naturally depend on its mysterious creature, and the makers have brought in Hollywood talent to create it. Creature effects specialist Alec Gillis has designed the central alien for the film. Gillis has extensive experience with creature-driven Hollywood productions and has worked on the Alien and Predator franchises. His more recent credits include Alien: Romulus. His involvement suggests that the creature itself will play a significant role in the film rather than

functioning simply as a background threat.

British action director Luke Tumber has also joined the project. He will design and direct Samuk’s action sequences, with the film reportedly aiming for physically demanding set pieces that complement its survival-thriller setup. Samuk also marks a reunion between Akshay Kumar and producer Vipul Amrutlal Shah after 13 years. The two have previously collaborated on films including Aankhen, Waqt: The Race Against Time, Namaste London and Action Replay, among others. Their partnership has covered everything from family drama and romance to comedy and action.

Priyanka Chopra’s emotional note for late father on his birth anniversary

Mumbai : Priyanka Chopra was incredibly close to her late father Ashok Chopra. He was a physician, surgeon, and Lieutenant Colonel in the Indian Army Medical Corps. Ashok Chopra served over 20 years as a doctor in the Indian Army and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1997. He passed away on June 10, 2013, after a battle with cancer.

Dr. Ashok Chopra was born on August 23, 1950. On his 76th birth anniversary, her daughter Priyanka Chopra was left emotional. She took to Instagram to share an emotional picture from the earlier days with her dad. The actress also shared a heartfelt message remembering her father. In the photo, Ashok Chopra can



be seen brightly. Alongside the picture, Priyanka wrote, “Happy heavenly birthday Papa.” Priyanka has often kept her father’s memory alive through emotional tributes and throwback pictures. She also has a tattoo that reads “Daddy’s lil girl” in his handwriting. The special

message became part of her wedding to Nick Jonas in 2018, when she had the same words embroidered on her wedding veil.

Priyanka Chopra has often spoken about how much she misses her late father, Dr Ashok Chopra. In a recent video, the actress was

asked which phase of her life she would revisit. She said she would choose to spend time with her father again, recalling how funny he was and remembering the mid-2000s as a particularly happy period in his life. “I’d go and hang out with my father again. I really miss him, and I think he was just so funny. If there was a specific time, I think I would go to around the mid-2000s...I think he was his happiest then,” she told Esquire India.

On the work front, Priyanka Chopra is set to make her Telugu cinema debut with SS Rajamouli’s Varanasi. She will be seen playing the role of Mandakini alongside Mahesh Babu. The action-adventure will release in theatres on April 7, 2027.

Anasuya Bharadwaj questioning widowhood customs sparks row

Hyderabad : Actress and anchor Anasuya Bharadwaj has once again sparked a debate on social media with her views on traditional practices followed by women after the death of their husbands.

In a video shared on Instagram, Anasuya questioned why women are expected to stop wearing a bindi, bangles and anklets after becoming widows. Recalling the death of her father three years ago, she said her mother had always dressed beautifully, wearing a bindi, colourful bangles and anklets. However, after her husband’s death, she stopped wearing them. Anasuya questioned why such accessories should be considered exclusively connected to marriage. She pointed out that girls are introduced to bindis, kajal, bangles, anklets, mehndi and nail polish by their mothers and grandmothers from a young age, well before marriage.



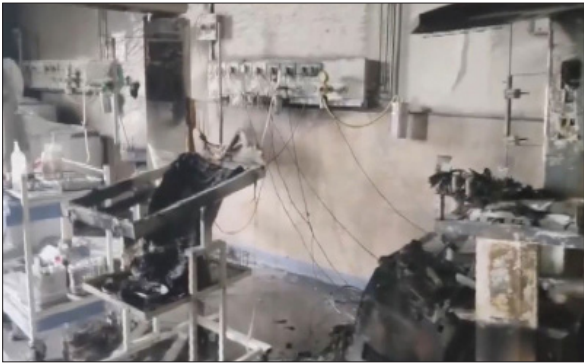
“If these things are part of a woman’s life before marriage, why should they suddenly become unacceptable after her husband’s death?” she questioned, while also asking where it is written that a widow must remove them. She further argued that if these practices are meant to signify mourning after the death of a loved one, similar restrictions could logically be expected after losing a mother

or grandmother as well. At the same time, Anasuya clarified that she was not trying to disrespect anyone’s beliefs. She stressed that these were her personal thoughts and said every woman should have the freedom to decide how she wants to live.

Her latest comments come soon after her remarks on Sanatana Dharma and Hinduism triggered a heated debate on social media. Senior actress Hema and others had criticised her views at the time. While some social media users have supported Anasuya, arguing that women should have the freedom to make their own choices, others believe such traditions carry cultural and emotional significance and should be respected. Anasuya’s comments have once again opened up a sensitive conversation about widowhood, tradition and individual choice—an issue that continues to generate strong opinions in society.

A ventilator explosion causes a fire at a hospital in Maharashtra, killing three newborns

Amravati, Aug 24: In the early hours of Monday, a fire broke out at a government hospital in Amravati, Maharashtra, resulting in the rapid evacuation of scores of infants receiving treatment, which resulted in the deaths of three newborns. A third-floor ventilator explosion is said to have caused the fire to start around 3:30 in the morning. 39 babies were hospitalized to the Amravati District Women's Hospital's Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) at the time of the event. Following serious burns and smoke inhalation, all three infants passed away. The SNCU has three sections: one for inborn and outborn newborns, as well as one for step-down care for kids who are ready to be released. Amravati Police Commissioner Rakesh Ola told news agency PTI. He said that 39 babies were admitted to the three sections. When the fire started, doctors, nurses, and other hospital employees raced to the ward and started removing the infants. As the rescue effort began,



medical equipment was unplugged and the infants were removed from the impacted area. For treatment, six dangerously ill babies were sent to a neighboring Super Specialty Hospital. Soon after the event, senior police officers, including the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), arrived at the scene to evaluate the situation and start an investigation. According to news outlet IANS, local authorities have declared a formal high-level investigation to address culpability for the administrative errors that caused this catastrophe. Expressing grief over the loss, the Amravati District Guardian Minister and Revenue Minister Chandrashekar Bawankule offered heartfelt condolences to the grieving families and pledged full government support during this crisis. "I am deeply saddened by today's tragic incident in Amravati. My heart goes out to the affected families," Bawankule said. "I pay my solemn tributes to the departed newborns and pray that God gives their parents the strength to bear this irreparable loss." NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule termed the fire at Maharashtra hospital that killed three newborns "extremely heartbreaking" and demanded a thorough probe into the incident, alleging that it pointed to serious lapses in the system. "The entire incident must be thoroughly investigated,

and strictest action should be taken against those responsible. There is also an urgent need to conduct fire audits and safety audits of medical equipment in all government and private hospitals across Maharashtra," she said on X. Former minister and Congress leader Advocate Yashomati Thakur called the fire at Amravati District Women's Hospital that claimed three newborns' lives as "very shocking" and alleged lapses in the hospital's fire-fighting system may have allowed the fire to spread. "This is a really startling event. I have no idea what to say to you. However, the truth is that young infants have been hurt in the NICU of a new facility. I have rescued young children. However, the firefighting apparatus was inadequate in this instance. The fire grew as a result. Additionally, an inverter caught fire, indicating that a lapse occurred somewhere. As a result, this area's firefighting infrastructure lacked the necessary equipment. As a result, the fire spread," Thakur remarked.

An England star was handcuffed during a nightclub incident. ECB Issues a Declaration



Derby: Brydon Carse, a fast bowler for the England cricket team, is being investigated after reportedly being engaged in an altercation on Saturday at a nightclub in Derby. Videos that have resurfaced on social media seem to show police officers escorting Carse out of the club while he is handcuffed. The bowler was spotted alongside Durham teammate Matthew Potts, who is in England's squad for the second Test match against Pakistan. "We are aware of an incident which is reported to have taken place in Derby last night, and are currently investigating," an ECB statement said. "We will provide a further update when possible." In a second tier County Championship encounter at Derby, Durham defeated Derbyshire by 338 runs with the help of Carse, who has played

in 14 Test matches, and Potts. With 22 wickets at an average of just over 30, Carse, 31, was England's top bowler during their terrible 4-1 Ashes series defeat in Australia in 2025-2026. This week's series opener at Headingley saw the hosts enjoy a crushing innings and 103-run victory in three days, despite his inclusion in the England team for the first two Tests in a three-match campaign against Pakistan. On Thursday, the second Test at Lord's begins. During his second term as England's Test captain, Joe Root said last week that there would be no curfew. Following many late-night incidents during the tours of Australia and New Zealand, including a brawl between white-ball captain Harry Brook and a bar bouncer in Wellington, the curfew was implemented in January.

The June incident at a London nightclub when former Test captain Ben Stokes and Gus Atkinson were out past a midnight curfew was one of the main scandals at the conclusion of the "Bazball" era. The pair missed the second Test against New Zealand at the Oval, with Root -- both Stokes's predecessor and successor as captain -- taking temporary charge of the team. Root was confirmed as England's full-time Test skipper for the second time following Stokes's dramatic retirement from all international cricket after the 2-1 series to New Zealand, with Brendon McCullum sacked as red-ball coach, although he remains in charge of the limited-overs teams. "There's not going to be a curfew," Root told the Sky Sports cricket podcast. "I don't think curfews work, and if you want guys to take responsibility on the field, they have to be able to feel like they can be grown adults off it and make good, strong decisions," he continued. "That's for us as a team to manage well, and self-police well, for me and 'Flem' (incoming Test coach Stephen Fleming) to manage well in many ways but ultimately you're grown adults, you know what it takes to play for England, you know what your responsibilities are off the field and we need to make sure we don't find ourselves with any little situations off the field."

CJP Warns of New Protests and Will Determine Strategy at Monday's Meeting

New Delhi, Aug 24: On Monday, the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) will hold a meeting of its National Working Committee to choose its next course of action and evaluate how well the government has fulfilled its post-protest obligations. The CJP declared in a statement on Sunday that "all measures necessary to secure the government's fulfillment of its commitments will be on the table, including another round of peaceful nationwide agitation." Students, youth, and volunteers around the country have been asked by the CJP to be ready. Following the CJP's suspension of its first protest activity on July 25 due to official assurances, a statement expressing "grave concern over the Union government's conduct" was released. The CJP leadership claims that a Supreme Court

hearing on August 18 served as the direct cause of the re-kindled conflict. CJP leaders claim that in order to resolve outstanding legal proceedings against protesters, the bench frequently asked for government assistance. The CJP observed, "The Supreme Court asked the Union Government three separate times to provide a consolidated list of FIRs registered against students and protesters across the country so that the Court could use its extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to quash them all at one go." Despite the court's repeated requests, the CJP alleged that the government failed to commit to submitting the list. The CJP highlighted that while initial demonstrations successfully achieved the resignation of Union Education Minister

Dharmendra Pradhan, broader systemic commitments remain unfulfilled. The CJP noted that government representatives have failed to formally reach out to document progress on key terms, including the complete withdrawal or quashing of all protest-related FIRs, guarantees against future punitive action for peaceful protesters, and written assurances regarding "honourable compensation for the families of the deceased NEET victims." The CJP stated, "Our good faith must not be mistaken for weakness," emphasizing that its prior willingness to resign was an act of good faith. We won't let the government offend a whole generation by promising to put a stop to a nonviolent movement and then trying to back out of those same pledges after the streets have been cleared."

Vijay Declares "I Stand With Protesters" After Tamil Nadu Drops the Parandur Airport Project

Chennai, Aug 24: The most recent source of contention between Tamil Nadu's ruling TVK and the opposition DMK, which just lost the election, is a now-canceled proposal to build a new airport close to Chennai.

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), the party of Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay, has consistently supported demonstrators who opposed the airport proposal, claiming environmental issues and the threat to multi-crop agricultural fields in Parandur, which is around 70 kilometers from the state capital.

Vijay has now put the project on hold. Prior to the election that ultimately resulted in the DMK losing power, he had vigorously opposed the project. This chapter has been concluded by Vijay's most recent choice. "We are leaving the airport in Parandur. I firmly support the demonstra-



New Delhi: Before the competition began, Treesa Jolly said to her coach, Pullela Gopichand, "Sir, is World Championships mein medal jeetna hai." With Treesa and her women's doubles partner, Gayatri Gopichand, the renowned coach's daughter, standing on the platform, that ambition has now come true. After a fierce battle last week that resulted in a three-game defeat against the world No. 1 Chinese team of Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning, Treesa and Gayatri won a bronze medal. Speaking to RevSportz, Pullela shed light on his short but eventful chat with Treesa and how the 23-year-

old shuttler was determined to make her medal dream a reality. "When you speak to the girls, ask Treesa this. She came up to me about seven or eight weeks ago and said she wanted to speak to me. Never has she said anything like this and I was surprised. I felt she had something really serious to say, because she had never before made an appointment like this. Then she came and all she said was, 'Sir, is World Championship mein medal jeetna hai (We have to win a medal.)' Not one more word after that, and you must ask her about it," said Pullela. For Treesa and Gayatri, the World Championships bronze

medal is more than just a podium finish. It is a promise fulfilled, a dream realised. "I was coming back from injury and had not even started training," said Treesa. "I did go up to Gopi Sir and said to him that whatever happens, we need to win a medal at our home World Championships. Gaya and I have been discussing this for a long time, and I can't tell you what this medal means to us both. We used to dream about it and today it has come true." Treesa and Gayatri, ranked 39th in the world heading into the championships, overcame three seeded pairs on their way to the semi-finals.



tors opposing the proposed airport," Vijay said. Vijay remembered his opposition to the project dating back to October 2024, when he acknowledged in a meeting in Vikravandi that airports are necessary for industrial growth but cannot be constructed at the expense of farmers' welfare. "To fulfill the promise I made to the people that day... the steps taken to establish a new airport in Parandur

will be abandoned by this government," Vijay said. In April 2025, the Civil Aviation Ministry granted approval in principle to construct the airport in Parandur, which is located in the Kancheepuram district. But the showdown has not ended with the DMK led by former chief minister MK Stalin sending a dare to Vijay to "open our files" instead of insinuating suspicion over the pro-

posed airport project which was initiated during the DMK's tenure. "If the chief minister doesn't open our files, we will move a privilege motion against him in the assembly," DMK leader Duraimurugan told reporters today. "We are giving him permission to open it. If he doesn't do that in one week, the Opposition will consider moving a privilege motion to show the chief minister gave incorrect information in the assembly," he said. Just after coming to power after a massive win, the Vijay government had already said it would review the site earmarked for the proposed greenfield airport. In June, TVK leader CTR Nirmal Kumar had announced a comprehensive review of the proposed project had been going on to find alternative locations. This would help protect local waterbodies and fertile lands, he had said.

"You Destroyed My Family" After the Hill Tragedy, an old video of the teen's mother appears

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Aug 24: The police investigation into the tragedy has taken on a new dimension because to a mysterious post made by the mother of the teenager who fell to his death from a 250-foot-deep cliff in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Maharashtra. Kunal Chandgude, 18, was shown in many videos standing on the brink of the cliff and making suicide threats. For hours, Murlidhar and Sangeeta, his parents, pled with him to move aside. Then, in an attempt to save him, his father grasped his hand, but they both lost their balance and perished. The distraught mother also leaped and perished in a matter of seconds. Police said Kunal had bought an Apple iPhone but was unable to pay the instalments. On Friday morning, he had a fight with his father over the EMIs before he went to the cliff. Sources, however, said that Kunal had attempted suicide a year ago at the same spot, and that there were tensions within the family in the wake of the couple's elder son's death. What piqued the police's interest in this probe angle was Sangeeta's social media post, which pointed to a family dispute. "You took away my and my son's rights, all over property. You never allowed brothers and parents to be together. You ruined my happy family. You poisoned my family... You separated my son from his parents. Your next seven generations will suffer. This is my curse," she said in the post. She didn't name anyone or add any context to her social media post. Police are trying to find out what the post meant.

The sources said the couple's elder son had died six years ago due to an illness. Since then, they had been in a domestic dispute. Murlidhar became so engrossed in his profession that he didn't return home for months due to the stress at home. Tension in the home increased when Murlidhar returned home after three months, only two days before the family's deaths.

The 2028 India Open will be place in Guwahati before returning to Delhi

Guwahati: The India Open, the nation's premier tournament on the BWF World Series, will take place in Guwahati in 2028 after relocating from its current location in New Delhi for a year before returning to the nation's capital in 2029. Sanjay Mishra, secretary general of the Badminton Association of India, declared on Sunday that the India Open will henceforth take place in Guwahati in 2028. Both the 2027 and 2029 editions will take place in Delhi.

According to Mishra, the India Open is being shifted to Guwahati because it would take place in late January, which coincides with Delhi's Republic Day Parade. "The 2028 India Open will be held in the last week of January, and due to the tournament dates clashing with Republic Day security arrangements in the National capital. We felt that only for that year, we should shift the tournament to Guwahati. It will return to New Delhi in 2029," Mishra said in a statement released by the BAI on Sunday. Earlier, Mishra expressed hap-



piness over the praise the BAI received from other members of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) for successfully hosting the 2026 World Championship in New Delhi. The BAI has come in for praise for the arrangements it made for the World Championship after coping criticism for the playing conditions at the New Delhi venue for the India Open in the last two seasons. The BAI secretary general said, "Yes, we have done it," when asked if he was pleased with the World Championship's successful finish. Thus, every player is content," he said to

IANS on Sunday. Mishra cited Danish shuttler Mia Blichfeldt, who had questioned the quality of the site last year and earlier this year criticized the playing conditions at the \$950,000 India Open for the second consecutive year. Mia Blichfeldt, who was negative the last time, is the most notable case. This time, she was the first to tweet and express gratitude for our efforts. After the tournament went off without a hitch, Mishra commented, "And all the players, not just players, officials, and BWF members, all of them appreciated it."

Salima Tete Rues Missed Chances After India's Women's Hockey World Cup Exit



New Delhi : India captain Salima Tete rued her side's missed opportunities after India's women's hockey team crashed out of the Hockey World Cup following a goalless draw against Australia in Amstelveen. The result saw Australia progress to the semi-finals on goals scored, leaving India heart-

broken after they had defended resolutely but failed to find the goal they needed. Five years after stunning Australia 1-0 in the Tokyo Olympic quarter-finals, India were unable to recreate that famous result with another semi-final spot at stake. "We don't feel good, we came so close, but we let this game go out of her hands. We need to learn from this match. It was a tough game for us. We will learn from this. We had some chances as well, and we didn't finish," Salima said after the match. "We lose as a team, we'll fight to finish fifth, this World Cup isn't finished for us," Salima added. India had several chances to break the deadlock but lacked the finishing touch. Their biggest opportunity came just before half-time when a penalty-corner variation found Nikki unmarked, but she missed her attempted shot with the goal at her mercy. Deepika then failed to make clean contact after a promising move involving Navneet and Baljeet in the third quarter. Early in the final quarter, Salima's excellent low cross found Navneet inside the circle, but hesitation between Navneet and Lalremsiami allowed Australia to close down the chance. Navneet had also been crowded out by defenders earlier in the game. India eventually removed goalkeeper Bichu Devi with five minutes remaining to add an outfield player, but could not create a clear opening. Australia also had two goals ruled out after successful Indian referrals, giving India further reprieves. However, the Hockeyroos held firm, leaving India to rue their missed chances.

2028 India Open Badminton Tournament to Be Held in Guwahati, Confirms BAI



New Delhi: The 2028 edition of the India Open badminton tournament will be held in Guwahati instead of New Delhi, Badminton Association of India (BAI) secretary general Sanjay Mishra said on Sunday. Mishra said the decision was taken due to the tournament dates coinciding with Republic Day security arrangements in the national capital. "The 2028 India Open will be held in the last week of January, and due to the tournament dates clashing with Republic Day security arrangements in the National Capital, we felt that only for that year should we shift the tournament to Guwahati. It will return to New Delhi in 2029," Mishra said. The final day of the BWF World Championships 2026 witnessed a slew of new records as mixed doubles combination of Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue won France's first gold medal and Alex Lanier later added the men's singles

crown to their tally while An Se Young of Korea bagged her second gold medal in women's singles at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium here. Last edition's bronze medallists Gicquel and Delrue went two steps ahead as they upset top seeds Feng Yan She and Huang Dong Ping of China 22-20, 19-21, and 21-15 in an hour and 18 minutes to write their name in the history books, according to a release. France then became only the second European nation to win more than one gold medal in a single edition when Lanier outplayed Japan's Kodai Naraoka 21-11, 21-11 in just 50 minutes.

East Bengal Reach AFC Women's Champions League Group Stage Again

Kota Kinabalu: East Bengal FC staved off Sabah FA (Malaysia) to clinch a 2-0 win and earn a place in the AFC Women's Champions League 2026-27 Group Stage at the Likas Stadium in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, on Sunday, according to the AIFF. Second-half goals from Olivia Anokye and Soumya Guguloth settled a keenly fought contest, with East Bengal finishing top of Group A with maximum points. The IWL champions had earlier beaten Rajshahi



Stars FC (Bangladesh) 4-0 and Rovers FC (Guam) 12-0, and have become the first Indian club to make back-to-back appearances in the AFC Women's Champions League Group Stage. With so much at stake, the game endured a nervy start before Sabah started creating chances with Misaki Nakayama's half-volley sailing over in the 21st minute. Two minutes later, the hosts spurned a great chance to take the lead after Mai-Lisa Atis produced a first-time

cross from the right to an unmarked Enzi Broussard, who unfortunately scuffed her attempt with only Panthoi Chanu Elangbam to beat. It was a more even affair in the second half, with Juliana Barek slalom-

ing her way into the box on the right, but she could only place her attempted chip on the roof of the net. Soumya broke down the right flank in the 55th minute and crossed for Sulanjana Raul, who powered a header which the Sabah custodian Junaidi turned away. East Bengal were building momentum, and Olivia was next to have an opening, running away from Steffi before being prevented by a brave Junaidi block. Olivia, however, wasn't to be

denied in the 67th minute as she latched onto Sulanjana's through pass and bested Siti Nurfaizah for pace before knocking the ball past Junaidi on the second attempt. The Moshal Girls made sure of the win in the 87th minute, with substitute Rimpa Halder crossing for the oncoming Soumya to rifle the ball home. The AFC Women's Champions League 2026-27 Group Stage will be played in centralised locations from November 1 to 7, 2026. East Bengal will know their opponents when the draw takes place on September 3. East Bengal have secured a place in the AFC Women's Champions League group stage for the second successive season, marking another significant milestone for Indian women's football. The Kolkata-based club produced a determined performance in the qualifying round to earn their passage into the continental competition's main phase. Their achievement underlines the steady progress of the women's team and East Bengal's growing presence on the Asian stage. Having reached the group stage last season, East Bengal's latest qualification further strengthens their reputation as one of India's leading women's football clubs. The team will now face some of Asia's strongest sides in the group phase, providing valuable exposure and a major test of their ambitions.

Around 200 Golfers Participate in Caddie Welfare Golf Championship 2026 at Pune's Poona Club

Pune: The CW Golf Championship 2026 was held at the Poona Club Golf Course with the aim of recognising and supporting the contribution of caddies to the sport. The event began with a junior golf clinic hosted by ATRI Mumbai Garudas GC, featuring leading golfers including two-time IGPL champion Aman Raj, Olympian Udayan Mane, Asian Tour professional Aadil Bedi and rising talent Tushar Pannu, according to a release. The championship brought together 200 golfers in a team scramble format to support the welfare and development of caddies. The session was led by two-time IGPL champion Aman Raj and Olympian Udayan Mane, joined by Asian Tour



professional Aadil Bedi and breakout talent Tushar Pannu. The four professionals worked with junior golfers and club members on technique, course management and the fundamentals of tournament play, while Team Owners Rishabh Kishore

and Smruti Kishore interacted with young players and their families. The junior golf clinic was followed by a press conference unveiling the Caddie Welfare Golf Championship 2026, with all four professionals available to the media alongside team

owners Rishabh Kishore and Smruti Kishore, who spoke about the purpose behind the initiative. The main event took place on Saturday, with 200 golfers competing in a team scramble format featuring three amateurs and one professional per team, completed by a single handicapper or caddy pro. Every player will tee off in support of the caddies who work the course. Explaining the team's commitment, Rishabh Kishore, Co-Owner, ATRI Mumbai Garudas GC, said, "Our caddies carry more than our bags; they carry the game itself, often without recognition. Partnering with The Poona Club is our way of putting belief into action, with all four of our players on the ground.

Cummins Braces for Australia's WTC Series Against South Africa, Calling Them a Really Strong Side

Mackay : Australia captain Pat Cummins has turned his attention to the upcoming ICC World Test Championship series against South Africa, which will play a crucial role in determining the teams that qualify for next year's final. Cummins claimed six wickets as Australia secured an emphatic innings-and-51-run victory over Bangladesh inside two days in Mackay on Sunday. The Australians now have some time to prepare before embarking on a three-Test tour of South Africa in October, a rematch of last year's World Test Championship Final at Lord's. The series against the Proteas could well serve as a preview of the 2027 World Test Championship Final, with Australia and South Africa currently occupying the top two positions in the standings. With qualification for next year's summit clash at stake, Cummins expects a fiercely contested series against the reigning champions. "They're a really strong



side," Cummins said of South Africa as per the ICC website. "We had a big series against them here in Australia a couple of years back and we probably exceeded expectations, played really well, and then they got us back at Lord's last year and outplayed us there," he added. Only six players in the current Australian squad have previously played

a Test in South Africa. Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Nathan Lyon, Steve Smith and Matt Renshaw were all part of Australia's most recent tour of the country in 2018. Australia will play Tests in Durban, Gqeberha and Cape Town during the three-match series, with Cummins expecting a variety of conditions and a stern challenge for his side.

Lando Norris Clinches Dutch Grand Prix, Seals Back-to-Back Formula 1 Victories in Style



New Delhi: Lando Norris produced a composed comeback at Zandvoort to win a dramatic Dutch Grand Prix on Sunday, securing back-to-back Formula 1 victories and strengthening McLaren's charge in the championship. The Briton recovered from losing the lead to Kimi Antonelli after a restart to beat the Mercedes driver and take the chequered flag. Norris started from pole after edging George Russell and Antonelli in a tense qualifying session, but his advantage disappeared almost immediately when Max Verstappen crashed heavily on the opening lap. The home favourite lost control of his Red Bull and hit the barriers, bringing out the red flag. Verstappen was unhurt, but the incident brought an early twist to

the race. When racing resumed, Antonelli made a flying start to move ahead of Norris at Turn 1 and establish himself at the front. The Mercedes driver controlled the race for a long spell, leaving Norris with the task of chasing down the championship leader. Norris gradually closed the gap before making his decisive move on lap 54 of 72. The McLaren driver went around the outside of the first corner to pass Antonelli, before taking the lead from Lewis Hamilton during the same lap. His aggressive but controlled charge put him back in command with the finish line approaching. A late Virtual Safety Car added another layer of uncertainty after Esteban Ocon's Haas stopped on track. Antonelli took the opportunity to pit for

fresh soft tyres, while Norris stayed out on his older rubber. The strategy gamble left Antonelli chasing Norris in the closing stages, but the McLaren driver managed to hold his advantage. Norris eventually crossed the line 11.536 seconds ahead of Antonelli, completing his second consecutive victory after his previous triumph in Hungary. The win also gave McLaren three straight Dutch Grand Prix victories at Zandvoort. George Russell completed the podium in third after Mercedes team orders allowed Antonelli through, while Hamilton finished fourth for Ferrari. Charles Leclerc was fifth, followed by McLaren's Oscar Piastri and Red Bull's Liam Lawson. Antonelli, despite missing out on victory, extended his championship lead to 59 points with 242 points. Norris moved up to fourth in the standings with 159 points, keeping the title fight alive as the season enters its crucial phase. Lando Norris won the Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort, securing back-to-back Formula 1 victories for McLaren and strengthening their championship campaign. After a red flag due to Max Verstappen's crash, Norris lost the lead to Kimi Antonelli but mounted a controlled comeback, overtaking Antonelli and Lewis Hamilton late in the race. Strategic decisions during a Virtual Safety Car helped Norris maintain his advantage.

Yashasvi Jaiswal Breaks Silence on Asitha Fernando Clash: India Will Fight Back

New Delhi: Yashasvi Jaiswal has broken his silence on his heated exchange with Asitha Fernando during the first session of the Colombo Test. The India opener responded after Cricbuzz questioned on Instagram whether he had "crossed the line" during the confrontation. The incident followed Jaiswal's dismissal for 45 on Day 1 of the second Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club. Responding to the post, Jaiswal said the full context of what was said on the field was not known before making a judgement. "If you don't know what he said then please don't make your judgment if anyone cross the line we need to let them know this India will fight and reply," Jaiswal commented. The exchange took place after Fernando produced a delivery that moved back sharply to breach Jaiswal's defence. The Sri Lankan pacer then gave the batter a send-off, prompting Jaiswal to turn around while walking back and confront him before Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya

de Silva stepped in to separate the two. The episode could attract the attention of match referee Andy Pycroft, with the ICC Code of Conduct containing provisions relating to physical contact between players during an international match. India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak acknowledged that the exchange appeared to have gone beyond a purely verbal confrontation, while suggesting emotions may have taken over. "I think they must have said something to him and it might have happened in the heat of the moment. Obviously, Jaiswal, I don't think he should have been so close to Fernando, but that happens when you are in the heat of the moment," Kotak said after the day's play. Sri Lanka fast bowling coach Ryan van Niekerk did not speculate on a potential punishment and instead left the matter with the match officials. "The verbals are probably an overflow of emotion. I'll leave that to the match referee to deal with," he said. Article 2.12



of the ICC Code of Conduct deals with inappropriate physical contact with another player during an international match. If Jaiswal is found guilty of a Level 1 breach, the possible punishment can range from an official reprimand to a fine of up to 50 per cent of the match fee, along with one or two demerit points. India recovered from a difficult start to finish the opening day on 300/5, with Devdutt Padikkal producing a superb unbeaten century before his dismissal later in the innings. The left-hander's 117 came in testing

conditions and helped India navigate the departures of Jaiswal, Shubman Gill and Rishabh Pant. Jaiswal had made 45 from 53 balls, while Gill scored 50 as the pair provided India with momentum before both fell after reaching significant milestones. Padikkal then anchored the innings through a demanding spell of batting in Colombo. Pant was forced to retire hurt on three after being struck on the wrist by Lahiru Kumara, while Ravindra Jadeja later contributed before also falling to Fernando.