

## Manipur Security Drive Intensifies: Kuki Injured Shifted, 26 Bunkers Demolished in Ukhrul Sector

**Imphal, Jun 17:** Three Kuki youths undergoing treatment for bullet injuries at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Imphal were shifted to Churachandpur district late Tuesday night under heavy security escort, bringing temporary relief to a tense situation that had developed around the premier medical institute. The transfer was carried out around midnight after security agencies arranged a special convoy to safely move the injured youths from Imphal to Churachandpur amid concerns over escalating protests and crowd mobilisation near the hospital premises. Officials said the decision was taken as a precautionary measure to maintain law and order and avoid any further confrontation within the RIMS campus. The situation at RIMS had remained tense since the admission of the three injured youths on June 15. Large groups had gathered in and around the hospital, leading to prolonged demonstrations and heightened security concerns. Police and security personnel reportedly faced difficulties in controlling the situation as emotions remained high among different groups. The development comes at a time when security forces have intensified operations across conflict-affected areas of Manipur to dismantle fortified positions and prevent armed groups from regrouping. According to the Police Control Room, combined security forces destroyed 26 bunkers in the sensitive Litan sector of Ukhrul district during coordinated search operations conducted over two days. The operations were part of wider cordon and search exercises and area domination measures being carried out in vulnerable areas. On June 15, security personnel demolished 12 bunkers, including two located along the Shang-kai-Mongkot Chepu hill stretch and ten along the Leingangching-Sikibung village hill stretch under Litan Police Station limits. During the operation,

forces recovered binoculars, 21 empty cartridge cases of different weapons and eight live rounds of single-barrel breech-loading ammunition. The following day, security teams destroyed another 14 bunkers in the area. Five of these were located along the Mogkot Chepu-Patijang hill stretch, while nine were found along the Lungphu Junction-Industrial Estate Centre stretch. Two empty 5.56 mm cartridge cases were also recovered during the operation. The Litan sector of Ukhrul has remained one of the sensitive zones in Manipur due to repeated incidents of inter-community clashes and the presence of fortified positions. Security agencies have identified several hill stretches in the area as vulnerable locations requiring continuous monitoring. Manipur Police said joint forces have been con-



ducting coordinated operations in fringe and vulnerable areas of Kangpokpi, Churachandpur and Thoubal districts to restore stability. Authorities have also increased security deployment amid concerns over fresh violence. The state government has maintained that large-scale combing operations are underway to improve security conditions and prevent armed groups from establishing new positions. Additional reinforcement has also been deployed, including three units of the elite Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA), as part of intensified counter-insurgency measures. Director General of Police Rajiv Singh is overseeing security operations in violence-affected areas, officials said, as authorities continue efforts to bring normalcy back to Manipur.

## Assam Records 85 Lakh Tourist Arrivals in 2025, Wildlife Tourism Remains Major Attraction

**Guwahati, Jun 17:** Assam has witnessed a significant rise in tourist arrivals, with more than 85 lakh visitors exploring the State during the last financial year. The growth of tourism has brought renewed optimism to the sector, although officials believe that the State's tourism activities are still largely dependent on a single season. According to the Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC), wildlife tourism continues to be the biggest contributor to the increasing tourist flow. The State's famous national parks, wildlife reserves, and natural landscapes have attracted visitors from across India and abroad. Among the total visitors, around 47,000 were foreign tourists, highlighting Assam's growing popularity as a global nature tourism destination. ATDC Managing Director Padmapani Bora said the steady rise in tourist numbers is a positive indication for the future of Assam's tourism industry. He pointed out that while the current trend is encouraging, there is a need



to develop tourism activities that can attract visitors throughout the year. One of the major challenges faced by the tourism sector is its seasonal nature. Most visitors currently arrive during the peak wildlife and favourable weather seasons, resulting in uneven tourist activity during the rest of the year. However, with improved infrastructure and the establishment of new hotels and tourism facilities, Assam has the potential to become an all-season destination. The State government and tourism stakeholders are focusing on expanding

tourism beyond wildlife by promoting cultural, adventure, river, and heritage tourism. Better connectivity, improved hospitality services, and new attractions are expected to help increase the duration of tourist stays. The rise in tourist numbers is seen as a boost for Assam's economy, creating opportunities for local communities, businesses, and employment generation. With continued investment and strategic planning, Assam aims to strengthen its position as one of India's leading tourism destinations.

## Mizoram Court Awards 20-Year Jail Terms to Two BSF Personnel in Gang Rape and Acid Attack Case

**Aizawl, Jun 17:** A court in Mizoram has sentenced two Border Security Force (BSF) personnel to lengthy prison terms for their involvement in a brutal gang rape and acid attack case that took place in Mamit district nearly nine years ago. The judgment has brought a significant development in a case that had drawn widespread attention due to the serious nature of the crimes and the long legal battle faced by the victims and investigators. Additional District and Sessions Judge Sylvie Zomuan-puii Ralte of the Aizawl Judicial District convicted Nilanjan Das and Dinesh Kumar on charges of gang rape, causing grievous injuries during the sexual assault, and carrying out an acid attack. The court awarded both convicts rigorous imprisonment of 20 years, 12 years, and 10 years under separate sections of law. The sentences will run concurrently. Apart from the prison terms, the court imposed fines of Rs 20,000 for each offence. The judgment stated that failure to pay the fines would lead to additional simple imprisonment. The court also directed that the period already spent by the accused in judicial custody during the trial would be ad-

justed against their total sentence. The convicts have also retained the right to appeal the decision before a higher court. The case dates back to July 2017 when two women had gone near the Gaskata river area in Mamit district to collect crabs and wild vegetables. During the incident, the women were allegedly attacked, sexually assaulted, and subjected to a horrific acid attack. One of the victims survived but suffered severe injuries, including facial disfigurement and partial loss of eyesight due to the corrosive substance used in the attack. Her companion later went missing and was found dead during a police search operation.



Medical examinations conducted soon after the incident confirmed evidence of sexual assault and injuries suggesting an attempt to cause permanent physical damage to the survivor. The investigation later focused on BSF personnel posted in the area at the time of the crime. Police examined duty records and other evidence to identify the accused. Investigators initially faced challenges in arresting the suspects and collecting biological samples. However, after further efforts, the accused were arrested following the survivor's identification during a judicial test identification parade held in September 2017.

During the trial, the prosecution presented evidence from 18 witnesses along with documentary and forensic materials. After reviewing the evidence, the court found the accused guilty of gang rape and acid attack but acquitted them of the murder charge, stating that the prosecution had failed to prove the offence beyond reasonable doubt. The verdict has once again highlighted the importance of timely investigation and strong legal procedures in cases involving crimes against women. The court's decision is expected to serve as a reminder of the serious consequences for those involved in such violent offences.

## West Tripura Administration Steps Up Village-Level Monitoring of Welfare Schemes

**Agartala, Jun 17:** In an effort to strengthen grassroots governance and ensure the effective implementation of welfare and development programmes, West Tripura District Magistrate and Collector Dr. Vishal Kumar conducted an early morning field visit to Simna Gram Panchayat under the Mohanpur Rural Development Block on Wednesday. The inspection, which began at around 8 a.m., was aimed at assessing the quality of public services and monitoring the progress of government initiatives at the village level. Accompanied by Mamata, IAS, Assistant Collector, and officials from various line departments, the District Magistrate visited key institutions and reviewed ongoing developmental works within the Gram Panchayat area. During the visit, Dr. Kumar inspected Simna Higher Secondary School and the Simna Anganwadi Centre, focusing on the functioning of educational and child welfare services. A detailed review was conducted covering educational infrastructure, classroom conditions, student attendance, sanitation facilities, drinking water availability, nutrition programmes, and the overall functioning of the institutions. The District Magistrate carefully assessed whether the facili-

ties were meeting the needs of students and beneficiaries and whether government schemes were being implemented effectively on the ground. A key feature of the visit was direct interaction with teachers, Anganwadi workers, students, and local residents. These interactions enabled the administration to gather first-hand feedback regarding challenges faced by educational institutions and child welfare centres. Teachers shared their experiences related to academic activities and infrastructure requirements, while Anganwadi workers highlighted issues concerning nutrition services and child development programmes. Students and community members also had the opportunity to raise concerns and offer suggestions regarding the delivery of public services in the area. Emphasizing the importance of quality education, Dr. Kumar stated that schools play a vital role in shaping the future of children and must be provided with adequate infrastructure and resources. He stressed that educational institutions should maintain a clean, safe, and supportive environment to encourage learning and overall development. The District Magistrate also highlighted the significance of Anganwadi centres in ensuring proper



nutrition, healthcare support, and early childhood education for young children, particularly in rural communities. Special attention was given to sanitation and hygiene standards during the inspection. Dr. Kumar underscored the need for maintaining cleanliness in schools and childcare centres, noting that a healthy environment is essential for the well-being of students and beneficiaries. He also reviewed drinking water facilities and other basic amenities to ensure that institutions provide a safe and comfortable environment for children. Following the inspection, officials were instructed to address identified issues on a priority basis. Concerned departments were directed to work in close coordination and ensure better convergence of services for achieving improved developmental outcomes. The District Magistrate emphasized that timely action and effective co-

ordination among departments are crucial for enhancing service delivery and ensuring that beneficiaries receive the full benefits of government schemes. The district administration stated that such field visits form an integral part of its strategy to promote responsive governance and strengthen monitoring mechanisms. By directly visiting institutions and interacting with stakeholders, officials can identify gaps in implementation and take corrective measures promptly. The initiative reflects the commitment of the West Tripura District Administration to improving public services, enhancing accountability, and ensuring that welfare programmes reach citizens effectively. Through sustained monitoring and community engagement, the administration aims to improve the quality of life of residents and accelerate grassroots development across the district.

## Arunachal Pradesh Signs Agreement with NHPC for 3,097 MW Etalin Hydroelectric Project

**Itanagar, Jun 17:** The Arunachal Pradesh government and NHPC Limited have signed a major agreement for the development of the 3,097 MW Etalin Hydroelectric Project in Dibang Valley, marking a significant step forward in the State's ambitious hydropower development plans. The project is expected to become one of the largest hydropower initiatives in the country and is projected to play a key role in strengthening India's clean energy capacity. The agreement was finalized during a high-level Steering Committee meeting on Hydro Power Development chaired by the Arunachal Pradesh government. During the meeting, officials reviewed the progress and status of various hydroelectric projects being developed by Central Public Sector

Undertakings (PSUs) and Independent Power Producers across the State. The Etalin Hydroelectric Project, to be executed by NHPC Limited, is expected to generate approximately 11,600 million units of clean electricity every year after completion. The large-scale project is likely to contribute significantly to the national power grid while supporting India's transition towards renewable and sustainable energy sources. Located in the Dibang Valley region, the project is also expected to bring major economic benefits to the remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh. The development is likely to create employment opportunities, improve infrastructure, and encourage growth in surrounding communities. Authorities have emphasized that local residents will remain important stakeholders in the

project's implementation process. Chief Minister Pema Khandu, while addressing the meeting, stressed the need for timely execution of all hydropower projects in the State. He gave a clear message that there should be "no delays, no excuses, and no slow movement" in completing projects. He added that every project, obstacle, and deadline would remain under close monitoring to ensure faster progress. The State government has been focusing on harnessing Arunachal Pradesh's vast hydropower potential, with several rivers offering opportunities for clean energy generation. The Etalin project is considered a crucial part of this strategy due to its size and expected contribution to electricity production. However, the project's development will require careful planning to balance

economic growth with environmental and social considerations. Officials have indicated that sustainable development practices and structured implementation will remain central to the project. Once completed, the Etalin Hydroelectric Project is expected to strengthen Arunachal Pradesh's position as a major contributor to India's renewable energy sector. Beyond power generation, the initiative is anticipated to boost regional connectivity, support local businesses, and create long-term opportunities for people living in the remote Dibang Valley region. The agreement between Arunachal Pradesh and NHPC represents a major milestone in the State's journey towards becoming a leading hub of clean energy production

while contributing to the country's broader energy security goals.



## ATTC students turn plastic waste into crude oil through innovative engineering project

**Agency:** Students of the Mechanical Engineering Department at the Advanced Technical Training Centre (ATTC), Bardang, have successfully demonstrated the conversion of plastic waste into crude oil through an experimental project using pyrolysis technology, showcasing an innovative approach to waste management and alternative fuel production.

The project was undertaken by a team of Diploma Mechanical Engineering students under the guidance of lecturer Bidhan Adhikari. The student team comprised Nivedan Hang Subba, Nawang Palzor Tamang, Aryan Sharma, Karma Sherpa and Prayog Sharma.

According to the institution, the initiative was designed to explore the possibility of converting plastic waste into fuel oil while promoting environmental awareness and sustainable waste management practices. The project also



aimed to provide students with practical exposure to emerging technologies that address real-world environmental challenges. As part of the experiment, the students designed and fabricated a small-scale pyrolysis unit.

Pyrolysis is a process in which materials are heated at high temperatures in the

absence of oxygen, causing them to break down into simpler chemical compounds.

During the trial, selected plastic waste materials were first cleaned and then placed inside a sealed reactor.

The reactor was heated without oxygen, resulting in the decomposition of the plastic into hydrocarbon

vapours. These vapours were subsequently directed through a cooling system, where they condensed into liquid crude oil. The successful outcome of the experiment demonstrated the feasibility of converting plastic waste into a usable fuel product through thermal decomposition. The project highlighted

the potential of engineering-based solutions in addressing growing concerns related to plastic pollution and waste disposal. Faculty members said the exercise provided valuable hands-on learning opportunities for the students. Through the project, participants gained practical experience in fabrication, manufacturing processes, heat transfer systems, environmental engineering and alternative fuel technologies. The initiative also enabled students to apply classroom concepts to a practical engineering challenge while enhancing their problem-solving abilities, teamwork and analytical skills. Project guide Bidhan Adhikari supervised the work from planning and fabrication to testing and analysis. He encouraged students to continue exploring innovative technologies that can contribute to environmental protection, resource recovery and sustainable development.

## Lawngtlai DEO reviews electoral roll digitisation progress in Tuichawng constituency

**Agency:** Lawngtlai District Election Officer (DEO) Donny Lalruatsanga on Monday held a review meeting with the Supervisor, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and Assistant Booth Level Officers (Asst. BLOs) of the 36-Tuichawng (ST) Assembly Constituency to assess the progress of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2026 exercise. The meeting was held at the BDO Office of Chawngte Rural Development Block at 4 pm and focused on electoral roll revision, digitisation progress and preparations for the next stages of the revision process.

Addressing the officials, Lalruatsanga appreciated the efforts of the Supervisor, BLOs and Assistant BLOs for their dedication and commitment in carrying out election-related responsibilities. He urged them to continue working with sincerity and diligence to ensure the successful completion of the exercise. Highlighting the significance of the

Special Intensive Revision 2026, the District Election Officer said the exercise is being conducted based on the 2005 SIR and plays a crucial role in maintaining an accurate and updated electoral roll. He stressed the need to ensure that all genuine Indian citizens eligible to vote are included in the electoral rolls while simultaneously preventing the inclusion of ineligible persons.

The DEO advised officials to verify records carefully and perform their duties with utmost responsibility and attention to detail. Lalruatsanga informed the meeting that the digitisation process is scheduled to be completed by June 28, 2026.

Following the completion of digitisation, the authorities will undertake the Claims and Objections phase, during which eligible voters can seek corrections, additions or deletions in the electoral roll. The final electoral roll will be published after the completion

of this process. During the meeting, Booth Level Officers from different areas of the constituency submitted progress reports on digitisation work.

According to the reports presented, digitisation has already been completed in Kamalanagar-I, achieving 100 per cent progress. Officials reported that Kamalanagar-II has achieved 90 per cent digitisation, while Kamalanagar-III has completed 85 per cent of the work. Kamalanagar-IV has recorded 95 per cent completion, indicating significant progress across the constituency.

The review meeting was aimed at ensuring that the electoral roll revision process remains on schedule and is completed in a transparent and efficient manner. Election officials reiterated their commitment to maintaining the accuracy of voter records and ensuring that all eligible citizens are included in the electoral database ahead of the publication of the final electoral roll.

## Assam plans major power sector reforms to achieve energy surplus status

**Guwahati, June 17:** Assam has set an ambitious goal of becoming an energy-surplus state, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announcing a series of major reforms aimed at strengthening the power sector, improving electricity supply and expanding clean energy generation.

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

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

ducing transmission losses, enhancing grid stability and increasing investments in sustainable energy projects.

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

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

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

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

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

In addition, the government will examine the feasibility of establishing small hydroelectric power projects in different parts of Assam to increase renewable energy generation and diversify power sources. Officials said the reforms are aimed at creating a modern power sector that can support industrial growth, economic development and rising household electricity demand. The focus will also remain on ensuring affordable and uninterrupted power supply for consumers across urban and rural areas.

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



## Experts and Communities Unite at Workshop to Advance Water Security in NE Through Science-Led Action

**Guwahati, June 17:** A Regional Workshop on "Himalayan Water Partnership: Strengthening Knowledge, Practice and Partnerships for Springshed Management" held in Guwahati on Wednesday brought together experts, policymakers, government officials, practitioners, researchers and development organisations from across Northeast India and the Himalayan region to deliberate on the growing crisis of spring degradation and the need for integrated springshed management. Organised under the Himalayan Water Partnership initiative, the workshop served as a platform for knowledge exchange, cross-learning and policy dialogue on spring rejuvenation, groundwater governance and climate-resilient water security.

The inaugural session commenced with a welcome and context-setting by Divyang Waghela of Tata Trusts, who highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing the declining health of mountain water sources. Dr Rajesh Thadani of Tata Trusts emphasised the urgent need for collective action to safeguard springs, which remain the lifeline of millions of people across the Himalayan and Northeastern regions. Addressing the gathering, Ranjit Barthakur, Chairman, Centre for Microfinance and Livelihood (CML) and founder and president of the Balipara Foundation, stressed the importance of community stewardship and ecosystem restoration for long-term water security.

Rabindra Kumar Samal, Principal Secretary (Forests), Government of Tripura, underscored the role of forests and catchment protection in sustaining groundwater recharge and spring flows. The session also featured a short film showcasing



successful spring rejuvenation initiatives undertaken by CML across Northeast India. The first technical session focused on the scientific understanding of springs and groundwater systems in the Eastern Himalayan region.

Himanshu Kulkarni from the Advanced Centre for Water Resources Development and Management discussed the unique hydrogeological characteristics of Northeast India and emphasised the need to understand springs as groundwater systems linked to larger recharge landscapes. He highlighted the importance of combining scientific knowledge with local ecological understanding to improve water management outcomes. Jagdish Krishnaswamy of Indian Institute for Human Settlements presented insights on the role of ecological data, landscape analysis and evidence-based approaches in strengthening springshed gover-

nance and informing sustainable water management decisions.

The panel discussion on "Hydrogeology of North-Eastern States and Potential for Sustainable Water Security", chaired by Dr. Rajesh Thadani, brought together experts from the Central Ground Water Board, Meghalaya Basin Development Authority, IWMI, Jal Jeevan Mission-Assam, HITA and academia. The panel deliberated on the diverse hydrogeological settings of the Northeast, the implications of climate variability on groundwater recharge, and the importance of scientific spring inventories and hydrogeological assessments in designing effective spring rejuvenation interventions.

The panelists emphasised that sustainable water security in the region will require stronger linkages between science, policy and community action. The second session

highlighted experiences from the field and explored opportunities for scaling springshed management across the region.

Vinod Kothari of Himmothana Society shared lessons from the Spring Atlas initiative in the Central and Western Himalayas, demonstrating how scientific mapping and documentation can support large-scale spring restoration efforts. Subash Dhakal from the Government of Sikkim presented the state's experience in springshed management and emphasised the value of participatory approaches involving local communities in spring mapping, planning and monitoring. A. Muralidharan of NITI Aayog discussed financing mechanisms and institutional partnerships required for strengthening mountain water security and scaling successful models across different geographies.

The concluding panel discussion

on "Role of Technology, Community in Spring-shed Management and Need of an Integrated Policy Framework" brought together representatives from NABARD, district administration, research institutions and civil society organisations. Discussions highlighted that technology alone cannot revive springs unless complemented by community ownership, traditional knowledge and long-term institutional support.

The panelists stressed the importance of convergence between programmes such as MGNREGA, watershed development initiatives, Jal Jeevan Mission and forest restoration efforts to ensure sustainable outcomes.

The need for dedicated policy support, improved groundwater governance and greater investment in spring rejuvenation was also strongly emphasised. The workshop concluded with a shared commitment to strengthen collaboration among governments, scientific institutions, development organisations and local communities under the Himalayan Water Partnership.

The participants agreed on the need to develop a regional roadmap for scaling springshed management, promoting scientific spring inventories, strengthening groundwater governance and integrating spring rejuvenation into development planning processes across Northeast India.

The deliberations reinforced the recognition of springshed management as an integrated approach that combines hydrogeological science, ecosystem restoration, community participation and policy convergence to improve water security, enhance climate resilience and sustain livelihoods in the fragile mountain ecosystems of Northeast India.

## Injured Farmer Rescued After Alleged Abduction by Bangladeshi Miscreants



**Katigora, June 17:** An injured farmer who was allegedly abducted by Bangladeshi miscreants from the Katigora border area in Assam's Cachar district has finally been rescued and brought back to India, triggering fresh tension along the international border. The farmer, identified as Ranjit Das (28), a resident of Rajtilak village under the Katigora Assembly constituency, had gone out to cut grass near his home on Tuesday morning but did not return.

According to family members and local residents, Das was allegedly taken across the border by Bangladeshi miscreants. Following his disappearance, villagers launched a search operation and raised concerns over his safety. The incident created panic among residents in the border belt, with locals alleging that the abduction took place despite the presence of border fencing and security arrangements. Following the reports, police personnel from Katigora police station, along with senior administrative officials and local representatives, reached the area and took steps to control the situation.

Das was later rescued from the border area in an injured condition. He was initially taken to a local health centre for treatment and was later shifted for further medical care. Cachar MLA Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha visited the area and spoke with the family members of the rescued farmer. He expressed concern over the incident and said that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had been informed about the matter and assured necessary action. Minister Kaushik Rai also took updates on the situation and directed officials to closely monitor developments.

The incident has raised concerns over security arrangements along the Assam-Bangladesh border. Local residents have demanded strict action against those involved and urged authorities to strengthen surveillance in vulnerable border areas. Security has been intensified in the region, and police have started an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident. Authorities have assured that appropriate action will be taken based on the findings of the probe.

## Employees are responsible for updating their address, according to SC



**New Delhi, Jun 17:** The Supreme Court has declared that it is the employee's responsibility to keep an employer updated on their whereabouts. However, it has cautioned that an employee cannot attempt to nullify disciplinary action by arguing that notices were sent to an outdated address that he neglected to update. According to a bench of justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta, it is the employee's responsibility to notify the employer of a change of address, and they cannot thereafter try to obtain a legal advantage by neglecting to do so.

It is only reasonable to expect an employer to contact an employee at the address they have given. It was the respondent-employee's responsibility to notify his employer if he had moved. In a ruling published last week, the court ruled that he could not be allowed to exploit his own failure in this regard. The decision was made in response to a disagreement between Arjun Gupta, a moulder who has been employed by Noida-based Rifilis Engineering Pvt Ltd since 2006. The corporation claims that on May 14, 2012, Gupta ceased showing up for work without permission or notification. He received a notification from the corporation by registered mail four days later, requesting an explanation for his absence and threatening disciplinary punishment. The warning was delivered to Gupta's permanent address in Bihar, which he provided when he was appointed. Gupta claimed to have taken

en leave due to his mother's serious illness, stating he informed his superior officer and attempted to re-join work. This dispute escalated to the labour court, which ruled in his favor, ordering reinstatement with back wages. The Allahabad High Court upheld this ruling, noting the employer had sent a notice to Gupta's permanent address rather than his alleged residence. However, the Supreme Court disagreed, asserting that the employer acted on the only address in its records. The court highlighted Gupta's failure to prove he communicated any address change or provided evidence supporting his claim of illness. It criticized his lack of written communication during his absence, stating that without such evidence, he could not rely on oral claims. The Supreme Court concluded that Gupta had absented himself without authorization and overturned the rulings of the lower courts, emphasizing the absence of documentation and evidence of his attempts to return to work.

## Inside the Ambitious NCR Regional Plan 2041: Namo Cities, Metro Corridors

**New Delhi, Jun 17:** Delhi-NCR is getting ready for the largest change in decades. In light of the potential for the region's population to nearly double to 11 crore by 2041, policymakers are now promoting a vision that goes much beyond building new houses or infrastructure. The goal of the proposed NCR Regional Plan 2041 is to change how people commute, live, and work in the biggest metropolitan agglomeration in northern India. Four proposed greenfield "Namo Cities," a Rs 5,000-crore budget for new urban centers, and the ambitious goal of a "30-minute NCR" with high-speed transport networks connecting homes, employment, and services are at the heart of the blueprint. The NCR Planning Board recently reviewed the plan and chose to maintain the National Capital Region's current borders while emphasizing more balanced regional growth.



The draft NCR Regional Plan 2041 highlights a critical shift in urban development, predicting the region's population will rise from 5.81 crore in 2011 to 11.3 crore by 2041. Experts argue that relying solely on Delhi, Gurugram, and Noida for growth is becoming unsustainable. Instead, they advocate for multiple growth centers to distribute economic activity. The plan aims to create a "30-minute NCR," enabling easy access to key commercial and residential hubs via improved transit systems. Proposed developments, including

four Namo Cities, focus on self-sustaining urban centers to alleviate pressure on overcrowded areas. Additionally, the plan emphasizes revising existing urban areas for vertical growth due to high population density, promoting mixed-use developments to enhance quality housing. However, the success of this ambitious vision hinges on effective execution, requiring significant investment in infrastructure and construction modernization to accommodate an expected population of over 110 million by 2041.

## As extensive security, traffic, and pilgrimage plans are implemented, Assam prepares for 8 lakh devotees



**Guwahati, Jun 17:** Nearly 800,000 devotees and tourists are anticipated to attend the yearly religious gathering at the esteemed Kamakhya Temple, where the Assam government has made elaborate preparations. Three sizable camps have been set up to house devotees and guests throughout the festival, according to Assam Tourism Minister Ajanta Neog, who spoke to the media. A public announcement system has been set up to help with

crowd control and information sharing, she said, and road carpeting and resurfacing projects are being carried out to enhance connectivity. The minister emphasized that sanitation and cleanliness had been given top importance across the temple grounds and its environs. To guarantee a seamless pilgrimage experience, special facilities have also been built for elderly people and people with impairments. Throughout the mela time,

Food Inspectors have been assigned to rigorously monitor food quality and safety standards in order to protect public health. Neog highlighted Assam's expanding tourism industry, noting that the state has already welcomed almost 42,000 foreign visitors and 8.5 million local visitors. In the meantime, Jayanta Sarathi Borah, Guwahati's Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic), presented a thorough traffic control strategy for the occasion.

## A UP minister makes the shocking remark that "the entire SP is sitting ready to join the BJP"

**New Delhi, Jun 17:** Speculation about a potential split in former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party (SP) surfaced on Tuesday amid turmoil in West Bengal's Trinamool Congress and rumors of an impending split in Maharashtra's Shiv Sena (UBT). State minister and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party chief OP Rajbhar claimed that the opposition party could face a significant exodus. In a cryptic post on X, Rajbhar claimed that senior SP leader Ram Gopal Yadav had

approached the Center in response to growing pressure over alleged corruption cases. "There will be a significant rift among the Samajwadi Party. Union Home Minister Amit Shah ji has received a letter from Ram Gopal Yadav. Everyone in Uttar Pradesh is aware of the identity of the mastermind behind the Gomti River Front and mining scams. The Hindi post said, "The SP is becoming nervous as the noose tightens." Rajbhar wrote in the post, "Forget Bengal and Maharashtra—the entire SP is sitting ready

to join the BJP." Manish Singh, a spokesman for the Samajwadi Party, responded to the allegations by asking Rajbhar to evaluate his own ability before making any remarks about SP. "Om Prakash Rajbhar ji should evaluate his own political strength and ability before making comments against the Samajwadi Party. In a viral video, Singh was heard stating, "The number of workers and leaders in your entire party is not even equal to the number of workers and leaders in a single block

of our party." The remarks highlight the turmoil within two major opposition parties in India facing internal rebellions. In West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) confronts a significant crisis following its recent Assembly election loss to the BJP. A faction of 58 MLAs supports Ritabrata Banerjee's claim to the Leadership of the Opposition role, prompting a legal battle that has reached the Calcutta high court. Meanwhile, MP Kakoli Ghosh has rallied support from 19 lawmakers

to back the BJP-led NDA, seeking to merge with the Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI) to circumvent the anti-defection law. Concurrently, Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) in Maharashtra is speculated to split due to "Operation Tiger," with reports of six MPs potentially forming a breakaway group and merging with the party's Lok Sabha unit. Currently, Thackeray retains support from only three of his nine MPs, indicating a precarious position for his faction.

## Sanjay Raut's significant assertion amid rumors of a Shiv Sena-UBT uprising



**New Delhi, Jun 17:** Senior party leader Sanjay Raut claimed on Wednesday that some MPs were being enticed to swap sides with large financial inducements as rumors of a potential split in the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) Lok Sabha unit grow. "A significant individual called me. He informed me that the MPs received an advance of ₹15 crore and were promised ₹50 crore. At a news conference with party leaders Arvind Sawant, Anil Desai, and Rajabhau Waje, Sena UBT MP Sanjay Raut said that MPs in Maharashtra are being bribed. According to reports, only three of the nine Sena-UBT MPs support Uddhav Thackeray: Arvind Sawant, Anil Desai, and Rajabhau Waje. Arvind Sawant,

the leader of the Sena (UBT) parliamentary party, has issued a whip ordering all nine party MPs to show up for a meeting on Thursday. Arvind Sawant, the leader of the Sena (UBT) parliamentary party, has issued a whip requesting that all nine MPs attend the party meeting tomorrow at 11 a.m. MPs have no right to betray the party, according to Sanjay Raut. "Those who are elected on party symbol have no right to betray the party." People won't put up with it this time. Reaction is inevitable, according to Sanjay Raut. Two days after only four of the nine Sena (UBT) MPs showed up for a meeting invited by Thackeray at his Mumbai home, Operation Tiger, the moniker given to the Shiv Sena's attempts to steal Sena (UBT) elected representatives, gathered steam on Tuesday night. Two days after only four of the nine Sena (UBT) MPs showed up for a meeting invited by Thackeray at his Mumbai home, Operation Tiger, the moniker given to the Shiv Sena's attempts to steal Sena (UBT) elected representatives, gathered steam on Tuesday night. Sanjay Jadhav (Parbhani), Bhausaheb Wakchaure (Shirdi), Sanjay Deshmukh (Yavatmal), Nagesh Patil Ash-tikar (Hingoli), Omraje Nimbalkar (Dhara-shiv), and Sanjay Patil (Mumbai North East) are the six MPs that are most likely to establish a breakaway group. This could not, however, be independently confirmed.

## Two BSF personnel are sentenced to 42 years in prison by a Mizoram court for gang rape and acid attack

**Aizawl, Jun 17:** Two Border Security Force (BSF) members were found guilty in a 2017 case involving the gang rape and acid attack of a lady, and a court in Mizoram sentenced them to a total of 42 years of severe jail. The two accused were given different terms by the court for several offenses connected to the crime, in addition to monetary fines. The ruling followed a protracted

court proceeding about the vicious attack that had caused considerable indignation. The victim was allegedly sexually assaulted and then attacked with acid in an attempt to cause serious harm, according to the 2017 incident report. Investigations and legal actions against the accused BSF employees resulted from the case. The court held the accused accountable in

accordance with applicable legal laws and emphasized the gravity of the offenses while rendering its decision. The sentencing has been seen as a major turning point in the case, highlighting the significance of accountability and justice in crimes against women. According to the authorities, the lawsuit demonstrates their dedication to provide victims of violent crimes with justice.

## Kharge supports the need for RSS legal supervision



**New Delhi, Jun 17:** On Tuesday, Priyank Kharge reiterated his call for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) to be placed under a formal legal framework. He rejected the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) criticism of his letter to RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and asserted that it was not unconstitutional to demand accountability and transparency from an organization with a large public following. Ranjit Das, a farmer from Kinnarkhal village in India, was reportedly abducted by a group from Bangladesh while returning home after working in fields accessed through a border gate opened by the BSF. After realizing he had left his machete, Das went back to retrieve it and was then assaulted and dragged across the border. His brother, Kalimohan Das, attempted to intervene but was overpowered. The incident incited panic in Kinnarkhal, prompting hundreds to demand Das's return. Local officials and the BSF sought a meeting with Border Guard Bangladesh, but there was no immediate response

regarding Das's whereabouts. Assam assembly member Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha alerted state authorities for urgent intervention. Kharge emphasized the necessity for the RSS to operate transparently despite its claim of being a cultural organization without a political agenda. He pointed to its significant influence, including a network of over 2,500 affiliated organizations and taxpayer-funded security for its leaders, highlighting the need for accountability under the law. Kharge also expressed concerns over the mobilization of large groups for RSS activities and questioned the organization's association with Hinduism given its relatively recent establishment. In response, R Ashoka criticized Kharge's moral authority to question the RSS, alleging his motives were politically driven and pointing to controversial actions by other parties to undermine his statements. Ashoka defended the RSS's longstanding service to India as commendable and labeled Kharge's challenges as unfounded.

## Hours after his kidnapping, Bangladesh returns an Assamese farmer to the zero line



**New Delhi, Jun 17:** A 65-year-old farmer from Assam's Cachar was turned over by Bangladeshi officials to his Indian counterparts late on Tuesday, just hours after he was allegedly kidnapped from the zero line—the point where the two nations' borders converge. According to Ranjit Das's family, they received a call from someone in Bangladesh informing them that the kidnapping was purportedly done in vengeance for a Bangladeshi who had been killed close to the border between India and Bangladesh. A member of Das's family stated, "We do not know how true that is, but after talks between the two countries, he was finally returned."

Das was turned over securely and in good health, according to a Border Security Force (BSF) official. After visiting Das's border village earlier, Parliamentarian Parimal Suklabaidya, who represents Silchar, claimed that Bangladesh had consented to return the farmer following high-level talks and a medical assessment. According to Suklabaidya, the event made Indian farmers who work in fields close to the border worry about their

safety. "Many areas on the Bangladeshi side are still unfenced, but we have fencing on our side. In the Indian section of the zero line, a large number of Indians farm land. We will need to worry more about their protection in the wake of this occurrence," he stated. Suklabaidya promised to ask the government to improve security protocols. Ranjit Das, a farmer from Kinnarkhal village in India, was reportedly abducted by a group from Bangladesh while returning home after working in fields accessed through a border gate opened by the BSF. After realizing he had left his machete, Das went back to retrieve it and was then assaulted and dragged across the border. His brother, Kalimohan Das, attempted to intervene but was overpowered. The incident incited panic in Kinnarkhal, prompting hundreds to demand Das's return. Local officials and the BSF sought a meeting with Border Guard Bangladesh, but there was no immediate response regarding Das's whereabouts. Assam assembly member Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha alerted state authorities for urgent intervention.

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## Reliable PPI sharpens national income

India’s Wholesale Price Index (WPI) rose to 9.68 percent in May, the highest print in at least 44 months. Unarguably, the biggest drivers of price were oil and gas, chemical products and basic metals. Rising energy costs raised input prices across sectors, contributing to broader producer price pressures. For instance, inflation in crude petroleum and natural gas accelerated to 61.51 percent, while mineral oil prices jumped 49.82 percent. With global crude prices correcting closer to \$80 a barrel after the latest deal to end the Gulf war, it will be interesting to see how soon retail and wholesale inflation soften. Meanwhile, the May data marks the first release under the revised WPI series with the 2022-23 base and an expanded basket of 957 items. Importantly, India also launched a comprehensive Producer Price Index (PPI), which is set to replace the WPI in 2031. The reason for the transition is clear: the WPI measures average price changes of goods at the wholesale level, but excludes services such as healthcare, education and telecom despite India being a services-driven economy. It remains a key economic indicator and is used extensively in price escalation clauses in long-term contracts, apart from serving as the deflator to calculate real GDP. On the other hand, the PPI captures prices that producers receive and pay, and hence is an early indicator of supply-side pressures. What makes PPI better is that, unlike WPI, it excludes indirect taxes. When taxes rise, wholesale inflation often firms up even if the cost of production remains unchanged. Given that PPI excludes taxes, trade margins and transportation costs, it is the cleanest indicator of price changes at the factory level. Another key difference is that the WPI includes imported goods, while the PPI measures only domestic production. Above all, the PPI provides a more complete picture as it tracks price changes in banking, telecom, aviation and other services. So if used as a GDP deflator, it can enhance the accuracy of national income estimates. Which is why, advanced economies use the PPI as the principal measure of producer-level inflation and this shift will align India with global statistical practices. That said, building timely, reliable and accurate producer-level price databases is a complex task, while measuring price changes in the services sector is more challenging than measuring goods prices. India has taken an important step in modernising its economic statistics by introducing a comprehensive Producer Price Index (PPI), which is expected to gradually replace the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) by 2031. The move is being viewed as a significant reform because

the PPI offers a more accurate measure of producer-level inflation and can improve the quality of national income estimation. However, experts caution that the success of the new framework will depend heavily on the creation of timely, reliable and comprehensive price databases, particularly in the services sector. The development comes at a time when India has also revised the base year of the WPI series to 2022-23 and expanded the basket of commodities covered by the index. The government has indicated that the transition to PPI is part of a broader effort to align India’s statistical systems with international standards and improve the accuracy of inflation and GDP calculations. For decades, the Wholesale Price Index has served as one of India’s key measures of inflation. WPI tracks average changes in the prices of goods traded in bulk at the wholesale level. It is widely used in government contracts, infrastructure projects and economic analysis. However, the index has certain limitations. Most importantly, WPI focuses primarily on goods and does not adequately capture price movements in services such as banking, telecommunications, healthcare, education and aviation. This has become a significant drawback because India’s economy is increasingly driven by services, which account for a large share of national output and employment. The Producer Price Index seeks to overcome these limitations. Unlike WPI, PPI measures the prices that producers receive for their output and pay for their inputs. It provides a more direct picture of inflationary pressures at the production stage before products reach consumers. As a result, it is considered an important leading indicator of future inflation trends. According to experts, producer prices often change before retail prices. When manufacturers face rising costs, these increases may eventually be passed on to consumers. Therefore, tracking producer prices helps policymakers identify inflationary pressures at an earlier stage. One of the most significant advantages of the PPI is that it excludes indirect taxes, transportation costs and trade margins. These components can sometimes distort inflation measurements under the WPI framework. For example, if the government raises taxes on a product, WPI may show higher inflation even if the producer’s actual production costs have not changed. By excluding such elements, the PPI provides a cleaner measure of price changes occurring at the factory gate. It therefore reflects underlying production costs more accurately. Another difference is that WPI includes imported goods, while PPI focuses on domestic production.

# With Trump’s tariff wall still standing, India must find its own way forward

On Tuesday, the US Trade Representative proposed tariffs on 60 countries under Section 301 of the US Trade Act, 1974 — economies that together account for 99.4 per cent of all US imports. That the proposal has come up now — the USTR will hold hearings on the proposed actions on July 7 — is no accident. After the US court struck down the policy of reciprocal tariffs brought through the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, Trump had imposed a 10 per cent levy on all trading partners through Section 122 of the Trade Act. This tariff could, however, be levied only for a maximum of 150 days, unless extended by the US Congress. That period will end on July 24. The USTR’s investigation and its proposals now create space for White House to move ahead with its trade agenda. Of the 60 countries, 54 are said to have failed “to impose a legal prohibition on the importation of goods” that have been produced by forced labour and have allegedly been unable “to effectively enforce such a prohibition”. This category includes a wide range of countries — from China and India to Saudi Arabia, Australia, Switzerland, the UK, and others. Another six countries — EU, Canada, Indonesia, Mexico, Ecuador, and Pakistan — are said to have “failed to effectively enforce a forced labour import prohibition”. The USTR has proposed two sets of tariffs — 10 per cent and 12.5 per cent. India falls in the latter category. However, this is not all. Attempts to reinforce the tariff wall are playing out across multiple arenas. Another investigation was launched in March to look into the issue of “structural excess capacity and production in manufacturing sec-



tors” of 16 economies, including countries like India and China. All this suggests that, despite judicial setbacks, tariffs will likely remain key to the Trump agenda. The return of tariff-driven trade politics in the United States has become one of the defining challenges for the global economy. Despite legal challenges, criticism from economists, and opposition from trading partners, the tariff wall associated with U.S. President Donald Trump remains largely intact. For India, this presents both a challenge and an opportunity. As Washington increasingly uses tariffs as an instrument of economic and geopolitical policy, New Delhi must rethink its trade strategy and adapt to a more protectionist global environment. For decades, globalization was guided by the assumption that trade

barriers would gradually decline and markets would become more integrated. The United States, traditionally a champion of free trade, played a central role in promoting this system. However, that consensus began to unravel during Trump’s first presidency and has continued in various forms since then. Tariffs have evolved from temporary negotiating tools into a permanent feature of U.S. economic policy. Recent court rulings and policy decisions indicate that many of these measures are likely to remain in place, even as legal debates continue. India finds itself at a critical juncture. The country has emerged as one of the world’s fastest-growing major economies and seeks to position itself as a manufacturing alternative to China. Yet it must do so while navigating an increasingly

fragmented global trading system. Trump’s tariff policies were originally justified as a means of protecting American industries, reducing trade deficits, and bringing manufacturing jobs back to the United States. While critics argue that the results have been mixed, the political appeal of tariffs remains strong among many American voters. The idea that foreign imports threaten domestic jobs continues to resonate across parts of the U.S. political spectrum. Even when courts have questioned specific tariff mechanisms, the broader policy direction has remained largely unchanged. Recent developments suggest that significant tariffs on imports continue to influence global trade flows and business decisions. This persistence matters because businesses respond not only to existing

tariffs but also to expectations about future policy. Companies planning investments today assume that trade barriers could remain a long-term reality. As a result, supply chains are being redesigned, production locations reconsidered, and sourcing strategies altered. For India, these shifts create uncertainty but also opportunities. India’s economic relationship with the United States is both deep and complicated. The U.S. remains one of India’s largest trading partners, a major source of investment, and a key strategic ally. At the same time, trade disputes have repeatedly surfaced over market access, tariffs, digital regulations, agriculture, and industrial subsidies. The Trump administration has frequently criticized India’s tariff structure, arguing that American products face significant barriers in the Indian market. Trump has repeatedly described India as a difficult trading partner and has pressed for greater market openness. Discussions over tariffs and trade concessions continue to shape bilateral negotiations. India, meanwhile, argues that as a developing economy it requires policy flexibility to protect vulnerable sectors and support domestic industrial growth. New Delhi also points out that developed countries have historically used protective measures during their own industrialization phases. This difference in perspective is unlikely to disappear anytime soon. India’s ambitions to become a global manufacturing hub depend heavily on access to international markets. Initiatives such as “Make in India” seek to attract investment, create jobs, and integrate Indian firms into global supply chains.

# Elon Musk’s massive and growing wealth continues to defy both gravity and reality

Six years ago, a study by a financial services company predicted that the world would have its first trillionaire by 2026. Based on the fact that his net worth had grown 34 per cent in the previous five years, it predicted that the title would go to Amazon founder Jeff Bezos. Last week proved the study right on one count and wrong on the other. The world did, indeed, get its first trillionaire this year. It was not, however, Bezos but former Trump BFF Elon Musk, who crossed that threshold thanks to the blockbuster IPO of his aerospace and AI company, SpaceX. What does it mean to have the kind of money where the only entities that are richer than oneself are 21 countries and a dozen corporations? A trillion dollars in the abstract is hard to picture. In 2020, when Bezos was still the world’s richest man, a viral TikTok sought to explain the scope of his wealth in grains of rice: If one grain of rice represented \$100,000, Bezos — then valued at \$200 billion — was worth 2,000,000 grains of rice (about 54 kg). Musk’s current net worth would thus amount to 10 million grains. Published by the Indian Express on June 16, 2026, the editorial reflects on the extraordinary rise of Elon Musk to trillionaire status and what such wealth means in practical and social terms. The article begins by recalling a prediction made six years earlier that the world would see its first trillionaire by 2026. Analysts



correctly anticipated the timing but not the individual. Instead of Jeff Bezos, it was Elon Musk who crossed the trillion-dollar threshold, largely due to the highly successful public listing of SpaceX. The editorial focuses on the almost unimaginable scale of a trillion-dollar fortune. It argues that while people can roughly understand the idea of a millionaire or even a billionaire, a trillion dollars is so large that it becomes difficult to comprehend. To illustrate this, it references popular attempts to visualize extreme wealth. One example compares money to grains of rice: when each grain represents a fixed amount

of money, even the wealth of previous billionaires requires enormous quantities. Musk’s current fortune would require several times more, demonstrating how far beyond ordinary wealth it has become. The article also notes that Musk’s wealth places him in a category usually occupied by nations and giant corporations. According to the editorial, only a small number of countries and a handful of major corporations possess economic resources greater than Musk’s personal fortune. This comparison is intended to highlight how concentrated wealth has become in the modern technology-driven econo-

my. Another theme is the relationship between innovation and wealth creation. Musk’s fortune is closely linked to companies operating in sectors often associated with futuristic ambitions, including space exploration, artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, and satellite communications. The article suggests there is a certain irony in the fact that a businessman whose enterprises literally aim to escape Earth’s gravity has accumulated a level of wealth that seems to defy conventional economic expectations as well. The editorial emphasizes that much of Musk’s wealth exists on paper rather than in cash. Like most ul-

tra-wealthy entrepreneurs, the value of his fortune is tied to ownership stakes in companies whose market valuations fluctuate. The article reminds readers that Musk has experienced dramatic swings in wealth before. In 2023, for example, he reportedly lost more than \$100 billion as the value of shares in Tesla declined. Yet even losses on that scale appear relatively small when viewed against a trillion-dollar fortune. The piece then explores what a trillion dollars could theoretically purchase. It offers comparisons involving luxury aircraft, famous landmarks, and large real-estate holdings. These examples are not meant

as realistic spending plans but as tools to help readers grasp a number that is otherwise beyond normal human experience. A trillion dollars, the article argues, stretches the limits of imagination because everyday reference points become almost meaningless at that scale. Beyond the numerical spectacle, the editorial implicitly raises questions about inequality. If one individual can accumulate wealth comparable to that of entire national economies, what does that say about the structure of the global economic system? The article does not provide a detailed policy prescription, but it encourages readers to think about the broader implications of such concentration of wealth. The timing of Musk’s achievement is also significant. It comes during a period in which technology companies increasingly dominate global markets. Investors have poured money into sectors such as artificial intelligence, private space exploration, and advanced communications infrastructure. SpaceX’s blockbuster market debut reflected not only confidence in Musk but also investor enthusiasm for technologies that many believe will shape the future economy. Supporters of Musk often argue that his fortune reflects extraordinary entrepreneurial success. They point to achievements such as reusable rockets, satellite internet systems, advances in electric transportation, and investments in artificial intelligence.

## Glenmark enters \$19 million US drug segment with generic Methylene Blue Injection

**Mumbai:** Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, USA has launched a generic version of Methylene Blue Injection USP in the American market, targeting a product segment that recorded annual sales of roughly \$19 million in the twelve months through April 2026, as per exchange filings. This generic is used to treat a rare blood disorder that impacts the body’s ability to carry and deliver oxygen efficiently. The product, Methylene Blue Injection USP, 50 mg/10 mL (5 mg/mL) Single-Dose Vial, is a generic equivalent of Provay-Blue Injection, a drug manufactured by France-based Provepharm SAS

Adani Ports expands tie-up with US firm Kaleris

As per the filing, Glenmark’s version has been deemed bioequivalent and therapeutically equivalent to the reference listed drug by US regulators, clearing the path for its commercial rollout.What it means for the portfolio Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, which is listed on both the BSE and NSE, has been expanding its generics business in the US even as it continues to invest in branded and innovative therapies in other geographies. The Mumbai-headquartered company operates



11 manufacturing facilities across four continents and has a commercial presence in over 80 countries.company’s stock price has been rather flat as of market opening on June 17, 2026. The stock price was down 8.2% in the past month. However, the stock price was

up 29.92% in the past year.

Marc Kikuchi, President and Business Head for North America at Glenmark, said the launch was in line with the company’s stated strategy of widening its footprint in the institutional segment of the US market.

## Rising fatty liver cases spur awareness push in Nagaland

**Kohima:** Doctors at Medanta-The Medicity have flagged a growing burden of fatty liver disease in Nagaland, warning that changing lifestyles, unhealthy diets and declining physical activity are driving an increase in cases among both young and middle-aged adults.The Gurugram-based hospital, recently named India’s Best Hospital by Newsweek 2026, said fatty liver disease has emerged as one of the country’s most common liver disorders, affecting an estimated four in ten adults. Medical experts cautioned that the condition often develops silently and can progress to liver inflammation, cirrhosis, liver failure and even liver cancer if left untreated.Dr. Rajesh Puri, Vice Chairman, Interventional Gastroenterology at Medanta, said the disease is increasingly being diagnosed among non-alcohol consumers, with obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, stress, sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy food habits emerging as major risk factors. He stressed that early detection and lifestyle modifications such as balanced diets, weight management and regular exercise can help reverse the condition.In Kohima, healthcare stakeholders are witnessing growing demand for preventive health

services as awareness of lifestyle-related diseases rises among urban consumers. The trend is expected to support increased uptake of health screenings, diagnostics and specialist consultations, reflecting a broader shift toward preventive healthcare in Nagaland’s capital.Dr. Hitesh Panchal, Associate Consultant, Gastroenterology at Medanta, urged residents to preserve healthy traditional habits while adapting to modern lifestyles responsibly. He highlighted the importance of regular health check-ups, particularly for individuals with diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol.Strengthening its footprint in the Northeast, Medanta has signed an MoU with the Government of Nagaland for accreditation under the Chief Minister’s Health Insurance Scheme (CMHIS) and partnered with IDAN and the Department of Youth Resources and Sports to develop a health awareness booklet launched by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio in September 2025. Dr. Panchal will consult patients in Dimapur on June 19, while Medanta’s dedicated Northeast helpline offers multilingual assistance for appointments and access to specialised care.

## Stock markets extend early trade on drop in crude oil prices

**Mumbai:** Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty climbed in early trade on Wednesday following a decline in crude oil prices and a rally in IT firms.Extending its rally to the fourth day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex further climbed 271.61 points to 77,080.09 in opening trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty advanced 55.35 points to 24,044.50.From the 30-Sensex firms, Trent, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Tech and Eternal were among the biggest winners.Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance, NTPC and Adani Ports were among the laggards.Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.49 per cent lower at USD 78.44 per barrel.“Crude oil prices have fallen sharply to a nearly three-month low. Falling energy prices are expected to act as a tailwind for the Indian economy, helping contain inflation, improve external balances and support earnings growth across several sectors,” Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said.

## LG India, Titagarh Rail, Kalpataru Projects



**New Delhi:** Indian equity benchmark indices continued to recover on the back buoyed sentiments led by the optimism around the US-Iran trade deal. Investor sentiment remains measured ahead of the upcoming US Fed policy. The BSE Sensex surged 544.15 points, or 0.71 per cent, to close at 76,808.48, while NSE’s Nifty50 jumped 135.25 points, or 0.57 per cent, to end at 23,989.15. Select buzzing stocks like LG Electronics India Ltd, Kalpataru Projects International Ltd and Titagarh Rail Systems Ltd (formerly known as Titagarh Wagons Ltd) are likely to remain under the spotlight of traders for the session today. Here is what Rajesh Palviya, Head of Research at Axis Direct has to say on them ahead of Wednesday’s trading sessionTitagarh Rail Systems has surpassed the past 8-10 months 'down-sloping trendline' at Rs 873 on a closing basis, accompanied by huge volumes. On the daily and weekly charts, the stock has confirmed a trend reversal, forming a series of higher tops and bottoms formation indicating positive bias. The stock is well placed above its 20, 50, 100 and 200-day SMAs. These averages are also inching up along with the price rise, which reconfirms the bullish trend. The daily, weekly and monthly RSI is in favourable territory, indicating rising strength across all time frames. Investors should consider buying, holding, and accumulating this stock. Its expected upside is Rs 925-950, and its downside support zone is the Rs 870-850 levels.

## Infosys, HCL Tech: What IT hiring trend suggests; target prices KPIT Tech, Coforge, Persistent,

**New Delhi:** Choice Institutional Equities in a latest note suggested that Indian technology labour market is undergoing a structural reallocation rather than a cyclical slowdown. It said while aggregate white-collar hiring growth moderated to 1 per cent YoY and IT hiring declined 7 per cent YoY in May, the weakness remains concentrated in volume-led and lower-skilled hiring categories. "In contrast, demand for specialised talent continues to remain strong, particularly across AI/ML, data engineering, cloud, cybersecurity and platform engineering roles," Choice Institutional Equities said.Choice said enterprises are recalibrating technology spending towards high-impact, outcome-oriented talent capable of driving AI adoption and digital transformation initiatives. As a result, it believes the traditional talent pyramid is gradually evolving into a diamond-shaped workforce structure, characterised by a larger concentration of experienced and specialised professionals. "We believe this trend is supportive for IT services firms with differentiated AI capabilities, digital engineering providers, ER&D players and premium technology staffing platforms, while demand for generalist and entry-level technology roles is likely to remain structurally challenged. Our long-term investment ideas are Coforge, Persistent Systems, Happiest Minds Technologies Ltd and KPIT Tech," Choice Institutional Equities said. Evaluating May 2026 Naukri Jobseek hiring data, Choice said AI hiring remained resilient despite broad-based demand weakness. It stayed 'Neutral' on the



sector. Among the tier 1 companies, Choice has targets of Rs 3,350 on Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS), Rs 1,500 on Infosys Ltd, Rs 215 on Wipro Ltd, Rs 1,500 on HCL Technologies Ltd, Rs 1,700 on Tech Mahindra Ltd (TechM) and Rs 4,700 on LTM. Choice sees these companies reporting 7.5-9.2 per cent growth in revenue annually over FY26-29.

Among tier II players, it has targets of Rs 6,200 on Persistent Systems, Rs 1,900 on Coforge Ltd, Rs 2,626 on Mphasis, Rs 650 on Zensar Tech and Rs 560 on Happiest Minds Technologies. Choice sees these companies logging 8-21 per cent sales growth for FY26-29.

## Turkey’s Celebi silence on post

**New Delhi:** India’s Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) revoked the security clearances of Celebi’s Indian subsidiaries on May 15, 2025, shortly after India and Pakistan halted hostilities following Operation Sindoor. The company reportedly handled nearly 58,000 flights annually before the contracts were terminated and reassigned to other service providersFollowing the cancellation, Celebi challenged the decision before the Delhi High Court, arguing that it was not given prior notice or an opportunity to respond.However, the court dismissed the challenge in July 2025 after reviewing confidential government submissions, ruling in favour of the Centre and citing “compelling national security considerations.”The court accepted the government’s argument that airport ground-handling firms occupy highly sensitive positions, grant-

ish government, Indian authorities cited national security concerns while cancelling its clearance.

across nine major Indian airports came to abrupt halt Before being forced to exit, Celebi had established itself as one of India’s largest airport ground handling and cargo service operators. The company operated through Indian subsidiaries at nine major airports, including Indira Gandhi International Airport, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Kempegowda International Airport and Rajiv Gandhi International Airport.Nearly a year after India revoked the security clearance of Turkish airport services firm Celebi Aviation in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, the company said the move erased almost \$500 million in business value overnight, describing it as one of the most damaging setbacks in its history.Speaking to

## DOMS share price drops 5% on heavy turnover; Fila likely seller amid block

**Mumbai:** Shares of DOMS Industries Ltd fell 5 per cent in Tuesday’s trade amid heavy turnover. The stock came under pressure as promoter Fabbrica Italiana Lapis ed Affini SpA (Fila), which held a 26.01 per cent stake in the company as of March 31, looked to offload shares worth nearly Rs 900 crore through block deals. A large trade of 44.1 lakh shares, accounting for 7.3 per cent of total equity, worth Rs 980.6 cr change hands via block deal. Details of the block deal transactions are disclosed by stock exchanges after market hours. DOMS shares fell 4.92 per cent to hit a low of Rs 2,200 on NSE. A total of Rs 1,116.92 crore worth shares changed hands on the counter within the first 15 minutes of trade. Fila was looking sell up to Rs 892 crore worth of shares. The floor price for the transaction was set at Rs 2,100 per share, sources told Business Today. Up to 4,248,184 shares, representing 7 per cent of the company's outstanding equity, were expected to change hands through the block deal. The base deal size of the block deal comprised 3,152,167 shares, or about 5.2 per cent of the total shares outstanding, with an upsize option of up to 1,096,017 shares, or around 1.8 per cent of the total shares outstanding. The offering was made to institutional and professional investors outside the United States in offshore transactions under Regulation S of the US



Securities Act of 1933, and to qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) in the United States under Rule 144A. Analysts noted that continued investments in ballpoint pens and highlighters supported strong growth in the office supplies segment. The baby hygiene segment also delivered healthy growth, aided by seasonal demand and higher capacity, they said.DOMS recently entered into an asset purchase agreement with Reynolds Pens India Pvt Ltd (RPI) for acquisition of certain assets, relevant contracts, employees and intellectual property relating to manufacture and sale of pens, markers, highlighters, and school supplies under the Reynolds

brand. Aggregate consideration for the transaction is \$3.7 million."Unlike diapers, where many investors had questions surrounding the decision to enter an unrelated category, pens is an ancillary business for DOMS IN. In addition, Reynolds is an age-old brand and has strong customer connect. Further, RPI’s portfolio breadth is diverse with strong focus on mid-market segment enabling

DOMS to scale the pyramid hierarchy of premiumization. We believe the acquisition could be value accretive in long term, if DOMS IN can lever its distribution strength of 145,000 outlets and scale the business," PL Capital

said recently. The brokerage has retained 'Buy' on the stock with a target of Rs 2,883.

JP Morgan India and BNP Paribas Securities India are said to be acting as joint placement agents for the transaction. No pricing guidance will be provided until the shares are crossed on the stock exchange, as per the offer document.

For the March quarter, DOMS reported 18.7 per cent year-on-year (YoY) revenue growth, driven by strong volume-led demand across key categories, including Scholastic Art Materials, Office Supplies, Paper Stationery, and Hobby & Craft, aided by increased capacity and new launches.

## Telegram-based phishing toolkit targeting Microsoft

**New Delhi:** The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has warned organisations about Kali365, a newly identified cybercrime platform that is being used to break into Microsoft 365 accounts by getting around multi-factor authentication protections. Kali365 is a “Phishing-as-a-Service” platform, or PhaaS, which means attackers can subscribe to ready-made phishing tools instead of building them from scratch. Its biggest danger is that it lowers the entry barrier for cybercriminals. Even attackers with limited technical skills can use it to launch campaigns against Microsoft 365 users.The attack begins with a phishing email that appears to come from a trusted cloud service or document-sharing platform. Instead of sending users to a fake login page, the email gives them a device code and asks them to enter it on a legitimate Microsoft login page.Unlike older phishing campaigns that mainly try to steal passwords, Kali365 targets the way users authenticate into cloud services. That makes the attack harder to spot and in some cases, harder to shut down even after a password reset.



ing them access to aircraft systems, cargo movement networks, passenger information and restricted airport zones.‘It was built stitch by stitch’

Celebioglu said the loss was not just financial but deeply emotional, given the company’s long investment in building operations in India.Speaking to Bloomberg, she said, “Put the monetary value aside. It was a place built stitch by stitch. We contributed to the development of the sector. We worked with authorities. We invested heavily. This shocked us. It truly saddened us.”The move came amid deteriorating diplomatic ties between India and Turkey, particularly after reports suggested Turkey had supplied drones to Pakistan during attacks targeting India.Although Celebi reportedly maintained that it had no links with the Turk-

Bloomberg, Chairperson Canan Celebioglu said India’s decision abruptly ended nearly two decades of business operations that the company had painstakingly built in the country.‘Our entire business value went to zero overnight’ Reacting publicly for the first time since the fallout, Celebioglu said the company lost access to all of its Indian operations immediately after authorities withdrew security clearances in May 2025 amid diplomatic tensions between New Delhi and Ankara following Operation Sindoor.According to Bloomberg, she said, “All our equipment, everything we had, was seized and they removed us from there.

They transferred our 10,000 employees to another company in a single day.”She added that the financial blow was massive and immediate.

## Sri Lankan court sentences 12 men to death over lawmaker killing during 2022 protests

**Colombo:** A Sri Lankan court on Wednesday sentenced 12 men to death for the killing of a lawmaker and his bodyguard in May 2022 during violence that erupted at the height of the island nation’s economic crisis.The Gampaha High Court convicted the men for unlawful assembly, assault and the deaths of Amaraakeerthi Athukorale and his bodyguard, who was a police officer, said senior state counsel Oswald Perera.Athukorale, who was a ruling party lawmaker, and his guard were attacked and killed in Nittambuwa, about 30 kilometres (18.6 miles) north of the capital, Colombo, after the car they were travelling in was intercepted by a crowd.Police at the time said Athukorale or his bodyguard had fired gunshots at the protestors who later chased them and trapped them inside a building where their battered bodies were later recovered by police.

The court also convicted another four people for unlawful assembly and imposed six-month prison terms suspended for five years, Perera said. Another 23 people were acquitted. Violence erupted in May 2022 after ruling party supporters attacked a peaceful anti-government demonstration which was calling for the resignations of the then ruling party leaders over the economic crisis. Dozens of lawmakers and their supporters were assaulted during widespread violence, while several houses were attacked and set on fire.Sri Lanka’s economic crisis brought severe shortages that led to the ouster of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. The country declared bankruptcy in April 2022 with more than \$83 billion in debt. Senior opposition lawmaker Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as president by parliament in July 2022 and led an economic

recovery. Under his leadership, inflation fell, the local currency strengthened and foreign reserves increased. But he faced a public backlash over his government’s stringent austerity measures.President Anura Kumara Dissanayake was elected in 2024 on an anti-corruption platform. While courts have the legal power to impose the death penalty, Sri Lanka has nothanged a prisoner since 1976. A Sri Lankan court on Wednesday sentenced 12 men to death for the killing of a lawmaker and his bodyguard in May 2022 during violence that erupted at the height of the island nation’s economic crisis.The Gampaha High Court convicted the men for unlawful assembly, assault and the deaths of Amaraakeerthi Athukorale and his bodyguard, who was a police officer, said senior state counsel Oswald Perera.

## Sergei Lavrov accuses US of pressuring India to stop buying Russian oil



**London:** Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov took a dig at the United States in an interview with TV BRICS and said that there are efforts to ban India and other partners from purchasing Russian oil, Sputnik reported on Monday.The Russian Foreign Minister also spoke about several areas such as the peace talks in Alaska last year, and how Washington has set itself the objective of achieving economic domination while they use “coercive” measures like tariffs, sanctions and direct prohibitions. Lavrov said, “They (US) tell us that the Ukraine

problem should be resolved. In Anchorage, we accepted the US Proposal... The US position was important to us. By accepting their proposal, we seem to have completed the task of resolving the Ukrainian issue and moving on to a dull-scale, broad-based and mutually beneficial cooperation. So far, the reality is quite the opposite. New sanctions are imposed, a ‘war’ against tankers in the open sea is being waged in violation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. They are trying to ban India and our other partners from buying

cheap, affordable Russian energy resources (Europe has long been banned), and are forcing them to buy US LNG at exorbitant prices.” He said that the US has set itself the objective of ‘achieving economic domination’, adding further to it that Americans want to control the routes to leading countries to provide its energy sources to them.Calling the measures coercive and incompatible with fair competition, Lavrov said that the use of tariffs, sanctions, direct prohibitions and forbidding some from engaging with others are the steps being taken to meet their objectives. “We have to take all of this into account while remaining open just like India, China, Indonesia and Brazil to cooperation with all countries, including major powers such as the United States. We are in a situation where the Americans themselves are creating artificial obstacles along the way,” he said.His statement comes as Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Monday said that “national interest” would continue to guide India’s energy-related decisions, underlining that the key drivers of the country’s energy policy are “adequate availability, fair pricing and reliability of supply”, amid reports suggesting New Delhi is cutting its oil imports from Russia.Misri noted India is a net importer in the oil and gas sector and, as a developing economy, must remain conscious of its resource availability and the impact of import dependence on inflation. He added that safeguarding the interests of Indian consumers remains a top priority for the government.

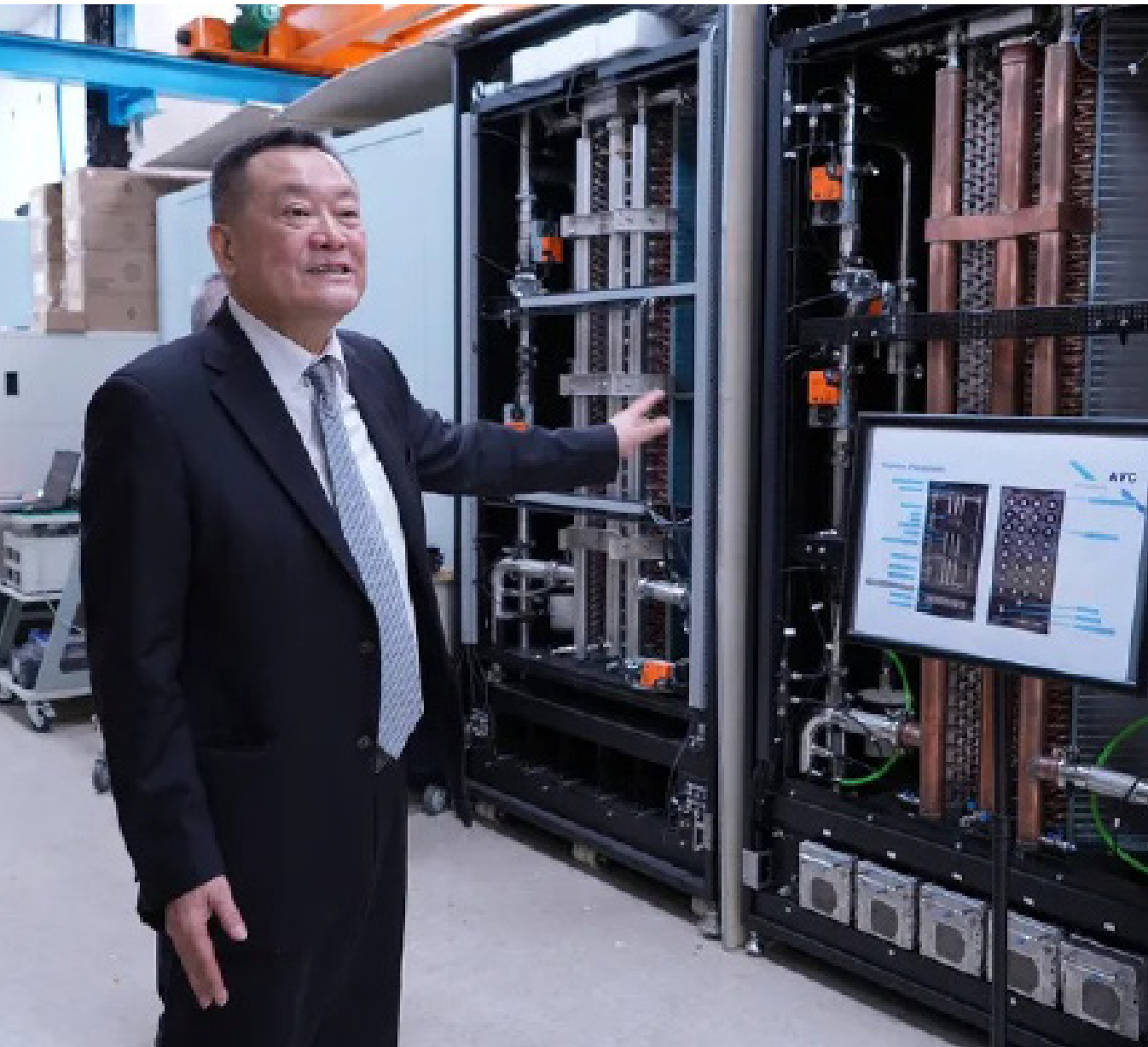
## Cuban peso hits record low against US dollar in informal markets



**Taipei:** The Cuban peso hit an all-time low Wednesday against the U.S. dollar in Cuba’s widely used informal market, reflecting a deepening crisis as the Trump administration’s restrictions on oil imports further choke the island’s economy.The currency hit 500 pesos to the dollar in informal channels, according to the independent news website El Toque, which provides regular updates on Cuba’s peso. That compares with about 400 last summer.The informal rate — often negotiated on WhatsApp groups and between neighbors who bring cash from the U.S. or Europe — is used far more than the official exchange rates. Despite the government’s attempts to exert strict economic control, experts have long used the informal exchange rate as a gauge of the health of the Cuban economy.As the country has spiraled deeper into an economic and energy crisis over the past five years, caused in large part by decades of U.S. sanctions on Cuba, the peso has dropped with it. At the same time, the Caribbean nation’s economy has become increasingly dollarized.“It’s not good news, obviously,” said Cuban economist Ricardo Torres of American University in Washington. “Many things are already being sold directly in dollars even though most Cubans do not have stable income in dollars.”The Cuban peso’s plunge in the informal market deals a blow to residents already struggling to scrape by. The average state salary is around 7,000 Cuban pesos — now about \$14 on the informal market — and a carton of eggs costs 3,000 Cuban pesos. Cuba has three official exchange rates in a complex system that many residents struggle to understand, ranging from 24 pesos to the dollar for certain business transactions to a new 455 pesos rate implemented in December in an effort to compete with the informal rate. Yet, most people still use the informal market. The peso began to dip further after a U.S. military operation on Jan. 3 in Venezuela deposed former President Nicolás Maduro, and U.S. President Donald Trump announced that no more Venezuelan oil would go to Cuba, cutting the country off from its key ally. The day of the operation, the Cuban peso was at around 438 pesos to the dollar.Then at the end of January Trump threatened to slap tariffs on any nation providing Cuba with fuel, prompting Mexico to cut off shipments to the island, though Mexico has continued to deliver other aid to Cuba.What came next was a gradual descent into turmoil in just a span of days.Last week, Cuba’s government announced it would only sell limited amounts of gasoline in dollars and other foreign currency. Cuba announced it no longer had enough oil to refuel airplanes, prompting flight cancellations from across the world and cutting the island off from its key economic engine: tourism. Public transport in Havana has largely been slashed. Endemic blackouts have become longer and grown more frequent. Banks have cut operating hours. Cultural events have been cancelled and many classes have gone remote.

## Taiwan’s AI-powered economy soars in the shadow of bubble fears and China threats

**Taipei:** real estate agent Jason Sung is betting that home prices around a high-tech industrial park in the northern part of Taiwan’s capital will soon take flight – because of computer chip maker Nvidia.The area is where Nvidia plans to build its new Taiwan headquarters as it rapidly expands on the island, set to surpass Apple to become the biggest customer of Taiwan semiconductor maker TSMC, the biggest contract manufacturer of the advanced chips needed for artificial intelligence. Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang describes Taiwan as the “center of the world’s computer ecosystem.” It’s riding high on the global AI frenzy. Its economy grew at an 8.6% annual pace last year, and it’s hoping to maintain that momentum after it recently sealed a trade deal with U.S. President Donald Trump that cut U.S. tariffs on Taiwan to 15% from 20%.“We have been lucky,” said Wu Tsong-min, an emeritus economics professor at National Taiwan University and a former board member of Taiwan’s central bank.But Taiwan’s heavy reliance on computer chip makers and other technology companies carries the growing risk of the AI craze turning out to be a bubble.“What if the AI bubble is real, and what if its rapid growth pace slows, what’s next for Taiwan? That’s the question many have been asking,” Wu said.Escalating tensions with Beijing, which claims independently governed Taiwan as mainland China’s territory, are another abiding threat, despite the island’s vital role in global chip and AI supply chains.An island of about 23 million people, Taiwan depends heavily on exports. They jumped nearly 35% year-on-year in 2025, as shipments to the U.S. surged 78% due to ballooning AI demand.That’s thanks largely to TSMC, or Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp., and electronics giant Foxconn, which makes AI servers for Nvidia and is a major supplier to Apple.Taiwan has undergone massive economic changes while shifting from mainly labor-intensive industries such as plastics and textiles to advanced manufacturing like semiconductor fabrication.The AI frenzy has made TSMC one of the world’s top 10 most valuable companies. Its profit jumped 46% last year to \$1.7 trillion Taiwan dollars (\$54 billion).The chipmaker is investing heavily both in Taiwan and in new factories in Arizona in the U.S. It produces more than 90% of the world’s most advanced chips.Foxconn, formally known as Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., has doubled its value since 2023. The maker of Apple’s iPhone and iPads now produces AI servers and racks and has a partnership with OpenAI to supply AI data center equipment.Taiwan’s heavy reliance on its technology industry means its biggest risk is that growth will be “very highly contingent on the AI boom and tech race continuing,” said Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at ING Bank.Worries that the AI craze may prove to be a bubble prone to a bust similar to the dot.com crash in 2000 that swept through markets, alarming many in Taiwan.“I’m also very nervous about it,” C.C. Wei, TSMC’s chairman said when asked about a potential AI bubble during an earnings call in January. “Because we have to invest about \$52-\$56 billion (this year).”“If we did not do it carefully, that will be a big disaster to



TSMC for sure,” he said. “I want to make sure that my customers’ demands are real.” In a recent report, analysts from Fitch Ratings argued that AI demand will remain strong at least in the near term. In the longer term, however, the risks “will depend on the evolution of AI, as well as trade and investment policies and the adaptability of Taiwanese firms,” they wrote.Taiwanese electronics company Asia Vital Components, a key supplier of liquid cooling systems for Nvidia, is investing heavily in research and development. Its chairman, Spencer Shen, said he saw no signs of a slowdown in AI-related demand so far. The company is already designing thermal solutions for 2028 AI servers, he said.“We do not believe this is a bubble,” Shen told The Associated Press in an interview. “AI is driven by companies with real products and massive cash flows, like Amazon, Microsoft, Google and Meta.”“In fact, AI infrastructure is still in short supply,” Shen added. “I expect AI to trickle through to our everyday level and change the way that things will work fundamentally.”Some in Taiwan believe that its pivotal role in the technology sector, especially as a maker of computer chips whose main material is silicon, helps to protect the island from attack by communist-ruled Beijing, whose leaders have vowed to reunite the island with the Chinese mainland, by force if necessary.The two govern-

ments split in 1949 during a civil war. Beijing has been stepping up pressure, conducting military drills nearby. Exercises in late December included live rounds landing closer to the island than before, Taiwan officials said. Such geopolitical factors cloud the economic outlook, though many in Taiwan including its former President Tsai Ing-wen believe its importance to global chipmaking would deter China from attacking.The risk of an invasion is unclear. Both global tech companies and Chinese industries would suffer from massive disruptions of the chip supply chain, said Wu of National Taiwan University.Still, some companies have been identifying contingency scenarios in recent years on how to respond in case of military action by China, said Chen Shin-hong, vice president of the semi-official Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research.“We need to understand the potential risk, potential damages to Taiwan,” said Chen.While many of its core research and development activities are in Taiwan, TSMC already has plants in China, Japan and the U.S., and it’s expanding its offshore production in the U.S., Germany and Japan. Roughly 65% of Foxconn’s manufacturing is in China, and the company has factories in other parts of the world such as India, Mexico and the U.S. AVC has been expanding its production capacity in Vietnam.While some have called for Taiwan to diversify its

economy away from technology to reduce risks, others argue that doubling down on its world-leading technology is the way forward. “It is our greatest strength,” said Shen of AVC The AI boom has done wonders for Taiwan’s stock exchange, where the benchmark Taiex has climbed nearly 250% over the past decade, making many investors rich. Economists have significantly upgraded forecasts for Taiwan’s economic growth for 2026 based on its robust AI-related exports. But as is true elsewhere, the wealth is not evenly spread. Many Taiwan residents feel they have been left behind.Taiwan’s wealth gap, according to official data, has roughly quadrupled over the past three decades.The pay of tech workers already earning high wages, especially chip engineers and managers, has skyrocketed. For other traditional industries, such as plastics and machine toolmakers, growth has lagged.Economists say that gap might widen as the AI frenzy continues.“It can be tough to make a living,” said Jean Lin, a 30-something manager of a takeaway outlet selling bento meals in a Taipei neighborhood where Foxconn’s office is located.“Many of the younger generation still can’t afford to buy an apartment,” Lin, who wishes to start her own business one day, added. “A lot of young people still feel they don’t have much money.”

# 8 enduring designs from the esteemed legacy brand

Some brands provide watches, while others create lasting memories. Titan has remarkably managed to offer both. If you have noticed Titan watches making a comeback in various locations, you are indeed correct. The brand has regained prominence, driven by the enthusiasm surrounding the “Made in India: A Titan Story” series, which has reignited conversations about Titan’s legacy, craftsmanship, and the qualities that make an Indian watch brand truly iconic. Titan has never merely been about telling time. For numerous Indians, their first “adult” watch, a gift for a celebration, a present for graduation, or that one cherished item stored safely in a drawer has frequently been a Titan.

The series has brought attention back to the brand’s journey, from creating a homegrown watch identity to blending Indian craftsmanship with modern design. And the timing couldn’t be better. In a world where trends move faster than ever, classic watches are making a comeback as people look for pieces that feel personal, timeless, and worth keeping. From sleek minimalist dials to statement chronographs and elegant women’s watches, Titan’s collections prove that a watch can be both a style accessory and a piece of heritage. Titan watches that are trending right now

1. Titan Sparkle Quartz Analog Watch: A little sparkle nev-



er hurt anyone, and this Titan Sparkle watch brings just the right amount of shine without going over the top. Designed for women who like their accessories elegant yet noticeable, the anthracite dial paired with a silver stainless steel strap gives this watch a sophisticated feel. The subtle shimmer adds a festive touch, while the clean analog design keeps it wearable for everyday styling. It is the kind

of watch that works equally well with a crisp white shirt, a saree, or a cocktail dress.

Style it with: Silver jewellery and monochrome outfits for a sleek, polished look.

2. Titan Karishma Quartz Analog Watch: A true classic never needs too much introduction. The Titan Karishma collection has been loved for years because of its simple, timeless designs, and this version keeps

that legacy alive. The green dial adds a modern twist, while the brown leather strap brings a warm, vintage-inspired appeal. It has a sophisticated personality that feels perfect for everyday wear, office looks, or anyone who prefers understated accessories. It proves that a watch does not need a loud design to make an impression. Style it with: Linen shirts, chin-

3. Titan Edge Beige Dial Leather Strap Watch: Titan Edge is known for its slim, refined profile, and this watch captures exactly why the collection remains a favourite. The beige dial creates a minimal, clean aesthetic, while the leather strap adds a classic touch. It is designed for those who believe luxury lies in simplicity, no unnecessary details, just a beautifully balanced silhouette.

This is a watch you can wear for years without worrying about it feeling outdated.

Style it with: Tailored outfits, neutral tones, and minimal accessories.

4. Titan Raga New You Quartz Analog Watch: Titan Raga has always been about celebrating femininity through design, and this watch brings that signature elegance forward. Featuring a mother-of-pearl dial and rose quartz-inspired details, this piece feels delicate, graceful, and slightly dreamy. It adds a jewellery-like quality to your wrist while still staying functional as a classic analog watch. Perfect for occasions where you want your accessories to quietly stand out. Style it with: Pastel ethnic wear, flowy dresses, or soft-toned outfits.

5. Titan Maritime Pro Chronograph Watch: For those who prefer a watch with a stronger personality, the Maritime Pro brings a sporty yet sophisticated edge. The green dial gives it a bold appearance, while the chronograph detailing adds a premium feel.

The leather strap balances the rugged elements, making it versatile enough for both casual and smart dressing. It is the kind of watch that instantly upgrades a simple outfit. Style it with: Denim jackets, polos, and weekend looks.

6. Titan Phoenix Skeletal Automatic Watch: This one is for the watch lovers who enjoy seeing the mechanics behind

the beauty. The skeletal dial design gives a glimpse into the automatic movement, turning the watch into more than just an accessory, it becomes a conversation starter. The gunmetal dial and black stainless steel strap create a bold, contemporary aesthetic. It feels modern, technical, and premium all at once. Style it with: Dark outfits, formalwear, or evening looks.

7. Titan Retro Revive Quartz Analog Watch: As vintage-inspired fashion continues to trend, retro watches are having their own comeback, and this Titan piece fits perfectly into that movement. The grey dial and brown leather strap combination gives it a timeless old-school charm. It feels like a watch with a story, even if you are wearing it for the first time. A great pick for anyone who loves classic designs over fast-changing trends.

Style it with: Denim, relaxed shirts, and vintage-inspired outfits.

8. Titan Lagan Quartz Analog Watch: Simple, elegant, and effortlessly wearable; the Titan Lagan is built for everyday sophistication. The midnight blue dial adds depth and richness, while the brown leather strap keeps the overall look warm and classic. It is understated enough for daily wear but polished enough to make your outfit feel more complete. A true everyday essential. Style it with: Workwear, casual shirts, and smart basics.

## From adaptable daily slippers to a fashionable lace-free walking shoe



Locating footwear that meets all criteria is more challenging than it appears. A pair may be fashionable yet uncomfortable after just an hour, cozy but overly simplistic, or in vogue but insufficiently practical for daily use. So when I tried these three pairs from Liberty, I was looking for one thing: can they actually survive real everyday plans? Think long walks, running errands, casual outings, and those days when your footwear needs to keep up without making your feet regret your choices.

From a neutral everyday slipper to a walking shoe that might just convert even the biggest lace-haters, here’s my detailed review of each pair.

1. Healers MDG-6 Women’s Navy Blue Casual Slippers: First impressions? This pair instantly stood out because of how wearable the colour is. The navy blue

shade is subtle, sophisticated, and honestly one of those colours that quietly goes with almost everything. Whether you are wearing jeans, cotton dresses, kurtas, or relaxed summer outfits, this slipper blends in without looking boring. The premium nubuck upper gives it a slightly elevated finish compared to regular casual slippers, making it feel more polished for everyday wear. The solid design keeps it minimal, which is perfect if your wardrobe leans towards timeless basics. Comfort-wise, this one scores really well.

The cushioned insole makes walking around feel easy, and the mid-heel gives a slight lift without making it uncomfortable. The PU sole also adds to the lightweight feel, so it does not feel heavy even after wearing it for longer hours. The buckle closure helps adjust the fit, ensuring the slipper stays secure while walking.

One detail I liked is that it doesn’t feel like a “just at home” slipper, it can easily work for stepping out.

The anti-fungal feature is also a practical addition, especially for everyday footwear that gets regular wear.

My verdict: A great everyday pair if you want comfort with a slightly premium feel. The colour is safe, versatile, and honestly a wardrobe workhorse. Best for: Office errands, casual outings, daily wear, travel days.

2. Healers JLL-4 Women’s Cherry Casual Slip-On Sandals: This pair is designed more for comfort-first dressing. The cherry shade caught my attention because I expected a brighter pop of colour. In reality, it leans more towards a muted, earthy tone, almost closer to brown than a vibrant cherry. Personally, I would have loved a slightly richer, more playful colour payoff.

That said, the design itself

is extremely practical.

The punched upper adds a little texture and detail, making it more interesting than a plain sandal. The elastic closure makes it easy to slip on and off, while the back strap gives extra support, something I appreciate because some slip-ons tend to move around while walking. The comfort factor is definitely the highlight. The soft upper feels gentle on the feet, and the cushioned sole makes it suitable for long casual days. This is the kind of footwear you reach for when style takes a backseat and you just want something reliable, easy, and comfortable.

My verdict: Not the boldest colour choice, but if you prefer utility, comfort, and easy everyday wear, this one delivers.

Best for: Grocery runs, travel, casual walks, everyday wear.

3. Leap7X ZQ-WFLN-47 Women’s Peach Walking Shoes: The colour alone

had me. The peach shade is soft, feminine, and instantly makes the sneaker look more stylish than a typical walking shoe. As someone who loves pink tones, this was definitely the pair I gravitated towards. It is not just pretty; it is genuinely comfortable. The Flyknit upper makes the shoe feel lightweight and breathable, while the Ortholite insole adds that extra cushioning that you really notice during long hours of walking.

The slightly elevated sole gives it a modern sneaker look without making it feel bulky or heavy. It feels supportive but still easy to move around in. Now, the feature that completely won me over: the twist-lock system.

As someone who has avoided shoes because of annoying laces (yes, laces have genuinely been my villain), this design feels genius. Instead of tying and adjusting laces manually, you simply pull the knob to loosen it, slip your foot in, and twist it to tighten.

It is quick, secure, and honestly makes wearing sneakers feel effortless. Plus, it gives the shoe a cleaner, more futuristic look: no messy laces, no constant adjusting. My verdict:

This is the pair I would recommend the most. It combines comfort, technology, and style in a way that feels genuinely useful.

Best for: Walking, travel, daily commuting, casual sporty looks. Which pair should you pick?

For a versatile everyday slipper: Healers MDG-6 Navy Blue

For comfort-first casual wear: Healers JLL-4 Cherry Sandals

For the perfect mix of style and functionality: Leap7X Peach Walking Shoes

Overall, Liberty’s collection proves that everyday footwear doesn’t have to be boring. The best pairs are the ones that look good, feel good, and actually fit into your routine, and these three definitely bring that balance.

## Generously sized tote bags tailored for women

A unique form of frustration arises when one departs from home with a small bag. While your phone may fit, and perhaps your keys as well, the instant you include a charger, wallet, makeup pouch, sunglasses, water bottle, and several “just in case” items, you find yourself resorting to multiple bags once again. This is precisely the reason why roomy tote bags have become indispensable in daily life.

The modern tote is no longer just a work bag. Today’s designs are made for women who move between office meetings, coffee runs, travel plans, college schedules, and everyday errands. With laptop-friendly compartments, comfortable handles, organised interiors, and stylish silhouettes, these bags prove that practicality does not have to mean boring. From structured office totes to soft oversized carryalls, here are some spacious options that deserve a place in your wardrobe.

Tote bags for women

1. Miraggio Denice Large Tote Bag: A perfect blend of workwear and everyday style, the Miraggio Denice tote is designed for women who need their bag to keep up with busy schedules. The spacious interior can fit laptops up to 14 inches, making it a practical choice for office days, meetings, and work travel. The adjustable and detachable sling strap gives you styling flexibility, you can carry it by the top handles for a polished look or switch to the shoulder strap when you need a hands-free option. Style it with: Tailored trousers, oversized shirts, and loafers for a clean office look.

2. VAYA Zaelia Office Tote Bag: This tote takes office organisation seriously. Designed with dedicated storage, it comes with insulated lunch storage, making it ideal for long workdays when you are carrying more than just your laptop.

The structured silhouette keeps the bag looking professional, while the removable shoulder strap adds versatility. It is a smart pick for women who want a single bag that handles work essentials, meals, and daily necessities. Style it with: Formal dresses, co-ords, and minimal jewellery for a polished work wardrobe.

3. Puffy Shoulder Tote Bag: For those who prefer softer, more relaxed accessories, this puffy tote brings a trendy twist to the classic carryall. The lightweight design makes it comfortable for daily use, while multiple compartments help keep your essentials organised.

Its casual aesthetic works well beyond the office, making it suitable for travel days, gym sessions, and everyday outings. Style it with: Athleisure sets, oversized tees, and casual sneakers.

4. Lavie Mono Freya Monogram Tote Bag: A monogram tote is one of those timeless handbag styles that instantly elevates an outfit. The Lavie Freya combines a roomy structure with a fashionable print,



making it suitable for both professional and casual settings. It offers enough space for daily essentials while maintaining a stylish silhouette, making it a great option for women who want their work bag to feel like part of their outfit. Style it with: Dresses, denim, and smart casual outfits.

5. ZOUK Office Essential Jute Tote Bag: For women who love sustainable fashion, this ZOUK tote combines traditional materials with modern functionality. Made with jute and vegan leather details, it brings a handcrafted feel to everyday accessories. The double handles make it comfortable to carry, while the spacious design makes it suitable for office essentials and daily use.

Style it with: Cotton kurtas, linen outfits, and earthy-toned looks.

6. Carrylux Soft PU Tote Bag: This soft PU tote is designed for everyday convenience. The large compartment gives you room for your daily essentials without making the bag feel too structured or heavy.

The adjustable strap allows different carrying styles, making it useful for college, office, shopping days, or casual outings. Style it with: Jeans, casual shirts, and everyday flats.

7. Recycled Non-Woven Felt Tote Bag: A practical choice for those looking for an eco-conscious option, this recycled felt tote combines functionality with a lightweight design. Its sturdy handles make it reliable for carrying heavier everyday items, from laptops to groceries. The multipurpose design makes it useful beyond fashion; perfect for work, travel, and quick errands. Style it with: Minimal outfits and sustainable wardrobe staples.

8. Waterproof Heavy Duty Tote Bag: If your lifestyle involves constant movement, this tote is built for convenience. The waterproof material, zipper closure, side pocket, and trolley sleeve make it especially useful for travel and busy workdays.

It offers the practicality of a travel bag while keeping the easy-to-carry silhouette of a tote. Style it with: Airport outfits, casual layers, and comfortable travel looks.

Kriti Sanon denies ‘Cocktail 2’ has threesome or lesbian storyline with Shahid, Rashmika

**Mumbai :** After director Homi Adajania, actors Kriti Sanon and Rashmika Mandanna have also denied playing lesbians in Cocktail 2. Moreover, they revealed that all three lead characters in the film are straight, and that, contrary to rumours, there will be no threesome among them in the film. Besides Kriti Sanon and Rashmika Mandanna, the highly anticipated sequel also stars Shahid Kapoor as the lead.

At a recent promotional event, Kriti Sanon said, “There is no les-

bian story.” Rashmika Mandanna laughed and said, “But we do have that chemistry.” Kriti added, “There are three straight people, guys, relax. It’s an emotional film; there is no physical threesome.” Rashmika said, “Watch the film, guys. You will enjoy.” Previously, some reports claimed that the film will feature Rashmika and Kriti as queer people. However, the Cocktail 2 cast and makers clarified that this speculation was not true. During the film’s trailer launch, Rashmika was asked



about speculation linking her and Kriti as a couple. Responding to the question, Kriti suggested that

the rumours seemed to be originating from a single source, a remark that Rashmika appeared to

agree with.

“I think the rumours are coming from one place only,” she said, to which Shahid joked, “I didn’t say anything, guys. Why would I want it that way? I have nothing to do with that? Kaha se aa rahe hain rumours?” Director Homi Adajania explained, “This is where the rumour came from. We were all sitting on the set...” He added, “They (Kriti and Rashmika) definitely get a little cuddly with each other because they are friends. And we

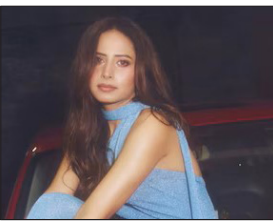
just hypothetically thought what if the story was about them and Shahid was the third wheel? And I said I wouldn’t mind making a movie like that.” Producer Dinesh Vijan then clarified, “So there are two love stories. Purana love and naya love and ye Luv (Ranjan). Aur kuchh nahi hai kisi ka love nahi hai is picture mein.” Cocktail 2 is about to be released on June 19, and fans are eager to see if the sequel can add to the legacy of Saif Ali Khan, Deepika Padukone and Diana Penty’s original film.

Sargun Mehta urges end to trolling

**Mumbai :** Actress Sargun Mehta, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming Punjabi film “Carry On Jatta 4”, has spoken about that one habit she wants people to not “carry on with”, which is “negative comments and trolling online.” Talking about that one habit she wants people not to carry on with, Sargun told IANS: “People should stop making negative comments or trolling online. Like they should not carry it on at all.”

Gippy Grewal chimed in and said: “This is what I would want as well. But it’s not like people will stop just because we tell them to. Of course, this shouldn’t happen... everyone should just do their own work.” The fourth part of “Carry On Jatta”, which was first released in 2012, will hit the silver screens on June 26.

It focuses on a fresh web of hilarious lies, mistaken identities, and structural family chaos. The film franchise is directed by Sneep Kang. The first installment stars Gippy alongside Mahie Gill. The second and third installments featured Sonam Bajwa. It was released in 2018 and 2023, respectively. Talking about Sargun, the actress is one of the highest-paid Punjabi actresses. The actress, 37, began acting in her college, and later ventured into television roles, having made her screen debut in 2009 with 12/24 Karol Bagh. Her notable roles include Phulwa, Kya Huaa Tera Vaada and Balika Vadhu. She made her film debut in 2015 with the Punjabi film Angrej and was then seen in films such as Love Punjab and Lahoriye, Qismat, Qismat 2, Surkhi Bindi and Saunkan Saunkanay. Sargun made her Hindi film debut with the 2022 film Cuttputli directed by Ranjit M. Tewari. A remake of the 2018 Tamil film Ratsasan written and directed by Ram Kumar, it stars Akshay Kumar, Rakul Preet Singh, Joshua LeClair and Chandrachur Singh.



Karisma reveals many turned down Dil To Pagal Hai over Madhuri



**Mumbai :** Shah Rukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit and Karisma Kapoor starrer ‘Dil To Pagal Hai’ has become a cult favourite over the years. But did you know that the film was rejected by multiple top actresses before Karisma Kapoor said yes to the project?

The actress recently revealed that many heroines rejected her role in the film as they did not want to ‘compete’ with Madhuri Dixit.

In a recent chat with India Today, Karisma Kapoor revealed, “When Dil To Pagal Hai was being made, no ac-

tress wanted to do the role opposite Madhuri. Nobody wanted to dance with her and compete with her in a dance face-off.” Madhuri Dixit is regarded as one of the best and most graceful dancers in Bollywood. Reflecting on her role as Nisha, Karisma said,

“I think cinema changed with Nisha’s character. She was a heroine, but not the conventional one. She was the one with whom the hero did not love. He was rejecting her, and the audience could actually see her pain.”

“I found that very different and very challenging. Even today, I get goosebumps thinking about it because, normally, the hero is supposed to love the heroine. Here was a girl wondering, ‘Why is this happening to me? I love this guy so much.’ That emotional journey was something very special,” she added. For the unversed, the film revolves around the love lives of the members of a musical troupe, in which two dancers get entangled in a love triangle with their choreographer. The romantic drama, which originally re-

leased in 1997, was directed by legendary filmmaker Yash Chopra.

Dil To Pagal Hai ruled the box office in 1997 and emerged as the highest-grossing Bollywood film of the year. The film also ruled award shows and won three National Awards, seven Filmfare Awards, and several other awards. Known for its soulful music, mesmerising dance sequences, and unforgettable dialogues, Dil To Pagal Hai remains a cult favourite among fans of Bollywood romance.

Meanwhile, Karisma Kapoor is currently seen in Brown on Amazon Prime Video, while Madhuri Dixit is seen in Maa Behen on Netflix. Both projects and the actresses’ performances are being hailed by the audience and critics alike.

Raj Nidimoru on Chiranjeevi’s influence in Raj & DK projects

**Mumbai :** Producer-director Raj Nidimoru hails from Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh, yet he has carved a successful career primarily in Bollywood. Along with his long-time creative partner Krishna D.K. (DK), Raj has delivered several acclaimed films and web series that have won audiences across the country.

Over the years, fans have noticed a recurring trend in their work — references to Megastar Chiranjeevi and Telugu culture. When asked about this in a recent interview, Raj opened up about the reason behind these tributes. “We have used Chiranjeevi garu’s songs in projects like Guns & Gulaabs and Go Goa Gone. In Guns & Gulaabs, there is a Telugu character named Athmaram who runs a hotel in North India. When we started making web series, we felt that



characters should speak their own languages rather than everyone speaking only Hindi,” Raj said. He explained that authenticity was a major factor behind this creative

decision. Raj and DK wanted characters to reflect the cultural and linguistic backgrounds they came from, making the stories feel more natural and relatable. “We wanted

to cast actors from different parts of the country and allow them to speak their native languages. It gave us the opportunity to bring in talent from across India and added a new layer of realism to our storytelling,” he added. Raj also revealed that The Family Man 3 features a connection to the Telugu film Cinema Bandi, describing it as a tribute to their roots. “That’s our way of paying homage to our mother tongue and where we come from,” he said.

Despite building their reputation in the Hindi entertainment industry, Raj and DK have consistently stayed connected to their Telugu heritage. Through subtle references, regional characters, and nods to icons like Chiranjeevi, the duo continues to celebrate the culture that shaped them while creating stories for a national audience.

Sonu Nigam diagnosed with nerve issue



**Mumbai :** Singer Sonu Nigam recently revealed that he has been dealing with a painful nerve-related condition. He shared that he underwent MRI and CT scans and has been on multiple medications as part of his treatment. Taking to social media, Sonu posted a video in which he opened up about his health struggles and the challenges he has been facing over the past week.

He said, “My nerves are pinched. I have been tak-

ing MRI and CT scans for a week. I have been taking a lot of medicines.” Speaking about the treatment, he added, “Physiotherapy was very painful. I am taking painkillers now. Due to that, my throat is also a little heavy.” Sonu further shared that the condition has kept him under medical supervision. The muscle-relaxant medications prescribed as part of his treatment have also affected his throat, making it difficult for him to sing at his

usual capacity.

Despite the discomfort, the singer revealed that he has decided to go ahead with his scheduled performance in Mumbai. His determination to honour his professional commitments has earned praise from fans, many of whom flooded the comments section with wishes for his speedy recovery. Fans took to the comment section to wish the singer well. One of them wrote, “Get well soon Legend”, while another added, “Get well soon Sonu Sir Your voice is our healing. Please take care and rest well. Praying for your speedy recovery”

One of India’s most celebrated playback singers, Sonu Nigam, has lent his voice to several iconic songs across Hindi, Kannada, Bengali, Marathi and other languages. With a career spanning over three decades, he remains one of the most beloved voices in Indian music and continues to perform extensively across the world.

Imtiaz Ali says Main Vaapas Aaunga drew unusually attentive audience

**Mumbai :** Imtiaz Ali knew each time he picked up a newspaper that he wanted to connect the headlines of displacement and destruction to his story of Partition. He realised that vision in “Main Vaapas Aaunga”, a film that draws an arc from past to present, and from the subcontinent to the rest of the world.

“I kept reading that there is some destruction, there is some battle, and there are more and more people getting abandoned, becoming refugees and getting on to the verge of existence... I couldn’t help but think that this is exactly what happened in Partition,” Ali told PTI on his 55th birthday on Tuesday. His greatest birthday gift possibly is the response to the film, starring Naseeruddin Shah, Diljit Dosanjh, Vedang Raina and Sharvari: youngsters sitting quietly and empathising with the story about a 95-year-old remembering the love he left behind on the other side of the border.

The film is told through



the ramblings of the old man (Shah) to his grandson (Dosanjh), who joins the dots to draw a picture of Partition trauma and a romance that survived the decades. As the credits roll, news clips from various contemporary events of war, bombings and bloodshed, of displaced people from around the world and different ethnicities flash across the screen. Also hope, with shots of children smiling through it all.

It is set to a song of peace, “Kya Kamaal Hai”, voiced by Dosanjh and composed by A R Rahman. An anonymous quote by a refugee ties it all together: “If I had a choice between death and leaving my home, I would have gladly chosen death. Unfortu-

nately, I did not have such a choice.” “I felt that ‘let’s do this in the end’. And we present actual footage of people that are going through the severities of being partitioned from their homes, like we did in 1947. And also connect the visuals. And I wanted this song for that,” Ali said. Ali, whose filmography includes “Jab We Met”, “Rockstar”, “Love Aaj Kal” and “Amar Singh Chamkila”, has been doing the rounds of theatres to gauge the response of audiences. It has been a gratifying experience.

“There is this feeling that what I wanted to say has been communicated... I have never seen an audience watching the film so quietly. In all of my successful films

also, people have this habit of fidgeting here and there. This time, they’re really paying attention; the younger people are paying attention,” Ali said. The director, famous for his take on relationships, is especially happy that the “intimacy and affection” central to the story have connected with the young. “I have said it many times that the present generation feel a little lost because they don’t find sustaining love, something they can just hold in their hearts, that old-fashioned love, like old music. That longing, that yearning, that holding one person and being with that person, they are relating to that,” Ali said.

The film, he added, is about discovering inter-generational connections that we need to make sense of the present. “The situation 78 years back was different, and the way those guys had to be in order to survive is different. Now Nirvair (Dosanjh) has the mind space to reconnect and he should because otherwise, he will never feel whole or settled.” Discussing

his last sequence, Ali said it became possible because of Dosanjh and his long-time collaborator, lyricist Irshad Kamil. “A lot of people have said that they think the whole film is on one side and the music video on the other. I must acknowledge Irshad Kamil, who said, ‘Sir, you have made this film, but then there is something that you can do, which goes beyond the film’.

“Diljit Dosanjh said, ‘Sir, from here, this will be a very different connection. A very different aspect of the mind will open. You have to make this song’. There was no budget for the sequence, and the money was taken from the publicity budget. “But I wanted to do this. And Diljit wanted to do this. We shot it quickly,” he said, adding that cinema is permanent, and the visuals will be there for all time as evidence of what happened. According to Ali, he deliberately did not over-emphasise the magnitude of the tragedy told through the remembrances of the aging man on his deathbed.

# Kharge defends call for legal oversight of RSS

Priyank Kharge on Tuesday doubled down on his demand that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) be brought under a formal legal framework, rejecting the attacks by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over his letter to RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and saying there was nothing unconstitutional about seeking transparency and accountability from an organisation with a significant public presence.

The Karnataka minister also dismissed claims circulating on social media that a video of Bhagwat was a response to his letter. Kharge said he had dispatched the letter and made it public on June 15, while the RSS chief’s interaction being shared online had taken place on June 13 or 14.

“A video of Dr Mohan Bhagwat ji is being widely circulated as a response to my letter is false. I dispatched my letter and put it up on social media on June 15, while this interaction by the RSS Chief was on June 13/14,” Kharge wrote.

Defending his position, Kharge said the RSS was free to function as a cultural organisation but could not wield extensive social and political influence while claiming it was under no obligation to answer public questions.

“The RSS has every right to be a cultural organisation. That is their choice. But it cannot simultaneously exercise enormous social and political influence while repeatedly insisting that it has no political agenda and therefore owes no public accountability,” he said.

Kharge argued that the BJP itself regards the RSS as its ideological parent and said the organisation’s influence over public life made transparency essential.

He referred to what he described as a network of more than 2,500 affiliated organisations in India and overseas, donations flowing through



that ecosystem, and RSS headquarters in New Delhi and state capitals. He also pointed to taxpayer funded security protocols for Bhagwat and other RSS functionaries.

“The only expectation is that it functions transparently and within the framework of the law, like every other organised body in this country,” he said, adding that no institution, regardless of its age or influence, should consider itself beyond legal accountability. Kharge also rejected arguments comparing the RSS with Hinduism. “The RSS cannot be considered to be representing any religion when they themselves are only 100 years in existence and no Government has asked any religion to be registered,” he wrote.

Earlier in the day, while speaking to reporters, Kharge defended his demand for legal oversight of the

organisation. “Is it wrong to ask for transparency? Is it wrong to ask organisations to function under the Constitution?” he asked.

He said his concerns were based on reports relating to the RSS and referred to its nationwide activities, including around 4,120 shakhas and nearly 5,000 route marches. “When lakhs of people are mobilised for such programmes, shouldn’t there be transparency about how these gatherings are organised?” he asked, maintaining that every organisation should operate within the framework of the law.

The remarks drew a response from Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka, who said the Congress lacked the moral authority to question the RSS. He alleged that the party had political ties with organisations such as the Indian Union Muslim League

and referred to the controversy surrounding alleged pro Pakistan slogans near Vidhana Soudha, accusing Kharge of defending those involved instead of acting against them. “The RSS has dedicated itself to the service of Mother India for nearly 100 years without seeking anything in return. Questioning its legality and patriotism is not only laughable but also shameful,” Ashoka said.

He also alleged that Kharge was targeting the RSS to strengthen his position within the Congress and divert attention from his performance in portfolios including Information Technology and Biotechnology, Rural Development and responsibilities relating to Kalaburagi district. Kharge’s found support for his position from other senior leaders.

Urban Development Minister Dr Yathindra Siddaramaiah said the RSS functioned on behalf of the BJP and should disclose details of its finances.

“RSS is not just a cultural organization, it is an organization working on behalf of the BJP. The organization has assets worth crores all over the country. Crores of money are also coming in. They have to give an account of this. All the transactions have to be checked. Therefore, it should be registered,” he said.

“No organisation is bigger than the law of the land. The Home Minister is right to insist on RSS registration,” he added.KPCC President BK Hariprasad also objected to Bhagwat’s comparison of the RSS with Hinduism, saying it diminished a faith with a history spanning thousands of years.

“Hinduism is not the property of any one organization. It is a civilizational heritage that is bigger, broader and more inclusive than the RSS,” Hariprasad said. He also asked whether BJP leaders agreed with the proposition that Hinduism and the RSS were one and the same.

# Political realignment not criminal misconduct: Madras HC

**Bengaluru, June 17:** Political realignment, howsoever abrupt, does not amount to criminal misconduct in the absence of evidence, the Madras High Court held on Tuesday, as it dismissed a plea seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the resignation of four All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) legislators and their subsequent induction into the ruling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK). A bench of chief justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and justice G Arul Murugan said that a CBI probe can be ordered only in exceptional cases supported by evidence of a prima facie offence, and not on the basis of vague allegations or suspicion.

The bench dismissed the public interest litigation (PIL) filed by advocate B Ramkumar Adityan, who had sought a CBI probe into the circumstances surrounding the resignation of four AIADMK legislators — S Jeyakumar, P Sathyabama, K Maragatham Kumaravel and Dr E Subaya — and their subsequent joining of the TVK.

The PIL had also sought criminal action under the Prevention of Corruption Act, alleging political horse-trading. The court, however, held the allegations “entirely misconceived, devoid of specific factual details, and legally unsustainable.” “While a sudden realignment of political loyalty by respondent Nos.12 to 15 (the four MLAs) may cause financial strain due to the necessities of conducting a bye-election, such political choices do not ipso facto (by that very fact) translate into criminal misconduct under the Prevention of Corruption Act, in the complete absence of proof of an unlawful quid pro quo,” the bench held.

According to the petitioner, the TVK emerged as the single largest party in the April 23 Tamil Nadu assembly elections with 108 seats but fell short of a majority in the 234-member house. During the confidence vote on May 13, the four legislators allegedly voted in favour of the C Josphe Vijay-led TVK government going against the party whip. The AIADMK leadership sought disqualification proceedings against the four. But before those proceedings could conclude, the four MLAs resigned from the assembly on May 25 and 26. The speaker accepted their resignations and the legislators

subsequently joined the ruling TVK. The petitioner alleged that the MLAs would not have resigned so soon after contesting elections unless they had received “monetary inducements” or promises of office.The bench, however, said that the petition rested entirely on suspicion and conjecture. It noted that the petitioner had made “highly generalised, sweeping and vague allegations” without producing any material to support claims of corruption.

Holding that the PIL was legally unsustainable and devoid of factual foundation, the court declined to order a CBI probe and dismissed the petition.Meanwhile, in separate proceedings related to the same issue, the TVK government told the high court that it was committed to taking the disqualification proceedings against the four former AIADMK legislators to their “logical conclusion.”

Advocate general Vijay Narayan told the bench led by chief justice Dharmadhikari that the AIADMK had originally sought the disqualification of 25 MLAs for allegedly defying the party whip during the confidence vote, but later condoned the conduct of 21 legislators. Proceedings continued only against the four MLAs, who subsequently quit the AIADMK, resigned from the assembly and joined the TVK.Narayan said that assembly Speaker JCD Prabhakar accepted their resignations in accordance with Supreme Court rulings after satisfying himself that the resignations were voluntary and genuine.

The law officer made the oral submissions on a petition filed by ML Ravi, president of Desiya Makkal Sakthi Katchi, challenging the speaker’s decision to accept the resignations. AIADMK leader Agri SS Krishnamurthy has also moved the high court challenging the speaker’s decision and seeking to restrain the Election Commission from conducting by-elections to the four constituencies — Perundurai, Madurantakam, Dharapuram and Ambasamudram — vacated by the four former MLAs.Both petitions contend that accepting the resignations while disqualification proceedings were pending enabled the legislators to circumvent the anti-defection law. The court will hear the pleas filed by Ravi and Krishnamurthy on Wednesday.

# Germany’s training session at FIFA World Cup hampered by ‘snakes’

German football captain Joshua Kimmich said his teammates came up against a snake at their World Cup training base in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. “We saw a snake yesterday, and we were told that it was poisonous. With a bite, you have to go to the hospital. I don’t think you’re dying, but it’s dangerous at least.” North Carolina is home to 37 species of snakes, of which the most common is the venomous copperhead, which the German team is reported to have encountered. It is far from ideal circumstances for the team to juggle during a World Cup campaign.

“We’re here trying to prepare for the biggest tournament in football, and suddenly players are looking at the ground before every step they take,” said the 31-year-old Kimmich.

Also based in North Carolina is Norway, with Erling Haaland and Co., who were also warned of snakes at their Greensboro training facility. Copperheads are “very common” in the area, according to the city’s official website, much to the displeasure of midfielder Kristian Thorstvedt, who reacted at a press conference, “I’m not happy at all to hear that.” Switzerland have been facing the same headache. Last week,



the team’s official Instagram account posted a marked-up photo of their World Cup base at the San Diego Jewish Academy. The wilderness bordering the training ground was designated in red as “snake area”, and the post was captioned “Watch out for the snakes.”

They are yet to come face-to-face with any reptile, though. “We have not seen a snake on the pitch,” clarified Switzerland media officer Sergio Affuso at a press conference, but it did little to assuage fans’ fears. At the

Austrian base camp at Santa Barbara, players and staff have been prohibited from riding bicycles to avoid any risk of snake encounters. Germany, Norway and Switzerland are yet to take similar precautionary measures.

Snakes are the latest controversy to mar the FIFA World Cup, with host nation USA drawing much of the flak (co-hosts Canada and Mexico have relatively escaped the spotlight). So-malian referee Omar Artan, one of 52 FIFA-selected referees for the tournament,

was barred from entering the country over “association with suspected members of terror organisations”. Fans of multiple participating countries have been hit with travel bans and denied visas, with a pattern of racial biases against Global South countries being strongly evident.

Switzerland are next in action against Bosnia and Herzegovina on Friday. Germany will face the Ivory Coast on Sunday, while Norway will take on Senegal on Tuesday.

# Semifinal spot assured, India look to continue winning run against Uruguay in FIH Nations Cup

**Auckland:** A semifinal spot already sealed, a relaxed Indian women’s hockey team would look to end the pool engagements undefeated to bolster its confidence against a lower-ranked Uruguay in the FIH Nations Cup here on Thursday. Unbeaten India are atop Pool A with six points from two games and have already qualified for the last four, having defeated USA 3-2 and Japan 2-1 in their first two matches.

India are determined to win the FIH Nations Cup to get their place back in next season’s elite FIH Pro League, from which they got relegated last year.The Indian women’s team was relegated from the elite FIH Pro League to the second-tier FIH Hockey Nations Cup, following its last-place finish in the 2024–25 season, after managing only 10 points from 16 matches.

The winner of the eight-nation FIH Nations Cup will progress to next year’s FIH Pro League.Going into their final pool game against a relatively easy opponent, India would take heart from their fighting wins in the opening two games. Ranked ninth in the world, the Salima Tete-led India will definitely start as favourites against world no. 17 Uruguay, who have lost both their opening two matches.

India scored all their five goals in the two matches through penalty corners. Deepika is joint second in the goal scorers list with two strikes, while Navneet Kaurn Salima and Lalremisiami found the net once each.

But going into the business end of the tournament, India’s chief coach Sjoerd Marijne would expect heavy effort from his strikers and would



want them to find the net from field efforts and Uruguay provides them the best opportunity to do that.

With two important tournaments lined up this year World Cup and the Asian Games Marijne would also be tempted to try out new combinations in the remaining matches of the FIH Nations Cup, which is part of the team’s preparations for the big ticket events.

Having considered three goals in two matches, the Indian defence, though, needs to tighten up a bit.In-

dia’s chief coach knows the significance of it.

“In tournaments like this, small moments often make the biggest difference. We need to remain disciplined, stay united as a team and make the most of our opportunities.

“The objective is not only to achieve good results but also to continue building a strong foundation for the future. We know the expectations are high, and the players are motivated to give their best for the country,” he had said.

# Erling Haaland bows down to ‘madman’ Lionel Messi after record-breaking World Cup hat-trick

It’s safe to say that Erling Haaland is a big fan of Lionel Messi. On Wednesday morning, the 38-year-old Messi netted a hat-trick in the FIFA World Cup 2026 as defending champions Argentina swept past Algeria 3-0. Haaland was quick to react on Snapchat, posting a selfie with the simple caption: “Messi is a madman”. Hours earlier, the Manchester City striker had scored a brace in Norway’s thumping 4-1 win. In the picture, Haaland is seen sitting in an aeroplane, presumably on Norway’s

flight back from Boston to their North Carolina training base after their match against Iraq. Followers of Erling Haaland know all about his Snapchat presence, with the 25-year-old’s unserious side on full display to his 2.4 million subscribers. He often posts his reactions to watching other football matches, and his social media activity is as entertaining as his on-field performances.

Messi, on the occasion of his 200th international appearance, put on a vintage performance in Argentina’s

opener, running the show and scoring three sumptuous goals. It was the fifth consecutive World Cup game in which he had scored, a run dating back to Qatar 2022, and a first-ever World Cup hat-trick at a record-breaking sixth World Cup, aged 38 years and 357 days, surpassing Cristiano Ronaldo (33 years and 130 days) as the oldest to do so. He now has the most goal contributions (24) of any player at the FIFA World Cup, passing Pele’s tally of 21. His 16 goals also placed him joint-top of

the list for most World Cup goals among male players, equalling German Miroslav Klose’s record, which has stood since 2014. Among active players, he is the outright leading goalscorer (Kylian Mbappe briefly held that record for 4 hours after his brace in France’s 3-1 win over Senegal earlier on Wednesday). Messi, whose preparation for the World Cup was hampered by a hamstring injury picked up last month, did not feature in Argentina’s first pre-tournament warm-up game against



Honduras. He returned to action in their second friendly against Iceland, scoring a goal off the bench. Against Algeria, he was named in the starting XI and brushed off any lingering fitness concerns in sublime fashion. After just one game at this summer’s World Cup, he is top of the Golden Boot standings with three to his name. Behind him are six players with two apiece — Haaland (Norway), Mbappe (France), Kai Havertz (Germany), Folarin Balogun (USA), Yasin Ayari (Sweden) and

Elijah Just (New Zealand). Messi is the eldest among them by far, 11 years senior to the 27-year-old Mbappe. He could not have scripted a better opening to his final World Cup campaign. On Instagram, his reaction to the win was simple: “Happy for the start, grateful for the love and very proud to see this group compete again as they have been doing it all these years.”Argentina will next be in action on Monday evening against Austria. Norway will take on Senegal on Tuesday morning.

# Sri Lanka stun the defending champions, leaving New Zealand in serious danger of early exit

**Mumbai :** New Zealand are in serious danger of missing out on a place in the semifinals of the Women's T20 World Cup. On Tuesday, June 16, Sri Lanka produced a stunning performance to defeat the defending champions by five wickets at the Rose Bowl in Southampton. Despite a brief drizzle, Sri Lanka remained unfazed and completed their highest successful run chase in the tournament's history. Nilakshika de Silva led the charge with an experienced knock, scoring a half-century off 33 balls and guiding Sri Lanka over the line in a thrilling contest. Chamari Athapaththu's side also bounced back strongly from their heavy defeat to England to keep their semifinal hopes alive. As for the White Ferns, they now need to win their remaining three matches to give themselves a realistic chance of securing a top-two finish. After opting to bat first, New Zealand posted a competitive 150/6, but the total ultimately proved insufficient against a spirited Sri Lankan chase. The White Ferns were put under pressure early when wicketkeeper Isabella Gaze fell for four in the opening over, leaving them at 4/1. Captain Amelia Kerr and Georgia Plimmer then steadied the innings with a 49-run partnership for the second wicket. Plimmer made 18 before Kerr anchored the innings with a composed 45 off 36 balls, hitting five boundaries. Veteran all-rounder Sophie Devine added impetus in the middle overs with an aggressive 45



off just 30 deliveries, including four fours and a six. Despite the efforts of Kerr and Devine, Sri Lanka's bowlers struck at regular intervals to keep New Zealand in check. Kavisha Dilhari was the standout performer with figures of 2/35, while Mithali Ayodhya, Nimasha Meepage, Sugandika Kumari and Chamari Athapaththu claimed a wicket each. Maddy Green's unbeaten 18 off 13 balls provided a late flourish as New Zealand closed their innings in an impressive manner. In the chase, Athapaththu set the tone with a brisk 27 off 19 balls, but New Zealand hit back through Nensi Patel, who dismissed Vishmi Gunaratne and Harshitha Samarawickrama. Two run-outs further stalled Sri Lanka's progress as they slipped to 105/5 after 15 overs. With

the match finely poised, Nilakshika Silva stepped up with a match-winning knock. The experienced batter remained unbeaten on 54 off 37 deliveries, striking five fours and a six. She received excellent support from wicketkeeper Kaushini Nuthyanga, who scored an unbeaten 24 off just 14 balls at a strike rate of 171.42. The duo added an unbroken 48 runs for the sixth wicket, guiding Sri Lanka to a memorable five-wicket victory with two balls to spare. For New Zealand, it was a second successive defeat after their loss to the West Indies, leaving the defending champions staring at the prospect of an early exit from the tournament. Sri Lanka stunned defending champions New Zealand by five wickets at the Womens T20 World Cup, with Nilakshika de Silva's unbeaten 54 leading the highest

successful chase in tournament history. Despite strong innings from New Zealand's Amelia Kerr and Sophie Devine, Sri Lanka overcame early setbacks and two run-outs to secure victory at the Rose Bowl, keeping their semifinal hopes alive while New Zealand face a tough path, needing wins in their remaining matches to qualify. "When you play quality teams like India, they don't give you many chances. Even a small mistake can be costly because they take advantage of it. In the last game, the way Gurbaz played was one of the best innings I've seen. But after he got out, I lost my wicket, and then Nabi and Azmat didn't take responsibility. "When you're ahead in the game against teams like India, you have to capitalise and not allow them back into the contest," Shahidi said in the press conference before the second ODI on Wednesday. Shahidi also said that Afghanistan's lack of ODI cricket over the past couple of years has affected the team's ability to perform consistently. Since January 2025, the Afghans have played only seven ODIs, winning four, losing two, while one match ended in a no result. "At the same time, we haven't played much ODI cricket. Over the last two years, we've played only eight or nine ODI matches, which is very little. Maybe that also affected us. But we have more series coming up, including against Ireland. The more we play, the more we learn, and we'll continue to improve with every game.

# South Korea players boycott press over Son Heung-min mockery

**New Delhi:** South Korea have found themselves at the centre of a major controversy during the 2026 FIFA World Cup after players boycotted media interactions following the leak of remarks mocking captain Son Heung-min's military service status. The incident has triggered widespread backlash in South Korea and prompted a strong response from the Korea Football Association (KFA). The controversy stems from a training session held at South Korea's base camp in Guadalajara, Mexico, on June 7. During a live broadcast of the session, microphones allegedly picked up a conversation between reporters in which Son's military exemption and leadership were ridiculed. The comments quickly spread on social media and were met with criticism from fans and members of the football community. The issue is particularly sensitive in South Korea because military service is mandatory for most men. Son, however, earned an exemption from the standard service requirement after helping South Korea win the gold medal at the 2018 Asian Games. Despite the exemption, he still completed mandatory



basic military training in 2020. In response to the leaked remarks, South Korea's players refused to engage with sections of the domestic media, rallying behind their captain. Reports from Guadalajara suggested that tensions between the squad and journalists escalated significantly, with the team taking steps to limit media access in the aftermath of the incident. The KFA subsequently released a statement expressing regret over the "inappropriate remarks" made by certain media personnel. The governing body said the comments had caused "great shock and disappointment" within the squad and emphasised that respect for players must take precedence in all reporting activities. The association also called on media outlets to demonstrate greater responsibility and con-

sideration toward the national team. "The Korea Football Association respects the reporting activities and the role of the media. However, on-site reporting must also be conducted based on mutual respect and trust, and respect for and protection of the players must take precedence," the statement said. "In response, the Korea Football Association requests that media outlets and reporters show greater consideration and a responsible attitude toward the national team and players to prevent similar situations from recurring," the statement added. The controversy has overshadowed what has otherwise been a positive start to South Korea's World Cup campaign. Hong Myung-bo's side opened their tournament with a 2-1 comeback victory over the Czech Republic A.

# Messi, Mbappe, Haaland scored: will Cristiano Ronaldo follow vs DR Congo?

**New Delhi:** It is one of those rare World Cup nights when football's biggest stars all seemed to be reading from the same script. Across the United States, records have tumbled, milestones have been reached, and some of the greatest names of this generation reminded the world why they have defined an era. The FIFA World Cup has always been a stage for legends, but Wednesday felt different. First came Kylian Mbappe. Still only 27, yet already carrying the weight of French football history on his shoulders, his brace against Senegal not only guided France to victory but also saw him become Les Bleus' all-time leading goalscorer, surpassing a record many thought would stand for years. Then it was Erling Haaland's turn. The Norwegian goal machine had waited patiently for his World Cup debut, and when the moment finally arrived, he wasted little time making his mark. Two goals against Iraq announced his arrival on football's grandest



stage, the latest chapter in a career that seems destined to break every scoring record within reach. And then came Lionel Messi. At 38 years old, just seven days shy of turning 39, and making his 200th appearance for Argentina, the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner produced a performance worthy of the occasion. A stunning hat-trick against Algeria not only powered the defending champions to victory but also saw him draw level with Miroslav Klose as the highest scorer in World Cup history. Nearly two decades after first gracing the tournament, Messi is still rewriting its record books. When Portugal takes on DR Con-

go, Ronaldo will have the chance to become the first player ever to score in six different FIFA World Cups. The Portuguese international has eight goals in total across the previous five editions of the tournament. The last World Cup didn't go as planned, with Ronaldo scoring just once, being substituted against South Korea, and later benched for Portugal's first knock-out-stage match against Switzerland. He also failed to score in the 2024 European Championship — the first time that has happened at a major international tournament. While Messi might have taken the record of oldest player from Ronaldo himself.

# Delhi Redz launches their new women's team ahead of Rugby Premier League season two

**New Delhi:** Delhi Redz is entering a new chapter. For the second season of the Rugby Premier League (RPL), the club has launched a women's team, a move that signals where the franchise intends to go. After a strong debut season from the men's side, the addition of a women's team marks a natural next step for the club. Its stated ambition has always extended beyond results: to grow rugby in India, build a genuine sporting movement, and give a new generation of athletes and fans something to rally behind. The timing is significant. For the first time, four women's franchises will compete at the national level in the RPL, held in Hyderabad. It marks a real moment for the women's game in the country, and Delhi Redz has positioned itself to be part of it from the start. The squad brings together elite international and Indian talent, with marquee players from Brazil, Fiji, Canada and South Africa lining up alongside some of India's most exciting young



athletes. The team will be led by Head Coach Edwin Cocker of Brazil, with Arun Dagar as Assistant Coach. The launch arrives at a pivotal time for women's rugby in India. Participation has grown by 66% since 2019, and India's U-18 and U-20 women's national teams now rank among the strongest in Asia. Delhi Redz aims to give elite female athletes a national stage while drawing more girls into the game at the grassroots level -- across schools,

colleges and communities. Commenting on the launch, Delhi Redz leadership Sidharth and Mihir Menda said: "Delhi Redz was never built to be just a rugby team. It was built to become a symbol of ambition, resilience and opportunity for a new generation of Indian athletes. The women's team is an important milestone in that journey. Across the country, there are extraordinary women athletes with the talent, discipline and determination to succeed.

What they need is visibility, platforms and belief. Our ambition goes far beyond winning matches. We want to build role models, create pathways for future athletes and contribute meaningfully to the growth of rugby in India. If more young girls pick up a rugby ball because they saw themselves in this team, we will have achieved something far greater than sporting success." At its core, Delhi Redz stands for a new era of Indian sport -- relentless, inclusive, am-

bitious and proudly rooted in culture. With both men's and women's teams now under the banner, the club is building a platform to grow the game, celebrate its athletes and leave a lasting legacy for rugby in India. Diksha began her second round on the 15th tee, one of the two starting points used at the Evian Resort Golf Club. Unlike her opening-round 67, the second day proved more challenging as she struggled to find momentum. The left-hander dropped a shot on her opening hole and made the turn at one-over-par. Another bogey on the sixth hole left her further behind the leaders before she finally found some rhythm with birdies on the ninth and 12th holes. Just as she appeared set to salvage an even-par round, a bogey on the 13th hole pushed her back to one-over for the day. Significantly, all three of her bogeys came on holes where she failed to hit the green in regulation, highlighting the importance of her usually reliable approach play.

# Months after Manchester United sack, Ruben Amorim lands the AC Milan job



**New Delhi:** AC Milan have turned to Ruben Amorim in a bid to revive the club's fortunes, appointing the former Manchester United boss as their new head coach on Tuesday following a disappointing Serie A campaign that ended without Champions League qualification. The Portuguese tactician succeeds Massimiliano Allegri, who was dismissed after Milan could only manage a fifth-place finish in the league. While the club did not disclose the terms of the agreement, reports in the

Italian media suggest the 41-year-old has signed a two-year deal. Milan endured a miserable end to the season, wrapping up their campaign with a 2-1 defeat at home to Cagliari. They won only one of their final four league games, with supporters at San Siro voicing their frustration at the final whistle as the Rossoneri missed out on Europe's premier club competition for a second straight year. I know exactly what this club means: history, prestige and an extraordinary fanbase around the world. It

is a challenge I embrace with pride and enthusiasm, fully aware of what these colours represent," Amorim said in a statement. "I can't wait to get started and to experience every day the passion that drives AC Milan." Amorim arrives in Italy after an underwhelming 14-month stint at Manchester United. Appointed amid high expectations, he found it difficult to reverse the club's decline and was relieved of his duties in January. Earlier in his tenure, United co-owner Jim Ratcliffe had labelled him an "outstanding young manager" and insisted he deserved time to implement his ideas, but results ultimately led to his departure. Despite his struggles in England, Amorim's reputation remains intact thanks to his impressive work at Sporting CP. The former Portugal international ended the club's 19-year wait for a league title by winning the Primeira Liga in 2021 before adding another championship in 2024. A 14-time Portugal international, Amorim becomes Milan's fourth permanent manager since Stefano Pioli guided the club to the Serie A title in 2022.

# Neymar boosts Brazil as superstar begins training ahead of Haiti World Cup clash

**New Delhi :** Brazil received a timely boost at the FIFA World Cup 2026 after Neymar resumed training on Tuesday (June 16), taking his first steps towards a return since the tournament began. The 34-year-old, Brazil's all-time leading scorer in men's international football, was seen working through an individual fitness programme in videos circulating on social media. While he has rejoined training, Neymar has not yet progressed to ball drills or full-contact sessions with the rest of the squad. The forward has not represented Brazil since 2023 and was unavailable for Selecao's opening Group C fixture against Morocco on June 14. Without their talisman, Brazil were held to a 1-1 draw by the African side. Although Neymar's return to the training ground is an encouraging development, he is still expected to miss



Brazil's upcoming Group C clash against Haiti. The five-time world champions are scheduled to face Haiti on Saturday (June 20 IST) at 6:30 AM IST. Haiti head into the contest after beginning their campaign with a narrow 1-0 loss to Scotland. Neymar picked up a right calf injury last month shortly after being included in Carlo Ancelotti's squad for the World Cup. Before Brazil's opener at New York New Jersey Stadium, Ancelotti had revealed that the veteran forward was making good progress in his

recovery and was likely to return to training during the following week. "Neymar is working very hard to recover as quickly as possible," Ancelotti said on Friday. "We called him up not only for his football ability, which is indisputable, but also for the experience and example he can provide to the younger players in the squad," he added. Neymar has scored eight goals across his three FIFA World Cup appearances, including four at the 2014 edition and two each at the 2018 and 2022 tournaments. Brazil's

star forward Neymar, the nation's all-time leading scorer, resumed individual training on June 16 ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup after a right calf injury. Although absent from Brazil's opening 1-1 draw with Morocco, his recovery offers hope despite expected to miss the upcoming match against Haiti. Neymar, sidelined since 2023, has scored eight World Cup goals across three tournaments and is valued for his skill and leadership under coach Carlo Ancelotti. Neymar has not played for Brazil since 2023 and has been sidelined since suffering a right calf injury in mid-May, leaving fans waiting a little longer to see the country's biggest star back on football's biggest stage. The Brazil boss also stressed that Neymar's importance to the squad extends beyond what he produces on the pitch.