

Arunachal Governor urges stronger landing grounds, improved air connectivity

Itanagar, Sept 30: Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen (Retd) K.T. Parnaik has stressed the need to strengthen Advanced Landing Grounds (ALGs) and expand air connectivity across the frontier state, underscoring their strategic and developmental importance.

Speaking at a review meeting with senior officials and defense representatives, the Governor highlighted that ALGs serve as vital infrastructure for both military preparedness and civilian mobility. He noted that Arunachal Pradesh's rugged terrain and sensitive international borders make reliable air connectivity essential for security, disaster response, and socio-economic growth.



Parnaik emphasized that upgrading ALGs would enhance the Indian Air Force's operational readiness while simultaneously improving access to remote districts. "Strengthened landing grounds are not just military assets; they are lifelines for our people in far-flung areas," he said.

Officials pointed out that several ALGs, including those at Pasighat, Mechuka,

Ziro, and Tuting, have already been developed, but require further modernization to handle larger aircraft and increased traffic. The Governor urged coordination between defense authorities, civil aviation, and state agencies to ensure dual-use facilities that benefit both security forces and civilians. Improved air connectivity was also identified as a catalyst for tourism and trade. With Arunachal

Pradesh's scenic landscapes and cultural diversity, better flight services could boost economic opportunities while reducing isolation of border communities. The Governor stressed that enhanced connectivity would encourage investment, facilitate medical evacuations, and strengthen disaster management capabilities. Civil society groups welcomed the focus, noting that road access remains limited in many districts. They argued that reliable air services could bridge gaps in healthcare, education, and livelihoods. However, experts cautioned that infrastructure upgrades must be accompanied by robust safety standards and environmental safeguards.

Nagaland Police launches e-Challan, e-Suraksha digital portals

Kohima, Sept 30: Nagaland Police has launched two new digital service platforms — e-Challan and e-Suraksha — aimed at modernizing policing and improving citizen convenience. The initiative marks a significant step in the state's push toward digital governance and transparent law enforcement.

Officials explained that the e-Challan portal will streamline traffic enforcement by enabling digital issuance of challans for violations. Citizens can now check, pay, and track their challans online, reducing paperwork and minimizing direct contact between traffic personnel and the public. The system is integrated with vehicle registration databases, ensuring



accuracy and accountability. The e-Suraksha portal, meanwhile, has been designed to enhance public safety and grievance redressal. It allows citizens to register complaints, seek assistance, and access emergency services digitally. Police officials noted that the portal will

also provide updates on case progress, ensuring transparency and building trust between law enforcement and the community. Launching the portals, senior police officers emphasized that digital services are essential for improving efficiency and accessibility.

Life Mission showcase faces vigilance probe

Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 30: The Kerala government's flagship housing initiative, Life Mission, has come under scrutiny once again, with its Mundamveli showcase project facing a Vigilance probe. Governor Arif Mohammed Khan ordered the inquiry after allegations surfaced regarding irregularities in the construction and allocation process.

The Mundamveli project, designed to provide affordable housing to economically weaker sections, was showcased by the Vijayan government as a model of inclusive development. However, complaints from local residents and opposition parties prompted Vigilance authorities to examine whether procedures were bypassed and funds misused. Officials confirmed that the probe will focus on tendering processes, contractor selection, and compliance with financial guidelines. "We are committed to transparency. Any irregularity, if found, will be dealt with strictly," a senior Vigilance officer stated. The opposition has seized upon the development, accusing the government of mismanagement and corruption. Leaders argued that the probe validates their long-standing concerns about the Life Mission scheme, which has previously faced controversies over alleged foreign funding and irregular allotments.

Nagaland reviews preparations for Census 2027 Phase-II

Kohima, Sept 30: The Nagaland government has reviewed preparations for Phase-II of Census 2027, focusing on ensuring accuracy, inclusivity, and transparency in the enumeration process. Senior officials, district administrators, and census supervisors attended the meeting, which was convened to assess readiness and streamline coordination ahead of the next phase.

Officials explained that Phase-II will involve detailed household enumeration, requiring meticulous planning and training of enumerators. The state administration emphasized that every household must be covered, with special attention to remote villages and marginalized communities.

"Accurate census data is the foundation of development planning and resource allocation," a senior official said.

The review meeting highlighted logistical challenges, including terrain difficulties, connectivity issues, and the need for adequate manpower. Authorities assured that measures are being taken to address these concerns, including deployment of additional staff, use of digital tools, and enhanced monitoring mechanisms.

Training programs for enumerators were also discussed, with officials stressing the importance of equipping field staff with skills to handle complex situations during enumeration. Awareness campaigns are being planned to encourage public

cooperation, ensuring that citizens understand the significance of participating in the census. Civil society groups welcomed the proactive approach, noting that accurate data is crucial for policy formulation in healthcare, education, infrastructure, and welfare schemes. They urged the government to prioritize inclusivity, ensuring that tribal communities, urban migrants, and vulnerable groups are properly documented. Observers believe that Nagaland's emphasis on early preparations reflects its commitment to transparency and accountability. By reviewing progress well in advance, the state aims to avoid lapses and strengthen confidence in the census process.

Arunachal's Rupa stadium earns FIFA quality certification fourth

Itanagar, Sept 30: The Asu Gyatpong Regional Stadium in Rupa, Arunachal Pradesh, has become the fourth venue in the state to receive the prestigious FIFA Quality certification, marking a significant milestone in the region's sporting infrastructure.

Officials confirmed that the certification was awarded after rigorous testing of the stadium's turf, facilities, and safety standards, ensuring compliance with international football requirements. The recognition places Rupa's stadium alongside other certified venues in Arunachal, strengthening the state's profile as an emerging hub for football in the Northeast. Governor



Lt Gen (Retd) K.T. Parnaik and senior sports officials hailed the achievement, noting that FIFA's endorsement reflects the state's commitment to promoting world-class sporting facilities. "This certification is not just about infrastructure; it is about inspiring our youth and positioning Arunachal on the global football map,"

a senior official said.

The stadium, developed with support from the state government and local authorities, is expected to host national-level tournaments and training sessions. Officials emphasized that the facility will provide opportunities for young players to train on international-standard grounds, bridging the

gap between grassroots development and professional competition. Sports associations in the state welcomed the recognition, highlighting that improved infrastructure is crucial for nurturing talent. They noted that Arunachal's growing interest in football, particularly among youth in rural districts, requires sustained investment in certified facilities. Observers believe the certification will also boost tourism and local economy, as FIFA-approved venues often attract tournaments, camps, and visitors. The achievement underscores Arunachal's broader strategy of combining sports development with community engagement and regional pride.

Maharashtra crime branch busts liquor consignment

Mumbai, Sept 30: The Maharashtra Crime Branch has busted an illegal liquor consignment bound for Rajkot, marking a significant breakthrough in its ongoing crackdown against smuggling networks. Officials confirmed that the operation was carried out following intelligence inputs, leading to the interception of vehicles transporting large quantities of illicit liquor. According to police sources, the consignment was being moved through concealed routes to evade detection, with smugglers attempting to exploit inter-state transport loopholes. The seized liquor, valued at several lakhs, was packed in cartons and hidden within cargo vehicles. Authorities stated that the operation was part of a coordinated effort to dismantle smuggling chains that supply contraband across state borders. The drivers and handlers of the consignment have been detained for questioning, and preliminary investigations suggest links to organized networks operating between Maharashtra and Gujarat. "We are probing the wider nexus to identify financiers and distributors involved in this racket," a senior officer said. Officials emphasized that such smuggling poses not only revenue losses to the state but also serious health risks, as illicit liquor often bypasses quality checks and safety standards. The crackdown reflects the Crime Branch's intensified surveillance measures, including highway patrols, intelligence sharing, and monitoring of suspicious transport activities.

Arunachal CM distributes tablets to boost student digital learning

Itanagar, Sept 30: Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday distributed tablets to students of Siang and Upper Siang districts, marking a major step in Arunachal Pradesh's push toward digital education. The initiative, part of the state's broader digital learning program, aims to bridge the technology gap in classrooms and empower students with modern tools for academic growth.

Speaking at the distribution ceremony, CM Khandu emphasized that digital literacy is essential for preparing youth to meet future challenges. "Education today must go beyond textbooks. By providing tablets, we are ensuring that students in remote areas have equal access to digital re-



sources and opportunities," he said. Officials explained that the tablets are preloaded with e-books, interactive modules, and exam preparation materials aligned with the state curriculum. The devices will also enable students to access online learning platforms,

helping them stay connected with teachers and peers even in geographically isolated regions. The program is expected to benefit thousands of students, particularly in districts where internet connectivity and infrastructure remain limited.

Bengal woman's mysterious death at in-laws' house, husband detained

Kolkata, Sept 30: A young woman was found dead under mysterious circumstances at her in-laws' house in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, the police said on Wednesday. The husband has been detained following the incident.

According to the police, the woman's mother went to the daughter's in-laws' house on Tuesday night and found her dead body. The incident took place in the Barasat police station area of North 24 Parganas. The deceased's family claimed that the son-in-law had married twice before. After the woman learnt about the previous marriages, he started torturing her. Based on the complaint, the police



have taken the deceased's husband to the police station and started questioning him.

The deceased, identified as Riya Debnath, is a resident of the Dum Dum area in North 24 Parganas district. She was an employee of a private organisation. Through that source, she met a young man named Prosenjit Basu from

Shalbagan in Barasat. They got married three months ago. They settled in Shalbagan adjacent to Taki Road. Riya's family claimed that tension started between the couple on Tuesday night. After learning about the conflict in the daughter's family, Riya's mother went from Dum Dum to Shalbagan's

house. But when she reached there, she saw her daughter lying on the bed wrapped in a veil. She alleged that her son-in-law had been beating her while drunk since the marriage. He had married twice before. They came to know about it later. Based on her complaint, the police detained the son-in-law.

On Wednesday, the body of the deceased was sent to Barasat Hospital for autopsy. However, the deceased's mother demanded that the autopsy be done at the RGI Kar Medical College and Hospital instead of Barasat Hospital. She had an argument with the police on the hospital premises regarding this.

3,190 health department posts remain vacant across Kashmir Valley, officials confirm

Srinagar, Sept 30: The Kashmir Valley is facing a severe shortage of healthcare personnel, with 3,190 posts in the Health Department lying vacant, officials revealed on Wednesday. The vacancies span across medical officers, paramedics, and support staff, raising concerns about the delivery of essential health services in the region. According to departmental sources, the shortage has been particularly felt in rural and remote districts, where hospitals and primary health centers are struggling to function with limited staff. "The vacancies

have created a significant gap in patient care, especially in areas where access to private healthcare is minimal," an official stated. The Health Department has acknowledged the issue and assured that recruitment processes are underway. However, delays in approvals and procedural bottlenecks have slowed down the filling of posts. Officials emphasized that the government is committed to strengthening healthcare infrastructure and addressing manpower shortages at the earliest. Medical associations have expressed concern, warning that



the shortage of doctors and paramedics could compromise the Valley's preparedness

for emergencies and seasonal health challenges. They urged authorities to expedite recruit-

ment and ensure equitable distribution of staff across districts. Civil society groups

highlighted that the vacancies not only affect patient care but also burden existing staff, who are often forced to work extended hours. "Healthcare workers are under immense pressure, and this impacts the quality of service," one activist noted. Observers believe the situation underscores the need for systemic reforms in healthcare management, including streamlined recruitment, better incentives for rural postings, and improved training facilities. Analysts argue that filling the vacant posts is critical to achieving universal healthcare access

in the Valley. The Health Department has reiterated its commitment to resolving the issue, stating that proposals for recruitment have been submitted and are awaiting final clearance. Authorities assured that once approved, appointments will be made swiftly to restore balance in the system. As the Valley grapples with the shortage, the figure of 3,190 vacant posts stands as a stark reminder of the challenges facing public healthcare, highlighting the urgent need for decisive action to strengthen medical services in Kashmir.

Bongaigaon police recovered 12.07 grams of suspected heroin jointly



Dispur, Sep 30: In a significant crackdown against the illegal drug trade in Upper Assam, law enforcement personnel in Bongaigaon district successfully intercepted and recovered a total of 10 containers filled with suspected heroin during a targeted, intelligence-led operation conducted in the No. 2 Bhandara area. The successful raid, executed under the jurisdictional limits of the Manikpur Police Station, marks another decisive step in the state's ongoing campaign to neutralize illicit narcotics networks and stem the flow of dangerous contraband across regional borders. The coordinated action was initiated after senior police authorities received precise and actionable secret information regarding a hidden stash of narcotics in the region. Acting swiftly upon the verified intelligence, a joint tactical team comprising officers from both the Manikpur Police Station and the Gerukabari

Police Outpost was mobilized to execute the raid. The joint operation was conducted directly under the leadership of Heart Goswami, the Officer-in-Charge of the Gerukabari Police Outpost, who coordinated the deployment and thorough search of the suspect location. Upon arriving at the target premises in No. 2 Bhandara, officers established a secure perimeter and carried out a meticulously detailed search of the property. The search team focused their efforts on a specific bamboo structure situated directly behind the residential house belonging to the late Harun Ali. During the systematic sweep of the outbuilding, police officers discovered and recovered 10 small containers carefully concealed within the bamboo architecture. A close preliminary examination confirmed that the containers held a substance suspected to be high-grade heroin. According to official state-

ments provided by the investigating police team, the total aggregate weight of the suspected illicit contraband recovered from the ten seized containers was measured at approximately 12.07 grams. Following standard protocol for narcotics busts under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) framework, all ten containers along with the hidden substance were formally seized on-site, secured as key evidence, and transported directly into official police custody for further forensic analysis and chemical testing. Immediately following the successful seizure, police authorities formally registered the case and launched a comprehensive investigation to trace the origins and broader network tied to the contraband. Investigators are currently working to ascertain the precise source of the seized heroin, identify the primary suppliers, and establish the exact circumstances surrounding its possession and concealment behind the residential site. Police are also probing potential local distribution links to determine whether the stash was intended for immediate sale within Bongaigaon or for transit into neighboring districts. Local law enforcement officials confirmed that further administrative and legal details will be made public as the investigation progresses and suspect leads are pursued. The Bongaigaon police department reiterated its unwavering commitment to maintaining a zero-tolerance stance against drug trafficking and illegal contraband operations across the district.

Manipur CM Khemchand Singh urges unity among 36 communities via Irawat's ideals

Imphal, Sep 30: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh Calls for Regional Unity on Jana Neta Hijam Irawat Day On Wednesday, September 30, Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh made a passionate plea for unity and peaceful coexistence among all 36 ethnic communities residing across the state's hill and valley regions. Speaking at the state-level observance of Jana Neta Hijam Irawat Day 2026, held at Irawat Square in Imphal, the Chief Minister emphasized that the enduring ideals of social justice, communal harmony, and collective progress championed by the visionary leader remain deeply relevant to resolving contemporary socio-political challenges. The solemn event commenced with Chief Minister Khemchand Singh paying formal floral tributes at the memorial of Jana Neta Hijam Irawat. Addressing a gathering that



included cabinet ministers, state legislators, senior administrative officials, law enforcement personnel, civil society representatives, and students, the Chief Minister urged government employees and the younger generation to emulate Irawat's legacy of selfless service, sacrifice, and civic responsibility. Reflecting on Irawat's historic legacy, Khemchand Singh characterized him as one of the most transformative figures in Manipur's histo-

ry. He highlighted Irawat's groundbreaking contributions not only as a political revolutionary and social reformer but also as a pioneer in Manipuri literature and journalism. The Chief Minister noted that as early as 1922, Irawat launched Meitei Chhanu, a seminal publication designed to raise social consciousness and address critical issues affecting Manipuri society. Khemchand Singh particularly underscored Irawat's profound

personal sacrifice, pointing out how he voluntarily relinquished the significant privileges associated with his marriage into the royal family to dedicate his life entirely to the public good. Irawat traveled extensively across the state, mobilizing people from all walks of life to fight against social inequalities and institutional exploitation. Reiterating Irawat's vision of inclusive development and unity, the Chief Minister urged the residents of Manipur to transcend ethnic divisions and remain guided by principles of shared responsibility and mutual respect. The commemoration was attended by several prominent dignitaries, including Art and Culture Minister Khurajam Loken Singh, numerous Members of the Legislative Assembly, former Members of Parliament Rajkumar Ranjan Singh and Lorho S. Pfoze, and Chief Secretary Rajeev Singh Thakoor.

Prestone Tynsong supported JPC's review of the FCRA Bill



Shillong, Sep 30: Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister and NPP State President Prestone Tynsong has clarified that concerns surrounding the proposed Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) amendments extend beyond Christian organizations, emphasizing that the legislation applies to every non-governmental entity receiving foreign contributions. Speaking on Tuesday, Tynsong acknowledged the widespread anx-

ieties among FCRA-registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious institutions regarding the bill's provisions, particularly those concerning the consequences of cancellation, surrender, or cessation of registration. He noted that the legislation in its current form requires thorough re-examination to address operational and legal apprehensions raised by various civil

society groups. Welcoming the Union Government's decision to refer the FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026—which was introduced in the Lok Sabha in March—to a Joint Committee, the Deputy Chief Minister commended the appointment of Meghalaya Rajya Sabha MP James Pangsang Kongkal Sangma as a special invitee to the JPC. He revealed that the nomination followed a formal request by Chief Minister and NPP National President Conrad K. Sangma to ensure the region's unique socio-religious concerns are effectively represented. Tynsong reaffirmed that the proposed amendments must be evaluated objectively through the democratic parliamentary process rather than viewed as targeted legislation against any specific religious community. review offers an inclusive platform for scrutinizing the controversial clauses before any final provisions are drafted.

Over 19 lakh Meghalaya electors enter final roll

Shillong, Sep 30: The Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Meghalaya has entered its closing stage, with 19,07,182 electors from the draft roll now parked for final publication. At the same time, Cabinet Minister Sanbor Shullai on Tuesday accused the Congress and its I.N.D.I.A. allies of spreading “false propaganda” and creating panic over the exercise. The SIR, he said, was needed to keep ineligible persons, including illegal immigrants, off the voters' list. Chief Electoral Officer B.D.R. Tiwari reviewed progress with Deputy Commissioners, DEOs, EROs and AEROs and separately briefed recognised political parties on the latest figures and Election Commission of India (ECI) directions. The draft rpled in 5,90,784 cases (90.65 per cent). After due process, 910 electors were found ineligible.

Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma visits Silchar for municipal election campaign

Silchar, Sep 30: Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma is set to arrive in Silchar on Wednesday to direct and bolster the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) high-decibel campaign for the upcoming Silchar Municipal Corporation election, scheduled to take place on October 3. The visit carries significant political and administrative weight, prompting local BJP leadership and party workers to organize an elaborate and grand reception across the town. Outlining the Chief Minister's extensive itinerary during a press conference held at the

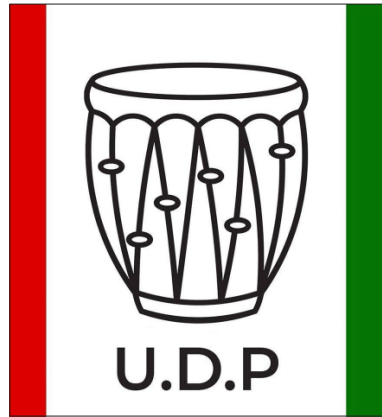
Cachar district BJP headquarters on Tuesday, Urban Development Minister Kaushik Rai emphasized that Dr. Sarma's presence will serve as a major catalyst for the socio-economic and infrastructural development of the Barak Valley. According to Minister Rai, the Chief Minister will touch down at Kumbhirgram Airport before heading straight to the Barak Valley Secretariat at Srikona. There, he will convene a high-level review meeting alongside key department officials, local administrative authorities, and civil society rep-

resentatives to thoroughly assess the progress of ongoing developmental projects and streamline governance initiatives across the region. Following his administrative reviews, Chief Minister Sarma will shift focus directly to the political arena. At approximately 4:00 PM, he is scheduled to address a massive public campaign rally at the historic Police Parade Ground. The rally is expected to mobilize thousands of party supporters, functionaries, and local residents as the BJP seeks to consolidate its public support ahead of the civic polls. The Chief

Minister's campaign blitz comes shortly after state party President Dilip Saikia unveiled the BJP's comprehensive poll manifesto, which lays out an ambitious roadmap to upgrade urban infrastructure, enhance public services, and transform Silchar into a modern, well-connected civic hub. Local campaign teams and party workers have been actively engaging voters through widespread grassroots meetings to communicate the promises detailed in the manifesto, pitching a unified vision for a developed and prosperous Silchar.

NPP and BJP dismissed rumors of merging after UDP's split

Shillong, Sep 30: Following a dramatic political shift in Meghalaya where eight United Democratic Party (UDP) MLAs defected to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in New Delhi, the two main coalition partners of the ruling Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA)—the National People's Party (NPP) and the BJP—have firmly dismissed reports of any impending merger or internal instability. Both parties publicly clarified that the state government under Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma remains entirely secure, dismissing rumors that the BJP's sudden expansion poses a threat to the stability of the governing coalition. The high-profile defection altered the legislative landscape of the 60-member Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. By absorbing eight former UDP legislators, the BJP's strength surged from two seats to 10, instantly propelling it to become the second-largest political party in the House behind the leading NPP, which holds 33 seats. Meanwhile, the UDP, which previously held the status of the second-largest



partner in the ruling MDA coalition, saw its representation reduced to just four MLAs. Despite the submitted merger documents awaiting a formal decision from the Speaker regarding anti-defection provisions, the new arithmetic ignited intense speculation about whether the BJP would pressure the coalition for an expanded Cabinet presence or attempt to poach legislators from the NPP itself. Directly addressing the widespread rumors, NPP State President and Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong

emphatically denied any threat to his party's standing. Tynsong stated that the 33 NPP legislators are completely intact, expressing “101 percent” confidence in the unity of the parliamentary party and confirming that no members intend to leave. He further clarified that the NPP has not placed any conditional terms regarding expanded Cabinet berths for the BJP, insisting that administrative power-sharing within the government remains unchanged. Concurrently, senior BJP leader and Cabinet Minister Sanbor Shullai echoed Tynsong's sentiments, stating that rumors of NPP legislators merging with or joining the BJP are entirely false. Shullai emphasized that the BJP central leadership remains satisfied with Conrad Sangma's leadership and has cautioned state leaders against making unauthorized statements that could damage the coalition. He reaffirmed that all 10 BJP MLAs, alongside the party's state president, plan to meet Chief Minister Sangma to reiterate their full support while working together on developmental goals for their respective constituencies.

Meghalaya urged BSF and police to boost border infiltration vigilance



Shillong, Sep 30: Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister Prestone Tynsong has directed the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Meghalaya Police to step up ground-level vigilance and seal vulnerable stretches along the international border with Bangladesh. The directive was issued

during a comprehensive security review meeting attended by senior state government officials, state police leadership, and BSF authorities to address growing concerns over illicit border crossings. Highlighting the urgency of the situation, Tynsong noted that security forces are intercepting illegal border-crossers on an almost daily basis. He emphasized that while many intercepted individuals are ordinary Bangladeshi citizens seeking to leave their country due to ongoing domestic unrest rather than intent to disrupt local law and order, unauthorized entry into Meghalaya cannot be overlooked. The review meeting focused on key operational challenges, including incom-

plete fencing, dense forests, difficult hilly terrain, and limited accessibility across frontier districts like East Khasi Hills and West Jaintia Hills. Tynsong explained that unlike the flat plains of neighboring states such as West Bengal, Meghalaya's rugged landscape severely hampers continuous surveillance and reduces night visibility for security patrols. Addressing reports of local intermediaries aiding illegal entries, Tynsong confirmed that strict instructions have been issued to crack down on facilitators. To bolster surveillance, the traditional institutions and impose night curfews along sensitive border stretches where necessary to achieve the government's goal of zero illegal infiltration.

Delays spark calls for local, decentralized railway decision-making in Assam

Nalbari, Sep 30: Calls for greater administrative decentralization within the Indian Railways governance structure have intensified in Assam, with passenger rights advocates arguing that excessive centralized authority is severely bottlenecking local infrastructure and passenger-centric services. The Assam Rail Passengers Association (ARPA) has raised significant concerns that routine operational matters and localized demands are facing undue delays because divisional authorities lack the autonomy to make final decisions without prolonged approval processes from central bodies. Highlighting the systemic administrative lag, Dipankar Sharma, General Secretary of the Assam Rail Passengers Association, has urged Indian Railways to delegate expanded decision-making powers directly to operational zonal offices and divisional headquarters.



Currently, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), headquartered at Maligaon in Guwahati, oversees rail transportation across the region through five primary operational divisions: Tinsukia, Lumding, Rangiya, Alipurduar, and Kathihar. While this expansive network is designed to maintain connectivity across vast distances, local passenger services frequently face prolonged operational de-

lays. These friction points stem largely from structural procedural bottlenecks and a centralized decision-making framework that restricts the administrative autonomy of divisional and zonal authorities. Under current operational protocols, whenever local communities, commuter associations, or regional representatives request minor service adjustments—such as modifying train timetables, extending route coverage, or

introducing additional passenger halts—the process begins at the local level. The respective division first conducts a detailed feasibility study to assess track capacity, signaling schedules, passenger demand, and rolling stock availability. Once the proposal clears technical and financial evaluations within the division, it is escalated to the NFR zonal headquarters at Maligaon for secondary review and endorsement. However, significant administrative stagnation occurs after these initial assessments are completed. Despite successfully passing both divisional and zonal technical evaluations, even minor, straightforward operational proposals cannot be implemented independently by local authorities. Instead, existing regulations dictate that all proposals must be forwarded to the apex Railway Board in New Delhi for official administrative sanction and clearance.

Uttarakhand High Court ordered counting of ballots in Kichha municipal polls within three weeks

New Delhi, Sep 30: After hearing petitions challenging the delay of the counting process, the Uttarakhand High Court on Wednesday directed authorities to perform the vote counting for the recently held municipal elections in Kichha and Sirauli Kalan in Udham Singh Nagar district within three weeks. A division bench, led by Chief Justice Manoj Kumar Gupta and Justice Subhash Upadhyay, was considering petitions challenging the State Election Commission's and the state government's orders suspending the counting. The state government, citing law and order concerns following disturbances at polling booths during the September 22 elections, had sought two more weeks to conduct the



counting. It told the court that the ballot papers had been sealed in ballot boxes and that adequate arrangements were required to ensure peaceful counting and declaration of results. The court, however, granted three weeks for the counting. In an earlier hearing, the court had stayed the State Election Commission's order deferring the counting and directed that the process be

initiated, observing that the elections had already been conducted and there was no apparent reason to halt the counting. Alina Malik, a Kichha resident, requested directions for vote counting. During an earlier hearing before a single-judge bench, the State Election Commission notified the court that polling for both municipalities took place on September 22, but counting had been postponed

until further notice. The single-judge bench had scheduled the hearing for October 5. Several petitions, including a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Kichha resident Naimul Hussain, were then heard by the division bench. The petitioners also challenged the government's decision to prepare the reservation roster based on 43 municipal chairperson posts. They alleged that certain wards and villages had earlier been proposed for merger with Kichha municipality, a move that was stayed by the high court, before the areas were subsequently re-incorporated. The petitions also demanded elections for the newly formed Sirauli Kalan Municipal Council, claiming that these had not yet been held.

A blast rocks Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited and neighboring houses, injuring nine people

New Delhi, Sep 30: A blast at Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited's Coker Hydro Treating Unit in Surathkal, Karnataka, injured at least nine people on Wednesday, according to authorities. According to police, the explosion occurred about 12.15 p.m. "Nine people were injured in the incident. Emergency response personnel have since brought the fire under control," Dakshina Kannada deputy commissioner Darshan HV, who visited the refinery alongside police commissioner Sudheer Kumar Reddy and Zilla panchayat chief execu-

tive officer Narwade Vinayak Karbhari, stated. "Further details and official statements regarding the incident are awaited from the MRPL management," Darshan said. Residents near the site said that the blast smashed windows in several homes. Videos of dense smoke and flames erupting from the refinery were extensively shared on social media. "I received detailed information from the authorities about the incident at the MRPL unit. 'I am in constant contact with MRPL officials, the City Police Commissioner, the Bajpe



Town Panchayat, and the Fire Department," Dakshina Kannada MP Brijesh Chowta stated. Chowta stated that the response at the scene was being monitored, and that "the situation following the blast was closely reviewed, and instructions were issued to bring the fire fully under

control and conduct safety operations in full swing." He also stated that hospitals in the vicinity were advised to keep prepared for medical crises. "All necessary precautions are being taken, and I appeal to the public not to panic," Chowta stated.

Chennai fishermen protest against assembly and secretariat building, warning of wider commotion

New Delhi, Sep 30: Fishermen from the Foreshore Estate protested in Chennai on Tuesday against the state government's proposal to develop a new Assembly and Secretariat building in the region. Some demonstrators dressed in black and held black flags as they chanted chants against the proposal. They also threatened to escalate their protest if the government failed to abandon the proposal. GR Vijayan, a member of the Tamil Nadu Fishermen Federation, detailed the protesters' demands. "The government order issued on September 8 announcing government plans to construct Assembly and Secretariat must be cancelled," he stated. "The land that the Metro City Improvement Trust gave to the fishermen must be offi-

cially granted to us, along with the issuance of land titles (patta). Many houses of the fishermen are severely dilapidated, we are bringing it to the chief minister's attention to immediately construct and provide houses for us on a war footing," he added. "If the chief minister does not cancel this G.O within the next 5 days, we will unite all fishing villages across Tamil Nadu and organize a massive protest," Vijayan warned. On September 3, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay made a suo motu announcement in the assembly, stating that the government will build a new Assembly-cum-Secretariat complex in Chennai for ₹1,200 crore, with a built-up size of 20 lakh sq ft. The structure would house all of the state's gov-



ernment departments. The suggestion emerged amid space limits at Fort St George, as well as limitations imposed by its historical preservation. Built in 1640, the campus spans 107 acres, but the government owns only four acres; the rest belongs to the defence authorities and Archaeological Survey

of India. To rally support for their protest, a team of fishermen recently met with former chief minister and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) president MK Stalin, who guaranteed them of his party's support. Stalin warned that if the government did not respond to the fishermen's demands, the DMK would

Eight dhaba operators have been booked for cutting crash barriers on the Delhi-Dehradun route



New Delhi, Sep 30: Eight dhaba operators have been charged with allegedly destroying crash barriers built on the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor to construct private access roads and

impeding officials who were reinstalling them, officials said on Wednesday. The case was filed late Monday evening at Nangal police station following a complaint from Akash Singh, a site engineer

of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)'s Project Implementation Unit (PIU), Roorkee. Construction of the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor between the Saharanpur bypass and Ganeshpur has been completed. Beam crash barriers have been installed along the median and shoulders of the expressway for road safety. According to the NHAI complaint, some hotel and dhaba operators along the road allegedly cut the crash barriers at multiple locations to allow private use. An NHAI team had arrived at

the location to replace the barriers when the hotel and dhaba operators allegedly appeared and impeded the government's operation, preventing the barriers from being installed on the expressway, according to the complaint. The complaint named the owners of over a dozen diners and restaurants. Police stated an investigation into the alleged cutting of the crash barriers, obstruction of government operations, and the roles of the named individuals has begun.

Sanjay Raut blames the Eknath Shinde group for the Thane leader's death

New Delhi, Sep 30: Sanjay Raut, the Shiv Sena (UBT) leader, ramped up his attack on the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and the Maharashtra government on Wednesday over the murder of the party's Thane leader Pradeep Purnekar, claiming that the "real masterminds" were in the Shinde camp. Raut also blasted the Maharashtra government, the home department led by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, and the Thane police for failing to safeguard people, questioning whether Thane was "not on the map of the Home Department." Pradeep Purnekar, a vibhagh pramukh (divisional head) of Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena (UBT), was shot dead by unidentified assailants outside his

office in Thane's Manpada area late on Tuesday. His family linked Meenakshi Shinde, the former Thane mayor and women's wing chief of Shiv Sena, and her husband Rajendra Shinde to the murder. Pradeep Purnekar's son Ram claimed that the accused had conducted a recee of the area before the murder and that he saw some of them with Rajendra Shinde shortly before the Ganapati immersion. "I saw the four accused standing there with the former mayor's husband." Two of the accused even approached my car and inspected it. A reconnaissance was conducted prior to my father's murder. Ram stated that two other people, in addition to himself, witnessed this.



Ram stated that one of the assailants addressed him as "Pradipdada," despite he did not know the person's name. "Perhaps the drug mafia was behind this, or it could have stemmed from a political dispute," he added, adding that his father had previously received threats. Meenakshi Shinde claimed she did not wish to reply to the claims. "Let the police investigate and find out who is guilty. I will answer then. I don't want to get into petty politics," she said. Thane was an undivided Shiv Sena

stronghold for nearly 25 years, and deputy chief minister Eknath Shinde still lives there. Following the 2022 party split, the majority of local corporators joined Shinde. However, a few prominent figures, notably former MP Rajan Vichare and Kedar Dighe, nephew of Shinde's mentor Anand Dighe, stayed faithful to party leader Uddhav Thackeray. The split has resulted in frequent conflicts between the two factions. Shortly after the split, party workers clashed when Kedar Dighe went to a ward represented by Shinde supporter Yogesh Jankar. Roshani Shinde, a hackeray faction activist, was allegedly assaulted by Shinde loyalists in April 2023 after a social media post.

Varanasi temple dancing video goes viral; cops call it AI-generated

New Delhi, Sep 30: Instagram has blocked access to cartoonist Satish Acharya's account in India, causing fellow cartoonists to show support and seek an immediate lift of the ban. According to the wording on Acharya's Instagram site, "We temporarily restricted access to this account pursuant to legal requirements under India's Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules." Meta has yet to publish a separate statement on the topic. A video purporting to depict two women performing an obscene dance at the Lat Bhairav temple complex in Varanasi during a traditional festival has gone viral on social media, sparking outrage at the claimed presence and behavior of police officers at the event. However, the Varanasi Police said on Tuesday that the video was AI-generated and was being shared with the alleged intention of harming the police's image. The police stated that a case would be filed against individuals

responsible for disseminating the deceptive film. The purported video showed women dressed in ghaghra and sleeveless choli dancing on a raised platform to Bhojpuri songs. Policemen could allegedly be seen near the performance, with some purportedly watching or recording it on their mobile phones. The video triggered criticism on social media and from political and civil society groups. The Samajwadi Party's media cell alleged on X that obscene songs and performances were being held at temple premises and during religious events under the BJP government. Prior to issuing their statement, the police had not independently verified the video's veracity. Gaurav Banswal, DCP Kashi Zone, stated that the video was totally artificial intelligence-generated. Police said cameras taken by members of the public at the event were scrutinized and zoomed in on, but the police officials supposedly shown in the viral video were not visible in those

recordings. "The above video was created using artificial intelligence and is being distributed in order to harm the image of police officers. The police officers standing in the backdrop of the crowd's mobile videos are not visible on any screen," the police stated. According to local reports, an FIR was registered at Adampur police station against unidentified persons over the circulation of the video. The film was tied to this year's Baba Lat Bhairav Barat celebrations, which lasted five days from September 23 to 27. The event commemorates the holy wedding of Baba Lat Bhairav, also known as Kapal Bhairav, and Goddess Bhairavi. As part of the ceremonies, devotees carrying wedding offerings from Kazzakpura's main temple travel to Visheshwarganj Sabzi Mandi for the Tilak ritual. The procession next comes to the Kaal Bhairav temple for rites and aarti before ending at the Lat Bhairav temple.

Dhanraj Parimal Nathwani is the Samajwadi Party's second Rajya Sabha nominee, along with Ram Gopal Yadav



New Delhi, Sep 30: The Samajwadi Party on Wednesday revealed its authorized candidates for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh, including senior leader Prof Ram Gopal Yadav and industrialist and sports administrator Dhanraj Parimal Nathwani. The two candidates will file their

nomination papers at 11 a.m., in the presence of party national president Akhilesh Yadav, according to an official communication circulated on social media. Nathwani's nomination makes him the party's second candidate for the upper house. Ten Rajya Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh are set to go to polls on Oc-

tober 16, with nominations now ongoing. The Samajwadi Party, which has strong representation in the state Assembly, hopes to win two seats in the election. Dhanraj Parimal Nathwani is a prominent corporate executive working for Reliance Industries Limited. He has held many positions within the business, including business President, and has served as a director of companies such as Reliance New Energy Limited. His responsibilities have included finance, human resources, corporate affairs, procurement, and corporate social responsibility for the company's manufacturing facilities in Jamnagar and Vadodara, as well as other business verticals in Gujarat. Nathwani is the son of Parimal Dhirajlal Nathwani,

a four-term Rajya Sabha member who now represents Jharkhand in the Upper House. The older Nathwani, an industrialist and Reliance Industries' director of corporate affairs, has a long history of working with the Ambani family. He served Jharkhand from 2008 to 2020, and Andhra Pradesh from 2020 to 2026. Dhanraj Nathwani studied international business at Regent's Business School in London before receiving an MBA from the National Institute of Management with a focus on corporate law and public relations management. He has also held key positions in sports administration. In November 2022, he was unanimously elected president of the Gujarat Cricket Association, succeeding

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, after previously serving as vice-president. He helped build Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi venue, the world's largest cricket venue. He has also been president of the Gujarat State Football Association. In addition to his corporate and sporting roles, Nathwani is involved in a number of social, cultural, and religious organizations. These include organizations affiliated with the Dwarka Devasthan Samiti as well as other trusts working in infrastructure and community development in Gujarat. He has also been involved in corporate social responsibility and development activities as part of his professional positions, and he enjoys sports, wildlife, and travel.

HC dismisses petition against order in Modi degree matter

New Delhi, Sep 30: The Gujarat High Court rejected AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal's appeal against a ₹25,000 cost for disclosing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's degree details, stating that political leaders cannot use statutory proceedings for their own political gain. "The appellant's response to the CIC (Chief Information Commission) in the proceedings against him and subsequent pursuit of the matter by filing written submissions speaks for itself and requires no further comments or observations from us," a division bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice DN Ray said. Kejriwal had appealed against the March 2023 order of a single judge who had quashed a 2016 CIC direction requiring Gujarat University to provide information con-

cerning Modi's degrees. The University had approached the single judge challenging the CIC's direction. The CIC order was passed on an application by Kejriwal under the Right to Information Act (RTI Act). "In the totality of the facts and circumstances of this case, no error in any of the appellant's submissions can be found in the impugned judgment." The appeal is consequently dismissed, with no further errors in costs. According to Live Law, the division bench dismissed the civil application for a stay. In 2016, Gujarat University's registrar filed a case with the Gujarat High Court appealing the CIC judgment. The Commission's order came after Kejriwal wrote to the CIC requesting that information of Modi's educational qualifications be made public.



Local cures for pit viper bites in Assam

Snakebite remains an important public-health problem in Assam and Northeast India. One of the major challenges in this region is that the medically important snakes are different from the traditional “Big Four” for which Indian polyvalent antivenom is primarily produced. The Indian polyvalent antivenom is directed against the venoms of Naja naja, Bungarus caeruleus, Daboia russelii and Echis carinatus.

However, these four species do not represent the major snakebite burden across most of Assam and the Northeast. Russell’s viper has been reported from parts of Assam, including areas such as Bongaigaon, Chirang and Tezpur, but many other parts of the region have a different venomous-snake profile. In Upper Assam and several neighbouring northeastern states, pit-viper bites constitute an important clinical problem. Districts and regions where pit vipers are frequently encountered include parts of Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Dhemajji, Lakhimpur, Karbi Anglong, Diphu, Dima Hasao and the Barak Valley, with similar clinical challenges reported from neighbouring north-eastern states. At present, India does not have a routinely available, region-specific antivenom covering the important Trimeresurus pit-viper species encountered in the Northeast. Historically, Indian polyvalent antivenom was sometimes administered to patients with pit viper envenoming. However, based on our clinical experience, the expected therapeutic response was not consistently observed, while some patients developed significant adverse reactions. Therefore, since 2018, our team at Demow Rural Community Health Centre has adopted a different approach for clinically diagnosed pit viper envenoming rather than routinely administering the available Indian polyvalent antivenom.

This approach was developed through continuing clinical observation and venom-related scientific work, including collaboration with Tezpur University and Prof. Robin Doley. More than 400 patients were treated without antivenom. We have now managed 411 clinically diagnosed pit viper bite patients using this approach, without administering polyvalent antivenom. Pit-viper envenoming can produce severe local pain, progressive swelling and prolonged coagulopathy. The swelling may extend across several joints, while abnormalities of blood coagulation can persist for several days. Patients may therefore remain at risk of serious bleeding and other systemic complications even when they initially appear clinically stable. The key is not simply “no antivenom” — it is intensive monitoring. Our message is not that pit viper patients require no treatment. It’s quite the opposite. The treatment is intensive observation and appropriate supportive management. A patient with significant pit viper envenoming should not simply be discharged because there is no locally appropriate antivenom.

In our experience, patients have required hospitalisation for approximately 5–7 days, sometimes longer, until clinical and coagulation parameters become reassuring. The principle is: the absence of appropriate antivenom does not eliminate treatment options. It means careful diagnosis, prolonged observation, supportive treatment and readiness to manage complications. Among the 411 pit-viper patients managed under this approach, we have not recorded a death. This represents our institutional clinical experience and should be interpreted in the context of patient selection, clinical protocols, monitoring capacity and the limitations of observational data. The experience nevertheless raises an important public-health question: Do we need region-specific snakebite protocols for Northeast India? The answer is clearly that the Northeast requires snakebite-management strategies that reflect its local snake species and local venom profiles. A one-size-fits-all approach based exclusively on the traditional Indian “Big Four” does not adequately describe the snakebite epidemiology of the Northeast. The experience accumulated at Demow has contributed to the development of Assam-specific approaches to snakebite management. Our clinical observations and related work have also been communicated through peer-reviewed scientific publications, while the Assam health system has incorporated region-specific recommendations into its snakebite-management framework. The larger objective is not to promote one hospital or one individual protocol. It is to ensure that a patient bitten by a pit viper in a remote village of Northeast India receives scientifically informed, locally appropriate and timely treatment rather than an inappropriate reflex treatment or unnecessary referral.

If a person is bitten by a suspected pit viper: (i) do not panic, (ii) do not apply a tourniquet, (iii) do not cut or suck the wound, (iv) do not depend on traditional remedies, (v) reach a health facility as early as possible, and (vi) do not leave the hospital prematurely. The absence of a specific antivenom does not mean that nothing can be done. With appropriate monitoring and supportive management, serious complications can be detected early and treated. Northeast India needs: (i) region-specific snakebite surveillance, (ii) venom-characterisation studies of local snake species, (iii) development of region-specific antivenoms, (iv) standardised pit-viper management protocols, (v) reliable coagulation testing at peripheral hospitals, (vi) Training of doctors and nurses in snakebite management, and (vii) research collaboration between medical institutions, universities and public-health authorities. The experience of more than 400 pit-viper patients at Demow provides an important clinical dataset for further scientific evaluation. The snake may be regional, the venom may be regional, and therefore, the solution also needs to be regional.

Caste and the growing trust deficit within India’s elite higher education institutions

On September 18, Sahil Wakode, a second-year BTech student, was found dead on the campus of IIT-Bombay (IIT-B). His was the third suicide or unnatural death at IIT-B this year. This year, there have been two suicides at IIT-Delhi and two at IIT-Kharagpur. All IITs have combinedly reported at least 11 student suicides or unnatural deaths. In the last five years, there have been at least 53 suicides/unnatural deaths at the IITs. In Wakode’s case, allegations that he was caught cheating in an exam and committed suicide while awaiting action have complicated matters. The allegations, however, remain contested. His parents have stated that their son had complained about facing casteist comments. They filed an FIR under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act against professor Suryanarayana

Doolla who was the invigilator during the exam and also the dean of administrative affairs. Eventually, IIT-B retracted its initial statement on Wakode’s death where it had mentioned the alleged cheating incident, saying conclusive statements could not be made till the matter was under investigation. Meanwhile, protests demanding justice for Wakode have been met with solidarity for Doolla from several members of the faculty at IIT-Bombay.

As polarised camps spin narratives and counter-narratives on social media, hardly anyone seems to have put their faith in the investigation. It is important to understand why. The IITs do not have a good track record on internal investigations. At IIT-B itself, a 12-member committee with no external members was hurriedly con-

stituted to look into Darshan Solanki’s suicide in 2023. Its hastily issued interim report ruled out casteism and blamed dipping academic performance. It is not clear how the committee so quickly determined the two were not correlated. Solanki’s parents rejected the interim report, suggesting it was aimed at giving IIT-B a clean chit. Across the dozens of deaths at the IITs in recent years, there has hardly been a case where anyone was found accountable or meaningful action was taken. If the conclusion in all cases is that the deceased was struggling mentally or under pressure academically, it is only natural to expect that the IITs urgently rethink pedagogy and institutional culture. Surely an average of one suicide roughly every five weeks is unacceptable. This has not been the case. A fundamental

reason is that many within the IIT system do not believe there is a structural flaw that needs fixing. It is a priori assumed that the excellence of IITs is built upon its unrelenting pressure and demanding system. It is seen as a crucible of forging toughness where the weak cannot survive. By that logic, student deaths become proof of weak students being weeded out and evidence that the ones who survive are really the cream. There is of course no pedagogical validity to such a logic. An educational institution is not a Spartan bootcamp, and a student death or dropout is not an acceptable metric of excellence or the lack thereof.

However, in the polarised discourse around IITs, this logic of toughness and belonging gets tied to the construct of merit, which inevitably leads back to

caste. Despite constitutional provisions of caste-based affirmative action, none of the IITs seem to honour it in principle. This is most evident in the SC/ST/OBC faculty recruitments or PhD admissions being well under the quota mandates across IITs. Despite repeated nudges from the Supreme Court and Parliament, IITs haven’t satisfactorily fulfilled their obligations. This fundamentally skews the caste balance of the faculty and administrative cohort. And, at moments like this, it amplifies the trust deficit when an institution with overwhelmingly general category faculty and administrative core has to investigate charges of casteism in the suicide of a Dalit student. The processes at the IITs, like at all Indian academic institutions, are compliance-oriented. Procedures are frequently root-

ed in excessive paperwork, quorum, and oversight to the point everything becomes impractical in day-to-day contexts. Hence, much of the processes get substituted by the so-called informal understandings and adjustments. This administrative reality also magnifies the trust deficit because, in an impartial investigation, such processes will often fall short. This pivots even well-meaning administrators to focus away from justice and instead be attentive to ensuring institutional procedures do not get exposed. The loss of a student’s life at one of India’s premier campuses is a national shame. The lack of accountability and erosion of trust in processes should be a collective concern. Such tragedies need to be seen as a broad pattern; as a nation, we need to urgently protect our students.

Land, legacy, and limits: what India’s wars teach us about winning

When Chief of the Army Staff General Dhiraj Seth declared at the NDTV Defence Summit that land remains the only tangible factor of victory, he articulated a view with deep institutional roots. Territory is visible, photographable and politically marketable. A surrendered army, the sight of a defeated general or a captured ridgeline offers a clean narrative. Yet treating land as the sole qualification for success is both historically inaccurate and strategically unwise. It locks national security policy into a commitment trap that India has repeatedly chosen not to enter and for good reasons. War is politics by other means; therefore, military strategy and the logic of combat must always serve the governing political objective, rather than operating independently. Victory is a political outcome measured against stated objectives, not a cartographic scorecard. Accepting the land-only standard would force India to occupy ground every time it is politically necessary to initiate the use of force. India would have to gain, hold and sustain territory, incurring in the process the cost in blood and treasure, just to be able to call it a ‘victory’. The very framing constrains the flexibility that has served India well in limited wars and wars with limited objectives. Land would always remain a key strategic objective; however, calling it the only objective that matters would be ill-advised. Should we subscribe to this single-metric framing of victory, we would have to rewrite a whole lot of our military history. Consider the 1965 war. Indian forces captured roughly 1,840 square kilometers of Pakistani territory while Pakistan held about 540 sq km of Indian land. The Tashkent Declaration required both sides to withdraw to the positions they held before 5 August 1965. The territorial “gains” therefore disappeared.

However, the political objectives stood vindicated. It was clearly demonstrated, despite not holding onto land (as evidence), that Pakistan could not seize Kashmir by force and that India could fight back militarily to

maintain the status quo. A land-centric framing of victory would deny India the opportunity to rightfully celebrate 1965 as a ‘win’. If land alone defines victory, 1965 becomes a draw at best. Kargil in 1999 offers a clearer example. Pakistani troops occupied Indian positions across the Line of Control. India recaptured every height. No new territory was taken; the LoC was restored. The operation succeeded because the political objective was eviction, not annexation. India deliberately chose not to cross the LoC despite the operational temptation. India won, despite no net territorial gain. The victory came at a great cost in blood and treasure — it was victory nonetheless — which was measured against the political objective of reversing an intrusion. Operation Sindoor in May 2025 makes the mismatch starker. The four-day exchange was largely non-contact: long-range missiles, stand-off weapons, precision artillery, drones, electronic warfare and air defence. No Indian ground force crossed to seize and hold Pakistani soil. The stated objective was to target terrorist infrastructure rather than capture territory. The ceasefire came after India said its military objectives had been achieved. Land was never the contested prize. To declare this operation something other than a victory because no territory changed hands would be grossly unfair. The 1971 war is often cited as clinching evidence in support of land-centric framing of victory. The Army Chief also alluded to the famous picture of Lieutenant General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi signing the surrender document. The war produced the most decisive result in India’s military history: the birth of Bangladesh. Even then, India returned captured territory in both the east and the west, under the post-war arrangements and the Simla Agreement. The political goals were achieved: the dismemberment of Pakistan’s eastern wing and the return of refugees. Permanent occupation of Pakistani land in the east or west was never the objective. Land was the means to an end, not the end. The photograph of the surrender

in Dhaka remains iconic precisely because it captured a political end-state, not because India captured Dhaka. India-China war and skirmishes illustrate the same point from the opposite direction. In 1962 India lost land in Aksai Chin and parts of what was then called North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA). That territorial loss was real and we unhesitatingly call it a defeat or debacle. Yet subsequent clashes at Nathu La and Cho La in 1967 saw Indian forces hold their ground and inflict costs — land did not change hands but India called them victories. The 2020 Galwan clash was followed by a prolonged military stand-off. Subsequent disengagement arrangements created temporary buffer zones and restrictions on patrolling in some areas. From a policy perspective, this loss of territorial access is framed not as a permanent ‘loss’, but as a deliberate tactical arrangement to prevent escalation, in line with political directions. This framing, thankfully, steers clear of land-centricity and focuses on larger national interest and political directions.

A land-only ledger creates a commitment trap. It inflates the political price of any future operation: if victory equals holding ground, then every operation must involve occupation or it will be labelled incomplete. For an operation like Sindoor to be called a victory, it would have to involve the annexation or permanent occupation of territory. This would take away strategic flexibility from the national leadership. India has consistently chosen limited aims below the threshold of overall war, as the leadership is acutely aware of the dangers of getting involved in never-ending wars. A punishment strategy seeking compellence has been preferred over an outright war of annihilation. A situation may arise in which the political leadership may order the seizure of land, and this remains an option. However, it would be foolhardy to call this the ‘only’ viable option. Critics of a broader definition of victory argue that contested borders make land operations primary and that ‘boots on the ground’ remain

decisive. That is true in a limited sense: India must be able to hold its own territory, and take others’ when required; however, it does not follow that every successful use of force must produce a new line on the map. The Army Chief is right that the soldier who occupies and defends ground is indispensable. However, to turn that observation into an exclusive test making land the sole qualifier for victory renders Kargil and Op Sindoor inconsequential. Some have made the argument that to counter fake narratives, it is essential to physically capture an adversary’s land. While in a limited sense physical occupation presents an undeniable fact, it can also make a conflict harder to end. Eventually the political leadership may take that call, if considered necessary; however, that cannot be the only call available to them. Sometimes, measures such as controlling river waters can extract greater strategic benefits than holding territory. Another distressing observation was the prominence of rhetoric over reason on social media while this subject was being discussed. Some even started framing it as an Air Force versus Army fight. This is a subject that has great strategic significance for how we equip, train and fight our wars. Innuendo, name-calling and the use of half-baked arguments add no value to the discourse. National security policy must retain the freedom to choose among punishment, denial, deterrence and, when necessary, limited occupation. Binding it to a single framing captured land as the only measure of victory reduces options and raises the cost of every future crisis. India’s record shows a consistent preference in several conflicts for restoring or defending the existing line rather than redrawing it. That preference is not weakness. It is a recognition that victory is the achievement of political purpose at an acceptable cost, not the accumulation of acreage that must then be garrisoned indefinitely. Growing beyond land-centricity is not a rejection of the soldier. It is a refusal to let one metric dictate strategy.

The 6-year loophole: why regulators can’t break the foreign grip on UPI

Over the years, India’s Unified Payments Interface has moved a largely cash economy onto digital rails at a fast pace. In May this year alone, it processed 23.2 billion transactions worth close to Rs 30 lakh crore. But digital public infrastructure of this size also brings responsibility. There is a well-established idea in financial regulation that fits this situation, and we have applied it everywhere except here. It is called concentration risk. Concentration risk arises when too much depends on too few. It is not a claim that the few are badly run. It is a statement about what happens when one of them stops. In India’s payments system, this kind of risk sits in three layers, one on top of the other. First, more than eight out of every ten digital retail payments in this country now move on a single rail, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Second, that rail is designed, run and governed by a single organisation, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). Third, on that rail, two applications, PhonePe and Google Pay, carry close to four-fifths of all traffic. In May 2026, their combined share was 79 per cent, the first time it had slipped below 80 per cent.

On 5 November 2020, NPCI issued a circular capping any sin-

gle third-party app at 30 per cent of monthly UPI volume, stating that it was acting “to address the risks and protect the UPI ecosystem”. Established players exceeding the threshold were given until December 2022 to comply. That deadline has been deferred twice and now stands postponed to 31 December 2026. What has never been adequately explained is why. Consider what happens when UPI stops working. It suffered repeated outages through 2025, of which NPCI properly explained the cause of only one, on 12 April. For a salaried person, four hours without UPI is an irritation. For a pushcart vendor or an auto driver, it can mean a day’s earnings, because they have no card machine, no second app and no fall-back. Then there is fraud, where our record is worse than we admit, and where concentration can heighten systemic vulnerabilities. The government’s own answers in Parliament record 10.64 lakh UPI fraud incidents costing Rs 805 crore till November 2025, and nearly 5.86 lakh digital payment fraud cases worth Rs 3,590 crore over five years. Is there evidence that concentration itself makes this worse for consumers, rather than being merely untidy? There is, and it comes from a country

that has travelled further down this road than India. In a 2024 study, ‘FinTech Monopoly and Systemic Risk’, researchers in China argued that regulators should curb fintech dominance and encourage fair competition. Pointing to the fact that two mobile applications account for 94 per cent of China’s digital payments market, they warn of “severe risk contagion”, where trouble at one platform spreads through the wider financial system.

The cap was framed in 2020 because NPCI itself identified concentration as a risk to the ecosystem it administers. Yet with every postponement, there has been little explanation of what has changed. Does the concentration risk no longer exist? Or has it been addressed in some other way? If the 30 per cent cap is the wrong instrument, NPCI should say so plainly, retire it and open a transparent consultation with Parliament, the regulator and the industry. If it is the right instrument, it should take effect. Ten years into UPI, the Ministry of Finance should also examine whether concentration has simply shifted to the application layer, and what this means for competition, data governance, resilience and continuity.

Infosys, TCS, HCL Tech, Wipro, TechM: Weakest Q2 results

Mumbai: Ahead of the kick start of September quarter (Q2) earnings season, Jefferies expects aggregate revenues across its coverage IT firms to grow 1.7 per cent sequentially in constant currency (CC) terms, led by mid-sized IT firms, while large IT firms are seen delivering their weakest Q2 growth in three years. Jefferies said aggregate margins for IT firms may improve 30 basis points (bps) quarter on quarter (QoQ), supported by currency tailwinds. “Key focus will remain on FY27 growth guidance, demand recovery and AI commentary, with Infosys likely to cut and HCL Tech expected to narrow growth guidance,” the global investment bank said.

For Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS), Jefferies said leadership transition, an update on the second phase of BSNL and large deal wins will be key focus areas, in addition to com-

mentary on its AI strategy. For Infosys Ltd, priorities under the CEO-designate, deal wins and deal conversions will be keenly followed. HCL Technologies Ltd’s FY27 margin guidance, deal bookings and margin levers will be watched, while Wipro Ltd’s Q3 revenue growth guidance and large deal ramp-up schedule are likely to be the key focus areas for investors. For TechM, updates on margin expansion program and sustenance of growth will be eyed. LTM’s outlook on top-2 clients and progress on Randstad acquisition; Coforge’s board transition, Encora integration and executable order book; while Mphasis’ deal bookings and TCV to revenue conversion will be followed keenly.

Meanwhile Hexaware’s CEO transition, update on two GSE clients business and 2026 guidance will be watched keenly.

“While mid-sized IT firms will see higher growth (3.5 per cent QoQ CC), growth among large IT firms may remain subdued at 0.5 per cent QoQ CC, making Q2FY27 the weakest 2Q for large IT firms in the past 3 years. Among large IT firms, HCLT, TechM and Infosys will lead growth due to inorganic contributions, while Wipro (despite 60 bps inorganic contribution) will lag,” Jefferies said. Among mid-sized firms, Jefferies said Coforge with 4 per cent QoQ CC will lead on organic growth while IKS (up 71 per cent QoQ CC) will lead on overall growth due to 67 per cent inorganic contribution. For TCS, leadership transition and large deal wins will be key focus areas, in addition to the commentary on AI strategy. Infosys priorities under the CEO-designate, deal wins and deal conversions will be keenly followed.

ICICI Securities sees recovery in ER&D stocks in Q2; Tata Tech, Netweb, IKS Cyient among top picks

Mumbai: Indian engineering research and development companies are likely to report a better September quarter, with firms that have shifted towards high-growth areas expected to lead the recovery, according to ICICI Securities’ Q2FY27 preview note. Limited Middle East exposure for most players and stronger demand from the US are expected to support order books, it said. After several quarters of macroeconomic turmoil, the brokerage said the segment is ‘gaining momentum’, supported by demand in automotive, aerospace and defence, industrial and heavy machinery, rail, and off-highway vehicles. It also pointed to better pipeline visibility for the second half of FY27 than in FY26.Among the expected growth leaders, Cyient is forecast to post 4.5 per cent quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) growth in dollar revenue to about \$170 million. ICICI Securities said only 0.5 per cent of this would be

organic, with the rest coming from \$6.5 million in inorganic revenue from the partial consolidation of the Tao Digital acquisition.Aerospace is expected to maintain double-digit growth, while a semiconductor fab modernisation deal won in Q4FY26 is seen adding momentum. However, EBIT margin is expected to fall about 66 basis points to 12.5 per cent because of integration costs. Tata Technologies is expected to grow 2.7 per cent in dollar terms, or 3.2 per cent in constant currency, to around \$180 million on a strong base. It cited support from anchor clients, a deal pipeline that includes a \$100 million Tenneco deal and a Japanese OEM opportunity, and traction in its BMW-led joint venture.EBIT margin is seen rising 54 basis points to 13.8% despite wage hikes. ICICI Securities expects double-digit organic growth from the company in FY27, although Volkswagen’s slowdown may weigh on its ES-Tech revenues.

L&T Technology Services is estimated to grow 2 per cent in dollar terms to about \$316 million as the impact of the divested low-margin SWC business fades.

The brokerage pointed to traction in sustainability, improved automotive demand and the company’s engineering intelligence pivot. It also noted the recently announced \$75 million, five-year engagement with a global technology firm. EBIT margin is expected to rise 31 basis points to 16 per cent, though weak European automotive demand remains a drag. At the weaker end, Tata Elxsi Ltd is forecast to grow 0.6 per cent in dollar terms to about \$108 million as automotive OEMs remain cautious on discretionary spending and large deals are still absent. Indirect exposure to Middle East tensions may affect its luxury auto segment, while healthcare and media are expected to fare better.Margin is seen expanding 53 basis points to 19.5%, partly off-

setting a 150 basis point wage-hike impact. KPIT Technologies Ltd is expected to report a 0.7 per cent decline in dollar revenue to about \$175 million, in line with its guidance for a muted quarter.ICICI Securities said the recovery could be prolonged because of its software-heavy, software-defined-vehicle-led portfolio, which it said is vulnerable to AI-led deflation. EBIT margin is expected to remain flat at 11.4 per cent. The Caresoft acquisition is expected to help, while a possible 1 per cent revenue contraction in FY27 remains a key monitorable.ICICI Securities’ top picks in the ER&D space are Tata Technologies Ltd and Cyient Ltd, alongside IKS Health, Indegene Ltd and Netweb Technologies India Ltd in its broader coverage. It expects Tata Technologies to benefit from its aerospace pivot and focus on non-anchor clients, and Cyient from its semiconductor push and the Tao Digital deal.

PPF, SSY and SCSS rates face September 30 review; what investors should know

Small savings interest rates

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry is set to announce the interest rates for small savings schemes for the October-December 2026 quarter on Wednesday, September 30. Investors will be watching the notification for possible changes in rates of popular schemes including the Public Provident Fund (PPF), Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY) and Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS). The review comes against the backdrop of rising government bond yields. The 10-year government security yield climbed to around 7.16-7.17% on September 28, after remaining around 6.7-6.9% through much of the first half of 2026.PPF rate unchanged for 25 quartersThe PPF interest rate currently stands at 7.1% and has remained unchanged for 25 consecutive quarters. The last revision came in April 2020, when the rate was cut from 7.9% to 7.1%.Under the framework rec-



■ *The Finance Ministry is set to announce the small savings interest rates for the October-December 2026 quarter today, with investors closely watching PPF, SSY and SCSS. The review comes amid rising government bond yields and prolonged rate freezes across key small savings schemes.*

ommended by the Shyamala Gopinath Committee, PPF is benchmarked to the 10-year government security yield with a spread of 25 basis points. However, the framework is a recommendation and the government does not have to mechanically follow the formula. The SSY currently offers 8.2% per annum. The rate was last increased from 8% to 8.2% from January 1, 2024. If the government leaves it unchanged in Wednesday’s noti-

fication, the scheme will have gone through 11 consecutive quarters without a revision.The current SSY rate is broadly supported by the bond-market formula. The scheme is benchmarked to long-term government securities with a 75-basis-point spread. Recent 15-year and 30-year government securities have yielded around 7.2% and 7.55%, respectively, putting the formula-implied range at roughly 8%-8.3%.\ SCSS currently

pays 8.2% and has not seen a rate change since April 2023. Based on the five-year G-sec’s July-September average yield of around 6.5% and the prescribed 100-basis-point spread, the formula-implied rate is around 7.5%. PPF, SSY and SCSS rates are reviewed every quarter and are not permanently locked when an account is opened.The rate declared for a quarter applies to the outstanding balance. Therefore, a change in the October-December rate would also affect existing balances from that quarter.

DoorDash to create 3,000 jobs at global tech hub

Mumbai: DoorDash will create 3,000 jobs in India over the next two years through a global technology hub it opened in Hyderabad, Telangana, the state government said. The US food delivery firm’s new centre adds to the recent investments in global capability centres in the city.The Hyderabad centre will initially house teams handling customer support and general administrative functions. It will add 500 professionals in the first phase and will be DoorDash’s third customer support-based service hub globally, alongside Tempe, Arizona, and Mexico City. This hub is also DoorDash’s second tech office in India after Pune, where it operates software, data and analytics teams linked to its 2021 acquisition of robotics start-up Chowbotics.Sridhar Babu Duddilla, Minister for IT,

player in the US, with more than 65% market share, operations in over 40 countries, and more than \$100 billion in Marketplace Gross Order Value expected in 2025.

Duddilla said the Hyderabad hub is expected to scale to more than 3,000 professionals, supporting DoorDash’s global operations and serving consumers across various markets. Hyderabad will be one of only three owned DoorDash Customer Experience and Integrity hubs globally, along with Tempe and Mexico City. DoorDash joins a growing digital commerce ecosystem in Hyderabad that includes Amazon, Walmart, FedEx, which have opened offshore centres in Hyderabad recently.Companies are increasingly setting up offshore technology hubs, known as global capability centres, to reduce costs and reliance on external IT contractors. India has become the world’s largest GCC hub, with over 2,100 centres employing about 2.36 million people and generating nearly \$100 billion in revenue, according to a 2026 Nasscom-Zinnov report.

Cabinet clears ₹2.79 lakh crore package: Rabi MSP hike, PM DHARA and Delhi traffic system

Mumbai: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved three major measures spanning agriculture, renewable energy and urban transport, with the combined value of the decisions put at ₹2,79,157 crore. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the decisions after the Cabinet meeting.

The largest allocation, ₹1,86,405 crore, has been approved for PM DHARA (Developing Harmonized and Accelerated Renewable Energy Access), a programme aimed at developing and accelerating access to renewable energy. The Cabinet also cleared ₹1,790 crore for an Intelligent Traffic Management

System (ITMS) in the National Capital Territory of Delhi. Separately, the government approved the Rabi Price Policy for the 2027-28 marketing season, with an estimated payout of ₹90,962 crore to farmers. The decision covers six Rabi crops — wheat, barley, gram, lentil (masoor), rapeseed-mustard and safflower — and sets new Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) based on projected costs of production and the margin over those costs. The MSP is the government-announced minimum price at which eligible crops are procured under the applicable procurement mechanism. The latest revision comes ahead

of the Rabi sowing cycle.

For comparison, MSPs for the previous Rabi Marketing Season 2026-27 were ₹2,585 per quintal for wheat, ₹2,150 for barley, ₹5,875 for gram, ₹7,000 for masoor, ₹6,200 for rapeseed-mustard and ₹6,540 for safflower. The Cabinet presentation estimated the financial payout under the Rabi Price Policy at ₹90,962 crore. The cost estimates and margins used for the six crops form the basis of the revised MSPs.

Meanwhile, the ₹1,86,405-crore PM DHARA allocation is aimed at expanding renewable-energy access and clean-energy infra-

structure. The ₹1,790-crore ITMS project for Delhi is intended to use technology-based traffic management tools to improve monitoring and management of traffic movement across the capital.

Together, the three decisions cover farm prices, renewable energy and urban traffic management, with the Rabi MSP decision directly affecting farmers growing the six notified crops for the 2027-28 marketing season. The measures combine farmer support through MSPs with major allocations for renewable-energy development and technology-led traffic management.

‘Fungal growth, cockroaches and house flies’: FSSAI suspends Seven Seas Hospitality licence

Mumbai: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has suspended the licence of Seven Seas Hospitality with immediate effect after an inspection found a series of food safety, hygiene, and infrastructure violations at its premises.According to FSSAI, inspectors observed “poor hygiene and sanitation conditions”, including water stagnation, foul odour, filth, and inadequate housekeeping in food preparation areas. The inspection also found deteriorated food materials, including “fungal growth on tomatoes, papaya, jaggery and cashew nuts”, along with rotten capsicums and blackened and degraded cooking oil.

Serious deficiencies were also found in the storage of food. FSSAI flagged inadequate segregation of meat and vegetarian food, improper storage of meat, and condensation dripping onto food items inside



cold storage units.

The regulator said the premises had ma-

jor infrastructure and pest-control deficiencies, including refrigeration leakage,

excessive ice deposition, plaster flaking, inadequate cold storage, and poor ventilation and lighting. Inspectors also found the “presence of cockroaches and house flies” at the premises. FSSAI said non-compliance was also observed in sanitation, record maintenance, and water testing. Around 74 kg/litres of non-compliant food articles were destroyed on-site following the inspection.

The food business operator received a “compliance score of only 30%” and was classified as “Non-compliance”, according to FSSAI.

Following the findings, the regulator said the licence issued to Seven Seas Hospitality had been “suspended with immediate effect”. The company has been directed to “cease all food business activities during the suspension period.”

World’s seas heated by a record 23 zettajoules last year

Thailand: A record-breaking 23 zettajoules of heat was sunk into the world’s seas last year, leaving ocean waters hotter, higher and less hospitable, a report has found.

The explosive addition of thermal energy, which was almost 40 times greater than all the energy humanity used that year, comes amid far-reaching changes to the deep water bodies fundamental to life on Earth.

Sea levels have risen by about 3.8mm per year since 1999, and at a faster rate of 4.2mm per year between 2012 and 2025, according to the 10th edition of the Copernicus ocean state report. It found the global ocean has become 17% more acidic in the last 40 years.

Oceans have absorbed about one-third of the carbon dioxide that humanity has spewed and about 90% of the extra heat that greenhouse gas pollution has trapped in the Earth’s system.

“The ocean is transforming before our eyes,” said Pierre Bahurel, director general of Mercator Ocean International, which published the report. “Warming, rising seas and ecosystem degradation are interconnected signs of significant and long-term change.”

In Europe, which is heating twice as fast as the global average, the Mediterranean and Black Seas have been plagued by record-breaking marine heatwaves – with elevated temperatures that persist deep below the surface – and bouts of extreme heat that have lasted more than a month, the scientists found.

The scientists found a clear acceleration of sea level rise in the western Mediterranean, even as the eastern part showed uneven gains. The entire sea has warmed by 0.32C per decade, the report found, driving up marine heatwaves, particularly in the last few years.

The report comes as western Europe experiences an unusually warm September right after its ruinously fiery summer, with temperatures hitting 40C highs in parts of Spain and Portugal last week. Hot coastal waters exacerbate heatwaves on land



by adding heat during nights that would otherwise cool down. Ángel Borja, a marine ecologist at AZTI, a Basque research institute, who was not involved in the report, said the effects have already been seen for several years and will certainly increase.

“But it seems to be a problem that society tends to downplay. For example, the combined problems of rising sea levels and extreme events, which are eroding the Mediterranean coast – and yet some people insist on rebuilding in places that will undoubtedly disappear.”

The report documented extensive damage to marine life resulting from the heat. Between January 2023 and September 2025, 84% of the world’s coral reefs experienced bleaching-level heat stress. Over the past 30 years, nearly 5% of the ocean has seen a persistent shift in growth patterns of phytoplankton, tiny creatures that underpin food webs and regulate carbon flows. In the Antarctic, four emperor penguin colonies saw total breeding failures in 2022 during periods of record-low sea ice.

The findings were published alongside separate Copernicus research that found this year’s deadly cocktail of extreme heat and dirty air subjected more than one-third of humanity to dangerous levels of ground-level ozone pollution.

The phenomenon, known as the “ozone-climate penalty”, is the result of chemical changes that occur when certain pollutants are exposed to heat and sunlight. In the first eight months of 2026, the report found, just 5% of the world’s population has been exposed to “good” levels of ozone that fall within the World Health Organization’s guidelines.

Florian Pappenberger, director-general of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, which conducted the analysis, said the findings show that “air pollution knows no border”.

“Wildfire smoke, ozone and dust can travel thousands of kilometres, affecting communities far from their source,” he said. “As the international community prepares for Cop31, these findings are a timely reminder that climate change, air quality and public health are deeply interconnected challenges that require coordinated global action.”

John Oliver on Brazil’s Flávio Bolsonaro: ‘Fearmongering and flagrant daddy issues’

Brazil: On the latest Last Week Tonight, John Oliver looked ahead to Sunday’s major election in Brazil, where 160 million people will vote to determine the country’s president, as well as state governors, two-thirds of the senate and every member of the lower house.

“Yet again, Brazil finds itself having to choose between Lula and a guy named Bolsonaro for president, and many do not seem thrilled that those are their main choices,” the host explained of the two candidates for president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, known as Lula, and Flávio Bolsonaro, the son of the disgraced former rightwing president Jair Bolsonaro.

All signs are pointing toward an extremely close race, “which is worrying, because that means the world’s fourth-largest democracy and the home to, not insignificantly, the rainforest that is key to meeting the world’s climate goals, could yet again be run by a dangerous dipshit named Bolsonaro,” said Oliver.

The host then traced how we got to this moment, after Lula defeated Jair Bolsonaro by two percentage points in 2022, the smallest margin for a Brazilian presidential election since the fall of the military dictatorship in 1985. Bolsonaro fled to Florida, but months later, violent rioters clashed with police as they vandalized government buildings, claiming Bolsonaro did not actually lose the election. “It turns out history doesn’t repeat itself,” said Oliver over footage of January 6, 2021 in the US, “but sometimes, it does get dubbed in Portuguese.”

After collecting significant evidence that he was planning to stage a military coup, Bolsonaro was convicted and sentenced to 27 years and three months in prison, and barred from ever running for president again. He was released from prison after four months, however, to serve the remainder of his sentence on “humanitarian house arrest”, owing to his failing health.

“If you’re seeing a lot of parallels to Trump here – an authoritarian leader who lost an election, only to then go sulk in Florida and plot his revenge – you’re not alone in that,” said Oliver.

“Trump clearly sees a reflection of his own experiences in all this, and during Bolsonaro’s trial, he even seemed to try to sway the outcome.”

Trump called the trial “a witch-hunt that should end immediately” as he threatened Brazil with 50% tariffs. “Of course he called it that!” said Oliver. “Trump overuses the term ‘witch-hunt’ the way the internet overuses the word ‘iconic.’”

Trump’s attempted meddling in Brazilian affairs may backfire; Lula has seen a boost in popularity whenever he denounces Trump’s tariffs as infringements on Brazilian sovereignty. “And to be honest, he could do with the help,” said Oliver. “Because if Bolsonaro is reminiscent of Trump, Lula can unfortunately be pretty reminiscent of Joe Biden, and not just because they both have big ‘I have a Werther’s original in my pocket’ energy.” Like Biden, Lula is a career politician who has generally governed as a center-left pragmatist, prioritizing social programs and supporting oil drilling in the Amazon while still attempting to curb deforestation.

The 80-year-old has also combatted concerns about his age via a steady stream of workout videos posted to social media. “I think I speak for everyone when I say that that is truly inspiring,” said Oliver. “Specifically, it has inspired me to stay the fuck off of Instagram, so I don’t risk witnessing an 80-year-old with his pits out filming geriatric thirst traps.”

“The problem for Lula is that many voters see him as an establishment candidate,” he added, and even though unemployment in Brazil is currently at its lowest level since 2012, affordability remains a major concern.

He also faces a candidate half his age in Flávio Bolsonaro, who has tried to paint himself as a newer, “vaccinated” version of his father without some of the baggage. But Flávio shares many characteristics with his father, whom he has invoked at his rallies via AI-generated videos skirting around rules that Jair Bolsonaro not address the public. Like his father, Flávio has a history of homophobic statements and a

pendant for defending Brazil’s military dictatorship, which killed and tortured its political rivals. He has also aligned himself with rightwing world leaders such as Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu and Argentina’s Javier Milei.

“But maybe the biggest similarity between Flávio and his dad concerns their rich history of being connected to scandals,” said Oliver, turning to the huge scandal around shady financing for a movie called Dark Horse. The English-language movie starring Jim Caviezel paints Jair Bolsonaro as the victim of a conspiracy of elites, and is now at the center of a corruption scandal after documents revealed that Flávio received 61m reais (\$12m) from a disgraced banker to finance the less than expensive-looking film.

“This suspiciously expensive movie was pretty clearly designed to reset Jair Bolsonaro’s image among Brazilians and in doing so, boost Flávio’s campaign,” Oliver explained. “Which is what makes it so funny that amid all of the controversy, the film’s distributor decided to postpone the release until after the election. So Flávio’s not going to get any of the propaganda benefits of Dark Horse, but he’s still having to deal with the scandal surrounding its financing,” which has become a major headline in Brazil.

But Flávio Bolsonaro still has a very real chance of winning the election, which is “not good”, said Oliver, noting that the son has already promised to pardon the father if elected. “There is clearly a lot at stake in Brazil right now,” he continued, “and I’m not just saying that because I’m not a big fan of the Bolsonaros, which is about as much of an understatement as me saying ‘the movie Dark Horse probably won’t win an Oscar.’”

Oliver conceded that “the only thing more annoying than me ending a story telling you to go vote is telling you to go vote if you’re in Brazil,” where voting is mandatory. “So all I’ll say is that hopefully next Sunday, Lula’s message of defiance and gym lunges will end up gaining a lot more traction than Flávio’s fearmongering and flagrant daddy issues.”

Texts about alleged Cornell gang-rape released after investigation reopened



New York: Excerpts of text messages reportedly exchanged by a defendant in the Cornell University gang-rape case and the woman who claims she was assaulted were published by CBS News on Tuesday, a day after New York prosecutors said they were reopening a criminal investigation.

The texts were reportedly sent within days of the alleged October 2024 assault at a campus fraternity house in which a female student said she was drugged and repeatedly raped over the course of seven hours by multiple men who were alerted to her presence on the social media platform Snapchat.

Taken together, the texts seem to highlight the complications that have often presented themselves in investigations centering on rape on college campuses in the US.

In one of the messages, screenshots of which were obtained by CBS New York, the unnamed male defendant appears to apologize to the woman for “how things went down” – and said his memory of events two nights previously was “kinda fuzzy”.

He said he and another male who was present regretted that they were too intoxicated to “shut it down and kick people out before it got way out of hand”.

In reply, the woman, who was 20 at the time of the alleged assault, and has since left Cornell, said her memory was “super clouded too” and that they were all intoxicated.

None were ever arrested or charged, and outrage over the treatment of the alleged offenders grew when the woman’s lawsuit was made public. On Monday, Matthew Van Houten, the Tompkins county, New York, district attorney – whose office’s jurisdiction includes Cornell – said he had reopened the dormant investigation into the case. He said his office did that in light of allegations that he said were “dramatically different” from those originally made by the alleged victim.

He also issued a statement defending his initial decision not to seek charges.

“Jane Doe’s sworn statement in November of 2024 did not allege that she was drugged against her will or gang raped,” Van Houten said.

“On the contrary, [her] statement described her participation in drug use and sexual conduct as voluntary, conscious, and consensual. My office obviously did not and could not have based our November 2024 decision on the allegations in a civil lawsuit that would not be filed until nearly two years later.”

CBS, meanwhile, also claimed to have a video of Snapchat messages exchanged on the night of the alleged assault by numerous members of a group called Chi Phi Actives. One of the messages, sent while the woman was in the since-closed fraternity house, allegedly stated there was “free pussy upstairs”.

According to CBS, a later message sent by a group member asked: “Shop still open?” The response was, “Yea”.

Attorney Thomas Giuffra, who represents the woman, confirmed to CBS that his client – named Jane Doe in court documents – exchanged text messages with one defendant after the alleged assault. But Giuffra said he could not be certain the screenshots that CBS News saw were authentic.

Giuffra, according to CBS, said Doe was in denial and traumatized afterwards, had been intoxicated to the point of incapacity that night, and was trying to find out what happened.

He said she felt as if she would not take an aggressive tone with this particular defendant if she wanted answers.

Further details released on Monday by Van Houten included a summary of a “six-page, single-spaced, typewritten statement” that the woman gave Cornell University police after she reported the assault three weeks after it was alleged to have taken place.

In it, she admits she was initially willing to have sex with two of the Chi Phi members – before the others showed up and joined in. She said she was plied with alcohol, marijuana and ketamine, was “slapped” multiple times, and said her “phone was on the other side of the room and she felt as if there was no way for her to escape this room full of predatory, fraternity men”.

Two of the defendants, Kretzschmar and Norris, denied their involvement in statements to ABC News, either directly or through lawyers. TMZ reported on Tuesday that a third defendant, Sarabia, had been fired from his job with Wells Fargo. The bank did not return a request for comment.

Why is South Korea so angry with Ukraine over two North Korean prisoners of war?

Ukraine: South Korea and Ukraine are locked in an escalating diplomatic dispute over who agreed with whom to release the circumstances of two prisoners of war captured fighting for Russia.

Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, told the UN general assembly last week that his country had “sent two North Korean prisoners of war to the Republic of Korea”.

Seoul had long said it would take the men. But rather than celebrate, on Monday South Korea summoned Ukraine’s most senior diplomat in Seoul and demanded an apology.

Here’s a brief guide to what

has happened, and why.

Who are the PoWs and what has happened to them?

Ukrainian forces captured the two men in Russia’s Kursk region in January 2025. They were among thousands of troops Pyongyang sent to fight for Moscow. Both men later said they wanted to go to South Korea, which regards North Koreans as its own citizens.

In July, Zelenskyy and South Korea’s president, Lee Jae Myung, agreed to resolve the issue while respecting the soldiers’ “free will”. The captured pair reportedly arrived in South Korea via a third country earlier this month.

North Koreans arriving in the South as defectors are usually questioned by the National Intelligence Service before being sent to a state resettlement centre, although sensitive cases can reportedly bypass the centre.

Why is Seoul so angry?

Seoul says Kyiv requested secrecy about the transfer, fearing domestic criticism for passing up the opportunity to exchange them for “a large number” of Ukrainian prisoners.

South Korea says it agreed, citing the safety of the two men and their families as well as diplomatic and security considerations.

After Zelenskyy revealed the transfer in his UN speech, Lee said on X that Ukraine had broken a “non-disclosure agreement” and that this was regrettable. Zelenskyy’s adviser Dmytro Lytvyn responded on Facebook that there had been no such agreement, prompting accusations from Lee’s critics that the president, whose approval rating has hit a low of 37.9%, had lied.

Lee’s office called Kyiv’s statement “false” and said its conduct “seriously damages trust” between the two governments. On Monday, the foreign ministry summoned Ukraine’s chargé d’affaires, demanding an apology at governmental level.

Was there actually an agreement?

South Korea’s foreign ministry told Ukraine’s envoy there had been a “clear agreement”.

Asked by the Guardian the same day whether anything had been put in writing, the ministry said only that the two sides “had decided to handle it confidentially”. Ukraine’s embassy in Seoul did not respond to a request for comment.

Has North Korea said anything?

No. South Korea’s unification ministry said it had “not identified any related developments so far” and would continue monitoring.

8 Compact Plant Species to Enhance Your Workspace and Window Ledge



Residing in confined metropolitan dwellings or possessing restricted outdoor terrace areas need not necessitate the abandonment of botanical ornamentation. Numerous houseplants and succulent varieties demonstrate a marked preference for constrained environments, flourishing optimally within diminutive containers measuring three to six inches in diameter. Compact containerization mitigates the likelihood of excessive irrigation and rhizosphere deterioration while simultaneously enhancing the aesthetic appeal of window ledges, professional workspaces, and narrow storage surfaces.

Jade plants are exceptionally resilient and charming succulents that have captured the hearts of plant enthusiasts worldwide, largely due to their remarkable ability to store moisture within their fleshy, thick, oval leaves. This natural adaptation allows them to thrive with very little attention, making them wonderfully forgiving houseguests

for both novice gardeners and busy professionals alike. Because they require only minimal watering—preferring to let their soil dry out completely between waterings—they eliminate the stress often associated with high-maintenance indoor foliage. Preferring bright, sunny windowsills where they can soak up ample natural light, these compact plants bring a touch of vibrant, enduring green to tabletops, office desks, and windowsills without demanding excessive space. Their slow-growing nature and sturdy woody stems allow them to adapt effortlessly to small decorative pots, where they can steadily mature into miniature tree-like forms over the years. Beyond their aesthetic appeal and effortless care routine, jade plants are frequently celebrated as symbols of good luck, prosperity, and positive energy in many cultures, transforming any cozy indoor corner into a peaceful, thriving green sanctuary.

Snake plants, scientifi-

cally known as Sansevieria or Dracaena trifasciata, are celebrated worldwide as the ultimate resilient houseplants, making them a staple choice for homes, offices, and low-light apartments alike. Featuring striking, architectural upright leaves that grow in tight, vertical clusters, these remarkable plants naturally tolerate cramped pots exceptionally well, often thriving even when they are thoroughly root-bound. Beyond their undeniable aesthetic appeal with their sleek, sword-like foliage, snake plants are renowned as highly efficient indoor air purifiers, actively filtering out common household toxins and releasing fresh oxygen—sometimes even continuing the process at night. Their legendary toughness stems from their drought-tolerant succulent nature; requiring only infrequent watering and easily adapting to dimly lit corners or neglected office spaces, they are famously regarded as almost impossible to kill. This combination of effortless

upkeep, striking structural beauty, and air-cleaning prowess makes them the ideal companion for anyone seeking a touch of enduring, maintenance-free greenery indoors.

Peperomia plants possess shallow root systems specifically suited for miniature containers. Their thick, textured foliage holds moisture well, making them resistant to underwatering while taking up very little space on desks or shelves.

Mini Syngonium offers vibrant arrowhead-shaped foliage without overflowing its container. Feeding this compact indoor plant monthly keeps its leaves dense, making it an ideal decorative choice for small office desks and coffee tables.

Spider plant pups root rapidly when potted into tiny containers. These adaptable, air-cleaning plants thrive in indirect light and visually signal their watering needs when their light green leaves fade slightly.

Haworthia succulents grow at a very slow pace, retaining a small footprint for years. Their shallow roots require minimal soil, meaning they stay comfortable in tiny clay pots where overwatering is the only real hazard.

Fittonia nerve plants feature striking veined leaves that bring bright color into small rooms. Because they prefer consistent soil moisture, placing them in tiny self-watering pots keeps their delicate root systems perfectly hydrated.

Dwarf Peace Lilies bloom reliably even when root-bound in smaller planters. They act as natural air purifiers, gently drooping when thirsty and bouncing back quickly after receiving filtered, room-temperature water.

Five Things to Avoid in Your Mandir

Vastu Shastra serves as an ancient and profound architectural science that fundamentally governs the flow of subtle energies within a living space, wherein the domestic temple or puja room acts as the vital spiritual heart and primary conduit for divine, beneficial vibrations. According to Neeraj, an esteemed Ayodhya-based astrological practitioner, maintaining absolute sanctity and energetic harmony around this sacred altar is of paramount importance, as the inadvertent placement of unsuitable, broken, or deteriorated objects in its immediate proximity can severely disrupt the delicate energetic balance, precipitate severe vastu dosha, and consequently invite stagnant adverse energies, lingering domestic discord, and persistent economic difficulties. To safeguard the spiritual purity and financial prosperity of your household, ancient traditions and expert insights advise that the following five items—ranging from cracked idols and old, expired ritual offerings to clutter and non-sacred possessions—must be strictly excluded from your puja room to ensure that positive blessings and divine grace flow unhindered through your home.

Every corner of a house carries specific energy, and the home temple serves as the primary hub for positive vibrations. Astrologer Neeraj emphasizes that even minor Vastu oversights in the puja area can negatively impact mental peace and family stability.

Keeping broken or chipped idols in the puja room creates severe vastu dosha. Damaged deities should be immediately immersed in water or placed near a sacred tree to maintain spiritual purity and prevent negative energy accumulation. In the practice of Vastu Shastra, the home temple is designated as a sanctuary of pure tranquility, love, and spiritual alignment, meaning that the introduction of sharp items such as scissors, utility knives, or any pointed metal objects is strictly discouraged and should never be stored inside or anywhere near the sacred altar. Vastu experts and traditional practitioners consistently warn that the aggressive, cutting energetic profile of sharp objects fundamentally disturbs the peaceful,



soothing vibrations required for prayer and meditation, inadvertently acting as a magnet for negative energy and fostering unnecessary tension. By intentionally keeping such tools far away from your domestic place of worship, you actively protect the emotional well-being of your household, prevent domestic friction, and ensure that your living space remains a harmonious haven of positive energy and familial peace. The sacred shankh (conch shell) holds a position of profound reverence as an auspicious symbol closely associated with Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Vishnu, believed to disperse negativity and radiate powerful, divine positive energy whenever it is ceremoniously blown. However, despite its immense spiritual significance, traditional Vastu guidelines advise against keeping more than one conch shell in the exact same puja room, as ancient spatial wisdom cautions that multiple conch shells can create conflicting sound frequencies and energetic imbalances within the sacred altar space. By honoring this delicate balance and limiting your altar to a single, well-maintained shankh, you can preserve the harmonious flow of devotional vibrations, respect traditional architectural principles, and maintain a tranquil, energetically aligned sanctuary for your daily prayers and spiritual practices. Storing

dirty dusters or soiled cleaning cloths near the temple offends divine energies and generates financial distress. Always use dedicated, clean cloths specifically reserved for wiping deity idols and maintaining temple hygiene.

Vastu Shastra lays down traditional guidelines for different areas of a home, including the worship space. Keeping unsuitable objects near the temple may create an unfavourable environment and affect the overall atmosphere of the house. At the heart of every mindful home lies the domestic temple, and the overarching key takeaway from ancient spatial traditions is to maintain this sacred space in a state of pristine cleanliness, thoughtful organization, and absolute energetic clarity. According to traditional Vastu beliefs, preserving this purity requires keeping the altar strictly free from damaged or broken idols, sharp objects that disrupt peaceful energies, multiple conch shells that can create energetic friction, and any soiled or dirty clothes. While these meticulous recommendations are deeply rooted in age-old cultural customs, traditional wisdom, and spiritual symbolism rather than empirical scientific facts, millions of households continue to observe them as a meaningful way to foster mindfulness, reverence, and a profound sense of inner peace within their living environments.

Fresh Juice at Home with Juicer Machines

Incorporating a freshly prepared glass of vibrant juice into your daily morning schedule can be a remarkably simple and health-boosting habit when you are equipped with the appropriate kitchen appliance, yet selecting the optimal juicer requires careful, deliberate consideration of your specific dietary preferences and intended use. The ideal machine for your countertop depends heavily on the type of produce you plan to process most frequently; for instance, an individual whose primary goal is extracting fresh, citrusy orange or mosambi juice will require substantially different equipment—such as a simple electric citrus reamer—compared to someone seeking a versatile masticating or centrifugal machine capable of effortlessly breaking down dense apples, fibrous carrots, leafy greens, and various other hard produce items. By understanding these mechanical distinctions and matching them to your personal lifestyle, you can invest in a durable, efficient appliance that seamlessly turns wholesome fruits and vegetables into delicious daily refreshment.

Embracing a healthier lifestyle by incorporating freshly made juices into your daily routine does not require a hefty financial investment, as the modern kitchen appliance market offers a wide array of versatile, highly efficient choices priced comfortably below ₹2,500. Whether you are looking for simple, hand-operated citrus presses that make quick work of morning oranges, sturdy manual juicers designed for effortless extraction, fast-paced centrifugal machines that handle everyday fruits and vegetables with ease, or convenient portable rechargeable blenders ideal for smoothies on the go, there are plenty of budget-friendly solutions available. By exploring these cost-effective alternatives, you can easily find a reliable appliance that fits your specific countertop needs and financial comfort zone without ever compromising on quality, freshness, or convenience. When your daily juicing routine revolves primarily around extracting vibrant, refreshing citrus beverages such as orange, mosambi, or lemon, investing in a specialized appliance like the Philips HD2799/00 Citrus Press Juicer proves to be a significantly smarter, more streamlined choice than purchasing a bulky, complicated multipurpose machine. Designed specifically for effortless citrus extraction, this compact yet capable appliance features a generous 1-litre capacity container that is exceptionally handy when you are preparing fresh, vitamin-rich juice for multiple family members or guests all at once. By cutting down on unnecessary attachments and focusing entirely on fast, clean, and efficient citrus juicing, it simplifies your morning routine, saves valuable countertop space, and ensures you can enjoy a delicious glass of homemade juice with absolute ease and minimal cleanup. This appliance is ideally suited for anyone who wants a quick glass of fresh citrus juice without the hassle of complicated assembly or tedious cleanup routines, making it a fantastic addition to daily morning breakfast routines. However, it is essential to keep in mind that its specialized mechanical design is strictly optimized as a citrus press, meaning it lacks the heavy-duty grinding power or high-speed centrifugal blades required to handle hard produce. Consequently, this is definitely not the right machine if your goal is to juice harder fruits and vegetables like carrots, crisp apples, or earthy beetroot, which demand a more robust masticating or centrifugal juicer. BTC India HPJ Aluminium Hand Press Juicer: If you'd rather avoid another electrical appliance on the kitchen counter, this heavy-duty hand press is worth considering. The long lever lets you extract juice manually, making it particu-



larly useful for citrus fruits and pomegranates.

It suits someone who doesn't mind putting in a little effort in exchange for a simple machine without motors, charging or complicated controls. For several glasses every morning, however, an electric juicer will be more convenient. Qlect Portable Blender Juicer: The Qlect is better suited to someone who wants smoothies and fruit blends rather than traditional extracted juice. Its compact rechargeable design makes it convenient for preparing a single drink without getting out a full-sized appliance.

It's also a useful option for the office or travel because you aren't tied to a power socket while using it. But because it blends the fruit rather than separating the juice from the pulp, don't buy this expecting the same result as a centrifugal or citrus juicer. Amazon Basics 450W Centrifugal Juicer: If you don't want to restrict yourself to oranges and mosambi, the Amazon Basics model is the most versatile conventional juicer in this selection. The 450W centrifugal system is designed for a broader range of fruits and vegetables, making it better suited to households that like changing their juice combinations. A centrifugal machine is the ideal choice if your morning juice rotation changes frequently, allowing you to easily switch between hard produce like apples, carrots, or beetroot one day and soft fruits the next. The primary trade-off to keep in mind is that high-speed extraction requires more detachable components—such as the mesh filter and pulp container—which take slightly longer to wash than a simple citrus press. Turelar Portable Juicer Blender: The Turelar is another option for someone who values portability over conventional juice extraction. Its rechargeable bottle-style format works particularly well for quick smoothies, shakes and fruit blends for one person. This compact design makes absolute sense for students in hostel rooms, busy office-goers, or anyone living in a cozy apartment who simply does not want a bulky, full-sized appliance taking up valuable kitchen counter space. However, much like the Qlect or similar compact gadgets, it is essentially a portable blender at its core rather than a traditional juice extractor, meaning that all the wholesome pulp, skin particles, and dietary fibre remain thoroughly blended right into your drink rather than being cleanly separated. While this design choice preserves all the beneficial fiber and creates a thick, smoothie-like consistency, it is an important characteristic to keep in mind for those who specifically prefer a smooth, pulp-free liquid texture in their daily beverages.

Don't Neglect Your Neck: Why Neck and Throat Care Matters

Cleansing, toning and moisturising are often treated as essential steps in a facial skincare routine. But skincare should not stop at the jawline. The neck and throat also need regular attention, as the skin in these areas is relatively thin and can be more prone to dryness, fine lines and visible signs of ageing. Beauty experts often point out that neglecting the neck can create a noticeable contrast between the face and the rest of the upper body. Extending a basic skincare routine to the neck can therefore be an important part of maintaining healthy-looking skin.

Why Does Neck and Throat Care Matter?

Long hours spent looking down at a mobile phone, tablet or laptop can contribute to repeated folding of the skin around the neck. Over time, these repeated movements may make existing lines more noticeable. Sun exposure is another important concern. People often remember to apply sunscreen to the face but forget the neck and upper chest. This can leave these areas exposed to ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which can contribute to pigmentation and premature skin ageing. Regular moisturisation can help maintain the skin barrier and prevent excessive dryness. Gentle neck movements and regular breaks from prolonged sitting can also help reduce stiffness associated with maintaining the same posture for

long periods. Simple Ways to Care for the Neck

Cleanse gently: When washing the face, extend the cleanser to the neck and the area around it. Avoid vigorous rubbing, particularly if the skin is sensitive.

Moisturise regularly: Apply your usual moisturiser to the neck as well as the face. The shoulders and upper chest can also be included in the routine when they are exposed. Never skip sunscreen: Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen to the neck and other exposed areas along with the face. Reapply when necessary, particularly during prolonged outdoor exposure.

Choose skincare products carefully: If you use anti-ageing products or serums, check whether they are suitable for use on the neck. The skin here can be sensitive, so introduce active ingredients gradually and stop if irritation develops.

Be cautious with scrubs: Experiencing darkening or rough patches on the neck can be concerning, but it is important to understand that these skin changes should never be automatically treated with aggressive or vigorous scrubbing in an attempt to wash them away. In fact, excessive or harsh physical exfoliation can severely irritate the delicate skin of the neck—which is thinner and more sensitive than the skin on other parts of the body—and the resulting inflammation frequently triggers a defensive response that

actually worsens hyperpigmentation. If you do choose to incorporate exfoliation into your neck care routine to help manage texture or tone, it is vital to select a very gentle chemical or mild physical product and use it sparingly, ensuring you avoid overdoing it so your skin barrier remains healthy, calm, and protected.

Lifestyle Habits Can Also Help

Maintain good posture: Keep your phone or computer screen closer to eye level so that you do not have to constantly bend your neck. Sit with your back supported and take regular breaks from prolonged screen use.

Try gentle movement: Slow neck movements, stretching and appropriate yoga exercises can help maintain flexibility and reduce stiffness. Movements should be gentle and pain-free; avoid forceful neck rotation.

Massage gently: Incorporating a light, mindful facial massage while applying your daily moisturizer can profoundly transform your standard skincare regimen into a deeply relaxing, spa-like ritual that relieves the accumulated tension of the day while simultaneously boosting your mental well-being. To maximize both the sensory pleasure and the structural benefits of this practice, it is crucial to employ gentle, deliberate upward or outward strokes using your fingertips rather than aggressively pulling, rubbing,

or stretching the delicate skin, as proper technique prevents premature sagging and encourages lymphatic drainage. This soothing application method not only enhances the overall blood circulation to your facial tissues—leaving you with a natural, healthy flush—but it also helps to optimize the absorption of your skincare products, ensuring that the nourishing hydration penetrates deeply and effectively to maintain a plump, glowing complexion.

Follow a balanced diet: A wholesome, nutrient-dense diet rich in vibrant vegetables, fresh fruits, crunchy nuts, and wholesome seeds plays an exceptionally vital role in nurturing overall skin health from the inside out, providing the fundamental building blocks necessary for a radiant, resilient complexion. Specifically incorporating ingredients like flaxseeds and crunchy walnuts into your daily meals offers a fantastic, plant-based source of essential healthy fats—such as omega-3 fatty acids—alongside a rich array of antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals that actively combat inflammation and support cellular repair. When these nutrient-packed foods are thoughtfully combined as part of a well-balanced, mindful dietary pattern, they not only nourish your body's vital internal systems but also visibly enhance your skin's natural moisture barrier, elasticity, and youthful glow over time.

ENTERTAINMENT

Starstruck Lilly Singh has a major fangirl moment experiencing Shreya Ghoshal live



Mumbai : Actor-comedian and You-Tuber Lilly Singh recently attended Shreya Ghoshal’s ‘The Unstoppable’ concert in Los Angeles, and she had a fangirl moment as she met the singer. Sharing glimpses and videos from her meeting with Shreya at the concert, she revealed that it was a full-circle moment for the little girl who grew up loving Hindi cinema.

Lilly Singh first shared a video from the concert showing her sharing a warm hug with Shreya Ghoshal. Shreya then introduced her to the crowd, saying, “I am so blessed, Lilly Singh in the house, everyone,” before singing ‘Lag

Jaa Gale’, as Lilly watched on, visibly starstruck. She also shared a backstage photo with Shreya, where Lilly posed with her hands folded while the singer smiled beside her. Another video captured Lilly having the time of her life as the packed crowd sang Om Shanti Om along with Shreya. The final clip perfectly summed up the experience, showing Lilly’s completely starstruck reaction after meeting the singer she has admired for years.

In her caption, Lilly Singh wrote, “A magical moment with @shreyaghoshal Swipe to the last slide to see my actual reaction. Moments like this make little

Lilly so proud. Hindi cinema was such a fundamental part of my upbringing (why I always CRUSH in the family Antakshari), and I will truly die on the hill that voices like Shreya’s are simply UNMATCHED.” She further added, “This woman sang for THREE HOURS and somehow sounded like an actual angel the entire time. Pitch perfect. Effortless. The type of voice where you’re sitting there thinking... how is that sound coming out of a human being?!” And a stadium full of people singing Om Shanti Om together healed something in me I didn’t even know needed healing. To top it off, my heart exploded when Shreya said she’s so excited for my YouTube relaunch.”

Lilly Singh ended her post on a deeply personal note, reflecting on why moments like this matter. “This is why we hustle, y’all. This is why we chase our dreams. For magical little moments where the younger versions of ourselves get to live their absolute best lives. I’m so grateful. Thank you Shreya Ji for the love, the hospitality, the shoutout, and for giving little Lilly a moment she’ll never forget,” she concluded.

Kareena Kapoor Khan and Mira Kapoor’s latest interaction viral online

Mumbai : Mira Kapoor is set to appear on Kareena Kapoor Khan’s talk show What Women Want, and the internet is already having a moment over it. After wrapping the shoot, Mira took to Instagram to share pictures from the sets, and the caption she wrote was as heartfelt as the collaboration itself.

“What women want is to be themselves. Thank you @kareenakapoorkhan for being there for me and being the woman you are,” Mira wrote. Kareena didn’t take long to respond, commenting simply, “So glad you came, awesome.” Kareena also shared her own tribute on her Instagram story, posting a picture with Mira and writing, “Absolutely warm and lovely Mira on the show today.” Mira reshared the



story with her own line, “Couldn’t be in better company. With the beautiful Kareena Kapoor Khan.”

The exchange went viral almost instantly, with fans flooding comments sections expressing excitement over seeing the two

women share screen space, many admitting it wasn’t a pairing they saw coming. Given the history between their families, and specifically between Kareena and Mira’s husband Shahid Kapoor, who dated for about four years before Shahid

married Mira in 2015, the collaboration has understandably piqued curiosity. Kareena and Shahid were once one of Bollywood’s most talked-about couples, later remembered fondly for their on-screen chemistry in films like Jab We Met.

What Women Want has always leaned into candid, personal conversations, with Kareena previously hosting guests across topics ranging from motherhood to financial independence. Mira’s episode, going by the warmth on display already, looks set to continue that tradition, minus any awkwardness fans may have expected given the shared history. Sometimes the best television moments come from the pairings nobody predicted.

Sreeleela begins shooting for Rajinikanth’s highly anticipated film Dharman



Chennai : The already-ensemble cast of Rajinikanth-starrer Dharman has just gotten bigger! Apart from the superstar, the action thriller features Ram Pothineni and Raashii Khanna in significant roles. Sreeleela happens to be the latest addition to the film’s cast. The actress has reportedly joined the film’s shoot in Mysuru on Wednesday.

Sreeleela has established herself as one of the fastest-rising stars in South cinema. Known for her gracious dance moves and infectious screen presence, she had taken it easy lately when it came

to signing films. However, the actress seems to be back in the reckoning with back-to-back Tamil films. After signing Dhanush’s OM, she has bagged the Rajinikanth-starrer Dharman. The actress has rapidly built an impressive filmography by starring alongside several superstars in Tollywood. By signing Hindi films, she has transformed from a regional talent into one of the most talked-about young starlets. Her youthful appeal stems from her vibrant screen presence, exceptional dance skills and relatable charm.

The director of Dharman is

believed to have felt that her casting in the film would add a layer of spunk and instantly connect with Gen Z and millennials. A source close to the production house informs, “When Sreeleela was approached to be part of a Rajinikanth-starrer, she didn’t think much before coming on board. The actress felt it was an opportunity that she couldn’t resist.” Directed by Ashwath Marimuthu and produced by Kamal Haasan, Dharman is one of the most-awaited films. Ashwath has described the film as a blend of the larger-than-life,

high-attitude commercial appeal of Padayappa and the investigative edge of Vettaiyaadu Vilayaadu.

The first-look poster depicts Rajinikanth in blue medical scrubs, holding a bloody scalpel over a defeated rowdy and presenting a ‘deadly doctor’ persona. The superstar’s role as a senior medical faculty member and a doctor who takes on criminals has garnered significant attention. According to sources, Dharman features an intense face-off and a family-oriented conflict involving a father-in-law and son-in-law dynamic.

Uditi Singh discusses her breakup with Karan Wahi on Bigg Boss 20

Mumbai : Actor Uditi Singh, who is currently seen as a contestant on ‘Bigg Boss 20’, has opened up about her past relationship with actor Karan Wahi, revealing how their breakup changed her life and career.

During a conversation with fellow contestant Scout, Uditi called the separation a “blessing in disguise” and spoke about the differences that led to their relationship ending. In the latest episode, Uditi spoke about her relationship with Karan and recalled how their differences became more noticeable during the COVID-19 lockdown. Speaking about how the breakup changed her life, Uditi told Scout, “Mere live the breakup was really a blessing in disguise. Kyunki meri puri career, meri puri life, sab kuch badal gaya (Because my whole career and my life changed after that).” She also recalled how adopting a pet during the lockdown led to disagreements between them. According to Uditi, their different habits and approaches towards cleanliness often resulted in arguments.

Recalling how her former partner would discourage her, Uditi said, “Humne



lockdown mein na saath mein pet liya, a golden retriever. Usko leke bohot la-daiyaan start hui. Covid bhi tah toh safai ka hum dono ka bada woh tha... Mere tareeke alag safai ke, uske alag.” “Phir woh thoda dominant bhi tha usme... apko nahi aata. Kyunki age gap tha toh har cheez mereko ye bolte thhe ki, ‘Aap nahi kar payoge,’ and ‘Aapko nahi aata!’ Partner hi demotivate kar raha hai. Stars nahi milte toh har baat pe ladaai hota hai,” she said.

In an earlier episode, Uditi had recalled how the two first met through Instagram. She had sent Karan a direct message asking about

a restaurant in London, following which they decided to meet. Karan was in London for three days, and the two spent time shopping and talking with his friends. Their friendship eventually turned into a relationship after two months. Karan and Uditi were reportedly in a relationship for more than two years before parting ways in 2022. Karan Wahi is currently competing in ‘Khatron Ke Khiladi 15’. He is known for his roles in television shows such as ‘Remix’, ‘Dill Mill Gayye’, ‘Kuch Toh Log Kahenge’, ‘Khatron Ke Khiladi’ and ‘Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa’. He also appeared as a guest on ‘Bigg Boss 13’.

Rupali Ganguly breaks down recalling hardships

Mumbai : Anupamaa actress Rupali Ganguly is one of the most popular faces on television today, but her journey to success has come with its fair share of struggles and setbacks. At FICCI Frames 2026, she opened up about her family’s difficult financial phase. She recalled her late father Anil Ganguly’s dream of owning a home in Mumbai and the struggles she faced before finding success on television.

Rupali Ganguly had an emotional moment at FICCI Frames 2026 on Wednesday as she spoke about a personal chapter of her life. Rupali recalled that filmmaking was very different when her father was working in the industry. She said that filmmakers who worked outside the corporate system sometimes had to sell their homes to finance their movies. “My father was a filmmaker. In those times, those who were not into corporate filmmaking business, they sold homes and made films. There was a point when we lost it all,” she said.

“My father’s only dream was to make a house in Mumbai,” Rupali recalled, becoming emotional. Rupali also addressed the perception that she had an easy start because she was the daughter of a well-known filmmaker. Anupamaa producer Rajan Shahi, who was also at the event, offered another glimpse into Rupali’s journey. He recalled working with her early in their professional association and revealed that she had auditioned three times for their first show together before he finally gave her a chance.

Parineeti Chopra recalls Sushant Singh Rajput’s emotional reaction to her national award

Mumbai : Parineeti Chopra has opened up about her special bond with her late Shuddh Desi Romance co-star Sushant Singh Rajput. Recalling his reaction to her National Award recognition, the actress said Sushant was among her biggest cheerleaders. She also fondly described him as her “buddy” while reflecting on the friendship they shared off camera during the

making of the 2013 romantic comedy.

In a conversation with Zoom, Parineeti Chopra recalled a special moment from one of their breaks during the shoot. She was relaxing by the hotel pool with Sushant Singh Rajput and veteran actor Rishi Kapoor when she received an unexpected congratulatory message from filmmaker Karan Johar. It was through



that text that she learnt about the recognition. She said, “I

got a message from Karan (Johar) saying, ‘Mubarak ho’ (Congratulations). I was wondering what this was for. Sushant got excited and said he would find out.” When Sushant learnt that the National Film Awards had been announced, he reportedly jumped onto the chairs by the pool and excitedly declared, “Main National Award winner ke saath kaam kar raha hoon”

(I am working with a National Award winner). Parineeti further added, “I have never seen somebody get so excited, so happy for me... Rishi Sir said, ‘Both of you have gone crazy.’ Sushant hugged me and I started crying.”

Parineeti also recalled how Sushant proudly shared the news with the entire team when they returned to the sets the next day. Talking about

their conversations, the actress said, “Sushant and I used to have academic talks. I am a banker by qualification and he had done something before joining films. So we would talk about stars, economics. He really used to get me, and I used to get him.”

Meanwhile, Sushant passed away in June 2020. His sudden demise left the entire nation shocked.

Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Saif Ali Khan in talks for Ritesh Batra’s next



Mumbai : Saif Ali Khan and Priyanka Chopra Jonas may finally share the screen, with the two actors reportedly in talks to headline an international film by The Lunchbox director Ritesh Batra, if our sources are

to be believed.

The project is expected to be an international outing for Batra, who has previously moved between Indian and international stories through films such as The Lunchbox, The Sense of an Ending and Our Souls at Night. If the casting comes together, the film will also mark the first collaboration between Saif and Priyanka, who have been spoken about as potential co-stars in the past but have never actually worked together. Interestingly, Priyanka had expressed an interest in working with Saif as far back as 2012. At the time, she said she considered him an “incredible actor” and revealed that they had been supposed to work together on two or three films, but the projects did not materialise, partly because of scheduling.

Priyanka has spent the past decade building a career across Hindi and international productions, with films including The Matrix Resurrections, Love Again and Heads of State. She was most recently seen in The Bluff, while her upcoming slate includes Varanasi, directed by S. S. Rajamouli, which is currently scheduled for April 2027. This will mark her return to Indian films and also her first Telugu project. Saif, meanwhile, was last seen in Priyadarshan’s film Haiwaan. He is also set to appear in Hum Hindustani, Rahul Dholakia’s period drama about the making of India’s first democratic election.

For Batra, the reported project would mark his return to feature filmmaking after Photograph, his 2019 drama starring Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Sanya Malhotra.

Akshay Kumar and Rana Daggubati’s Mahakaal revealed as a multi-location supernatural thriller

Mumbai : Akshay Kumar and Rana Daggubati have earlier shared the screen in the action thriller Baby (2015). The actors are now set to reunite for an upcoming mythological-historical film titled Mahakaal. The ambitious film will be helmed by National Award-winning director Chandoo Mondeti. Speaking to Filmfare, he shared the backstory of how the project materialised.

Apparently, Akshay and Rana have been looking to team up for a Pan-India film after Baby. “I met Rana garu, and he shared that they were looking for a good script that resonates with all sections of the audiences,” shares Chandoo, who later came up with the story idea set against an



Ujjaini backdrop. Rana and Akshay liked the script, and the director then started developing the idea. “I have been working on the script for over six months, and it is nearing completion. This phase has been very exciting because while researching for the Mahakaal script, I could experience the vibes I got while

writing the action-adventure *Karthikeya 2*,” shared the director.

The film explores the ancient and cultural landscape of the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. Chandoo reiterates that the story of Mahakaal will be set in contemporary times but will be laced with historical elements. “The story also has a

supernatural element to it,” he reveals, adding that it also travels across multiple locations.

“We have taken the Sthalapurana (regional or oral account that narrates the sacred history) and historical elements/incidents associated with the place and have weaved a script set in the present day. During this period, working on the script has been a fascinating experience.” The director adds that his discussions with the team, as well as the musical sittings, have been very exciting. When asked about the roles of Akshay Kumar and Rana Daggubati, Chandoo remains tight-lipped. “It’s too early to reveal, but we are designing interesting roles for them. Their characters will be a complete departure.”

In the Hyderabad doctor corruption case, a plot and farm lands valued at Rs 2.7 crore are revealed



Hyderabad, Sep 30: With searches revealing properties and financial records purportedly connected to suspected benamis and associates, the Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has stepped up its investigation into the alleged disproportionate assets of Dr. Sri Nori Lakshmi Bhasker, Additional Medical Superintendent and Additional Professor at Nizam’s Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Hyderabad.As part of the continuing investigation, ACB personnel investigated five sites in and around Hyderabad using search warrants granted by the Principal Special Judge for Special Police Establishment (SPE) and ACB Cases, Hyderabad. During the searches, investigators reportedly discovered Rs 4.94 lakh in cash from the apartment of Dhanraj, a barber working at NIMS Government Hospital.His purported financial ties to the accused medical professional are being investigated, as is the possibility that the money is related to the assets under investigation. The ACB also found documents relating

to three agricultural land parcels in Maheswaram, with an estimated market value of around Rs 57 lakh.The agency is verifying the ownership and source of funds used to acquire the properties.Another significant property under scrutiny is an open plot in Venkateswara Cooperative Housing Society at ultra-posh MLA Colony of Banjara Hills in Hyderabad valued at approximately Rs 2.7 crore book value. The market value of the property is multiple times higher. The property was reportedly linked to D Ganesh, an outsourcing employee, and other associates. Investigators are probing whether the property was held on behalf of the accused.The searches also led to the tracing of two investment portfolios worth Rs 20 lakh and receipts relating to hand loans totalling Rs 3 lakh.The disproportionate assets case against Dr Lakshmi Bhasker was registered on September 21, under Section 13(1)(b) read with Section 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act.The latest searches are aimed at tracing the alleged money trail and

identifying assets that may have been held in the names of other individuals. The ACB said verification of the papers, properties and financial activities is underway. The market value associated with the arrested NIMS extra medical superintendent may exceed 200 crores based on the new asset information. Earlier on September 22, Telangana ACB conducted searches at eight locations in Hyderabad, including Bhasker’s residence in Erragadda and premises linked to his relatives, friends and associates.During the searches, investigators found documents related to eight residential flats: a four-bedroom flat in a high-rise gated community, two three-bedroom flats in Kukatpally and five two-bedroom flats located in Manikonda, Petbasheerabad and Kukatpally.The agency also identified four open plots in Yadadri, Nandigama and Shamirpet, besides an 800-square-yard plot in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Financial assets allegedly linked to the official include Rs 41 lakh in bank balances, Rs 12 lakh in post office deposits, Rs 35 lakh invested in private financial institutions and Rs 29.55 lakh in mutual funds.The ACB further found around 517.8 grams of gold ornaments, three cars, including luxury vehicles such as Jaguar and an Audi and a Tata Nexon, four two-wheelers, and electronic gadgets valued at about Rs 5 lakh. The agency claims that Bhasker allegedly gave Rs 1.33 crore in hand loans to different people and invested Rs 1.30 crore in an apartment that is the subject of proceedings before the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT).

PM Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu congratulate the Women’s Trap Team



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu congratulated Manisha Keer, Neeru Dhandra, and Aashima Ahlawat for winning the silver medal in the Women’s Trap Team event at the Asian Games, applauding their commitment and collaboration. Dhandra, Aashima Ahlawat, and Manisha Keer won silver in the women’s trap team event with a total score of 328. China won gold with 346 points, while Kuwait finished third with 325. Dhandra was India’s top performer in the team event, earning 118 out of 125. ”Congratulations to Manisha Keer, Neeru, and Aashima Ahlawat for earning silver in the Asian Games’ Women’s Trap Team event. It was an excellent demonstration of accuracy, at-

tention, and collaboration. According to a PMO post, the PM wished the entire team continued success and brought more accolades to India. PM Modi also congratulated Dhandra for being the first Indian woman to win an individual Trap Gold at the Asian Games, praising her precision and composure and said that her feat will inspire future shooters. ”Neeru Dhandra has given India a historic reason to celebrate! Congratulations on becoming the first Indian woman to win an individual Trap gold medal at the Asian Games. Her outstanding precision and poise have given great pride to the country. This performance will inspire many more young athletes to take up shooting and compete for the top accolades.” Dhandra produced

a dominant performance to win the women’s individual trap gold medal at the Asian Games 2026 on Tuesday, securing India’s fifth gold of the Aichi-Nagoya Games after topping both qualification and the final.Dhandra began the final strongly, hitting all five targets in her opening series. She missed once in the second series but recovered immediately and remained in contention before producing a remarkable run in the latter stages. She hit a perfect series in the third round to move back to the top and followed it with another strong sequence, reaching 19 hits out of 20 shots after four series. The controversy comes as the BJP intensifies its outreach to Punjab’s rural and farming constituencies ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections.

BJP’s Patiala Farmer Pushes Backfire Into Organizational Row

Chandigarh, Sep 30: The BJP’s attempt to demonstrate farmer support in Punjab’s Patiala has resulted in a political squabble in less than 24 hours, with the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Shadipur) rejecting the party’s assertion that its leaders had joined it and charging that its name and emblem were used during the event on Tuesday.On Monday, the BJP utilized its Nasha Mukti Yatra in Patiala Rural to announce the participation of about 100 to 150 representatives from farmer organizations. The initiative was planned as part of the party’s outreach to the Punjab rural population ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections. BKU (Shadipur) leader Buta Singh Shadipur, however, said, “No one from our organisation has joined the BJP.”He alleged that some people were brought from outside and presented as members of the union, while its badge, name and logo were allegedly used during the programme.

The union is now investigating the event and has indicated possible legal action.“Our legal advisers are with us. We are examining the videos and other material. Once the investigation is complete, we will consider sending legal notices to the people concerned,” Singh said. He alleged that the use of the organisation’s identity could create an impression that BKU (Shadipur) had thrown its weight behind the BJP. “If someone from our organisation had actually raised the BJP flag or joined the party, why would the organisation take legal action?” he said. During Monday’s ceremony, farmer Nirmal Singh justified his choice to join the BJP.Previously, we opposed the BJP and stated that it would not be permitted to enter Punjab. However, after considering all three main parties, people have opted to vote the BJP,” Nirmal Singh remarked.He said, “The AAP has ruined the environment in Punjab. That is why we’re joining the BJP. We feel that the BJP has the potential to change the situation in Punjab.” The party has increasingly sought to take its political campaign beyond the urban constituencies traditionally associated with its support base, using issues such as drugs, farmers’ welfare and rural development to engage with the farming community. The Patiala episode now adds a dispute over farmer representation to that outreach effort.

Dhakshineswar Suresh and Sumit Nagal get spots in tennis men’s singles pre-quarterfinals



Aichi-Nagoya: Indian tennis players Dhakshineswar Suresh and Sumit Nagal got off to a victorious start in their men’s singles campaigns at the Asian Games, albeit in different styles, and advanced to the pre-quarterfinal round on Tuesday. Dhakshineswar, India’s emerging star, defeated Indonesia’s Gunawan Trismuwantara 7-5 7-6(2) in the second round, while Nagal defeated South Korea’s Seongchan Hong 6-4 6-0 in a rain-shortened match. Dhakshineswar, who earned a bye in the first round, kept his composure in a closely

contested encounter to win in one hour and 25 minutes. It turned out to be a closer than expected contest as there is a huge gulf between the ranking of the two players. While the Indian is ranked 364, Trismuwantara is placed outside 2000.Dhakshineswar will also feature in the men’s doubles later in the day, partnering Yuki Bhambri. Meanwhile, Nagal, who lost both his Davis Cup matches in Seoul, finally managed to beat a Korean. His match lasted three hours and four minutes, across two days. His next opponent is Uzbeki-

stan’s Sergey Fomin.“Today was a challenging day for both players, with the weather causing a start-stop match and the shift from outdoor to indoor courts, match started yesterday, finished today,” India coach Ashutosh Singh told PTI.“With four courts running side by side and a lot happening around the competition area, it wasn’t an easy environment, although the organizers are doing their best.“Sumit took a little time to settle in, but once he found his rhythm and took control, he played really well, especially when he was ahead. Pro players have to adjust to the conditions and circumstances in front of them,” Singh added.Later in the day, the men’s doubles team of Anirudh Chandrasekar and N Sriram Balaji will take on Nepal’s Abhishek Bastola and Pradiip Khadka.Balaji will also compete in mixed doubles with Ankita Raina. They play the Hong Kong team of Eudice Chong and Kairan Thompson.

Sujeet Kalkal, Antim Panghal, and Aman Sehrawat have tough draws in the Asian Games

Aichi-Nagoya: Sujeet Kalkal’s red-hot form, Antim Panghal’s desire to retake the spotlight, and Olympic bronze medalist Aman Sehrawat’s return to the Asian Games will highlight India’s wrestling campaign, with all three facing tough draws in their pursuit of continental gold. The wrestling program will be performed in a one-day style for each weight category, which means that the qualification rounds, semifinals, and medal fights will all take place on the same day. Sujeet’s 65kg campaign is one of the most talked about, with the 23-year-old arriving in Japan as India’s best freestyle wrestler. The U-23 world champion has enjoyed a breakthrough 2026, winning the Asian Championships and collecting gold at the Zagreb Open and Muhamet Malo Ranking Series before heading to the Asian Games.The draw, however, has given Sujeet a demanding route. He is in the same half as Japan’s Olympic champion Kotaro Kiyooka, with a potential quarterfinal against Iran’s Abbas Ebrahimzadeh and a semifinal meeting with

Kiyooka if both negotiate their earlier bouts.Kiyooka defeated Iran’s Rahman Amouzad in the Paris Olympic final, while Amouzad, the world No.1, is not in the Asian Games field. That potential Sujeet-Kiyooka clash has emerged as one of the marquee bouts of the wrestling competition.Sujeet has established himself as one of the leading wrestlers in the weight class over the past year, but Kiyooka will have the additional advantage of competing in his home country. The Indian’s speed and attacking style will be tested against a wrestler who has already shown on the biggest stage that he can handle the pressure of major finals.Antim Panghal’s 53kg campaign carries a different narrative. The 22-year-old, a Hangzhou Asian Games bronze medalist and two-time World Championships medalist, enters the competition with six wins and two losses in senior UWW events this season.Antim’s draw puts her in the same half as China’s Zhang Jin, setting up a potential semifinal between the two.The pair have met twice previously, with

Antim winning both closely contested bouts. Japan’s Moe Kiyooka and North Korea’s Choe Hyo Gyong are in the other half. For Antim, the Asian Games represents another opportunity to establish herself after a turbulent period around the previous Olympic cycle. She secured her place in the Indian team by winning the national selection trial, beating Meenakshi Goyat in the 53kg final. Aman Sehrawat, meanwhile, returns to the Asian Games as an Olympic medalist and one of India’s most recognisable young wrestling stars.He won bronze at the Paris Olympics in 2024 at 57kg, becoming India’s youngest Olympic medalist at the age of 21 years and 24 days.His 57kg draw is far from straightforward. Aman could face either Uzbekistan’s Gulomjon Abdullaev, an Olympic bronze medalist, or Japan’s Yamato Ogawa in the opening round.A quarterfinal against Kazakhstan’s Nurdanat Aitanov and a potential semifinal against Iran’s Ali Momeni also await if he advances through the early rounds.

Sonia Gandhi Snaps At Digvijaya Singh’s Nitish Kumar Quip During Congress Meeting



New Delhi, Sep 30: As the Congress Working Committee met on Tuesday to discuss the party’s plan for cornering Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and the BJP, one of the members mentioned a former ally, prompting a harsh response from the party’s matriarch Sonia Gandhi.According to sources, during discussions at the CWC meeting, senior politician Digvijaya Singh stated that the INDIA alliance should not have allowed JD(U) president and former Bihar president Minister Nitish Kumar to quit in 2024. ”The political situation would have been different,” Singh told the group, according to those who attended.But Singh’s claim about Kumar was quickly refuted by Sonia Gandhi, who, according to insiders, stated that Nitish Kumar was due to quit anyhow.

“He did not want to continue in the INDIA alliance. It was best for him to go when he did. “That was where he was going; he had been actively looking for ways to leave the INDIA bloc,” Sonia Gandhi told the gathering. Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge concurred with Sonia Gandhi’s views and added: “While he had not intended to bring this up, he would mention that Nitish Kumar had indeed been looking for a way out of the INDIA bloc. His bid to become the convener of the INDIA bloc was merely a charade, given that he had previously told Kharge he wanted to remain active in state politics while supporting the INDIA bloc at the national level.” Then Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar officially quit the INDIA opposition bloc on January 28, 2024, when he resigned as

Chief Minister of the Mahagathbandhan government and returned to the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Kumar, who was seen as a primary architect in uniting opposition parties to form the INDIA bloc, reportedly grew frustrated by delays in finalising seat-sharing agreements and the failure to name him the coalition’s convener early on.Reports had suggested that Nitish was also upset at being sidelined by the INDIA partners, particularly the Congress. The last nail in the coffin was presumably the moment when TMC chief Mamata Banerjee and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal proposed that Mallikarjun Kharge should be made the chairman of the INDIA bloc and would be the PM face in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Nitish Kumar’s exit dealt a major strategic blow to the INDIA bloc ahead of the 2024 general elections, severely straining opposition unity.Later detailing his exit, Nitish Kumar had said: “I was hurt. I left the INDIA alliance. I have been working hard to make a successful, meaningful (INDIA) alliance, but no one else (in the alliance) has been doing anything... I was making an all-out effort to make the INDIA bloc running, but I received no response. People are not happy,” he told reporters.“You all know how I came to this alliance and also how I worked to bring together so many parties. But of late, things were not working well. It was not going down well with those in my party as well... Nobody was doing anything after the alliance was formed. INDIA bloc failed my expectations,” Nitish added.

India defends its women’s compound team gold with a world record

Aichi-Nagoya: The Indian compound archery team, which included Chikitha Taniparthi, Prithika Pradeep, and Jyothi Surekha Vennam, defeated China 238-234 on Wednesday at Okazaki Chuo Sogo Park Multipurpose Square to successfully defend their gold medals. India won silver in the event in 2018, and bronze in 2014. This is India’s fifth gold medal at the current edition of the continental championship. Overall, India has 53 medals, including seven gold, 21 silver, and 25 bronze. The Indian trio edged South Korea in the semifinals before defeating China in the final with a world-record score of 238, which the Koreans established in Incheon 2014.After gaining a 30-28 lead in the first end, India increased their lead to three points despite Chikitha hitting a nine in the first rotation of the second end. Prithika and Jyo-

thi stayed faultless, scoring 10s throughout. At the start of End 2, both India and China hit a 9 and two 10s each in the first rotation. China hit two 10s and a nine in the next three arrows, and the Indian trio hit perfect 10s in the second rotation to stretch the lead to three points, 119-116.In the first rotation of End 3, China hit perfect 10s, while India started with a nine from Chikitha, but Prithika and Jyothi hit 10s to keep India’s lead intact. In the second rotation, China had a 9 before hitting two 10s. India extended the advantage with three 10s to hold a 178-175 lead.In the final end, China began with two 9s and a 10.

The India trio responded with perfect 10s. In the last three errors, China shot three 10s to keep pressure on India, but the Indian trio had a perfect end with all 10s and successfully defended the gold



with a 234-238 win. India had its most successful Asian Games archery performance in Hangzhou 2023, collecting a record nine medals (five gold, two silver, and two

bronze). The compound archers won all five gold medals, with the recurve teams contributing a silver and a bronze.

Justin Greaves ruled out of second India ODI following a calf injury



New Delhi: West Indies opener Justin Greaves, who struck a sensational hundred against India in the 1st ODI at Thiruvananthapuram, has been ruled out of the 2nd ODI due to a calf injury. Greaves dominated the proceedings against India in the opening match of the series, taking on the fast bowlers and giving the West Indies a terrific start alongside John Campbell. The pair added 135 runs in the first 20

overs. Greaves' cover drives were a treat to watch as he methodically tore apart the Indian fast-bowling attack. The batter, however, struggled with an injury through much of his 108-ball stay. In the first 10 overs of the match, he pulled his calf and needed treatment from the physio. "Justin Greaves has been ruled out of the second game of the ODI series against India after sustaining a calf injury," Cricket West Indies

said in a statement. "Greaves picked up the injury during his innings in the opening match of the series," it added. The hot and humid weather in Kerala made life difficult for the fast bowlers, while Greaves also struggled to maintain his intensity throughout his innings. Greaves was eventually dismissed after completing his century in the 36th over, by none other than Kuldeep Yadav, who helped India

fight their way back into the game. Kuldeep's 4/40 helped India recover from a difficult start and restrict the visitors to 295 for 7. In reply, India dominated the chase, courtesy of Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli, who added 151 runs between them. Gill anchored the innings, while Kohli went on a blistering run, helping India chase down the target in just 41.4 overs. The second ODI of the three-match series will be played in Guwahati on September 30. West Indies opener Justin Greaves scored a remarkable century against India in the 1st ODI at Thiruvananthapuram but was ruled out of the 2nd ODI due to a calf injury sustained early in his innings. Greaves and John Campbell gave West Indies a strong start with a 135-run partnership, but India fought back with Kuldeep Yadav taking four wickets. India successfully chased 296, led by Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli. The 2nd ODI will be held in Guwahati on September 30.

Pragyan Ojha likely to replace Ajit Agarkar as India's chief selector

New Delhi: Former India left-arm spinner Pragyan Ojha is likely to become India's next chief selector following Ajit Agarkar's departure, reported PTI on Tuesday, September 29. Ojha, 39, is currently serving as the interim head of the four-member selection committee. Ojha was among the four selectors who held a lengthy discussion with India head coach Gautam Gambhir in Guwahati on Tuesday, a day before the second ODI against the West Indies. Shiv Sundar Das, Ajay Ratra and RP Singh were also part of the meeting, while outgoing chief selector Agarkar was not present. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the Barsapara Stadium while the West Indies went through their training session. The Indian team was taking a day off after travelling from Thiruvananthapuram to Guwahati.

The presence of the entire selection committee during a bilateral series is not commonplace, with the discussion understood to have centred on India's upcoming tour of New Zealand and the squads that need to be finalised for the series. Ojha, who played 24 Tests for India, took interim charge of the selection committee after Agarkar's departure. He is now in line to take



over as the full-time chief selector. The selection committee has a busy period ahead, with India scheduled to play five T20Is, five ODIs and two Tests during their New Zealand tour from October 22 to November 27. The selectors also need to finalise the India A squad for a three-Test tour of New Zealand, which begins on October 24. The New Zealand tour will begin with a five-match

T20I series, with the opening game scheduled in Christchurch on October 22. A five-match ODI series will follow from November 4, before the two-Test series begins in Wellington on November 19. With India's international calendar packed across formats, player workload and availability are likely to be among the issues facing the selectors.

Perfect 10s from Sahil and Chikitha secure Asian Games gold despite nervy finish



New Delhi : India's compound archers Sahil Rajesh and Chikitha Taniparthi secured Olympic qualification for Los Angeles 2028 after winning the Asian Games mixed team gold medal on Wednesday, surviving a nervy shoot-off against South Korea's Choi Yonghee and Park Jungyoon. India had looked to be cruising towards gold after a near-perfect start, but a late wobble allowed South Korea to pull level at 157-157 and force a shoot-off. The Indian pair held their nerve when it mattered most, shooting a perfect 10-10 combination to put the pressure back on their opponents. South Korea could not match them. One of their archers hit

a 9, handing India the gold medal and completing a second archery triumph of the day. The victory also carried significance beyond the Asian Games podium. Compound archery will make its Olympic debut at Los Angeles 2028, with the mixed team event among the new events on the programme. The Asian Games champions were guaranteed one men's and one women's quota place for LA28, making the gold medal in Okazaki a direct route to Olympic qualification for India. India had entered the final against a South Korean pair that had already shown just how high the scoring could go. Earlier in the competition, Choi and Park had combined for a world-record score of 160, hitting all 10s across their 16 arrows. The Koreans therefore arrived in the final with the weight of that performance behind them. India, however, started without any visible sign of being overawed. Sahil and Chikitha were perfect through the opening two ends, hitting all eight arrows into the 10-ring to score 80 out of 80. South Korea, by comparison, dropped two points after shooting two 9s to finish the opening phase on 78. The Indian pair had established a two-point advantage and appeared to be moving towards a comfortable victory. Sahil was regularly speaking to Chikitha between shots, helping her settle and line up her arrows as the pair tried to build on India's strong start. The gold was also significant for the Indian archery contingent, which had already won a title earlier in the day.

Virat Kohli's star performance sets up India series victory as West Indies seek answers India Eye Series Win in Guwahati Match

New Delhi: India will be looking to put in another dominant showing, but Guwahati could offer the West Indies one last chance to push back before the series slips away. After being blown away by Virat Kohli and Shubman Gill in the opening ODI, the visitors arrive at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium with plenty of questions to answer. For India, the mood is markedly different. Kohli's sublime century and Gill's fluent hundred powered them to a comfortable eight-wicket victory in Thiruvananthapuram, putting the hosts 1-0 up and firmly in control of the series. The second ODI now gives them an opportunity to finish the job while



allowing several of their key players to build further momentum. Kohli's unbeaten 139 in the first ODI was another reminder of his ability to take control of a chase. He found the boundary with remarkable ease and, along-

side Gill, ensured India were never really in danger after West Indies posted a competitive total. The former India captain will have another landmark in sight in Guwahati. His century in the opening ODI took his tally of in-

ternational hundreds against the West Indies to 13, level with Sunil Gavaskar. Another hundred would take Kohli past Gavaskar and make him the leading century-maker against the Caribbean side in international cricket.

India Edges Qatar to Reach Volleyball Quarters



Nagoya : India pulled off a stunning comeback from two sets down to beat Qatar 3-2 and book their place in the men's volleyball quarterfinals at the Asian Games in Nagoya on Tuesday. After losing the opening two sets, India fought back to win 26-28, 25-27, 25-23, 25-20, 24-22 in a marathon Pool C contest that lasted two hours and 47 minutes. The result completed an unbeaten group-stage campaign for India, who finished top of Pool C with three wins from three. Their reward is a place in the quarterfinals on Thursday, with the opponent still to be confirmed. Qatar had looked firmly in control after edging two extremely tight opening sets. India had opportunities in both, but could not convert them, leaving themselves needing to win three straight sets to keep their campaign alive. That is exactly what they managed to do. India took the third set 25-23, followed it with a 25-20 win in the fourth and forced a decider, where the match descended into a remarkable battle of nerves. The fifth set saw India survive nine match points before finally sealing the contest 24-22.

Dal, Paneer, and Lord Hanuman: Gulveer's Winning Formula for Asian Games History



New Delhi: A strictly vegetarian diet of dal, chapati and paneer has powered Gulveer Singh through a gruelling Asian Games campaign, while a small statuette of Bajrang Bali in his room has provided him with a source of mental strength. The Indian distance runner completed a historic treble on Tuesday, winning bronze in the men's 5000m to go with his silver medals in the 1500m and 10,000m. In doing so, Gulveer became only the second Indi-

an man and the fourth Indian overall to win three athletics medals at a single edition of the Asian Games. "I don't eat non-vegetarian food. I don't eat eggs also. I am a pure vegetarian. I eat chapati, dal (pulses) and paneer (Indian cottage cheese)," Gulveer said when asked about his diet during the Games.

I get good food from the hotel. It's available at the hotel. I have a good diet and a good supplement. I eat enough protein," Gulveer said his diet

has remained vegetarian even while training in the USA in the build-up to the Asian Games. The medal haul came at the end of an exhausting schedule. Gulveer ran four races in five days, including the 1500m heat, and managed to finish on the podium in each of his three events. "It's been very tiring because I've had to run four races (in five days), but I'm going back with three medals. I'm very happy because I always wanted to give something back to India, and I've done that with three medals," he said. His recovery routine included continuous endurance training, along with support from a dedicated physiotherapist provided by the Athletics Federation of India. "I have been doing endurance training continuously. The AFI also gave me a dedicated physio, and that helps me also in recovery. I got massages and stretching done," he said. Gulveer's achievement puts him alongside an exclusive group of Indian athletes.

Lavy Pinto won three athletics medals at the 1951 Asian Games in New Delhi, PT Usha won four in Seoul in 1986, while KM Beenamol won three in Busan in 2002. Gulveer received his latest medal with a traditional tilak on his forehead. He said faith has also played a role in helping him deal with the demands of competition. "I also keep a statuette of Bajrang Bali (God Hanuman) in my room. I prayed to Him to look after me," he said. The 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou were a very different experience for Gulveer. He described himself then as a raw talent who was still learning and admitted that the scale of the competition had made him nervous. Four years later, that fear has been replaced by belief.

Back then, it was new, so I was scared. But now I train daily with Olympic medalists, championship medalists, and I feel that if I'm training with these guys, why can't I compete with them," he said.

Lovlina and Hockey Lead India's Medal Quest in Asian Games

New Delhi : September 30 could be another significant day for India at the Asian Games, with medal opportunities spread across boxing, archery, shooting, canoe slalom, cycling, judo, wrestling and sports climbing. The action begins early, with several Indian athletes chasing places in finals and medal rounds. India's esports contingent will also be in action, with the League of Legends team facing Hong Kong, Republic of Korea and Chinese Taipei in Group B matches through the day. Lovlina Borgohain will be one of the key names in focus when she takes on Kazakhstan's Natalya Bogdanova in the women's 75kg semifinal. Priya will also be in semifinal action in the women's 60kg category against China's Yang Chengyu. Archery could provide multiple medal opportunities, with India's compound women's, mixed and men's teams all featuring in semifinal or medal



matches. The shooting contingent also has a trap mixed team final scheduled, subject to qualification. Later in the day, India's women's hockey team will face South Korea in the semifinal. Wrestlers Sunil Kumar and Nisha Dahiya could also feature in medal matches if they progress through their respective events. Cycling, canoe slalom, judo and sports climbing round off a packed schedule, giving India several more chances to add to its medal tally. On September

30 at the Asian Games, India has medal prospects across boxing, archery, shooting, canoe slalom, cycling, judo, wrestling, and sports climbing. Key athletes like Lovlina Borgohain, Priya, Sunil Kumar, and Nisha Dahiya are in semifinal and medal rounds. India's esports team competes in League of Legends Group B matches. Multiple archery and cycling events also offer medals. The women's hockey team faces South Korea in the semifinal.

Will Rain Threaten the Asian Games Cricket Semifinal Between India and Sri Lanka?

New Delhi: India and Sri Lanka will be hoping the weather finally allows them to take the field when they meet in the Asian Games cricket semi-final in Nagoya on September 30. Rain has already wreaked havoc on the men's cricket competition, with all four quarter-final matches aban-

doned without a ball being bowled. India's quarter-final against Afghanistan was among the matches washed out, while Pakistan's clash against Hong Kong, Sri Lanka's match against Nepal and Bangladesh's game against Malaysia also failed to get underway because of persistent rain. After days

of unsettled weather in Nagoya, the focus will once again be on the skies ahead of the India-Sri Lanka semi-final. India advanced to the last four without taking the field, while Sri Lanka also progressed after their quarter-final was abandoned. As per Accuweather, for now, there are no chances

of rain in the forecast for September 30, although intermittent clouds are expected. Temperatures are likely to remain cool at around 20 degrees Celsius. However, Nagoya has experienced persistent rainfall over recent days, meaning the condition of the outfield could still be a concern

even if the rain stays away. The teams will therefore be hoping for a full game after the tournament's quarter-final stage was completely disrupted by the weather. If rain prevents the India-Sri Lanka semi-final from taking place, the higher-ranked team will qualify for the final.

