

Supreme Court Weighs Larger Bench For Meghalaya Honeymoon Murder Case

Shillong, July 09: The Supreme Court of India is considering the constitution of a larger bench to hear the high-profile Meghalaya honeymoon murder case, underscoring the gravity and complexity of the matter. The case involves Sonam Raghuvanshi, accused of murdering her husband Raja Raghuvanshi during their honeymoon in Meghalaya, which has drawn widespread public attention and legal debate. The apex court's move comes in response to petitions challenging the bail granted to the accused by the High Court. Meghalaya Police had earlier approached the Supreme Court seeking an immediate stay on the bail order, arguing that the release could hamper the ongoing investigation and affect witness testimonies. During the proceedings, the bench observed that the case raises significant questions of law and procedure, particularly regarding bail in serious criminal cases involving allegations of murder. The possibility of referring the matter to a larger bench reflects the court's intent to ensure consistency and clarity in judicial interpretation. Legal experts note that the decision could set an important precedent for future cases where bail orders are contested in heinous crimes. The Supreme Court emphasized that while personal liberty is a constitutional



right, it must be balanced against the interests of justice and the need to protect society. The hearing also

highlighted concerns raised by the victim's family and the state authorities, who have demanded a thorough and impartial trial. The court assured that all aspects of the case will be examined carefully before arriving at a final decision. The matter will now be listed for further consideration, with the possibility of a larger bench being constituted in the coming days. Legal experts note that the decision could set an important precedent for future cases where bail orders are contested in heinous crimes. The Supreme Court emphasized that while personal liberty is a constitutional right, it must be balanced against the interests of justice and the need to

protect society. The hearing also highlighted concerns raised by the victim's family and the state authorities, who have demanded a thorough and impartial trial. The court assured that all aspects of the case will be examined carefully before arriving at a final decision. Observers point out that the case has become emblematic of broader debates around criminal justice in India, particularly the tension between safeguarding individual rights and ensuring public safety. The Supreme Court's deliberations are expected to influence how lower courts approach bail in sensitive cases, especially those involving violent crimes.

Nagaland likely to face rain, thunderstorms till July 12

Kohima, July 09: The Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) has issued an advisory warning of continued rain and thunderstorms across several districts of the state until July 12. The forecast highlights the possibility of lightning strikes, gusty winds, and heavy downpours in localized areas, urging residents to remain cautious and prepared. According to the NSDMA, the weather pattern is being influenced by active monsoon conditions, which are expected to intensify over the coming days. Districts in both central and eastern Nagaland may witness moderate to heavy rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms and strong surface winds. The authority has advised citizens, particularly farmers and those engaged in outdoor activities, to monitor updates closely and

avoid exposure during peak storm hours. The advisory also cautions against the risks of landslides, flash floods, and waterlogging in vulnerable areas. Local administrations have been directed to remain on alert and ensure that emergency response teams are ready to act in case of severe weather events. The NSDMA emphasized that fishermen should refrain from venturing into rivers and streams during this period, as rising water levels and strong currents pose significant dangers. Residents are encouraged to secure loose structures, avoid sheltering under trees during lightning, and keep essential supplies ready. The NSDMA reiterated its commitment to providing timely updates and urged the public to follow official advisories rather than relying on unverified information.

Meghalaya celebrates Behdienkhlam festival with rituals, prayers

Shillong, July 09: Meghalaya witnessed vibrant celebrations of the Behdienkhlam festival, one of the most significant cultural and religious events of the Pnar community, marked by traditional rituals, community prayers, and colorful processions. The festival, observed annually in the West Jaintia Hills district, symbolizes the collective effort to drive away evil spirits and seek blessings for health, prosperity, and good harvests. The celebrations began with prayers at local sanctuaries, followed by the ceremonial beating of logs, a ritual believed to ward off disease and misfortune. Community members, dressed in traditional attire, participated in the rituals with devotion, reinforcing the festival's role as a spiritual and cultural anchor for the Jaintia people. A highlight of the festival was the



grand procession of elaborately decorated structures known as Rots, carried through the streets by groups representing different localities. The procession, accompanied by

drums, chants, and dances, showcased the unity and creativity of the community. The Rots were later immersed in water, symbolizing purification and renewal.

Union DoNER Minister Scindia cancels Tripura visit, joins conclave virtually

Agartala, July 09: Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Jyotiraditya Scindia, has cancelled his scheduled visit to Tripura and will now participate in the upcoming North East Business Conclave through a virtual platform. The decision was announced today, with officials confirming that the Minister will deliver his keynote address online, ensuring continuity of the program despite his absence. The Business Conclave, organized to highlight investment opportunities and infrastructure development in the North Eastern states, is expected to draw participation from industry leaders, policymakers, and entrepreneurs. Scindia's virtual presence will include discussions on strengthening



connectivity, promoting sustainable industries, and enhancing regional trade. His intervention is anticipated to set the tone for deliberations on accelerating economic

growth in the region. Officials noted that while the Minister's physical presence in Tripura would have added momentum to the event, his virtual participation ensures

that the state remains central to the discussions. The conclave will feature sessions on tourism, agriculture, renewable energy, and digital innovation, with Tripura's

potential in each sector being spotlighted. State leaders expressed confidence that the Minister's engagement, even in virtual form, will reaffirm the Centre's commitment to the North East. They emphasized that the conclave represents a significant opportunity to attract investment and foster collaboration between government and private stakeholders. The cancellation of Scindia's visit was attributed to scheduling constraints, but organizers assured that the program will proceed as planned, with robust participation from across the region. The Minister's address is expected to emphasize the importance of inclusive development and the role of the North East in India's growth story.

Manipur CM Reviews Progress Of Investment MoUs Signed With Investors

Imphal, July 09: Imphal, July 09 – Manipur Chief Minister Nymnam Khemchand Singh today chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress of investment Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed with various investors during recent conclaves and business summits. The meeting, held at the Chief Minister's Secretariat, brought together senior

officials, representatives of partner companies, and departmental heads to evaluate implementation timelines and address challenges. The Chief Minister emphasized that investment commitments must translate into tangible projects that generate employment, strengthen infrastructure, and boost the state's economy. He directed officials to ensure that clear

roadmaps are in place for each MoU, with regular monitoring to track progress. "Our priority is to convert promises into performance. Investors must feel confident that Manipur is a reliable destination for business," he stated. Key sectors under review included agro-processing, renewable energy, tourism, IT services, and manufacturing. Officials presented updates on land al-



location, regulatory clearances, and project financing. The Chief Minister urged departments to expedite approvals and provide single-window facilitation to avoid delays. Representatives of investor groups expressed optimism about Manipur's potential, citing improvements in connectivity, policy support, and skilled manpower. They reaffirmed their commitment to

long-term partnerships that would contribute to inclusive growth. The Chief Minister also highlighted the importance of aligning investment projects with local needs, ensuring that communities benefit directly through job creation, skill development, and sustainable practices. He stressed that transparency and accountability must guide all agreements, reinforcing

public trust in the government's development agenda. The meeting concluded with directives to prepare a consolidated progress report on all MoUs, to be reviewed quarterly. The Chief Minister assured that his government remains committed to fostering a business-friendly environment while safeguarding the interests of the people of Manipur.

Meghalaya's VPP Opposes Assam CM As Chief Guest At Shad Behdeinkhlam Festival

Shillong, July 09: The Voice of the People Party (VPP) has strongly objected to the decision to invite Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma as the chief guest at the upcoming Shad Behdeinkhlam festival in Jowai, West Jaintia Hills. The festival, one of the most significant cultural and religious celebrations of the Pnar community, is scheduled to take place later this month. In a statement issued by party leaders, the VPP expressed concern that the presence of the Assam Chief Minister at such a sacred event could politicize the festival and undermine its cultural sanctity. The party emphasized that Shad Behdeinkhlam is not merely a public gathering but a deeply spiritual occasion rooted in the traditions of the Jaintia people, and therefore should remain free from political



overtones. The VPP highlighted ongoing disputes between Meghalaya and Assam over border issues, noting that tensions remain unresolved in several areas. According to the party, inviting the Assam Chief Minister at this juncture sends the wrong message to com-

munities affected by these disputes and risks overshadowing the festival's cultural significance with political undertones. "The festival belongs to the people and should not be used as a platform for political optics," the statement read. Party leaders further urged the organiz-

ing committee to reconsider the decision and ensure that the festival remains a celebration of faith, unity, and tradition. They stressed that the Shad Behdeinkhlam has always been a symbol of resilience and cultural pride for the Pnar community, and its sanctity must be pre-

served above all else. The VPP also called upon the Meghalaya government to take a stand in safeguarding the cultural heritage of the state. They argued that while dignitaries are welcome to attend, the role of chief guest should be reserved for individuals who embody the spirit of the festival rather than political figures whose presence may trigger controversy. As preparations for Shad Behdeinkhlam continue, the VPP's opposition has sparked debate across the state. Many community members have echoed the party's concerns, while others see the invitation as an opportunity to foster goodwill between neighboring states. The final decision of the organizing committee is awaited, but the controversy has already ensured that this year's festival will draw heightened public attention.

Arunachal's first Wancho folktale animation begins production

Itanagar, July 09: Arunachal Pradesh has embarked on a landmark cultural project with the production of its first indigenous animated film based on a Wancho folktale. The film, currently in development, uses stop-motion animation to bring to life the rich oral traditions of the Wancho tribe, offering a new medium to preserve and share their heritage. The project, spearheaded by a team of local artists and filmmakers, draws inspiration from the Patkai Hills, where the Wancho community has long nurtured stories passed down through generations. By adapting these tales into animation, the creators aim to ensure that younger audiences connect with their cultural roots while also introducing Arunachal's folklore to a wider national and global audience. Stop-motion animation was chosen for its tactile and organic quality, which mirrors the authenticity of indigenous



storytelling. Each frame is being carefully crafted to reflect the landscapes, attire, and traditions of the Wancho people. The filmmakers emphasized that the project is not only an artistic endeavor but also a cultural responsibility to safeguard intangible heritage. Community leaders have welcomed the initiative, noting that it will help preserve the Wancho identity in a rapidly changing world. The film is expected to serve as an educational resource, inspiring schools and cultural institutions to integrate indigenous

stories into curricula and exhibitions. Beyond its cultural significance, the project also represents a milestone for Arunachal Pradesh's creative industries. By investing in animation rooted in local traditions, the state is positioning itself as a hub for innovative storytelling that blends heritage with modern technology. The film is expected to open doors for collaborations with national and international studios, while also encouraging young artists in the region to explore animation as a career path.

Manipur Police Arrest Two Extortionists

Imphal, July 09: Manipur Police and security forces have intensified their crackdown on insurgent activities and drug trafficking, leading to the arrest of two alleged extortionists linked to banned militant outfits and the seizure of a large quantity of methamphetamine over the last 24 hours. Accepting to the official information on Thursday, Manipur Police arrested an active cadre of the KYKL outfit, identified as Takhellambam Gremichand alias Inaocha Singh (52), from Kalika Bamon Kampu under Irilbung Police Station in Imphal East district. Police recovered a 9 mm pistol, two magazines and 70 live rounds of ammunition from his possession. In another operation, security forces apprehended an active cadre of the KCP (PWG), identified as Angom Chingkhieganba Meitei (27), from Aihang Village Gate under Waikhong Police Station in Kakching district. He was allegedly involved in extortion activities.

Meanwhile, a joint team of Manipur Police and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) recovered around 22 kg of WY tablets (methamphetamine) packed in 19 packets during a raid at the residence of Ms. Paominlin Munlo in Churachandpur. A Mahindra Bolero vehicle was also seized from the



premises.

Security forces also continued search operations and area domination exercises in vulnerable and fringe areas across the state. Authorities ensured the safe movement of 151 vehicles carrying essential commodities along National Highway-37 by providing security escorts in sensitive stretches. Additionally, 114 checkpoints were set up across hill and valley districts to strengthen security and maintain law and order

ICAR-KVK Dimapur conducts demonstration on natural farming

Dimapur, July 09: The weekly Census review meeting of Chiephobozou sub division was held on Wednesday at the office chamber of ADC Chiephobozou, Vekusheyi Rhakho.

According to DIPR report, addressing the meeting, Rhakho said the objective was to review progress and activities carried out in the layout map and to resolve issues raised by responsible officers during the census exercise. Stressing the importance of quality and accuracy of data, he urged supervisors to make regular visits and conduct random checks to clear

doubts.

He reminded them to maintain confidentiality while carrying out census operations and to strictly follow the Acts, rules and guidelines issued by the Census department. He further asked supervisors to take immediate corrective action wherever errors are detected and seek guidance from Master Trainers or Census Nodal officers.

Supervisors present highlighted their operational status reports and shared challenges faced during the ongoing House Listing Operation (HLO). Ac-

cording to DIPR report, the field visit was conducted to monitor the progress of enumeration, ensure adherence to census guidelines and review the quality and accuracy of the House Listing operation. During the visit, the EAC interacted with the enumeration team and village authorities, emphasising the importance of accurate and comprehensive data collection for the successful conduct of Census 2027.

Officials from the Directorate of Census, Kohima—Assistant Director (T) Chuyalo Kath and Dr. Kekriethshunuo

Kire, Sr. Executive—also interacted with enumerators and explained necessary guidelines. Field Trainers Alemson-gla Jamir, Lecturer DIET Chiechama, and Ruthla Sangtam, Lecturer DIET Chiechama, highlighted various issues in the presence of Chiephobozou Town Charge Officer, EAC Viketoulie Metha, and Botsa Charge Officer, EAC Kohima, Annie Khieya. Census Liaison Officer, enumerators and village authorities, visited Meluri village to oversee the House Listing exercise under Census 2027.

Sharingain graces GPS Aolijen holds recognition ceremony



Imphal, July 09: The Recognition Ceremony of Government Primary School (GPS) Aolijen was held Wednesday at the school premises with Nagaland Legislative Assembly Speaker, Sharingain Longkumer, as chief guest. In his address, Sharingain said the recognition of a new school was possible through the grace of God and the concerted efforts of stakeholders including the Village Council, concerned department, land donors and the community. He appealed to stakeholders to maintain healthy enrolment annually so that the school may not face merger or de recognition. He added that the establishment of a school not only nurtures educated citizens but also provides job opportunities and contributes to the overall development of the village. He further urged the department to care for and guide the newly recognised school. The programme was chaired by SMC secretary I. Tiajungba, with the welcome note delivered by Council chairman, Ungma, Sutsung-kaba Tatar, and vote of thanks proposed by Matsung Salong Tatar. Students Pangkhah and Eshe presented a special song. Short speeches were delivered by SMC chairman L. Imli Imsong, land owner Lanumeren, DEO Arenla and AEO L. Alemtensu Ao. Invocation was said by Rev. T. Wati Lkr, Pastor UBA, while benediction was pronounced by Rev. Talijungla, Associate Pastor UBA.

Meghalaya has enhanced its score on the Education Performance Grading Index (PGI)

Shillong, July 09: Meghalaya has achieved a historic milestone in school education by moving out from Akanshi-3 to Akanshi-1 in the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2.0 in the latest school assessment by the Union Ministry of Education, State Education Minister Lahkmen Rymbui said on Wednesday.

According to the PGI 2.0 report for 2025-26, Meghalaya has improved its overall score from 448 in 2024-25 to 525.71 in 2025-26, a jump of two grades in a single year. "Meghalaya has risen above the lowest grade since the inception of the PGI. It is a historic milestone for our State in school education reflecting Meghalaya's emergence from the bottom tier into the mainstream group of improving States," Rymbui told reporters.

Meghalaya now shares the Akan-



shi-1 category with States such as Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Tripura, Jharkhand, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.

Rymbui said the state's score has steadily improved over the last four

assessment cycles—from 401.62 in 2022-23 to 417.90 in 2023-24, 448 in 2024-25, and 525.7 in 2025-26—an overall increase of more than 124 points. He attributed the achievement to sustained educational reforms undertaken by the State government over the past

eight years, with particularly focused interventions during the last three years.

"This achievement demonstrates that consistent policy reforms, improved governance, investment in school infrastructure, teacher capacity building, and evidence-based planning are beginning to yield measurable results," the minister said. Describing the state's achievement as encouraging, Rymbui said, "It is not the destination but the beginning of a new phase of educational transformation."

He also reiterated the Education Department's commitment to achieving progressively higher PGI grades in the coming years and to building a school education system that delivers equitable, inclusive, and high-quality education for every child in Meghalaya.

Nirupam Chakma, a leader of the BJP, has been inaugurated Chief of the Chakma council

Aizawl, July 09: BJP leader Nirupam Chakma was sworn in as the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) on Wednesday, marking the end of the Governor's rule in the council after a year. Chakma was administered the oath of office and secrecy by Lawngtlai Deputy Commissioner Donny Lalruatsanga during a swearing-in ceremony held at the council's arts and cultural hall in Kamalanagar, according to officials. The event was attended by District Council and Minority Affairs Minister C Lalsawivunga, BJP Mizoram state in-charge Debesh Kumar, members of the CADC, and important officials, among others, they said. On June 23, the state's ruling party ZPM and BJP formally forged an alliance and formed the Chakma Democratic Alliance Legislature Party headed by Nirupam Chakma, who staked claim to form an executive body in the CADC. At present, the BJP has 10 members and the ZPM 9 in the 20-member CADC. Chakma was appointed as the CEM by the Governor on July 3. Under the terms of his appointment, he is required to prove his majority on the floor of the council within seven days. A floor test has been scheduled for July 9, officials said. Chakma was previously elected to the state Assembly and served as Minister of State between 1989 and 1998, handling several portfolios. In the last CADC polls in 2023, he was elected from Kamalanagar South constituency. In 2024, he was appointed as a member of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST). Speaking on the occasion, Chakma described his swearing-in as the beginning of a new chapter for the Chakma Council.

He pledged to lead an administration based on transparency, accountability and dedication, with priority given to infrastructure development, education, healthcare, agriculture, employment generation and improved public service delivery. He also appealed to elected representatives, government officials, civil society organisations and the public to work together for the development of the council area.

Congratulating the new CEM, Lalsawivunga expressed confidence that the Executive Committee under Chakma's leadership



would provide stable and people-centric governance. He said that the Mizoram government had strengthened the Autonomous District Councils through increased financial support and administrative reforms. Highlighting the state's commitment, the minister said that the Budget Estimates for the CADC had increased from Rs. 141.81 crore in 2023-24 to over Rs. 169.39 crore in 2026-27. He also said that a Group or Cadre Review Committee has been constituted in 2024 under the Chief Secretary to examine the administrative structure of the Autonomous District Councils and recommend reforms in recruitment, service rules and governance. Lalsawivunga further said the state government had submitted a proposal to the Centre seeking direct funding for the three Autonomous District Councils in the state and the extension of anti-defection law provisions to them. He urged the new Executive Committee to maintain financial discipline and assured continued support from the Mizoram government for the council's development. The CADC was placed under the Governor's rule for a year between 7 July 2025 and July 7, 2026 due to prolonged political instability caused by frequent change in leadership

Sikkim MP presses Centre on border road project

Itanagar, July 09: Sikkim MP Indra Hang Subba on Wednesday urged the Centre to expedite a key road project along the India-Nepal border and sought to know the progress on the long-pending reservation of seats for the Limboo and Tamang tribes in the state assembly.

During a meeting with Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan in New Delhi, Subba submitted a detailed representation highlighting issues, according to a statement from his office.

The MP stressed the need to prioritise the proposed all-weather road linking Border Outpost (BOP) Nambu with Border Pillar 34/1 and extending to BOP Hanspokhri. He said the project is crucial for improving India-Nepal border.

Subba, the state's lone Lok Sabha MP, Tamang Scheduled Tribes in the state assembly. The Limboo and Tamang communities were included in the Scheduled Tribes list in 2003, but reservation of assembly seats for them has remained unresolved for over two decades.

Central visits Arunachal's flood-hit Keyi Panyor to assess damage

Itanagar, July 09: An Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) on Wednesday visited Arunachal Pradesh's flood-hit Keyi Panyor district to assess the damage caused and evaluate the need for additional central assistance, officials said. The team, led by Ministry of Home Affairs Joint Secretary Nishtha Tiwari, was accompanied by state Disaster Management Secretary Dani Salu during the visit, they said. The delegation travelled from state capital Itanagar to the district by road, inspecting landslide-hit stretches and road breaches along the way that have disrupted connectivity in the region, they added. The team later visited the worst-affected areas, including the Posa NEEPCO Colony and Posa village, to take stock of the destruction caused by the floods. On June 24, a cloudburst triggered flash floods and landslides in the district, killing three people while two others remain missing. The disaster also damaged the NEEPCO colony, houses, government buildings and other infrastructure.

Following the field visit, the IMCT held a review meeting with Keyi Panyor Deputy Commissioner



Shweta Nagarkoti, SP Anagad Mehta, and public representatives.

During the meeting, Nagarkoti briefed the team on the extensive damage to public infrastructure, losses in the agriculture sector and the district's immediate relief and rehabilitation requirements, officials said. The team's ground assessment will form the basis of its report to the Ministry of Home Affairs, which will determine the quantum of additional central financial assistance to be provided to Arunachal Pradesh for reconstruction efforts, they said. Two Bihar labourers killed, four injured in landslide at Arunachal construction site

Itanagar, Jul 8 (PTI): Two labourers from Bihar

were killed and four others injured after a landslide triggered by incessant rain hit a construction site in Arunachal Pradesh's Lohit district, police said on Wednesday. The incident happened around 12.45 pm on Tuesday at Lohitpur, SP Thutan Jamba said. The deceased were identified as Bipin Kumar (33) and Rahul Kumar (26), he said.

Police and rescue teams pulled out four other labourers who had been trapped under the debris.

One of them sustained serious injuries and is undergoing treatment at the Lohit Zonal General Hospital, police said.

A case of unnatural death has been registered at Tezu police station in connection with the incident, they said.

Chief Minister, and other officials pay their last respects to the fallen personnel of the Assam Rifles

Imphal, July 09: Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla and chief minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Wednesday paid their last respects to two Assam Rifles personnel who were killed in an ambush in Ukhrul district on July 6. A solemn wreath-laying ceremony for the martyred paramilitary personnel was held at Imphal Airport before their mortal remains were sent to their respective native states. The ceremony was conducted with full military honours.

The two personnel were killed in a deadly ambush by suspected militants armed with sophisticated weapons on a convoy of the 40 Assam Rifles along NH-202 (Imphal-Ukhrul Road) near Nungshang Kong (Lungshang River) under Ukhrul police



station on the afternoon of July 6. The martyred personnel were Warrant Officer (general duty) Balwant Singh and Havildar (driver) Chandra Mohan Singh of the 40th Battalion, Assam Rifles.

Bhalla paid his last respect to the

two personnel who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty while laying wreath on their mortal remains at Imphal Airport this morning.

Chief minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh also offered floral

wreaths and observed a moment of silence in memory of the fallen soldiers, paying tribute to their courage, dedication and supreme sacrifice in the service of the nation. A ceremonial guard of honour was accorded to the slain personnel as officers and personnel of the Army, Assam Rifles and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) paid their final respects.

Among those present were home minister Govindas Konthoujam, some MLAs, state security advisor Kuldiep Singh, general officer commanding (GOC) 3 Corps Lt Gen. Girish Kalia, Inspector General Assam Rifles (South) Major General Gaurav Sharma, senior civil and police officials, and senior officers of the Army, Assam Rifles and CAPF.

SEWA Nagaland oppose extortion; safeguard vendors' rights

Dimapur, July 09: An emergency meeting between the Street Vendors Association Nagaland (SVAN) and the Self Employed Women's Association Nagaland (SEWA Nagaland) was held at Hotel Grand Tizu, Dimapur, on July 7, 2026 where both organisations agreed on shared principles to oppose extortion, harassment and forced evictions of street vendors. According to a press release from SVAN, representatives led by president Kughato Zhimo and general secretary Dr. Subonglemba Aier, along with other office bearers, and SEWA representatives led by president Atoli, deliberated on measures to safeguard the welfare of street vendors across Nagaland. The meeting underscored the importance of coordinating with legal authorities to protect livelihoods and rights under the Street Vendors Act, 2019, and



the rules and schemes mandated in Nagaland. It also highlighted the need to empower street vendors—particularly women and vulnerable groups—by engaging with local authorities and the Town Vending Committees of each district. Both organisations reaffirmed their commitment to promoting the well being and dignity of street vendors throughout Nagaland.

After 158 years, a rare Himalayan flower was found again in Arunachal



Itanagar, July 09: After 158 years, *Cyananthus hookeri*, a rare Himalayan blooming plant, was found again in the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh. This is the plant’s first confirmed discovery in India since it was last collected in Sikkim in 1867. According to officials at the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) office here, the rediscovery was made by BSI scientists during a field survey near Chuna Valley, close to Mago village in Tawang district, at an elevation of about 3,600 meters. The worldwide conservation

journal *Oryx* has reported on the discovery. According to researchers, the purple-blue flowering species *Cyananthus hookeri*, which is a member of the bell-flower family (*Campanulaceae*), was last observed in India in 1867 in Sikkim by famous British botanist Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker.

In addition to being the first time the species has been found in India in over 150 years, the most recent finding also marks the species’ first confirmed presence in Arunachal Pradesh. Because of its extremely limited range and ongoing

population decline, scientists have recommended that the species be listed as Endangered nationally under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria. They have observed fewer than 50 mature individuals of the species in India. The species is abundant in Bhutan, China, Nepal, Tibet, and other parts of the eastern Himalayas, but it is still quite rare in India, according to the experts. It is anticipated that the finding would aid in future conservation planning and mobilize efforts to save the species’ delicate alpine habitats. During botanical exploration in September of last year, BSI scientists Subhajit Lahiri, Monalisa Das, and Sudhansu Sekhar Dash discovered the plant growing on alpine grassland and rocky slopes. The species’ vulnerable situation was highlighted by the researchers’ discovery of only a few mature and immature plants at the location.

Tirupati is shocked by a wedding dispute and a double murder on the road

Tirupati, July 09: The temple town of Tirupati has been rocked by a double murder at a wedding site. Knives were allegedly used to attack two men after a fight about a wedding. One guy passed away instantly, and another died from his wounds while being transported to the hospital. Munirathnam Reddy, 50, of Jeevakona and Manikanta, 50, of Subba Reddy Nagar in Tirupati, have been identified as the victims. The incident happened close to a marriage hall on Tiruchanur Road in Tirupati at approximately 9:40 p.m., according to police. Munirathnam was dead and Manikanta was in critical condition when the cops arrived. He died while receiving treatment at Sri Venkateswara Ramnarain Ruia Government General Hospital after being transferred there right away. Police are reviewing local CCTV footage and confirming eyewitness footage. One of the videos has become very popular. The deaths were allegedly connected to a family conflict, according to preliminary investigations. Sunil from Jangalapalli hamlet in Yerpedu mandal, along with his brother, sister, and another

relative, are suspected by police of carrying out the attack. Sources claim that Sunil and his wife had been living apart for a number of years. According to reports, Sampurnamma, his mother-in-law, learned that Sunil was going to a wedding on Wednesday night at Padmavathi Kalyana Mandapam. She told Munirathnam and Manikanta, the victims who had set up her daughter’s marriage. According to reports, Sunil was confronted by the two guys at the marriage hall and questioned about supposedly deserting his wife. Sunil’s family apparently joined him during the altercation, which intensified the conflict. According to the police, the accused used knives to strike Munirathnam and Manikanta before running away. According to sources, the accused were apprehended for interrogation after being located before they could depart Tirupati. Inspector Srinivasulu of Tirupati East Circle stated that although the precise cause of the altercation was still being looked into, preliminary information suggested that a family conflict may have been the catalyst.

At Vikas Sadan in Gurugram, Haryana starts testing a filterless outdoor air purifier

New Delhi, July 09: In order to evaluate its efficacy in lowering localized particulate pollution, the Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) installed a particulate matter reduction (PAMARES) system, a filterless outdoor air purifier, at Vikas Sadan in Gurugram on a trial basis. Over the next few weeks, officials plan to track changes in PM2.5 and PM10 levels, according to officials. To track variations in the local air quality, the device was placed a short distance from Vikas Sadan’s Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Station (CAAQMS). The device is the first of its kind to be put in conjunction with an air quality sensor in Haryana as part of a trial. A senior official with knowledge of the development stated that data from air quality monitoring over the coming weeks will be used to evaluate its efficacy. The purifier, which is situated at least six feet above the ground, gathers dust on its metal surface by leveraging ambient and natural air movement to charge and transfer the particulate matter into the ionization zone. According to officials, the test results will reveal if the purifier can absorb and lessen the concentrated presence of particulate matter, including PM2.5 and PM10. To remove dust from the roads and lower localized emissions, the city uses trucks or mechanical road sweepers. Although the city has 20 road sweepers of its own, the Clean Air Action Plan created for 2026 effectively covers all city roads with an additional 52. “The purifier will capture particulate particles within a 300 square meter radius of its installation. The senior official, who asked to remain anonymous, stated, “It is placed in hotspots where the PM levels are typically relatively high.” The official stated that the purifier eliminates noise pollution in the region by running on little electricity and having no fans or filters. The board will aim to expand its deployment to other areas and districts based on the trial’s results. The equipment, which only needs to be periodically cleaned of collected dust, will be installed and maintained by a private company.

In Kaliabor, a land broker scam has resumed, defrauding a couple of Rs 18 lakh

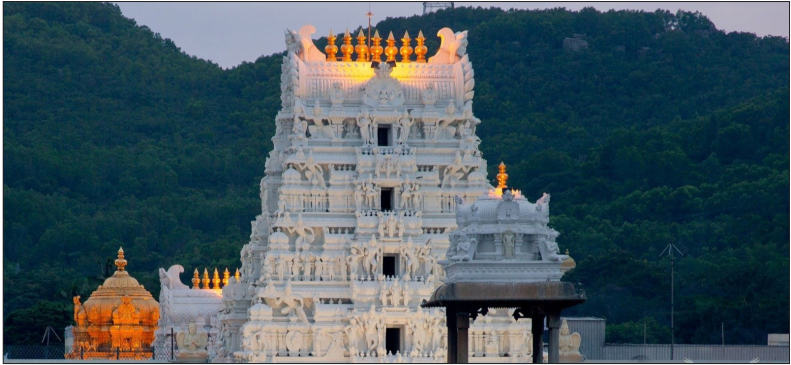


Kaliabor, July 09: Locals reported that a land broker syndicate has resumed operations in Kaliabor after going underground following the BJP-led state government’s stern stance against such rackets during its second term. Even within the Kaliabor Revenue Circle Office, a sector of brokers has reportedly reappeared. Many people have lost their hard-earned money as a result. The most recent incidence was discovered in the Kaliabor Revenue Circle’s Jakhlabandha town region under Chatiyal Mouza. In the guise of selling someone else’s land, two brothers allegedly defrauded a local businessman of Rs 18 lakh. A “main person of RSS in Kaliabor” was the accusation made by one of the accused, while the other identified himself as a portal journalist. The primary culprit, Bhaskar Singh, a land dealer, has revealed the ways in which the racket functions in Kaliabor. According to the facts at hand, Bhaskar Singh created fictitious sale deeds for 1 kotha 10 lecha of land in Chatiyal Mouza, Jakhlabandha

town, under Dag No. 231 of Myadi Patta No. 166, saying it belonged to Rajeev Rajkonwar and Dipali Borgohain. In a same vein, pretending to have a Power of Attorney, he produced a fictitious contract to sell one kotha of land under Dag No. 110 of Myadi Patta No. 126 in Chatiyal Mouza. Ankit Jain, the husband of Priyanshi Gogoi of Jakhlabandha, was robbed of Rs 18 lakh by Bhaskar Singh and his brother Aditya Singh using both agreements. Ankit Jain, a merchant and gas station employee in Jakhlabandha, purchased two bigha 10 lecha of land from two plots under his wife Priyanshi Gogoi’s name. On May 2, 2025, Bhaskar Singh collected Rs 18 lakhs from him and prepared the required paperwork at the Jakhlabandha Sub-Registrar Office. Additionally, he prepared agreement deeds using a Kaliabor subdivision notary. When Bhaskar Singh showed Ankit Jain the land, which was actually owned by other patta holders, the scam became apparent. When the actual owners were reached, they were taken aback and informed Jain that they were unaware of any sales.

On June 30, Priyanshi Gogoi filed a formal complaint at the Jakhlabandha Police Station. Aditya Singh and Bhaskar Singh’s homes were visited by police, but they have not yet been taken into custody. According to reports, both are actively evading capture. The Jakhlabandha Police’s next move against the land brokers is yet unknown.

VIP Break Darshans are cancelled on certain periods from July to September, according to Tirumala Temple



New Delhi, July 09: Due to a number of forthcoming festivals and religious events, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) stated on Thursday that VIP Break Darshans at the Srivari Temple will not be held on a number of specific dates between July and September 30, 2026. The Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) of TTD said in a statement that the decision was made to manage the large number of common devotees during these auspicious times and to make

it easier to carry out customary rites. Due to Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam on July 14, Anivara Asthanam on July 17, Pedda Maryada to the Swamiji of Sri Andavan Ashramam on July 19, and Chaturmasya Sankalpam of the Tirumala Jeeyar Swamijis on July 29, VIP Break Darshans will not take place in July.

In August, the darshan will be cancelled on the second day of the Pavitrotsavams on August 24 for Pavitra Samarpana and on August 22 for

Ankurarpanam. The darshan will be cancelled on September 8 for Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam in conjunction with Srivari Brahmotsavams and on September 14 for Ankurarpanam.

These restrictions will continue into September. Most significantly, during the Srivari Brahmotsavams, which are set to occur from September 15 to September 23, 2026, VIP Break Darshans will be totally suspended.

The guidelines for recommendation letters at these times have also been made clear by the TTD administration. “On the day preceding the above-mentioned dates, VIP recommendation letters will not be accepted, except for the Protocol Dignitaries,” the temple authority said. When making travel plans to the hill shrine, pilgrims are advised by temple administrators to remember these particular dates. “Devotees are requested to take note of these restrictions while planning their pilgrimage to Tirumala and cooperate with TTD,” the notification said.

Rain causes traffic jams, uprooted trees, and flooded roads around Delhi-NCR

New Delhi, July 09: The weather department’s three-hour “red alert” warning for the day was highlighted when Delhi woke up on Thursday to gray skies, uprooted trees, and flooded roads from the rain that fell overnight and this morning. Additionally, districts in the larger National Capital Region (NCR), including Ghaziabad, Noida, Meerut, and Gurugram, where more intense rainfall is anticipated during the day, were under an orange alert. According to the India Meteorological Department, the Safdarjung weather station recorded 72.6 mm of rainfall during a 24-hour period ending at 8.30 am. During that time, the Lodhi Road station recorded 80.2 mm, the Ridge 77.8 mm, and the Palam 63 mm. Mayur Vihar (103 mm) and Delhi University (90 mm) had the highest readings in Delhi, followed by Kamala Mehru Nagar in Ghaziabad (164 mm) and Hindon (134 mm), Tanda in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Noida (62 mm), and NorthCap University and Krishna Vigyan Kendra (KVK) stations in Gurugram (27 mm and 36 mm, respectively). The lowest recorded temperature was 24.3 degrees Celsius, which is 3.6 degrees below average. Hours of nonstop rain interrupted everyday schedules throughout the city, especially in affluent neighborhoods, and caused hectic commutes for office workers. One tree collapsed outside the National Heart Institute, and two trees were uprooted east of Kailash. “The incident occurred on Raja Dhir Singh

Marg,” resident Karan Agarwal told news agency ANI. The tree fell sometime between 2:30 and 3 in the morning. There are a number of reasons why trees fall, including encroachment and concrete paving. A commercial car was crushed beneath this tree today, and at least two or three more trees have fallen on this road. “In Noida, Uttar Pradesh’s Sector 6, another tree collapsed. Other areas of Noida were also inundated by torrential rain. Videos of waterlogging outside Sector 45’s Anrapali Sapphire residential complex were circulated online. Additionally, severe waterlogging caused enormous traffic delays in Gurugram, with the Cyber City business district being among the worst affected, and traffic on the Delhi-Noida Expressway slowed to a crawl.

The Delhi-Meerut Expressway was also congested. Traffic disruptions led companies to advise employees to work from home due to severe rainfall in Gurugram, where the drainage system “virtually collapsed” after 115 mm of rain fell within two days. Meteorologists attributed this to the monsoon trough’s northward shift and warned of continued heavy rainfall. The rains lowered temperatures and improved Delhi’s air quality, with an AQI of 61. In Maharashtra, heavy rainfall caused three deaths and hundreds of evacuations in Thane, alongside incidents such as a building collapse in Pune, highway closures, and gas cylinders being swept away in floods.

Rain and a garbage pile caused a building in Pune to collapse, trapping nine people



Mumbai, July 09: After a three-story building in Moshi Pradhikaran, Pune, fell on Wednesday afternoon, rescue workers are attempting to get in touch with nine people who are still buried beneath the rubble. In the midst of intense downpour, a “mountain-like” mass of trash next door collapsed and crashed into the building, trapping 23 people inside. Nine people were rescued from beneath the rubble by 8 p.m., while five people were able to escape the fallen structure on their own. For medical care, the rescued people were transferred to local hospitals. Employees of a renewable energy company that collaborates with the district government to manage a 14 MW power plant in the area were among those stranded, according to officials. According to reports, the building served as the company’s administrative office. Deputy Commissioner of Police Ganesh Ingale told reporters that a multi-agency rescue operation involving personnel from the National Disaster Response Force, the Army,

and the local police and fire departments is in progress to save the remaining individuals. Rescue cameras (placed on flexible fiber-optic cables that may be inserted through fissures) and listening devices that can pick up sounds like tapping or scratching from beneath rubble heaps are among the specific tools used in the operation. Medical personnel and heavy equipment, such as earth movers, have also been sent in. While Maharashtra Water Resources and Disaster Management Minister Girish Mahajan visited the scene and assessed the situation, Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Commissioner Dr. Vijay Suryawanshi and Police Commissioner Vinaykumar Choubey are keeping an eye on the rescue effort. In the meantime, Maharashtra is still experiencing unrelenting monsoon rains, which are seriously interfering with daily living in Mumbai, Thane, Palghar, Pune, Nashik, and the larger Konkan region. Over the past week, there have been numerous rain-related incidents, including the temporary suspension of the recently opened “missing link” stretch of the Pune-Mumbai Expressway due to a landslide, severe waterlogging, landslides, and transportation problems. A protection slab and a portion of a retaining wall close to the tunnel entrance were damaged when rocks, mud, and debris obstructed the section. While debris clearance efforts were underway, traffic was redirected. Now that the part is accessible again, drivers are advised to drive carefully.

Heavy rain causes Ghaziabad Road to cave, causing an SUV and a scooter to fall into a pit

New Delhi, July 09: In Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, after a lot of rain, a car and a scooter fell into a pit. Since yesterday, Delhi-NCR has been experiencing nonstop rain, which has resulted in flooded roads, traffic jams, and falling trees. A portion of the road near Atal Chowk in Vasundhara collapsed this morning due to persistent rain. Two cars fell into the hole as a result of the earth giving way due to soil from the adjacent building site slipping. The



incident did not result in any injuries. The two cars parked next to the building site

along the road are visible in the incident site photos. The two cars are still being overtaken by debris. The police were informed and traffic was brought to a halt for some time. The two vehicles are currently being pulled out using a hydraulic crane. The car, a Tata Punch, bears a registration number of Haryana. The scooter has not been identified yet. In 24 hours (between 8:30 am on Wednesday and 8:30 am on Thursday), Kamla Nehru Nagar in Gha-

ziabad recorded 164 mm of rainfall and Hindon reported 134 mm of rainfall. For a number of Uttar Pradesh districts, including Agra, Aligarh, Baghpat, Bulandshahr, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Ghaziabad, Hapur, Hathras, Mathura, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, and Shamli, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an orange alert, warning of thunderstorms and lightning with gusty winds of 40–60 kmph and moderate rain.

PM Modi Calls on Australian Companies to Invest in India



New Delhi, July 09: On Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged a speedier conclusion of the proposed Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) to strengthen bilateral economic ties while promoting India as a long-term investment destination for Australian companies, claiming that the country’s size and Australia’s experience make for a “win-win proposition.” Speaking alongside Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at the Australia-India CEOs Forum and the Economic Roadmap Business here, PM Modi stated that India’s robust economic growth, policy reforms, digital transformation, and growing innovation ecosystem are opening up new opportunities for Australian businesses.

He highlighted investment opportunities in manufacturing, clean energy, critical minerals, mining, infrastructure, urban development, aviation, logistics, advanced technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), fintech, food processing, and the digital economy to highlight the complementarities between the two economies. Australia’s experience and India’s size make for a win-win situation,” he stated. Additionally, the Prime Minister encouraged Australian investors to consider long-term investment opportunities in India.

Additionally, PM Modi applauded the increasing number of Australian universities in India, stating that greater cooperation in higher education, research, innovation,

and skill development would equip both nations’ potential for future international prospects. Later, PM Modi referred to India and Australia as “natural partners” whose shared democratic values, common Indo-Pacific vision, strong people-to-people ties, and political understanding provide a solid foundation for expanding business cooperation during his speech at the Economic Roadmap Business event, which was attended by more than 200 CEOs and business leaders from both nations. PM Modi urged for the early conclusion of the proposed CECA to advance bilateral economic connections, expressing pleasure with the progress in trade and investment under the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) inked in 2022. In crucial areas including rare earths, lithium, batteries, electronics, electric vehicles (EVs), semiconductors, artificial intelligence (AI), and defense supply chains, he called on corporate executives to take use of the complementing strengths of both nations and work together to build global solutions.

PM Modi added that it was critical for Australian provinces and Indian states to establish dynamic economic collaborations based on their respective core competencies in order for bilateral business ties to advance to the next level.

The two leaders spoke together at the Economic Roadmap Business event in Melbourne and the Australia-India CEOs Forum.

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A Library Is More Than a Building

For many people, a library is simply a place to borrow books. In reality, it is one of the few public spaces that welcomes everyone without expecting them to buy anything. Libraries provide students with quiet study areas, job seekers with access to information, and com-

munities with opportunities for learning and discussion. As digital platforms expand, the role of libraries is changing rather than disappearing. A society that invests in libraries is investing in informed citizens, equal opportunity, and lifelong learning.

Le Pen’s Populist Rise and France’s Political Future

Marine Le Pen’s continued political survival after her legal troubles has intensified a debate about the future direction of French democracy and the growing influence of populist movements across Europe. Her decision to continue pursuing the presidency despite a conviction has transformed the issue from a legal controversy into a major political confrontation. For her supporters, the case represents a battle between ordinary voters and what they describe as an established system determined to block their movement. For her critics, it raises serious questions about respect for democratic institutions and the rule of law.

The court’s decision created an unusual political situation. While maintaining the seriousness of the conviction, the ruling reduced the immediate consequences that could have prevented Le Pen from competing in the next presidential election. This allowed her to argue that the final decision should belong to voters rather than institutions. Le Pen quickly presented herself as a candidate determined to defend the choice of the French people, turning the legal dispute into a broader argument about political legitimacy.

This strategy reflects a wider pattern seen among populist leaders, including Britain’s Nigel Farage. Although their political contexts are different, both have relied on a similar message: that they represent ordinary citizens against powerful institutions. Populist movements often gain strength by portraying courts, parliaments, governments, and other established bodies as disconnected from public concerns. By framing conflicts with institutions as struggles between “the people” and “the establishment,” such leaders transform criticism into a source of political energy.

However, Le Pen’s potential return to the presidential race carries wider implications because of the power of the French presidency. Unlike many European parliamentary systems, France’s political structure gives the president significant authority over national direction, foreign policy, and security matters. A Le Pen victory would therefore have consequences far beyond domestic politics, potentially reshaping France’s relationship with the European Union and its approach to international affairs.

One major concern among her opponents is that Le Pen has historically taken a more confrontational approach toward European institu-

tions than some newer figures within her party. While younger leaders such as Jordan Bardella have gained popularity among voters, Le Pen remains the central figure of the National Rally because of her experience and long-standing connection with the party’s transformation from a fringe movement into a major political force. Her supporters see her as a seasoned leader capable of challenging the political establishment, while critics fear that she could use presidential authority to weaken democratic checks and balances.

The question of Bardella’s future has also become increasingly important. At only 30 years old, he represents a younger generation of populist politics and has attracted strong support among voters. However, a presidential campaign requires intense political experience, especially during high-pressure debates and international scrutiny. Whether he could replace Le Pen successfully remains uncertain, creating potential tensions within the National Rally over leadership and strategy.

The broader political environment has made Le Pen’s path more realistic than in previous elections. In 2017, she faced significant obstacles and was defeated comfortably by Emmanuel Macron. In 2022, however, the gap narrowed, showing that her movement had expanded its appeal among voters dissatisfied with traditional parties. Years of economic frustration, political divisions, concerns about immigration, and declining trust in institutions have created conditions in which populist messages have become increasingly powerful.

Le Pen’s opponents now face the difficult task of presenting a united alternative. The French left remains divided, while the mainstream right continues to search for a clear identity and leadership strategy. Political disputes and internal rivalries have weakened efforts to create a single credible challenger capable of defeating her in a second-round presidential contest.

The challenge for French democracy is therefore not only whether Le Pen can win but whether other political forces can offer a convincing alternative. Populist movements often succeed when voters feel that existing parties are unable to address their concerns. Defeating such movements requires more than criticism; it requires credible leadership, effective policies, and a renewed connection between institutions and citizens.

From Negotiation to Confrontation: Why Tehran and Washington Struggle to Rebuild Trust

From Tehran’s perspective, the deterioration of relations with Washington cannot be understood as the result of a single disagreement or isolated diplomatic incident. Iranian officials have argued that the difficulties surrounding recent negotiations reflect a much deeper pattern in which political commitments are frequently overshadowed by strategic competition. In their view, the central problem has been a lack of confidence that the United States is prepared to treat diplomatic agreements as long-term commitments rather than temporary arrangements shaped by changing political circumstances.

According to Iranian officials, the purpose of negotiations was not limited to resolving immediate disputes but was intended to establish a broader framework for rebuilding trust between the two countries. Tehran has maintained that successful diplomacy requires gradual confidence-building measures, including economic incentives, respect for sovereignty, and a reduction in hostile rhetoric. However, Iranian policymakers argue that continued sanctions, military warnings, and political pressure created an environment in which diplomatic engagement became increasingly fragile. From this perspective, agreements cannot remain stable if one side expects concessions while continuing actions that the other side considers threatening or coercive.

The question of economic relief has remained one of the most important elements in Tehran’s assessment of diplomatic progress. Iranian leaders have repeatedly emphasized that

sanctions relief and access to financial resources are not symbolic issues but essential components of any meaningful agreement. They argue that economic measures directly influence Iran’s ability to participate in international trade, attract investment, support domestic industries, and address economic challenges. For Tehran, economic benefits are viewed as a necessary demonstration that diplomacy can produce practical results rather than simply political statements.

Iranian officials have therefore expressed frustration when expected economic measures were delayed, restricted, or interpreted differently by Washington. From Tehran’s viewpoint, limitations on financial relief suggested that the United States remained committed to maintaining leverage rather than fully implementing the spirit of diplomatic understandings. Iranian policymakers argued that such an approach weakened public confidence in negotiations and strengthened voices within Iran that questioned whether engagement with Washington could deliver reliable outcomes.

The economic dispute also reflected a broader disagreement over the role of sanctions in international diplomacy. The United States has traditionally viewed sanctions as a tool to encourage changes in government policies, while Iran has described many sanctions as a form of economic pressure designed to limit its independence and influence. Tehran has argued that sanctions affect ordinary economic activity and make diplomatic compromise more difficult by creating domestic political

pressure against negotiations. Washington, however, has maintained that economic restrictions are connected to concerns over security, regional behavior, and other policy issues.

Beyond economic disagreements, the dispute highlighted fundamental differences in how Iran and the United States view regional security. Tehran has sought recognition of what it describes as its legitimate security interests and regional role. Iranian officials have argued that Iran’s policies are shaped by concerns about foreign military presence near its borders, historical conflicts, and the need for strategic deterrence. From this perspective, efforts by Washington and its allies to restrict Iran’s regional activities are viewed as attempts to weaken Iran’s influence and reduce its ability to respond to perceived threats.

The United States and its partners have offered a different interpretation, expressing concerns about Iran’s regional activities, military partnerships, and influence in neighboring countries. Washington has argued that its policies are designed to address security challenges and protect allies in the region. This disagreement has remained one of the most difficult obstacles in bilateral relations because both sides approach regional stability from fundamentally different assumptions.

For Tehran, American military partnerships and deployments throughout the Middle East represent a continuing source of concern. Iranian officials have frequently argued that Washington applies unequal standards by criticizing Iran’s regional

involvement while maintaining extensive military cooperation with its allies. They contend that security arrangements in the region should not be defined solely by American and allied interests but should include the concerns of all regional actors.

The issue of maritime security has added another layer of complexity to the relationship. The Gulf region and the Strait of Hormuz hold significant strategic importance because of their role in international energy transportation. Tehran views the waterway as a critical part of its national security environment and has emphasized its historical and geographic connection to the region. Iranian officials have argued that any actions involving maritime routes are intended to protect national interests and maintain security rather than permanently disrupt global commerce.

However, Washington and regional partners have expressed concerns that increased Iranian control or influence over maritime activity could create uncertainty for international shipping. They have emphasized the importance of freedom of navigation and the uninterrupted movement of commercial vessels. The disagreement over maritime security therefore reflects a larger competition over who has the authority to shape security arrangements in one of the world’s most strategically important waterways.

The debate over shipping routes and maritime control demonstrates how broader geopolitical competition often becomes concentrated in specific practical issues. For Tehran, maritime policy is closely connected to sovereignty, deterrence,

and national security. For Washington, maritime access is connected to international trade, energy security, and regional stability. These competing perspectives have contributed to repeated periods of tension even when diplomatic channels remain open.

The erosion of trust between Iran and the United States has also been shaped by decades of historical grievances. Tehran frequently points to previous experiences with foreign pressure and argues that American policies have often sought to limit Iran’s independence. Iranian officials have used these historical experiences to explain why they remain cautious about relying on American commitments.

At the same time, Washington has emphasized its own concerns regarding Iran’s policies and regional activities. American officials have argued that pressure on Tehran is connected to security considerations rather than an effort to undermine Iran as a nation. This fundamental disagreement over intentions has made compromise difficult because each side often interprets the other’s actions through a lens of suspicion.

The result has been a cycle in which diplomatic opportunities are repeatedly affected by political tensions, economic disputes, and security concerns. Even when representatives from both sides engage in negotiations, progress can be disrupted by actions outside the negotiating room, including sanctions decisions, military statements, regional conflicts, and domestic political pressures.

For Tehran, the failure to achieve expected outcomes reinforces the argument that American commitments are

unreliable and that greater self-reliance is necessary. Iranian officials have argued that future agreements must include stronger guarantees and clearer mechanisms to prevent unilateral changes in policy. They maintain that diplomacy can only succeed when both sides believe that commitments will be respected over time.

For Washington, however, any diplomatic arrangement must address broader concerns about regional security and Iran’s strategic activities. American policymakers have argued that agreements cannot focus only on economic issues while ignoring other areas of disagreement. This difference in priorities has remained a central challenge in efforts to improve relations.

The dispute surrounding the memorandum and its implementation therefore represents more than a disagreement over specific provisions. It reflects a larger struggle over the future structure of relations between Iran and the United States. Tehran views the issue as evidence of the dangers of relying on American promises without stronger protections, while Washington views it through the broader framework of security concerns and regional strategy.

As a result, the future of engagement remains uncertain. Diplomatic communication continues to be possible, but rebuilding trust requires addressing not only immediate disputes but also the deeper political and strategic differences that have shaped the relationship for decades. Without progress on those underlying issues, future negotiations may continue to face the same obstacles that have repeatedly limited cooperation between the two countries.

The Great British Reform Dilemma: Too Frustrated to Accept the Status Quo, Too Cautious to Change It

Britain’s current political dilemma is defined by a contradiction that has become increasingly difficult to ignore: many citizens express deep dissatisfaction with the state of the country, yet major attempts at reform are frequently met with warnings that change is too costly, too disruptive, or too dangerous. The result is a political environment where frustration with the status quo grows alongside resistance to the very policies that seek to challenge it. Governments promise transformation, voters demand improvement, but powerful institutions often respond by emphasizing the risks of change rather than the risks of continuing with existing arrangements.

The debate over reform in Britain has always been shaped by competing interpretations of risk. In some cases, concerns about major decisions have been justified. History has shown that political choices can produce unexpected consequences, and caution can sometimes prevent serious mistakes. However, the concept of risk is not always neutral. What is considered dangerous or unrealistic often depends on who benefits from the current system, who has influence over public debate, and whose concerns receive the greatest attention.

Political risk is frequently determined not only by economic calculations but also by social power. A policy that threatens established interests may quickly be portrayed as unrealistic, while policies that maintain existing inequalities may be described as practical or responsible. In this way, debates about reform are not simply arguments over money or administration; they are also struggles over whose priorities shape the national conversation.

One example of this dynamic can be seen in discussions about public spending and national security.

Concerns about future threats have become increasingly central to debates about defence budgets, with arguments often made that Britain must prepare for possible conflicts and strengthen military capabilities. Supporters of increased defence spending argue that national security requires long-term investment, while critics question whether security concerns are being used to justify reductions in other areas, including social support and public services.

The debate reveals a broader question about how Britain defines security. For some, security means military strength and the ability to respond to external threats. For others, security also includes economic stability, affordable housing, functioning healthcare, education, and protection against poverty. The disagreement is not simply about spending priorities but about competing visions of what makes a country resilient.

Britain’s wider political discussion is also shaped by a widespread belief that the country faces multiple crises. Across the political spectrum, there is broad agreement that serious challenges exist. Rising living costs, pressure on public services, housing shortages, economic inequality, weak productivity growth, environmental concerns, and dissatisfaction with political institutions have all become central issues. The persistence of these problems has led many people to conclude that maintaining the status quo is itself a major risk.

Yet despite widespread recognition that change may be necessary, proposals for reform often face immediate resistance. Over recent years, governments and opposition movements with very different ideological approaches have all experienced similar difficulties when attempting to introduce significant changes. Some proposals have been criticized for being too

expensive, others for being too ambitious, and others for creating uncertainty. The common pattern has been that major transformation is frequently treated with suspicion before it has the opportunity to be tested.

Different political movements have faced this challenge in different ways. Left-wing proposals focused on reducing inequality and expanding public ownership have often been criticized by opponents as economically unrealistic. Conservative attempts at reshaping the economy or reforming public services have also faced backlash when they appeared too radical or poorly prepared. Across the political divide, ambitious promises frequently encounter a political system that rewards caution and gradualism.

This creates a difficult environment for leaders who present themselves as agents of change. Citizens who feel ignored or left behind often demand bold solutions, but the same public mood can quickly turn against leaders when reforms create uncertainty or short-term disruption. The desire for improvement exists alongside a fear of the consequences of change. Politicians are therefore trapped between pressure to transform the country and pressure to avoid upsetting existing expectations.

The result is a cycle of disappointment. Voters become frustrated with governments that fail to deliver meaningful improvements, then support alternatives promising a different approach. However, when those alternatives struggle to meet expectations, public dissatisfaction returns. The political system becomes characterized by rapid shifts in opinion and declining confidence in institutions.

This atmosphere is intensified by a

deeper sense of national pessimism. A significant part of public debate increasingly presents Britain as a country in decline, with arguments that its influence, prosperity, and cultural confidence have weakened compared with previous generations. Some commentators suggest that Britain must accept a reduced global role, while others argue that decline is not inevitable and that political choices can still shape the future.

This tension between decline and renewal has become a defining feature of modern British politics. Those who emphasize decline often argue for caution, stability, and the protection of traditional institutions. Those who demand reform argue that avoiding change will only deepen existing problems. The disagreement reflects different beliefs about whether Britain’s challenges are temporary difficulties or signs of deeper structural problems.

Traditional conservative thinking has often placed value on continuity, stability, and gradual evolution. The argument is that societies are complex and that rapid transformation can produce unintended consequences. Supporters of this approach believe that existing institutions contain accumulated knowledge and should not be replaced without careful consideration.

However, critics argue that excessive caution can become an excuse for avoiding necessary reforms. They contend that societies also face risks from refusing to change. Problems such as deteriorating infrastructure, strained public services, economic inequality, and declining opportunities can worsen when governments delay action. From this perspective, preserving the familiar may sometimes create greater long-term instability.

Another important factor is that

not everyone experiences the current system in the same way. Some groups benefit from existing economic and social arrangements and may view major reform as a threat rather than an opportunity. Wealthier homeowners, successful professionals, and those with secure financial positions may have different attitudes toward change compared with people facing rising costs, insecure employment, or limited access to essential services.

This difference in experience influences public debates about reform. Those who are comfortable within the current system may be more likely to emphasize the dangers of disruption, while those struggling within it may see disruption as preferable to continued decline. The question of reform therefore becomes connected to wider debates about fairness, opportunity, and the distribution of resources.

At the same time, instability itself can create opportunities for certain economic actors. Periods of uncertainty can benefit investors and businesses that specialize in purchasing undervalued assets, restructuring companies, or profiting from financial disruption. This does not mean all economic activity during difficult periods is harmful, but it highlights how different groups can experience national problems in very different ways.

Britain’s challenge is therefore not simply a shortage of ideas. The country has experienced repeated debates over how to improve economic performance, strengthen public services, address inequality, and restore confidence in political institutions. The deeper problem is the difficulty of building agreement around the scale and direction of change.

ICICI Securities downgraded stock to ‘Hold’, cut target South Indian Bank share price

Mumbai: ICICI Securities on Thursday said the appointment of Mahesh Pai could bring longevity to the MD and CEO role at South Indian Bank Ltd. The domestic brokerage said it had been positive on the bank’s transformation, driven by a revival in MSME growth, continued cost control and superior asset quality. However, the sustainability of this transformation warrants close monitoring amid the ongoing leadership transition, it said. Citing the ongoing leadership transition, the brokerage downgraded the stock to ‘Hold’ from ‘Buy’. ICICI Securities said that despite the frequent changes in top management, it does not envisage any governance or asset quality issues following the change of guard. It retained its growth and profitability estimates for FY27 and FY28 but conservatively lowered the target multiple to 0.8 times from 1 time earlier, cutting the target price to Rs 45 from Rs 56.



On Friday, South Indian Bank shares were trading 1.44 per cent higher at Rs 44.33 apiece, a day after falling 8.33 per cent. ICICI Securities’ target suggests upside is capped on the counter. Recently, Biji S S, CGM and Head of branch banking, liabilities, chose voluntary retirement to pursue opportunities outside the bank. ICICI Securities

said Pai, currently serving as CGM at Canara, has close to three decades of experience across governance, strategy, treasury, foreign exchange, retail, agriculture and MSME credit. At Canara, Pai has handled multiple strategic initiatives, including the setting up of its gold loan vertical and has headed one of the largest zones. He has also worked in the

overseas branches of the bank. A seamless MD & CEO succession, along with higher-than-expected growth and net interest margin (NIM), are key upside risks for South Indian Bank. On the other hand, a churn in senior management and a rise in the cost-to-income ratio are the key downside risks, ICICI Securities said.

Largecap IT stocks are falling ahead of TCS Q1 results

Mumbai: Largecap IT stocks such as Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) Ltd, Infosys Ltd, HCL Technologies and Tech Mahindra Ltd (TechM) fell up to 3 per cent in Thursday’s trade, while others such as Wipro and LTM were quoting sideways ahead of the kick start of the earnings season. Stocks fell. TCS is scheduled to report its Q1 results later today and many brokerages see tier I IT firms lagging the tier II players this time. Margins for tion and productivity gains. TCS fell 2.06 per cent to Rs 2,016.05 apiece on BSE, taking its year-to-date fall to “Within Tier1 companies, Infosys (up 2.3 per cent CC QoQ) is likely to lead growth, followed by TechM (up 1.2 per cent) while TCS (up 0.1 per cent) is likely to remain stable. HCLT (down 1.1 per cent) and Wipro (down 1.5 per cent) are likely to report a decrease.” Nuvama said. In the case of margin, MOFSL said Infosys, HCL Tech and Tech Mahindra are expected to post only a modest sequential improvement, supported by operating leverage and cost actions.

Valuations reasonable, should you subscribe What GMP hints Laser Power IPO:

Mumbai: The initial public offer (IPO) by Laser Power & Infra Ltd, an integrated power infrastructure company with operations across manufacturing and EPC segments, kicked off for public subscription on Thursday, July 9. The 742-crore issue, which comprised of a fresh issue of Rs 542 crore and offer for sale (OFS) of Rs 200 crore, is being offered in the price band of Rs 203–214 per share, valuing the stock at 25.3 times on a post-issue basis. This is significantly lower valuations than some of its larger peers and in line with peer of similar size. Analysts have ‘Subscribe’ rating on the IPO. “At the upper price band, the company is valued at 19.8 times FY26 EPS and 12.6 times EV/Ebitda, representing a meaningful discount to the listed peer average of approximately 36 times EPS and 24 times EV/Ebitda. The valuation appears reasonable considering the improving business mix and favourable industry outlook,” said DR Choksey Research. Laser Power & Infra plans to utilise the IPO proceeds for debt reduction, which should reduce the interest cost and help improve profitability. SBI Securities recommended investors to ‘Subscribe’ to the issue with a LONG TERM investment horizon. Choice Broking said the proposed utilisation of a significant portion of the fresh issue proceeds towards debt repayment is expected to reduce finance costs, strengthen the balance sheet and further support earnings growth and net profit



margins. Choice said the company is backed by a diversified product portfolio, expanding EPC presence and favourable long-term industry tailwinds driven by rising investments in India’s power transmission and distribution infrastructure. “Laser Power & Infra is well-positioned to sustain its growth trajectory. At the upper price band, the issue is valued at P/E of 19.8x and an EV/Sales of 1.4 times, relative to its listed peers, considering its integrated business model, improving financial profile and deleveraging-led earnings potential. Accordingly, we recommend investors “Subscribe for Long Term,” it said. A total of three of the four promoters participating in the OFS. The brokerage has ‘Subscribe’ rating on the stock. Listed peers of Laser Power & Infra included Apar Industries Ltd, KEI Industries, Polycab India Ltd, Dynamic Cables Ltd and Universal Cables. Swastika Investmart in a note said the

IPO is price at lower valuations than peers like Apar Industries and KEI Industries. It said the company’s order book of Rs 3,243 crore provides healthy revenue visibility for the next 12–18 months. “Subscribe for the medium to long term on attractive valuations, lower debt, and strong sector prospect,” it said. In the grey market, the grey market premium (GMP) for Laser Power was steady at Rs 15 apiece, suggesting a potential listing gain of about 7 per cent for investors. SBI Securities noted that Laser Power & Infra delivered revenue, Ebitda and adjusted profit growth of 15.4 per cent, 39 per cent and 72.5 per cent, respectively between FY24 and FY26. It said the company is a strategically located cable and conductor manufacturer in East India catering to the power transmission segment. “The location advantage along with its partnership with leading global player gives it an edge over its peers,” it said.

AU Bank, Jana SFB, Equitas SFB, Ujjivan Brokerage sees up to 74% upside SFB, Capital SFB shares

Mumbai: Systematix Institutional Equities believes the small finance bank (SFB) sector is nearing a key inflection point, citing provisional Q1 FY27 business updates and recent interactions with management teams. The domestic brokerage said growth remained resilient despite a seasonally weak quarter, while asset quality trends continued to improve. “Growth remains robust and broad-based despite a seasonally weak quarter, asset quality trends continue to improve, coupled with steady margin with (a marginal negative bias) leading to PAT growth of 86 per cent YoY (supported by favourable base effect in Q1 FY26),” Systematix said. “We see no visible signs of a slowdown in underlying credit demand despite concerns around an evolving El Nino and monsoon-related risks (a key monitorable). Reflecting the improving outlook, we raise our FY27/FY28 PAT estimates by 5 per cent/1 per cent on aggregate across our coverage



universe, driven primarily by lower credit cost and higher loan growth assumptions,” it added. “We also roll forward the valuation base year in our excess return framework to FY27, resulting in target price upgrades of 7–17 per cent across our coverage universe,” Systematix also said.

Following the review, the brokerage upgraded AU Small Finance Bank Ltd to ‘Buy’ from ‘Hold’ “With valuations remaining reasonable and return ratios poised for a meaningful recovery, we continue to advocate a basket approach to the sector, while acknowledging the potential for relative outperformance among select

names, as we believe the SFB universe is entering a phase of broad-based rerating over the next 2–3 years,” it stated. Among its preferred picks, Systematix assigned a target price of Rs 1,220 to AU Bank, implying a potential upside of 17 per cent from its assessed market price. The brokerage also maintained ‘Buy’ ratings on Jana Small Finance Bank, Equitas Small Finance Bank, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank and Capital Small Finance Bank. For Jana SFB, it set a target price of Rs 590, indicating a potential upside of 34 per cent. Equitas SFB was assigned a target price of Rs 95, implying a 24 per cent upside. For Ujjivan SFB, Systematix gave a target price of Rs 86, suggesting a potential upside of 43 per cent. Capital SFB emerged as the brokerage’s most optimistic pick, with a target price of Rs 490, implying a potential upside of 74 per cent from its assessed market price

Nissan bets on premium SUV market with TEKTON launch from Rs 10.49 lakh

Mumbai: Nissan Motor India has accelerated its India growth strategy with the global debut of the all-new TEKTON premium C-SUV, priced from Rs 10.49 lakh for the T160 manual range and Rs 14.99 lakh for the T280 variants. The launch marks Nissan’s second product introduction in 2026 and is a key pillar of the company’s resurgence strategy aimed at expanding its presence in India’s high-growth SUV market. Manufactured at Nissan’s Chennai facility under the “One Car, One World” philosophy, the TEKTON will

cater to Indian customers while being exported to markets across the Middle East and Africa, reinforcing India’s position as a global manufacturing and export hub for the Japanese automaker. Targeting the competitive C-SUV segment, the TEKTON offers a 100 per cent turbocharged engine lineup delivering up to 163 PS of power and 280 Nm of torque, paired with six-speed manual and dual-clutch automatic transmission options. The SUV also introduces Google built-in connectivity with

access to more than 200 apps, over 55 connected car features, class-leading 700-litre boot space, premium Japanese-inspired interiors and more than 17 ADAS functions supported by six standard airbags. Nissan said the Patrol-inspired TEKTON has been developed to strengthen its premium SUV portfolio while supporting its long-term growth plans. The company expects the made-in-India model to enhance domestic sales and boost exports as it expands its global footprint from India.

Stock markets slump over 2 pc as rising US-Iran tensions

Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled over 2 per cent on Wednesday after US President Donald Trump said the interim agreement with Iran is over, leading to a sharp rally in crude oil prices. Besides, investors shifted to a risk-off mode following pre-earnings anxiety over sluggish first-quarter forecasts amid a negative trend in global markets, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,677.12 points, or 2.15 per cent, to settle at 76,503.60. During the day, it plummeted 1,921.69 points, or 2.45 per cent, to 76,259.03. A total of 3,211 stocks declined, while 1,070 advanced and 173 remained unchanged on the BSE. On similar lines, the 50-share NSE Nifty tumbled 516.65

points, or 2.12 per cent, to end at 23,882.05. “Indian equity markets witnessed a sharp sell-off as US President Donald Trump declared the interim peace deal with Iran is ‘over’ following Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were major laggards. The BSE MidCap Select index tanked 2.14 per cent, and the Small-Cap Select index dropped 1.61 per cent, jumped 6.18 per cent to USD 78.74 per barrel. Meanwhile, the rupee tanked 59 paise to settle at 95.55 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday. “A global equity market sell-off triggered a massive correction in domestic benchmarks as investors turned risk-averse following a fresh wave of conflict in West Asia. A strong upsurge in crude oil prices, coupled with a sharp fall in the currency against

the dollar, dampened sentiment,” Ankur Punj, MD & Business Head at Equirus Wealth, said. In Asian markets, South Korea’s Kospi tumbled 5.35 per cent, Japan’s Nikkei 225 index declined 2.11 per cent, and Shanghai’s SSE Composite index dipped 0.49 per cent, while Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index jumped 2.99 per cent. European markets were trading significantly lower. US markets ended in negative territory on Tuesday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 393.19 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. In the previous session, fag-end selling dragged the Sensex lower, leading the benchmark to settle 104.35 points, or 0.13 per cent, down at 78,180.72. The Nifty dipped 31.65 points, or 0.13 per cent, to end at 24,398.70.

Earnings timing, dividend, net profit, sales and deal win TCS Q1 results today:

Mumbai: Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) is expected to report a single digit rise in year-on-year (YoY) net profit for the June quarter on 12–14 per cent rise in net sales. Revenue growth in constant currency (CC) terms is seen flattish quarter-on-year (QoQ), reflecting macro headwinds, productivity pass-through in renewed mega-deals and rising AI-led cost reduction expectations from clients. Margin is seen falling sequentially on wage hikes. Deal wins are seen in the \$8–9 billion range. TCS will announce its results after-market trading hours today. The company will also host an earnings conference call at 7 pm IST, during which the leadership team will discuss financial performance and take questions. Antique Stock Broking expects the IT firm to report a 5.9 per cent YoY rise in profit at Rs 13,508 crore on 13.9 per cent YoY jump in sales at Rs 72,246 crore. EBIT Margin is seen at 23.8 per cent, down 150 basis points over March quarter’s 24.5 per cent, thanks to wage hikes implemented during the quarter, coupled with ongoing business re-investments likely offsetting currency-related tailwinds.

Axis Securities sees TCS’ Q1 net profit growing 5.3 per cent YoY to Rs 13,493 crore on 12.6 per cent rise in sales at Rs 71,452 crore. Analysts are largely expecting TCS deal wins in the \$8–9 billion range. Antique Stock Broking said deal activity remains soft as TCV bookings are expected to be at \$8 billion, within the company’s guided range of \$7–9 billion. BNP Paribas said AI- and GenAI-related deal pipeline; an update on the international business outlook; revenue growth and margin outlook for FY27; update on the datacentre business and investments in GenAI partnership are five things investors would be watching this July 9. “We expect investor focus on: (1) any shift in AI deflation assumptions following new model releases by frontier labs; (2) timeline for convergence of growth with peers and key drivers; (3) impact of GCC ramp-up both as competitive intensity and as a growth lever; (4) progress on planned data center investments; (5) strategic priorities for inorganic investments after recent acquisitions; and (6) ability to defend margins amid sustained pricing pressure,” Kotak said. “Amid the uncertain macros and soft demand environment, verticals like BFSI & consumer (particularly travel) are witnessing increased caution; manufacturing is also



facing challenges due to supply chain issues; whereas Energy & Tech remain relatively healthy,” Antique said. Kotak expects TCV of \$8–9 billion, down on yearly basis, due to pricing compression. Sequential moderation would reflect typical seasonality, it said. Flat CC revenue growth QoQ. Nomura India expects TCS to report a flat revenue growth quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) in constant currency (CC) terms as West Asia war likely impacted the growth. The foreign brokerage said all eyes would be on restructuring and its impact on business, client discretionary spend in wake of rising macro volatility in US, impact of AI and ongoing Middle East war on business, cost takeout projects and BFSI vertical. MOFSL expects TCS’ EBIT margin to decline 140 basis points QoQ to 23.9 per cent, largely due to the annual wage hike effective April, partly offset by productivity improvements, operational efficiencies, and favorable currency. “Margins are likely to decline 160bp QoQ hurt by full quarter wage hike partially offset by the currency tailwinds. We shall watch out for the outlook on US macro and BFSI segment growth,” Nuvama Institutional Equities said. BNP Paribas sees a one-time legal expense provision of \$70 million in 1QFY27 as it pegs Ebit margin at 23.8 per cent. TCS dividend. The TCS board would consider declaring an interim dividend for FY27 today. The IT firm had declared an interim dividend of Rs 11 per share in the first quarter of FY26. Rs 10 per share in the first quarter of FY25. Rs 9 per share in the first quarter of FY24 and Rs 8 per share in the first quarter of FY23. Will it announce a higher payout this time? Click here for TCS dividend history. TCS Q1 dividend record date TCS said the interim dividend, if declared, will be paid to the equity shareholders of the IT firm, whose names appear on the Register of Members of the company or in the records of the Depositories as beneficial owners of the shares as on Wednesday, July 15, 2026, which is the record date fixed for the purpose.

Trump to ask US supreme court to reconsider birthright citizenship ruling

America: Donald Trump said on Wednesday he would ask the US supreme court to reconsider its ruling that the 14th amendment to the US constitution guarantees birthright citizenship in light of what he described as shocking new evidence: a hospital in Texas advertising its services to expectant mothers in Mexico on a pair of billboards.

“Signs and Billboards are being put up all over our Southern Border, and Mexico, advertising BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP, with ‘Deliveries starting at \$4000’, the president wrote on his social media platform, in what appeared to be a wild exaggeration of a Fox News report on just two billboards.

The high court last month rejected Trump’s attempt to restrict birthright citizenship in the US, ruling that his directive violated language in the US constitution’s 14th amendment that confers citizenship to those born in the United States who are “subject to the jurisdiction thereof”.

The US supreme court rarely grants requests to rehear cases and has not done so after issuing a ruling in an argued case in decades.

Fox News confirmed this week that a single hospital in Mission, Texas, five miles



from the border with Reynosa, Mexico, had advertised “delivery packages” in south Texas on two Spanish-language billboards in Mexico, and on social media.

The Fox News report was based on a photograph of one billboard posted on social media in April by Mayra Flores, a Trump-backed former Republican congresswoman from Texas who was born in Mexico and is running to return to Congress.

The image has been recirculated recently on social media, as Trump supporters have called for a total and complete shutdown of pregnant women being allowed

to enter the United States after the president’s attempt to deny birthright citizenship to children born to non-citizens in the US was rejected by the supreme court last month. Flores, who said she took the photograph in Reynosa, did not initially claim that the billboard was inviting Mexicans to give birth in the US to obtained US citizenship for their children. She expressed outrage, instead, at the idea that the price of the birthing services – \$3,950 for a natural birth or \$5,525 for a caesarean section – was far lower than the typical cost for American citizens. She offered no proof for her

claim that the prices were available only to foreign citizens at the hospital.

The Texas hospital, Mission Regional Medical Center, told the Guardian that the billboards and a website directed people to, havemybabyinTEXAS.com, “are no longer in use due to any unintended misunderstanding”.

“Mission Regional Medical Center, a public non-profit hospital, is committed to providing high-quality, compassionate healthcare and expanding access for the communities we serve,” the hospital said in a statement. “Like hospitals across the nation, we share information about the healthcare services we provide. We do not support or facilitate any unlawful activity and work to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.”

“The marketing materials regarding maternity services are no longer in use due to any unintended misunderstanding. We intend to work cooperatively and transparently with local and state officials. Our focus remains on delivering safe, high-quality care to every patient who seeks our services.”

While the prospect of US citizenship was not mentioned in the text of the hospital’s billboard advertise-

ment, or on an archived copy of the associated website that is no longer online, the governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, ordered an investigation of the hospital on Tuesday, accusing it of promoting “birth tourism”.

After the backlash this week from furious Trump supporters, the hospital also deleted an Instagram post in Spanish promoting their birthing services, even though it was crafted as an invitation to women “living abroad” who want to give birth in the US, with no mention of citizenship at all. “Are you pregnant, living abroad, and looking to welcome your baby in South Texas?” the Instagram post read, according to a screenshot published by the Houston Chronicle. “Look no further! Come and learn about the maternity packages Mission Regional Medical Center has for you and discover why thousands of families choose to have their baby with us every year.”

Trump, who has repeatedly tested the limits of presidential power in domestic and foreign policy, issued an executive order ending birthright citizenship last year on his first day back in office, as part of a suite of policies to crack down on legal and illegal immigration.

US Launches Retaliatory Strikes on Iran

Washington: The United States launched a series of military strikes against Iranian targets on Tuesday, following attacks on three commercial vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz, marking a sharp escalation in tensions and placing the fragile ceasefire understanding between the two countries under severe strain.

The United States Central Command (CENTCOM) said the operation was carried out in response to what it described as Iranian attacks on commercial shipping in one of the world’s most strategically important maritime corridors. According to the US military, the strikes were intended to impose significant costs for targeting civilian-crewed commercial vessels navigating international waters.

US officials stated that Iran’s actions constituted an unjustified act of aggression and a violation of the interim ceasefire framework agreed upon by both countries.

The military operation was launched only hours after three commercial tankers were reportedly struck by projectiles while sailing through the Strait of Hormuz.

According to multiple international reports, the strikes targeted Iranian military infrastructure, including air defence systems, coastal



surveillance installations, surface-to-air missile batteries, anti-ship cruise missile sites, drone launch facilities and port-related assets. Iranian media reported explosions in Bandar Abbas, Sirik and on Qeshm Island, although Iranian authorities have not released an official assessment of the damage.

The latest military action came shortly after Washington revoked a sanctions waiver that had allowed limited Iranian oil exports under the terms of last month’s interim memorandum of understanding. The waiver had formed part of broader efforts to reduce hostilities and facilitate negotiations between the two sides.

Iran strongly condemned both the withdrawal of the oil waiver and the subsequent military strikes. Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said the United States had violated key provisions of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding and warned

that Tehran would take “decisive actions” to safeguard its national interests and national security.

The renewed confrontation has cast fresh uncertainty over ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at restoring stability in the Gulf region. Negotiations have focused on ensuring the uninterrupted reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, addressing concerns surrounding Iran’s nuclear programme and working towards a durable settlement following months of conflict.

The Strait of Hormuz remains one of the world’s busiest energy transit routes, carrying a substantial share of global crude oil and liquefied natural gas shipments. Any disruption to maritime traffic through the waterway is closely monitored by governments and financial markets because of its potential impact on global energy supplies and regional security.

UK sanctions Russian labs and people over chemical weapons used



London: Britain imposed sanctions Monday on nine Russian people and entities it said developed chemical weapons used to kill opposition leader Alexei Navalny and attack a former spy in England.

The sanctions came the same day the U.K. criticized Russia’s “unsafe” approach to Royal Navy vessels in the Arctic.

The Foreign Office announced sanctions against seven people and two scientific institutes. It says they were involved in creating the epibatidine toxin used to poison Navalny in an Arctic penal colony in 2024 and the Novichok nerve agent used in a 2018 attack in the English city of Salisbury targeting former Russian intelligence officer Sergei Skripal. The attack left Skripal and his daughter seriously ill and a local woman, Dawn Sturgess, dead.

Britain sanctioned the Russian state scientific research institute SC Signal and GNIII VM, the State Scientific Research and Testing Institute for Military Medicine, along with several senior officials and scientists.

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper said that “Russia’s repeated use of chemical weapons is a sickening violation of international law and a direct threat to global security.”

Also on Monday, Britain’s defense ministry released images of U.K. F-35 fighter jets intercepting a Russian Bear-F maritime patrol aircraft that it said approached a British carrier strike group in the Norwegian Sea. HMS Prince of

Wales and other British vessels are in the Arctic as part of NATO operations.

The ministry said that on Thursday, “the Bear-F passed at low altitude and unnecessarily close to HMS Prince of Wales and dropped a large number of sonobuoys in close proximity to the carrier.” The monitoring devices float and use sonar to detect submarines and other vessels. “This activity was unsafe and unprofessional. The Russian aircraft was intercepted and escorted by two UK F-35 jets from HMS Prince of Wales until it left the area,” the defense ministry said in a statement.

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“This activity was unsafe and unprofessional. The Russian aircraft was intercepted and escorted by two UK F-35 jets from HMS Prince of Wales until it left the area,” the defense ministry said in a statement.

It was ‘love at first sight’ with their adopted baby. Then they were told he may have been trafficked

Singapore: When David and Ally first saw Marcus, they knew he was destined to be their son.

“For me it was love at first sight,” said David. Their long adoption journey had come to an end. Months later, the baby from Indonesia was in their arms and the family was ready to start their life together.

But now, years later, they face the possibility of losing Marcus because he is believed to have been trafficked into Singapore.

He is one of at least 20 babies alleged to have been illegally bought in Indonesia for adoption in Singapore in recent years. Nearly two dozen people have been arrested for alleged human trafficking last year and are now on trial in West Java.

This means authorities may have to decide if Marcus and other children, who would by now have spent most of their lives in Singapore, should stay with their adoptive parents or return to their biological parents in Indonesia.

Both countries have yet to state what will happen to the children. For David and Ally, these last few months have been agonising.

The high-profile case has highlighted the enduring problem of child trafficking in Indonesia, fuelled by parents who sell their children.

It has also raised questions over how Singapore - known for its tight controls and meticulous checks - failed to detect the alleged trafficking and even approved some of the adoptions. David and Ally agreed to share their story with the BBC on condition we use pseudonyms, as they fear jeopardising their chance to keep Marcus.

“There’s always the thought that Marcus might be taken away.” David and Ally had always wanted children but after Ally went through several painful miscarriages, they decided to adopt.

But they faced a long wait for a Singaporean child - with one adoption agency giving them a queue number of 142.

So they did what many Singaporeans in this situation do, and looked overseas. An estimated two-thirds of the children adopt-



ed in Singapore every year were born elsewhere, usually in neighbouring countries.

David and Ally chose a local agency that specialised in arranging adoptions of Indonesian babies.

Weeks later, they were peering at a tiny infant held up to the camera, in a video call arranged by the agency.

“What was so special about him that caught our attention? He’s very smart ! He smiled at us,” recalled David.

The couple paid tens of thousands of dollars, a sum they were told would cover agency fees, legal costs, expenses for the child, and a “token sum” for the biological parents.

Within a few months, Marcus was brought over to Singapore. The moment he was placed in their arms, “we felt nervous, scared, but happy,” said David. “We looked at each other and we said...”

Marcus’s adoption in Singapore was approved swiftly, and the final step was to apply for his citizenship. When immigration officials called them in for a meeting, they were expecting good news.

Instead, their lives were upend-

ed. They were told the citizenship application was suspended and that Marcus had possibly been trafficked into Singapore. “I said to them: ‘Didn’t you do your due diligence? You did all the checks, right? You put us through a tough but necessary process, that is why we abided to it’. They could not answer us.”

“A total of 19 people are now on trial in West Java. They are accused of illegally purchasing the children and transferring them overseas for “exploitation” while forging documents to make them look like legal adoptions.

Under Indonesian law, human trafficking can be defined as paying for a person and transferring that person for the purpose of exploitation.

Indonesia also has strict rules and processes for transnational adoptions, which the defendants are alleged to have bypassed.

In court, it was revealed that at least 12 out of the 20 babies had already entered Singapore. Singapore authorities declined to confirm these figures with the BBC.

Prosecutors allege that an Indonesian woman named Lie Siu Luan, who is among those on

trial, is the ringleader.

She has admitted supplying babies for adoption to at least four Singaporean contacts who promised to pay at least 18,000 Singapore dollars (\$14,000; £10,300) for each baby. That’s when I burst,” said David, who felt the Singaporean government should have done more in their checks. Lie is accused of recruiting people to act as brokers, source babies, take care of the infants, and forge documents.

The brokers were said to have trawled social media looking for parents interested in giving up their babies for adoption. In one case, a broker allegedly posed as a woman looking to adopt a baby to convince a man to give up his newborn son.

Once procured, the infants were taken to a house in Pontianak where they were taken care of by hired nannies. Lie also allegedly hired someone specifically to forge birth certificates and adoption documents.

Some members of the trafficking ring allegedly pretended to be the babies’ biological parents on paper. Not only were their names listed in the fake documents, they would also get on video calls

with prospective adopters.

Prosecutors are asking for jail sentences ranging from five to ten years for the defendants. David and Ally have yet to receive official confirmation from authorities that Marcus is one of the allegedly trafficked babies. But the BBC has found clear signs, which have been shared with the couple.

Going through court documents, we found Marcus’s full Indonesian name listed as one of the allegedly trafficked babies. One woman on trial, who is accused of falsely declaring she is the biological mother of some of the babies, is listed as Marcus’s mother in his Indonesian adoption papers.

Separately, the Indonesian branch of Interpol has identified the Singaporean adoption agency that handled the babies. It is the same agency that offered Marcus to David and Ally.

The agency is still registered as a live business in Singapore. The BBC tried contacting the agency’s owner but has yet to receive a response.

Singapore’s Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) declined to respond to the BBC’s questions on whether it was investigating the agency and Lie Siu Luan’s alleged Singapore collaborators, noting that Indonesian court proceedings were still ongoing.

It pointed the BBC to to previous statements where the MHA, along with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), said they were working with Indonesian counterparts to assist investigations.

Since news broke of the latest case, lawmakers have repeatedly raised it in parliament.

One pointed out that the children’s adoptions had been approved based on government officers’ recommendations, and that the adoptive parents “are innocent parties that have done every step in accordance with the law”.

But the MSF argued that adoption agencies are responsible for ensuring their babies come from “appropriate sources” and must do rigorous checks, and that adoptive parents must also do their due diligence.

After 20 days of using Fiama’s Serum Body Wash Duo

Your bathing routine should be revitalizing to ensure that both your body and mind remain refreshed. A quality smoothing body wash can truly work wonders after a demanding day at the office. Therefore, upon my initial experience with the Fiama 3% Brightening Serum Body Wash and the Fiama 4% Detan Serum Exfoliating Body Wash, I realized that I was dedicating my time and effort to a worthwhile product. After using both consistently, I feel like I have a good understanding of what each one offers. While both belong to the same serum body wash range, they serve slightly different purposes.

One focuses on brightening and everyday glow, while the other is designed to gently exfoliate and help with tan removal. Together, they’ve become a nice addition to my shower routine, especially on days when my skin needs a little extra care. So, after using them for almost 20 days, here is what I feel are the best and some trade-offs for both products. First Im-

pression

The first thing that stood out to me was the texture of both body washes. They have a rich, creamy consistency that spreads easily on damp skin and lathers well without needing a large amount of product. I appreciate body washes that feel luxurious without leaving a heavy residue, and these strike that balance nicely. They rinse off easily and leave my skin feeling fresh and clean.

Fiama 3% Brightening Serum Body Wash

The Fiama 3% Brightening Serum Body Wash quickly became my go-to for everyday use. I liked how refreshing it felt, especially during morning showers. After a couple of weeks, I noticed that my skin looked healthier and had a more even appearance. While I didn’t expect dramatic brightening overnight, I did feel that my skin appeared more radiant and less dull over time. Another thing I enjoyed was that it didn’t leave my skin feeling dry or tight after rinsing. Instead, my skin felt soft and comfortable, which is something I always look for in a body

wash.

1. Fiama 3% Brightening Serum Body Wash 250ml: Fiama 4% Detan Serum Exfoliating Body Wash

The Fiama 4% Detan Serum Exfoliating Body Wash offered a slightly different experience. It felt like a deeper cleansing treatment while still being gentle enough for regular use. I liked using it after spending time outdoors because it left my skin feeling smoother and cleaner. Over time, I noticed that rough patches around my elbows and knees felt softer, and my skin texture improved. It also gave me that freshly exfoliated feeling without being harsh or abrasive, which I appreciated because my skin can sometimes be sensitive to physical scrubs.

2. Fiama 4% Detan Serum Exfoliating Body Wash 250ml: What impressed me

Fragrance

One thing I really enjoyed about both the body washes was the fragrance. They have a fresh, pleasant scent that isn’t overpowering. The fragrance lingers just enough to make me feel refreshed after my shower but doesn’t interfere with

my perfume or body lotion. The overall shower experience felt relaxing and spa-like, making my daily routine a little more enjoyable.

Lightweight

Another positive aspect is that both the formulas feel very lightweight. Even though they contain serum-inspired ingredients, they don’t leave behind a sticky or slippery layer. My skin simply felt clean, hydrated, and smooth after every wash. I also found that my moisturiser absorbed well afterwards, which is always a good sign that the cleanser isn’t stripping the skin’s natural moisture barrier.

This is one area that I feel the brand has kept its promise. Delivering an exfoliating and brightening serum body wash at a nominal price of ₹300 is a cherry on the cake. This is exceptional for those who are looking for a nourishing body wash while not spending much. Few trade-offs

While I had a positive experience overall, there are a few areas where I think these products could be improved. Minimal brightening effect



The brightening effect of the 3% Brightening Serum Body Wash is gradual, so anyone expecting instant visible results may need to be patient and use it consistently. Tanning effect

The detan body wash works best as part of a regular skincare routine rather than as a quick fix for stubborn tanning. Thankfully, my skin was not very tanned, and I cannot exactly express how much of a

detan a body wash could do, but if you take the plus point, it did not leave my skin dry. Exfoliating might not suit everyone

If you are a fan of exfoliating your body, then the Detan Serum Exfoliating Body Wash is a perfect fit for you. As someone who simply loves the shower gel to work like a soap, this might not suit them. Alternatively, the fragrance is though not too overpowering, but people sensitive to scents might find the fragrance a bit too fruity, especially with the Brightening Serum Body Wash.

Size matters

Another small improvement could be offering refill packs or larger family-sized options. Since I found myself reaching for these body washes almost every day, having a more economical refill option would be convenient and

environmentally friendly. Or else, if they could launch it in different sizes.

Overall Verdict

Overall, I genuinely enjoyed using both the Fiama 3% Brightening Serum Body Wash and the Fiama 4% Detan Serum Exfoliating Body Wash. Rather than replacing one another, I found that they complement each other well. I prefer using the brightening variant for everyday cleansing and switching to the exfoliating version a few times a week or after long days in the sun.

For anyone looking for body washes that cleanse effectively while providing skincare-inspired benefits, I think this duo is worth considering. They leave my skin feeling clean, soft, refreshed, and smoother without compromising on comfort.

Although the results are gradual, consistent use made a noticeable difference in how healthy and well-maintained my skin looked. With a few small improvements in packaging and more size options, I think this range could become an even stronger everyday skincare essential.

These roomy purses can hold your laptop, charger, bottle, and everyday necessities



A reliable tote bag can enhance your daily organization. Whether you are commuting to work, attending classes, or enjoying a coffee at a café, the ideal handbag should accommodate your laptop, charger, water bottle, and other essentials without feeling cumbersome. A roomy design, durable handles, and thoughtfully arranged compartments can prevent the frustration of searching for your keys or wallet. Additionally, style is important; a versatile tote should complement both professional attire and casual wear. If you are in pursuit of a single bag that can effortlessly manage your daily activities, these ten spacious handbags meet all the necessary criteria while providing ample space for the small items you always carry with you.

1. Lavie Hailon Women’s Tote Bag: The Lavie Hailon Large Tote is a practical pick for anyone who carries plenty through the day. Its roomy interior easily fits a laptop, charger, notebook, water bottle and other daily essentials without feeling cramped. Multiple pockets help keep smaller items organised, while the zip closure keeps everything secure on the move. The structured silhouette adds a polished finish, making it a great companion for office commutes, college days, travel and everyday errands.

2. The Gusto Unisex Tote Bag: The Gusto Unisex Tote Bag is made for people who

The roomy interior easily accommodates your charger, notebook, bottle and wallet, while the zip closure keeps everything secure. Crafted from faux leather with comfortable handles, this handbag transitions effortlessly from office meetings to after-work plans.

5. ZOUK Office Essential Bag: The ZOUK Bristol Essential Tote is a stylish everyday companion that balances function with a clean, modern look. Its spacious main compartment easily accommodates your laptop, charger, notebook, water bottle and other daily essentials, while the internal zip pocket keeps smaller valuables organised. Crafted with handcrafted fabric and vegan leather, this tote feels lightweight yet durable enough for regular use. Comfortable shoulder straps and a secure zip closure make it a practical choice for office commutes, college, shopping and short trips.

6. Caprese Mcree 16 Inch Laptop Compatible Tote Bag for Women with Multiple Pockets: The Caprese Tote Handbag is made for days when you need to carry more without sacrificing style. Its spacious interior comfortably fits a laptop, charger, notebook, water bottle and other daily essentials, making it ideal for office commutes and everyday outings. Multiple compartments help keep your belongings organised, so everything stays easy to find. Crafted with a structured finish and comfortable shoulder straps, this tote pairs effortlessly with both workwear and casual outfits while keeping your essentials neatly in place.

7. Miraggio Denice Solid Structured Tote Bag For Women With Adjustable & Detachable Sling: The Miraggio Denice Tote Bag blends everyday practicality with a polished look that works across office days, meetings and weekend outings. Spacious enough to carry a laptop, charger, notebook, water bottle and daily essentials, it helps keep everything organised without feeling bulky. The adjustable and detachable sling strap offers flexible carrying options, while the structured silhouette adds a smart fin-

ish. Crafted from premium faux leather with thoughtfully placed compartments, this tote is a reliable choice for regular use.

8. Accessorize London Women’s Black Large Structured Laptop Tote for office use: The Accessorize London Metal Detail Large Tote is designed for people who need plenty of space throughout a busy day. The roomy interior comfortably fits a laptop, charger, notebook, water bottle and other daily essentials, while internal pockets help keep smaller items organised. Crafted with a structured silhouette and premium faux leather finish, it looks polished without compromising on practicality. Comfortable shoulder straps and a secure zip closure make it a dependable companion for office commutes, travel and everyday outings.

9. Lino Perros Voyage Commuter Tan Tote Bag: The Lino Perros Voyage Commuter Tote is designed for busy schedules that call for space and smart organisation. Its roomy main compartment comfortably fits a laptop, charger, notebook, water bottle and other daily essentials, while multiple internal and external pockets keep everything within easy reach. Crafted from synthetic leather with a structured silhouette, it offers a polished look that works well for office commutes, meetings and travel. Comfortable shoulder handles complete this practical everyday carry.

10. Hidesign Women’s Leather Handbag The Hidesign Aspen 03 Tote is a timeless leather handbag designed for work and everyday use. Its spacious main compartment easily accommodates an iPad, notebook, charger, water bottle and other daily essentials, while dedicated zip and slip pockets keep smaller belongings organised. Crafted from genuine leather with a clean, structured silhouette, it offers a refined look that pairs well with both office wear and casual outfits. Comfortable shoulder straps and thoughtful storage make it a dependable companion for busy days.

Eight choices for badminton shoes that will allow you to dominate the court: never miss a shot

While badminton may appear to be a simple sport when played by professionals, anyone who has played on a court understands that it is one of the quickest sports available. In one rally, you find yourself lunging forward, and in the next, you are leaping to execute a smash, only to quickly sprint sideways to retrieve the shuttle. This is precisely why standard running shoes are inadequate. A quality pair of badminton shoes provides excellent grip, lateral support, cushioning, and non-marking soles, allowing you to move with confidence and without the risk of slipping. Whether you’re playing casually on weekends or training regularly, investing in the right footwear can make a noticeable difference to your game. Here are some of the best badminton shoes worth checking out.

Badminton shoes to slay on court

1. Boldfit Badminton Shoes for Men: Designed specifically for indoor courts, these Boldfit badminton shoes combine a lightweight construction with excellent grip. The breathable upper helps keep your feet cool during long matches, while the anti-skid non-marking outsole offers confidence during quick directional changes. They’re also versatile enough for pickleball, padel and indoor tennis, making them a practical investment for multi-sport players. Style tip: Pair them with moisture-wicking shorts and a lightweight performance T-shirt for unrestricted movement.

2. Vector X Ranger Court Shoes: Made with a combination of synthetic leather



and breathable mesh, the Vector X Ranger offers the right balance between durability and comfort. The non-marking crepe rubber outsole provides reliable traction across indoor courts, while the cushioned footbed helps absorb impact during quick rallies. Suitable for badminton, squash, volleyball and table tennis, they’re a versatile addition to any sports wardrobe.

Style tip: Match with ankle socks and breathable sportswear for all-day comfort.

3. Nivia Flash 2.0 Badminton Shoes: The Flash 2.0 has become a popular choice among recreational badminton players thanks to its lightweight design and dependable court performance. The cushioned midsole provides excellent underfoot comfort, while the grippy outsole supports fast footwork and sharp turns. The vibrant colour

combination also gives the shoes a fresh, sporty appearance.

Style tip: Pair with matching blue sportswear for a coordinated athletic look.

4. Vector X TPU Mesh Badminton Shoes: These court shoes focus on breathability and flexibility without compromising stability. The TPU film mesh upper encourages airflow, while the EVA insole cushions every landing during jumps and lunges. Combined with the durable rubber outsole, the shoes provide excellent traction for players who enjoy quick-paced rallies and regular practice sessions.

Style tip: Great for pairing with compression leggings or performance shorts during training.

5. Boldfit Badminton Shoes: Another strong option from Boldfit, this model delivers the same winning

combination of lightweight comfort, breathable construction and reliable grip. The non-marking sole makes it ideal for indoor courts, while the supportive structure helps maintain stability during rapid side-to-side movements. It also transitions well into pickleball and padel sessions.

Style tip: Complete the look with a lightweight zip-up sports jacket for pre-match warm-ups.

6. Nivia Flash 2.0 Court Shoes: This variant of the Flash 2.0 continues Nivia’s focus on comfort-first performance. The cushioned sole absorbs impact effectively, reducing fatigue during extended games, while the supportive upper keeps your feet secure during aggressive movements. Its lightweight profile makes long practice sessions feel less demanding.

Style tip: Pair with white ankle socks and a classic badminton polo.

7. Reebok Courtflex M Badminton Shoes: Reebok brings its expertise in sports footwear to the badminton court with the Courtflex M. Featuring lightweight cushioning, a flexible design and a durable non-marking outsole, these shoes offer reliable performance across badminton, tennis and other indoor sports.

The sleek design also makes them stylish enough for casual athleisure wear. Style tip: Wear with Reebok activewear and a sports watch for a clean athletic aesthetic.



Bollywood Actor Rajesh Sharma Under Strict Medical Observation Following Severe Secondary Infection

Mumbai: Veteran film actor Rajesh Sharma remains under critical care and close medical supervision at a private hospital in the southern part of the city after a suspected toxic insect bite sustained during a film shoot triggered a rapidly progressing physiological infection. The medical emergency originated at Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad during the production of an upcoming film titled Fauji, featuring lead actor Prabhas. According to an official statement issued on behalf of the family by actress Sudipa Chatterjee and filmmaker Agnidev Chatterjee, the actor was interacting with local production technicians in a densely vegetated area of the studio lot following the conclusion of filming for the day. Sharma reportedly felt a minor puncture wound on his lower right extremity, suspected to have been caused by either a venomous spider or a predatory bug. Because the initial discomfort appeared negligible, immediate on-site medical intervention was not requested. The clinical condition altered significantly approximately six hours after the initial exposure, when the actor began experiencing

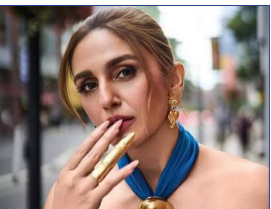


intense pain across his right lower limb. Despite the rapid onset of physical distress, Sharma boarded a scheduled commercial flight to return to West Bengal. During the transit, the actor developed a high fever, severe physical restlessness, and systemic respiratory difficulties. Upon landing, his health deteriorated further, leading to his emergency admission to Manipal Hospital in Dhakuria on July 7, 2026. Attending medical teams confirmed that the actor is battling a severe localized infection that has advanced

aggressively from his toes up to his knee, resulting in the formation of extensive cutaneous blisters over the right leg. The clinical team, led by Dr. Avijit Bhattacharya, indicated that the patient exhibits persistent high fevers alongside acute breathlessness. Medical authorities stated that it remains too early to project a definitive recovery timeline, confirming that the patient is not yet out of immediate danger. Specialized monitoring protocols have been enacted to watch for advanced secondary complications, specifi-

cally deep vein thrombosis or related blood clots that could cause life-threatening pulmonary embolisms if they migrate to the respiratory system. The incident has sparked regulatory reactions within the entertainment industry. The All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) issued an official appeal to Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, demanding a formal, high-level inquiry into the workplace safety, hygiene, and emergency medical protocols maintained on the active film set. The association questioned the absence of immediate local hospitalization in Hyderabad and sought strict administrative accountability regarding production safety guidelines. Meanwhile, the actor's family expressed formal gratitude to well-wishers, media outlets, the Bengal Motion Pictures Artists' Forum, and industry veteran Prosenjit Chatterjee for providing administrative guidance and support during the hospitalization period. Sharma has maintained a prolific career spanning more than two decades, contributing prominent supporting performances across both Hindi and Bengali

Huma Qureshi Breaks Action Film Stereotypes



Mumbai: The recent theatrical release of the dark comedy thriller Baby Do Die Do has ignited a conversation regarding the representation of female action protagonists in Hindi cinema, with lead actor and co-producer Huma Qureshi calling for an end to formulaic industry tropes. Directed by Nachiket Samant, the film stars Qureshi as Baby Kamarkar, an unremarkable-looking urban contract killer who is deaf and mute. Qureshi explained that the production team intentionally avoided the traditionally over-sexualized, physically objectified "femme fatale" archetype common in mainstream screenplays. Instead of presenting a physically glamorous assassin, the character was designed to look like an ordinary commuter on a Mumbai transit train. Furthermore, the narrative flips conventional cinematic tropes by treating her inability to hear or speak as a major tactical asset that enhances her environmental awareness and stealth, rather than as a physical vulnerability.

To prepare for the non-verbal role, Qureshi spent months training with a sign language expert and visiting specialized schools for speech and hearing impairments. Due to initial resistance from traditional financiers toward the unconventional, low-dialogue concept, the actor partnered with her brother, Saqib Saleem, to independently finance the project through their production banner, Saleem Siblings. The movie, which features an ensemble cast including Sikandar Kher, Chunky Panday, Seema Pahwa, and Rachit Singh, centers around a suspenseful narrative involving a regional property mafia. Industry analysts suggest that this production, alongside other highly anticipated female-led projects like Geetu Mohandas's upcoming film Toxic, reflects a growing shift toward more complex, structurally varied roles for women in the domestic entertainment sector.

Accepting Personal Accountability Demonstrates Strength of Integrity, Observes Amitabh Bachchan

Mumbai: Prominent film personality Amitabh Bachchan published a philosophical commentary regarding self-awareness and personal development, asserting that the willingness to acknowledge operational errors serves as a definitive indicator of individual integrity. Writing on his digital publication forum to address his established circle of readers and observers, the veteran actor framed daily life as a continuous educational framework. He observed that every consecutive day presents unique opportunities to accommodate institutional shifts, assimilate unfamiliar information, and pursue intellectual growth. The commentary emphasized that while specialized practitioners regularly formulate analytical assessments, individual reasoning remains the primary mechanism for navigating complex decisions and establishing personal accountability. The baseline of the actor's assessment focused on the constructive nature of identifying personal over-



sights. He noted that once an individual formally concedes a misjudgment, the dysfunctional impact of the error can be analyzed more clearly, which effectively halts secondary debates and circular arguments. To manage interpersonal disputes where opposing factions remain structurally inflexible despite an individual's underlying confidence in their own position, the actor suggested that conceding the debate represents a pragmatic allocation of time. He pointed out that

allowing an external party to perceive a conversational victory preserves valuable time and energy, which can subsequently be redirected toward productive tasks grounded in verified knowledge and personal conviction. The actor concluded by noting that while self-directed decisions carry the risk of failure, maintaining autonomy over one's reasoning remains superior to relying blindly on external assertions before concluding daily schedules for active film production.

Actor's Grooming Transformation Rekindles Casting Speculation For Mythological Project



Mumbai: A recent aesthetic change by actor Sunny Deol has generated widespread discussion across digital platforms, with observers linking his clean-shaven appearance to his upcoming portrayal of Lord Hanuman in Nitesh Tiwari's high-profile cinematic adaptation, Ramayana. The speculation intensified following the actor's public appearance at a promotional fan screening in Mumbai for his upcoming courtroom drama, Ikka. Deol, who has consistently maintained a rugged beard and mustache for various film roles in recent years, surprised attendees by debuting a completely clean-shaven look. While

the actor has not issued a formal statement validating the motive behind the transformation, social media platforms were quickly flooded with commentary from viewers claiming the makeover marks the formal initiation of his filming schedule for the epic mythological production. Ramayana, directed by Nitesh Tiwari and produced by Namit Malhotra, is structured as an ambitious two-part cinematic adaptation of the ancient epic. The project features an ensemble cast, with Ranbir Kapoor essaying the role of Lord Rama, Sai Pallavi as Sita, and Kanana cinema actor Yash portraying Ravana. Deol's casting as Lord Hanuman has remained a major point of interest since the project's inception, with production insiders indicating that the multi-part franchise is utilizing advanced visual effects technicians to deliver a scale comparable to major international features.

Music for the two-part venture is being co-composed through a debut collaboration between AR Rahman and Hans Zimmer, with the first installment slated for a theatrical release during the Diwali festive season in 2026, followed by the conclusion in 2027. Prior to the rollout of the mythological franchise, Deol is scheduled to headline Ikka, directed by Siddharth P. Malhotra, which premieres on Netflix on July 10, 2026. The narrative features Deol as Arjun Mehra, an unyielding defense attorney whose professional ethics and personal history are challenged when he is assigned to defend a murder accused portrayed by Akshaye Khanna. Industry analysts note that while the courtroom feature represents the actor's immediate commercial focus, public attention has remained heavily fixated on his physical preparation for his upcoming mythological role.

Saif Ali Khan Reflects on Evolving Cinematic Standards and Past Narrative Choices



Mumbai: Reflecting on his expansive career path across the Hindi film industry, actor Saif Ali Khan discussed the transformation of creative norms and narrative resolutions in mainstream cinema, noting structural elements in his earlier projects that contrast with contemporary audience expectations. The discourse focused specifically on the narrative resolution of the 1995 ac-

tion-drama production Kartavya, directed by Raj Kanwar, which featured Khan alongside late co-star Divya Bharti and antagonist Amrish Puri. Reflecting on the project over three decades after its cinematic release, Khan observed that structural narrative choices common in twentieth-century filmmaking occasionally failed to deliver logical accountability for central characters.

Specifically, he noted that the resolution of the film permitted the primary antagonist to evade formal consequences or clear narrative retribution, a structural conclusion he views with critical perspective under modern storytelling frameworks. The actor contrasted the open-ended resolutions of early-career projects with contemporary audience preferences, which heavily prioritize thematic clarity, logical character arcs, and narrative resolution. He emphasized that modern filmgoers seek coherent character journeys where motivations and actions encounter definitive resolutions by the conclusion of the production. Beyond structural choices, the actor noted that modern technical advancements, streamlined production pipelines, and specialized screenwriting

methods have systematically elevated industry standards compared to the decades preceding the digital shift. Kartavya represented a significant chapter in the actor's early filmography, gaining notable media attention during its production timeline due to the tragic demise of lead actress Divya Bharti prior to completion. The production was subsequently finalized following the casting of Juhi Chawla to fulfill the remaining sequences. Khan observed that analyzing historical narrative choices provides valuable insights for evaluating the structural evolution of mainstream storytelling formats, noting that the industry has increasingly abandoned formulaic conclusions in favor of more grounded and legally or morally absolute character resolutions.

Director Siddharth Anand Rejects Claims of Staggering Production Budget for Upcoming Feature

Mumbai: Veteran film actor Rajesh Sharma remains under critical care and close medical supervision at a private hospital in the southern part of the city after a suspected toxic insect bite sustained during a film shoot triggered a rapidly progressing physiological infection. The medical emergency originated at Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad during the production of an upcoming film titled Fauji, featuring lead actor Prabhas. According to an official statement issued on behalf of the family by actress Sudipa Chatterjee and filmmaker Agnidev Chatterjee, the actor was interacting with local production technicians in a densely vegetated area of the studio lot following the conclusion of filming for the day. Sharma reportedly felt a minor puncture wound on his lower right extremity, suspected to have been caused by either a venomous spider or a predatory bug. Because the initial discomfort appeared negligible, immediate on-site medical intervention was not requested.

The clinical condition altered significantly approximately six hours after the initial exposure, when the actor began experiencing intense pain across his right lower limb. Despite the rapid onset of physical distress, Sharma boarded a scheduled commercial flight to return to West Bengal. During the transit, the actor developed a high fever, severe physical restlessness, and systemic respiratory difficulties. Upon landing, his health deteriorated further, leading to his emergency admission to Manipal Hospital in Dhakuria on July 7, 2026. Attending medical teams confirmed that the actor is battling a severe localized infection that has advanced aggressively from his toes up to his knee, resulting in the formation of extensive cutaneous blisters over the right leg. The clinical team, led by Dr. Avijit Bhattacharya, indicated that the patient exhibits persistent high fevers alongside acute breathlessness. Medical authorities stated that it remains too early to project a definitive recovery timeline, confirming that



the patient is not yet out of immediate danger. Specialized monitoring protocols have been enacted to watch for advanced secondary complications, specifically deep vein thrombosis or related blood clots that could cause life-threatening pulmonary embolisms if they migrate to the respiratory system. The incident has sparked regulatory reactions within the entertainment industry. The All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) issued an official appeal to Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, demanding a formal, high-level inquiry into the workplace safety, hygiene, and emergency medical protocols main-

tained on the active film set. The association questioned the absence of immediate local hospitalization in Hyderabad and sought strict administrative accountability regarding production safety guidelines. Meanwhile, the actor's family expressed formal gratitude to well-wishers, media outlets, the Bengal Motion Pictures Artists' Forum, and industry veteran Prosenjit Chatterjee for providing administrative guidance and support during the hospitalization period. Sharma has maintained a prolific career spanning more than two decades, contributing prominent supporting performances across both Hindi and Bengali

Actor Deflects Speculation on American Nationality Status With Humorous Remarks



Mumbai: Prominent actor and singer Diljit Dosanjh addressed ongoing public speculation regarding his reported United States citizenship during a live digital broadcast, utilizing humor to redirect questions regarding his legal residency status. The subject surfaced during an interactive digital session primarily convened to address public controversies surrounding the regional removal of his film Satluj,

which had recently been withdrawn from a prominent domestic streaming platform within 48 hours of its release. When an observer participating in the live session suggested that the artist should apply for a United States Green Card—a status that permits Lawful Permanent Residence (LPR)—Dosanjh dismissed the inquiry with a joke about physically coloring a card green. He emphasized that

addressing such speculation directly would simply create sensational media headlines, stating that global travel should ideally be permitted without visa constraints. In a subsequent interactive sequence, an observer jokingly suggested that the entertainer should leverage a direct appeal to US President Donald Trump to facilitate American citizenship pathways for his audi-

ence. The artist rejected the premise, clarifying that his institutional identity remains strictly that of a creative performer. He noted that while the American leader's daughter follows his professional work on social media platforms, he has never engaged in direct communication with her and remains structurally opposed to requesting personal or political favors. The public debate regarding the artist's legal status follows previous investigative reports alleging that he successfully acquired United States citizenship in 2022 and has traveled internationally on an American passport since September 1 of that year, following the expiration of an Indian passport issued in Mumbai in 2018. The archival reports further asserted that his spouse, Sandeep Kaur, holds American citizenship and that the artist had registered a multi-bedroom residential estate in an upscale California neighborhood during the processing timeline. To date, the performer has declined to issue a formal validation or denial regarding these documentation claims.

IMD issues red alert after Delhi receives 34.9 mm of rainfall in just three hours



New Delhi, July 09: Heavy rains pelted most of the nation on Thursday morning, with waterlogging recorded in various districts of Delhi, Mumbai, and Rajasthan. The torrential rain also caused flash floods and significant train and road traffic congestion, with 11 persons believed to be buried under a collapsed rubbish mound in Maharashtra's Pimpri Chinchwad, as well as waterlogging in Delhi and Mumbai.

Aside from that, Surat in Gujarat had severe rains, with officials reporting that at least nine people perished in rain-related events in the district during the previous several days. The administra-

tion has relocated thousands of individuals from low-lying neighborhoods to safer areas, as well as given food packages in high-rise buildings in the city's flood zones. One person died and four people were rescued after a four-storey building under construction collapsed in the Rohini area amid rains in the city. Four to five people, besides the property owner's husband, are feared trapped under the debris. Flash floods triggered by rains disrupted road connectivity in some parts of Rampur subdivision of Himachal Pradesh's Shimla district as moderate rains continued to lash Himachal Pradesh on Wednesday, officials said.

Anil Kumble Slams Players, Team Management Following India's 'Abject Surrender' Against England

Kerala: India suffered a humiliating 125-run defeat as the Shreyas Iyer-led team was dismissed for 76 in the third T20I against England. The defeat meant that India had not won a single game in the five-game series up to that point and could only draw the series if they won the last two. Former India captain and head coach Anil Kumble was extremely dissatisfied with the performance, calling it a 'abject capitulation' by the squad. He also slammed the Indian hitters' strategies for dealing with the sheer pace of England's fast-bowling pair, Jofra Archer and Josh Tongue."

It was an abject surrender by the Indian team. You don't expect a world champion side to cave in like that." "The Indian batters needed to show more patience and application, but everyone just tried to attack instead of absorbing the pressure. Yes, the required rate was over 10, but someone had to take responsibility and bat deep. Instead, they went the aggressive route and paid the price with a batting collapse," Kumble



also criticised the team management for their decision during the match and specifically pointed out the call to send Harshit Rana to bat ahead of Shivam Dube. The move did not work as both batters failed to score runs in the game. "In T20 cricket, you put your best batters up front. Sending out Harshit Rana to bat ahead of a more complete batter like Shivam Dube was wrong. You can't expect a number eight guy to win you a game by sending him to bat ahead of a proven guy.

That's not how things work in modern-day cricket." Kumble encouraged team management to refrain from making frequent changes to

bowling lineups. The Indian team has made far too many changes to its squad, and this must stop.

The bowlers keep shifting. Prasidh Krishna was dropped after one poor performance against Ireland. Prince Yadav came in, bowled brilliantly, and took three wickets in the second T20I, but India still lost. As a rookie captain, you should stay with your five bowlers. "Batters score runs, but bowlers win matches." "When you pick players, you need to keep backing them. Ups and downs are part and parcel of life. They keep happening, but that doesn't mean failures end up with you getting dropped from the squad."

House falls in Tehri Garhwal as heavy rain causes landslide worries in Uttarakhand



Dehradun, July 09: The monsoon continues to pummel numerous sections of India, with torrential rain interrupting regular living in both mountainous and plain areas. Flooded highways, overflowing rivers, and landslides have been recorded in several states, and new images from Uttarakhand have underscored the mounting risk presented by the relentless rain.

The structures toppled in seconds, causing terror across the region. Fortunately, no one was inside either structure when the incident happened, averting a huge catastrophe. Following the incident, local authorities rushed to the spot and began assessing the damage. Officials said continuous rainfall has significantly increased the risk of landslides across several mountainous regions of Uttarakhand. In recent days, reports of hill slopes giving way, roads developing cracks and buildings suffering structural damage have emerged from different parts of the state, raising concerns among residents and tourists alike. Meanwhile, heavy rainfall since Wednesday night has brought the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) to a standstill, with widespread waterlogging and massive traffic snarls reported across the national

capital and its satellite cities on Thursday morning. While the rain has brought down temperatures, it has resulted in a chaotic morning for thousands of daily commuters. Local administration and traffic police in Delhi, Noida, and Ghaziabad have been deployed to manage the flow of vehicles, but the uninterrupted rain continues to hamper relief efforts. The administration has urged people to avoid unnecessary travel during periods of heavy rainfall and to stay away from landslide-prone areas. People have also been advised to strictly follow weather alerts and official advisories issued by the authorities. An alert remains in place across the state's hill districts, with officials closely monitoring the evolving weather situation. Experts say prolonged rainfall saturates the soil, making slopes unstable and significantly increasing the chances of landslides. Hill states such as Uttarakhand are particularly vulnerable during the monsoon season because steep terrain combined with persistent rain can weaken the foundation of roads and buildings. Authorities advise residents and tourists to remain alert and report any signs of cracks, soil movement or unusual water flow immediately.

Maharashtra government creates panel to write UCC; Justice Ranjana Desai-led committee receives six-month timeframe

Mumbai, July 09: The Maharashtra government has formed a seven-member committee to adopt a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the state, led by former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Desai. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced the decision in the Legislative Assembly on Thursday, stating that the panel has been charged with creating a draft framework for the proposed law. The committee has six months to produce its report. Based on its suggestions, the state administration intends to present a UCC bill during the Maharashtra Legislature's winter session in Nagpur. Besides Justice Ranjana Desai, the committee comprises former High Court judges RC Chavan and SG Mehare, former Maharashtra Chief Secretary DK Jain, former Advocate General Virendra Saraf, constitutional expert Ramesh Patange and educationist Suvarna Rawal. Announcing the panel, Fadnavis said the committee would prepare a comprehensive framework for implementing the

Uniform Civil Code in Maharashtra. "We will make efforts to introduce the legislation in the winter session of the state legislature in Nagpur," he said. Explaining the rationale behind the move, the Chief Minister referred to the Directive Principles of State Policy contained in the Constitution. "Accordingly, a seven-member committee has been constituted under the chairpersonship of Justice (Retd.) Ranjana Desai to prepare a framework for implementing a Uniform Civil Code," he said. The government believes the committee's recommendations will provide the foundation for drafting legislation suited to Maharashtra's legal and administrative requirements. The announcement comes at a time when the debate over the Uniform Civil Code has gained momentum across the country. Uttarakhand became the first state after Independence to implement a Uniform Civil Code, making it a key reference point for other states exploring similar legislation. Maharashtra

is expected to study Uttarakhand's experience while preparing its own draft. Several other states, including Gujarat and Assam, have also expressed support for reforms related to personal laws.

Meanwhile, discussions on introducing similar legislation have taken place in states such as Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. The Uniform Civil Code is envisaged under the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution. It seeks to establish a common set of civil laws governing matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption and succession for all citizens, irrespective of religion. At present, provisions relating to civil matters differ across various personal laws followed by different religious communities. The objective of the UCC is to bring greater uniformity in these areas through a common legal framework. The Justice Ranjana Desai-led committee will now begin consultations and prepare a draft framework for the proposed law.

Cristiano Ronaldo's Two-Word Post Amidst Retirement Buzz The internet is ablaze

Kerala: Cristiano Ronaldo expressed support with his team amid doubts regarding his international football future following Portugal's painful FIFA World Cup round of 16 loss to Spain. Cristiano, who announced ahead of the Spain match that he would be playing his final FIFA World Cup, was forced to leave the pitch with sorrow on his face and tears

in his eyes as a late winner from Mikel Merino and numerous missed chances by his side, including from him and Bruno Fernandes, saw Portugal suffer once more, signaling the end of the legendary striker's career at the sport's pinnacle. Taking to Instagram, Cristiano, who did not give any hint about his international future after the loss, posted a picture of

his team in a huddle saying, "Portugal Sempre", translating to "Portugal Forever". Following the match, Cristiano said that while it was his last WC, he will not be taking "rash decisions" about his future in a Portugal jersey. Since Cristiano's debut at the grandest stage, Portugal has achieved fourth place in his debut tournament in 2006.

Mamata Banerjee loses her calm during TMC Kolkata protest march and smacks her own worker



Kolkata, July 09: Former West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo Mamata Banerjee was spotted hitting a party worker during a protest march in Kolkata on Wednesday. A video of the event, which has gone viral on social media, shows Banerjee strolling past a big throng, flanked by security personnel, party leaders, and fans. During the march, she abruptly lifts her hand and appears to attack a man standing beside her. Soon

after, Banerjee is seen pointing towards the man, seemingly asking him to move away. People around her then escort the man away from the immediate area as she continues with the rally. The exact reason behind the incident remains unclear. It is not known what led to Banerjee's reaction, and the Trinamool Congress has not issued any official statement on the matter so far. Mamata accused the BJP and the police of disrupting the protest march held over

the alleged rape and murder of an 11-year-old girl in Baruipur. She claimed the police failed to follow the Calcutta High Court's order that had allowed the rally to take place peacefully. The march, organised by the TMC's student and youth wings, began at Ballygunge Phari and ended at Hazra Crossing in south Kolkata. During the procession, clashes broke out between TMC and BJP workers at several locations, forcing police to use batons

to disperse the groups. Addressing supporters after the rally, Banerjee alleged that BJP supporters blocked the procession, attacked TMC workers, including women, and ignored the court's directions. She also claimed the police acted in favour of the BJP instead of maintaining law and order. The TMC leader also claimed that her house had been under police observation since the morning. She said that cops confiscated hand mics despite court authorization, while allowing BJP supporters to play loud music and put up blockades along the path. Banerjee said she directly seen injured party members after learning that a prominent TMC official had been cornered.

Banerjee accused the police of violating the High Court's ruling and stated that her party will file contempt proceedings. She also accused the Centre of seeking to repress democratic protests through intimidation, claiming that the police were no longer operating impartially.

Egypt's coach yells at Lionel Scaloni during a heated FIFA World Cup clash Argentina's Boss Does This



Kolkata: The debate after Argentina's exciting 3-2 victory over Egypt in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 16 is showing no signs of abating. While Argentina rallied from two goals behind to win spectacularly, Egypt's players and coaching staff were furious with several of the match's officiating decisions. In a new video that has surfaced on social media, Egypt's head coach Hossam Hassan can be heard yelling at FIFA officials after the game ends. Hassan and several of his coaching staff were having a heated conversation with

the officials when Argentina's head coach, Lionel Scaloni, went by without engaging. In the footage, Hassan can also be seen yelling at Scaloni. However, Scaloni did not respond and silently returned to the dressing room at Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Meanwhile, the Egyptian Football Association (EFA) stated on Wednesday that it "cannot remain silent" following what it feels was unfair and biased officiating in Egypt's 3-2 round-of-16 loss to Argentina on Tuesday. Egypt coach Hossam Hassan and some players slammed the refer-

ees after being stunned when Argentina scored three straight goals in 13 minutes to pull off one of the greatest World Cup comebacks. "Defending the rights and interests of the Egyptian national team is not a matter that can be ignored, minimized, or treated as secondary," the EFA said in a statement. "It is a responsibility that we carry with full conviction and determination." FIFA's chief of refereeing Pierluigi Collina, in a statement issued later Wednesday, said while constructive discussion about decisions would always be part of football, "unfounded allegations have no place in our sport." "Nobody can question the integrity of the FIFA World Cup match officials," he said. "When this happens, it may provoke reactions that lead to threats against them and their families. This is not right." The EFA said that the referee failed to use the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system appropriately, leading to the loss to Argentina. Egypt thought to have scored their second goal in the 58th minute, but a VAR review revealed that Marwan Attia fouled Argentina defender Lisandro Martinez during the buildup. "Several key incidents raised serious concerns and left profound questions about the consistency and fairness of decisions that directly influenced the course of the game," the EFA stated.

R Ashwin transforms into Sanju Samson and questions the 'unfair, dangerous' culture

New Delhi: The Indian team's incessant cutting and shifting has left a much to be desired. Yes, budding players like Vaibhav Sooryavanshi require playing time and opportunity to continue their development, but is it fair to dismiss Sanju Samson, India's Player of the Tournament in the T20 World Cup 2026 earlier this year? Ravichandran Ashwin, one of the most impassioned bowlers turned pundits, nailed it when he spoke out against the Indian team's risky 'chop-and-change' philosophy. Speaking to Vimal Kumar in a video on his YouTube channel, Ashwin staged a skit on the video-blogging platform, explaining what his conversation would be with the selectors who had dropped him from the tour of Zimbabwe: "I don't want any rest. If I want to, I will bring my mother, father, and wife along with me to Zimbabwe. I want to play there. I have never been to Bulawayo. They are a proud cricketing nation. I saw in 1999, Zimbabwe beat India in the World Cup. I want to take revenge for that. Please take me there, I don't want to rest." Adopting a more serious tone as the conversation progressed, Ashwin asked who was going to be the next player to be dropped, now that India have lost two games in a row against England. "Who is next?" Ashwin asked bluntly, questioning who would be dropped next now that the team have lost two consecutive matches against England. "After those two losses in Ireland and a loss of form, they have made Sanju Samson sit out. Now, we have lost two in England. So, who is next?"

Delhi-NCR reels from heavy rain as roads turn into rivers and traffic comes to a halt

New Delhi, July 09: Heavy rain hit Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, and Gurugram on Thursday, turning roads into rivers and bringing traffic to a halt in critical regions. Heavy rains also hampered everyday commutes in many regions of the region. Videos from Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, and Bulandshahr revealed the magnitude of the waterlogging, with vehicles crawling through submerged streets and commuters struggling to cross flooded highways. In the meantime, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a red alert for Delhi, warning of heavy rainfall over

the national capital through most of the day. Apart from this, the weather department also predicted rainfall over Delhi, Haryana, Chandigarh and West Uttar Pradesh until July 10, while authorities remain on high alert to deal with rain-related disruptions. Safdarjung, the capital's base weather station, recorded 72.6 mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours that ended at 8.30 am, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The Lodhi Road weather station received 80.2 mm of rainfall, Ridge 77.8 mm, Palam 63.0 mm and Ayanagar 57.4 mm during this period.

Deschamps shrugs off Argentine referee controversy before France quarterfinal



New Delhi: Didier Deschamps has never been one to mince words, and on the eve of France’s high-stakes FIFA World Cup quarter-final against Morocco, the Les Bleus manager delivered a masterclass in psychological deflection. The build-up to the blockbuster clash at Boston Stadium has been dominated by FIFA’s decision to appoint an entirely Argentine officiating crew, led by 44-year-old referee Facundo Tello. Given the fiercely boiling, bitter rivalry that has simmered between France and Argentina since their legendary 2022 final in Doha, the choice raised serious eyebrows across the footballing world. Yet, rather than taking the bait and criticising the appointment, Deschamps flipped the script entirely, using the pre-match press conference to take a pointed swipe at his detractors. “We have to deal with it. I trust the referees. Our opponent is Morocco, not the referee,” Deschamps said firmly. However, the French tactician could not resist a jab at those critics, particularly sections of the North African media who had heavily scru-

tinised French referee Francois Letexier following Argentina’s dramatic, controversial 3-2 Round of 16 victory over Egypt. “Let’s hope our [officials] are as good as Monsieur Letexier was,” he said. The manager’s calm, slightly combative confidence has clearly filtered down through the rest of the French squad. Backup goalkeeper Robin Rissler also backed the officials, offering a refreshing dose of realism while urging his teammates to ignore any creeping digital paranoia. There’s been a certain bitterness [between France and Argentina] for a few years now since the last final, but that’s part of the game,” Rissler said. “If these referees are there, it’s because they’re up to the level of the competition.” For the players, the historical baggage between Paris and Buenos Aires is an exterior distraction; the task at hand is entirely restricted to the 90 minutes on the pitch. With the refereeing debate firmly put to bed by the French camp, the focus shifts squarely onto the formidable challenge posed by Morocco.

Shapoor Zadran laid to rest in Kabul as Afghanistan teammates pay heartfelt final tribute

New Delhi: Former Afghanistan fast bowler Shapoor Zadran was laid to rest at Maranj Hill in Kabul on Thursday, with thousands of mourners gathering to bid farewell to one of the architects of the country’s remarkable rise in international cricket. Current and former Afghanistan players, including Rashid Khan, Hamid Hassan, Asghar Afghan and Samiullah Shinwari, joined Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) officials, family members, and dignitaries to pay their final respects. Zadran’s mortal remains arrived in Kabul on Wednesday after being flown from India following his death at the age of 38 after a prolonged illness.

The coffin was received at Kabul International Airport by teammates, ACB officials, and family members before being taken to the historic Eidgah Mosque, where funeral prayers were offered on Wednesday morning. Following the prayers, the former left-arm pacer was buried at Maranj Hill in a ceremony attended by family, friends and members of Afghanistan’s cricket fraternity, bringing an emotional farewell to one of the pioneers who helped shape the country’s rise in international cricket. Zadran was one of the foundation stones of modern Afghanistan cricket. Making his international debut in 2009, the left-arm fast bowler repre-



sented Afghanistan in 80 international matches across formats between 2009 and 2020. He claimed 43 wickets in ODIs and 37 in T20Is, finishing with 80 international appearances during a period in which Afghanistan established itself as a force in world cricket. Among his most memorable contributions came at the 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup. Zadran finished as Afghanistan’s leading wicket-taker in the tournament with 10 wickets and also struck the winning runs against Scotland, sealing the nation’s first-ever victory at a men’s ODI World Cup, a landmark moment in Afghan sporting history.

Following his death earlier this week, tributes poured in from across the cricketing world. The ACB described him as one of the “foundation-laying figures” of Afghanistan cricket whose passion and commitment helped shape the game’s growth in the country. ICC Chairman Jay Shah and several cricket boards also expressed condolences, remembering Zadran’s contribution to Afghanistan’s inspiring journey from Associate ranks to the global stage. The ACB also postponed two days of fixtures in the ongoing 11th edition of the Shpageeza Cricket League in memory of Shapoor Zadran.

Noskova, Kostyuk storm into maiden Wimbledon semifinals in London

London: Czech tennis player Linda Noskova made history during the ongoing Wimbledon tournament on Wednesday, becoming the youngest player to reach the first-ever semifinal in London, at the age of 21. Linda outclassed Elise Mertens 6-3, 7-5 in straight sets, becoming the youngest since fellow Czech Petra Kvitova in 2010 to book a first-ever Wimbledon semifinal appearance, as per Wimbledon’s official website. After this landmark win over Mertens, the ninth seed aims to emulate the two-time Wimbledon champion Kvitova, saying, “I would love to follow in her footsteps. If the outcome’s going to be the same, I would love nothing more.” On the other hand, Marta Kostyuk also booked her place in the semifinals with a win over Jasmine Paolini, the 2024 edition finalist. The only former finalist in the women’s draw was sent packing by another Czech player, making the total number of Czech women’s players to reach Wimbledon semifinals since 2000 eight, more than any other country. Kostyuk beat Paolini in straight sets by 6-3, 6-2. Following the match, the number 12 seed admitted to having a practice walk around the centre court on Tuesday to calm her nerves, saying, “Thank God my coach made me walk here yesterday. I was flabbergasted by this entrance and everything inside.” “I was like, wow, I need one day to recover from what I saw. I was on this court as a spectator once, nine years ago, watching Roger Federer. It was super special. To be back here as a player, I made a walk of honour on the Centre Court and took a moment, soaked it all in, and now I am here after a win.” “My first time playing on this unbelievable court and obviously a dream come true. Winning here was not even in the plans today, I just wanted to go out and enjoy, put on a good show. It is always



incredible to play in front of a packed stadium, and here I feel like it’s always packed. Thank you so much for your energy today,” she signed off. Tenth seed Karolina Muchova snuffed out the Wimbledon hopes of friend and 2024 champion Barbora Krejckikova on Sunday, winning 7-5 5-7 6-3 in a tight battle for Czech supremacy and a place in the quarter-finals. Muchova, 29, used her athletic game of precise volleys, delicate drop-shots and searing cross court winners to overcome Krejckikova, at 30 just eight months older than Muchova, and now ranked 38th in the world, in warm sunshine on Court Two. Muchova stepped up her aggression in the 12th game, attacking the Krejckikova serve and winning the first set with a sizzling cross court backhand return. She produced a total of 50 winners in the match, to Krejckikova’s 24. She wore down her compatriot in a mamsymoth 16-minute sixth game of the second set, taking it on her fourth break point. But just when she looked down and

out, Krejckikova, who also has the 2021 French Open title to her name, roared back to win five games in a row and force a decider. Muchova steadied her nerves, grabbed a break in the fourth game of the third set as Krejckikova, whose career has been beset by injury, appeared to tire in the heat, and took the match with a lobbed forehand winner before hugging her opponent at the net. The 24-year-old’s return to the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (AELTC) signals another cherished fortnight of competition, one that has been defined by excellence since the tournament’s inception in 1877, according to a press release. “For me, opening play on Centre Court will be a goosebumps moment. The atmosphere is unique, unlike anything else you experience on tennis courts around the world. I would never have dreamed that one day it would be me stepping onto that lawn and into that theatre for the very first match of the championships,” Sinner said.

Haaland tells Rooney: Enjoy your rowing trip

New Delhi: Norway striker Erling Haaland reflected on one of the greatest victories in his country’s football history after the Scandinavian side stunned five-time champions Brazil to reach the FIFA World Cup 2026 quarter-finals, while also playfully reminding former England captain Wayne Rooney to honour his promise following the result. Sharing his latest vlog on YouTube after Norway’s historic triumph, Haaland smiled as he addressed Rooney, who had earlier joked that he would row down the River Mersey if Norway eliminated Brazil. “Wayne Rooney, I expect you to go out on a rowing trip,” Haaland said with a grin. The Manchester City striker produced the defining performance of his international career, scoring both goals in Norway’s memorable 2-1 Round of 16 victory over Brazil in New Jersey. The result secured Norway’s first-ever FIFA World Cup quarter-final appearance and extended their remarkable unbeaten record against the South American giants. Before reliving the victory, Haaland spoke warmly about his admiration for Brazilian football and its rich



legacy. “Brazil is a football nation, which is almost maybe the first football nation you kind of get to know because of all the legendary players that played there. Just the jersey, the country, the passion. Even in 2014, when Neymar and you know with all those big players they had, and they have,” said Haaland. “It’s just like it’s a bit unrealistic to play against them. No matter where you go, you kind of see a Brazil shirt, and yeah, that’s why I have so much respect for Brazil as a country, but especially as a football nation,” he added. Haaland also reserved special praise for Brazil legend Ronaldo Nazario. “I mean, Ronaldo is a special player as well, we all know. El Fenomeno. I think Zlatan (Ibrahimovic) said it like he is the inspiration to everyone who starts with football

because of the way he was dribbling, the way he was just enjoying football and everything,” he said. The occasion carried added significance for the Haaland family. Erling’s father, Alfie Haaland, was a member of the Norway side that famously defeated Brazil during the 1998 FIFA World Cup group stage. Ahead of this year’s Round of 16 clash, Alfie met Brazilian greats including Ronaldo Nazario and Cafu, sharing light-hearted moments with the former striker before kickoff. The vlog also captured those moments. Reflecting on Norway’sstunning achievement, Haaland admitted that even he never imagined such a result. “No words. This is just unreal. To win against Brazil and qualify for the quarterfinals was not on my bucket list. I think we played unbelievably

Arnav Paparkar extends dream Wimbledon run, reaches boys’ singles quarterfinals

New Delhi : Indian teenager Arnav Paparkar continued his remarkable run at Wimbledon 2026, producing another clinical performance to book his place in the boys’ singles quarterfinals with a dominant 6-2, 6-1 victory over Japan’s Ryo Tabata on Court 8 on Tuesday. He also became the first Indian since Leander Paes in 1990 to reach the Wimbledon boys’ singles quarter-finals, ending the country’s 35-year wait for a last-eight appearance.

The 18-year-old, who arrived at the All England Club as the world junior No.19, needed just 52 minutes to dismantle Tabata and move within two wins of a place in the final. The result also extended what has already become the best Grand Slam run of his young career after impressive performances at both Roland Garros and Wimbledon this season. Paparkar is in complete control from the outset, relying on a powerful serve



and clean ball-striking to dictate play. He blasted eight aces and remarkably did not commit a single double fault, while winning an outstanding 92 per cent of points behind his first serve. Even on his second serve, the Indian won 69 per cent of points, leaving Tabata with little opportunity to mount a comeback. The Indian was equally ruthless on return and converted four of his 10 break-point chances. Paparkar also dominated the winners-to-errors count, striking 21 winners while committing just

five unforced errors. In contrast, Tabata managed only six winners and was undone by 23 unforced errors, highlighting the gulf between the two players. Paparkar’s journey to the quarterfinals has been one of the standout stories of the Wimbledon junior championships. The Indian opened his campaign with a commanding straight-sets victory in the first round, showcasing his grass-court credentials with an authoritative serving display. He then grabbed the headlines by pulling off one of the biggest upsets of the tournament,

knocking out third seed and junior World No.3 Keaton Hance of the United States 6-2, 6-3 in the second round. Hance had entered Wimbledon as one of the favourites after finishing runner-up at the Australian Open junior championships earlier this year, but Paparkar outplayed the American from start to finish with fearless attacking tennis.

Paparkar carried that momentum seamlessly into the third round against Tabata, delivering arguably his most dominant performance of the fortnight. The Indian has now dropped just one set en route to the quarterfinals while defeating higher-ranked opponents with impressive consistency. Riding high on confidence after three impressive victories, Paparkar will now take on the winner of the quarterfinal between fellow Indian Tanishq Konduri and Jordan Lee, with a semifinal berth at stake.

Wimbledon: Arthur continues dream run, books thrilling semifinal clash with Zverev next

London: 23-year-old British star Arthur Fery continued his dream run at the ongoing Wimbledon, sealing the semifinal spot with a stunning win over Flavio Cobolli, becoming only the second wildcard to reach the semifinals of the prestigious tournament. The world number 114 produced a sensational performance, outclassing his top-10-ranked opponent, Cobolli, 6-4, 7-6(4), 6-0 under the baking London sun and, in the process, also became the lowest-ranked men’s singles semifinalist in Wimbledon since then-World No. 125 Goran Ivanisevic won the whole thing in 2001, as per ATP’s official website. Speaking in his post-match interview, Arthur said, “It just seems to be getting better and better every match. I just cannot believe it. Incredible, playing on Centre Court for the second time, a second win. I just cannot believe it.”

Fery, who is just the fifth British player to seal a Wimbledon semifinal spot after Roger Taylor, Tim Henman, Andy Murray and Cameron Norrie, has a tough opponent in the form of French Open champion Alexander Zverev. “I guess it is going to be a first time and we will figure it out as we go,” Fery said about the



clash with Zverev. “I am just going to keep going. I have been doing a great job over the past 10 days. I am just going to do the same thing and see where that takes me,” he added. Earlier, Zverev had outclassed sixth-seed American Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-4, 6-2. Having lost his previous seven matches to Fritz, the German secured a one-hour, 59-minute win to secure his first Wimbledon semifinal, becoming just the fifth from his country to reach the semifinals of Wimbledon in the Open Era. He also became the fifth active man to reach the semifinals at all four major tournaments --

joining Novak Djokovic, Marin Cilic, Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner “I hope to play two more matches here,” Zverev said afterwards, “But for now, I am extremely happy to be in the semi-finals, especially against Taylor, whom I had not beaten in more than two years. He has been beating me for two years straight. I played a fantastic match, and I am very happy to be in the semi-finals. Serbian tennis icon Novak Djokovic has landed in defending champion Jannik Sinner’s half in the Wimbledon draw, while Taylor Fritz will get to play Jack Drap in an intriguing first-round clash.