

HCG Cancer Centre expands access, launches expert cancer OPD services in Shillong

Woodland expert oncology care closer for Meghalaya patients

Shillong, Aug 03: Reinforcing its commitment to making specialised cancer care more accessible across Northeast India, Healthcare Global Enterprises Ltd. (HCG), India's largest dedicated cancer hospital network, today launched its Expert Cancer OPD services in Shillong in collaboration with Woodland Hospitals, Shillong. The press conference was addressed by Ms. Manisha Kumar, Chief Operating Officer, Karnataka HCG Cancer Hospitals; Dr. Kirthi Koushik A.S., Consultant – Radiation Oncology, HCG Cancer Centre, Bengaluru; and Dr. K.S. Nataraj, Senior Consultant – BMT Hemato-Oncology & Stem Cell Transplant Physician, HCG Cancer Hospital, Bengaluru. The speakers highlighted HCG's commitment to expanding access to advanced cancer care and bringing world-class oncology expertise closer to patients in Meghalaya through regu-



lar specialist consultations. As part of this initiative, the HCG Expert Cancer OPD will be conducted at Woodland Hospitals, Shillong, every 15 days from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The service will enable patients to consult HCG's multidisciplinary team of oncology specialists without having to travel outside the state. The initiative is designed to facilitate early diagnosis, timely referrals, person-

alised treatment planning, and seamless continuity of cancer care, significantly improving access to specialised oncology services for patients across Meghalaya. The Expert Cancer OPD will also provide specialist consultation for blood cancers such as leukemia, lymphoma and multiple myeloma, including assessment for stem cell transplantation where appropriate. HCG team also shared a success-

ful treatment journey of a 66-year-old woman from Meghalaya diagnosed with Vestibular Schwannoma (Koos Grade III)—a rare, benign brain tumour that develops on the vestibulocochlear nerve connecting the inner ear to the brain. For nearly a year, she experienced progressive hearing loss in her right ear, persistent giddiness, and difficulty maintaining balance while walking, symptoms

that significantly impacted her daily life and quality of living. After detailed evaluation at HCG Cancer Centre, Bengaluru, Dr. Kirthi Koushik A.S. and her team treated the tumour using the CyberKnife Robotic Radiosurgery System, delivering Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy (SBRT) with advanced 6D Skull Tracking technology. The highly precise treatment enabled accurate radiation delivery while protecting the surrounding healthy brain tissue and critical neurological structures. The patient completed the treatment without significant side effects and has since experienced considerable improvement in her symptoms. Dr. Kirthi Koushik A.S. Senior Consultant - Radiation Oncology, HCG Cancer Centre, Bengaluru, said, "Vestibular Schwannoma is a rare tumour located in one of the most delicate areas of the brain, making precision the cornerstone of treatment.

Manipur Police recover cache of arms and ammunition in Thoubal

Imphal, Aug 03: Manipur Police on Sunday recovered a cache of arms and ammunition from Ekok Pat near the Arong river bank under Thoubal Police Station in Thoubal district during a search operation. The recovered items include two INSAS rifles, one MP-5 sub-machine gun, one SLR rifle, two .303 rifles, eight magazines, one smoke bomb, and 379 live rounds of ammunition of various calibres. The recovery is part of the ongoing efforts to curb illegal weapons and strengthen peace and security in the state under the 'Disarm For Peace' initiative, Manipur police wrote on X. Senior police officers stated that the operation was based on intelligence inputs regarding hidden caches in sensitive areas. They emphasized that such recoveries are crucial to preventing armed violence and restoring confidence among local communities. The police reiterated their commitment to intensifying search operations across districts to dismantle networks

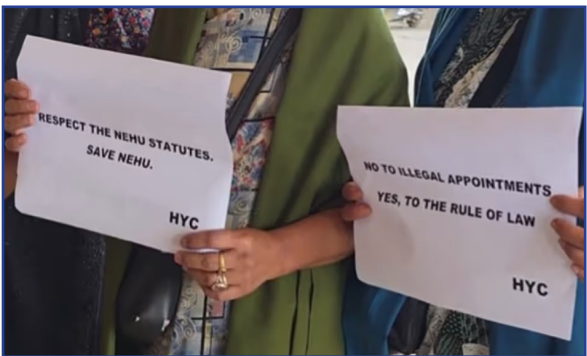


involved in illegal arms circulation. Community leaders welcomed the initiative, noting that the removal of weapons from civilian areas is essential for long-term peacebuilding. Civil society groups urged continued collaboration between law enforcement and residents to ensure that information about hidden arms is promptly shared. The 'Disarm For Peace' campaign is expected to expand further, combining enforcement with awareness drives to encourage voluntary surrender of illegal arms and promote reconciliation. Officials highlighted that the seized weapons will undergo

ballistic testing to determine whether they were used in past incidents of violence. This process is expected to provide crucial leads in ongoing investigations and help track the origins of the arms supply chain. Police sources indicated that coordination with national agencies may be sought to trace cross-border trafficking routes. The Manipur government reaffirmed its commitment to restoring peace and stability in the state. Authorities stressed that the success of the 'Disarm For Peace' initiative depends on both strong enforcement and active community participation.

NEHUTA defends Prof Barik, senior professor declined thrice

Shillong, Aug 03: The North-Eastern Hill University Teachers' Association (NEHUTA) has defended the appointment of Prof Saroj Kanta Barik as Vice-Chancellor in-charge of North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), rejecting the Hynniewtrep Youths' Council's (HYC) demand for his resignation. NEHUTA president Prof Lakshon Kma termed the demand "unfounded, irrational and totally unnecessary", asserting that there was no violation of university statutes in appointing Barik to the post. Kma said the university's senior-most professor, Prof R. Khongsdier, had been approached three times by key stakeholders to take charge of the institution during a period of administrative uncertainty. However, Khongsdier de-



clined on all three occasions. According to Kma, representatives of NEHUTA, the NEHU Non-Teaching Staff Association and the students' union had requested Khongsdier to assume responsibility in accordance with the university's statutes. Copies of the communications were also sent to the Ministry of Education and the office of the President of India, he

said. Kma claimed Khongsdier had maintained that he would take charge only if specifically directed by the Ministry. Prof Barik, who is the second senior-most professor, was meanwhile willing to assume responsibility during the crisis. "That may have weighed in his favour when the Ministry considered who should be entrusted with the responsibility," Kma said.

Petrol Bomb Hurlled at Meghalaya Pollution Control Board Office in Shillong; Probe Underway

Shillong, Aug 03: The office of the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board (MSPCB) in Shillong came under attack on Monday after three unidentified masked men allegedly hurled a petrol bomb at the premises around noon. Police from Laitumkhrah Police Station, accompanied by the Crime Scene Unit, rushed to the spot and launched an investigation soon after the incident. According to preliminary findings, the attack is suspected to be linked to the recent controversy surrounding the public hearing for Shree Cement Limited's proposed limestone mining project at Lum Syрман. The hearing had sparked protests after several pressure groups and local res-



idents alleged they were prevented from participating in the proceedings. MSPCB Member Secretary Dr G.H. Chyrmang said the Board has lodged a formal complaint with the police. CCTV footage reportedly

captured two of the suspects entering the premises, throwing the petrol bomb and fleeing on two scooters. Dr Chyrmang said the motive behind the attack remains unclear and is being investigated. Fortunately, no

one was injured in the incident, and no official records or documents were damaged. Police are examining CCTV footage and collecting other evidence to identify those involved and ascertain the motive behind the attack.

Local civil society groups have condemned the attack, calling it an attempt to intimidate institutions tasked with safeguarding environmental standards. Activists stressed that the MSPCB plays a crucial role in regulating industrial projects and ensuring compliance with environmental norms, and any attempt to undermine its work is a direct threat to public interest. Meanwhile, the state government has pledged full support to the investigation and reiterated its commitment to transparency in environmental decision-making. Authorities emphasized that public hearings must remain open and inclusive, and that violence will not be allowed to derail democratic processes.

Assam releases flood relief, ₹15k aid for 60,000 families

Guwahati, Aug 03: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday announced the release of the first instalment of interim financial assistance for families affected by the recent floods, with the state government allocating Rs 160 crore for immediate relief. Under the relief package, each eligible flood-affected family will receive Rs 15,000 as interim assistance. In the first phase, more than 60,000 families across the worst-affected districts of Sivasagar, Charaideo, Jorhat and Golaghat will benefit. The number of beneficiaries is expected to increase to around 75,000 after further verification and assessment. According to the Chief Minister, over 35,000 families in Sivasagar, more than 19,000 in Charaideo, over 4,000 in Jorhat and around 2,000 in Golaghat have been identified for the first phase of assistance. Sarma said the government would continue conducting



field assessments in flood-affected areas, and additional eligible families would be included as the damage assessment progresses. He also announced an additional relief package for displaced families in Sivasagar and Charaideo who remain unable to return to their homes. Families still residing in relief camps or temporary shelters by August 9 will receive an additional Rs 10,000 from August

10 to help them cope with prolonged displacement. The Chief Minister further stated that a comprehensive assessment of flood-related damage, including losses to property and casualties, will begin on August 10 in Sivasagar, Charaideo, Jorhat and Golaghat. Compensation and financial assistance will thereafter be released to eligible beneficiaries in accordance with government norms.

Meanwhile, Sarma announced that the state government has released its share of subsidy under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana to facilitate the installation of rooftop solar systems and reduce electricity expenses for households. Officials noted that the dual focus on immediate financial assistance and long-term infrastructure support reflects the government's commitment to both recovery and resilience. By combining cash relief with renewable energy initiatives, Assam aims to empower families to rebuild their lives while reducing vulnerability to future crises. Civil society groups and local leaders welcomed the announcement, stressing that timely disbursement of funds and transparent monitoring will be crucial. They urged the government to ensure equitable distribution of relief and to prioritize rehabilitation measures such as housing reconstruction, healthcare access, and livelihood restoration. The relief package, coupled with solar subsidies, is expected to set a precedent for integrated disaster response in the state.

stallation of rooftop solar systems and reduce electricity expenses for households. Officials noted that the dual focus on immediate financial assistance and long-term infrastructure support reflects the government's commitment to both recovery and resilience. By combining cash relief with renewable energy initiatives, Assam aims to empower families to rebuild their lives while reducing vulnerability to future crises. Civil society groups and local leaders welcomed the announcement, stressing that timely disbursement of funds and transparent monitoring will be crucial. They urged the government to ensure equitable distribution of relief and to prioritize rehabilitation measures such as housing reconstruction, healthcare access, and livelihood restoration. The relief package, coupled with solar subsidies, is expected to set a precedent for integrated disaster response in the state.

Mizoram police seize ₹8 crore contraband in raids

Aizawl, Aug 03: Mizoram Police have seized contraband valued at more than ₹8 crore in three major anti-drug operations conducted across the state. The coordinated crackdown marks one of the largest recent successes in the fight against narcotics trafficking in the Northeast, reinforcing the state's commitment to curbing the drug menace. According to officials, the operations were carried out over the past week in different districts, targeting suspected trafficking routes and storage points. Acting on intelligence inputs, police teams intercepted consignments that included heroin, methamphetamine tablets, and other illicit substances. The seizures were made possible through joint efforts of district police units, anti-narcotics squads, and local informants. Director General of Police Mizoram commended the teams involved, stating, "This achievement reflects our determination to dismantle drug networks and protect our youth from the



devastating impact of narcotics. We will continue to intensify operations and ensure traffickers face the full force of the law." Several suspects were arrested during the raids, and investigations are underway to trace the larger networks behind the contraband. Authorities believe the drugs

were intended for distribution both within Mizoram and across neighboring states, highlighting the region's vulnerability as a transit corridor. Community leaders and civil society organizations welcomed the police action, noting that drug abuse has been a growing concern in Mizoram.

Assam has improved as the number of affected individuals decreases to 178,000

Guwahati, Aug 03: The flood situation in Assam improved slightly, with the number of affected people coming down to 1.78 lakh even though the count of districts hit by the deluge increased to seven, officials said on Sunday.

The toll remained unchanged at 82 as no fresh fatalities were reported in the state in the last 24 hours, they said.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma will be visiting the worst-hit areas from Sunday, even as the Centre sanctioned over Rs 370 crore under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF),



the officials said.

A total of 349 villages in Golaghat, Sivasagar, Charaideo, Bajali, Dhemaji, Sonitpur and Jorhat districts remained affected by the deluge. Charaideo was the worst-hit, with 75,199 people affected, followed by 58,824 in Sivasagar.

A total of five districts and 1.92 lakh people were affected on Friday.

Forty-four relief camps were operational in the state, providing shelter to around 15,000 displaced people. Another 17 relief distribution centres were also working, catering to 5,569 people.

A crop area of 15,060 hectares remained submerged, while 1,543 animals were washed away and another 6,765 were affected.

Sarma expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister

with our people,” Sarma said in a post on social media.

The CM will be touring the affected districts to oversee the relief work and ensure that proper damage assessment is done.

“In a short while from now, I will be reaching Dibrugarh and thereafter to the flood-affected areas to meet the people, oversee ongoing relief efforts and lay the groundwork for a full proof assessment exercise to ensure appropriate compensation to the affected,” he said. Sarma had reviewed the relief and rehabilitation work in the worst-hit four districts in a virtual meeting from Guwahati on Saturday.

“HCM Dr. @himantabiswa today reviewed the ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts in the flood-affected districts of Sivasagar, Charaideo, Jorhat and Golaghat with the respective District Commissioners,” the chief minister’s office (CMO) said in a social media post. The chief minister directed the DCs to expedite the submission of the list of affected families to enable the release of financial assistance from August 3, ensure uninterrupted distribution of relief kits, complete damage assessment of educational institutions ahead of the reopening of schools on August 10 and submit the list of damaged ‘Namghars’ (Vaishnavite centres of prayer) for early restoration support.

“HCM also informed that the comprehensive flood damage assessment will begin on August 9,” the CMO added.

Jalukie Pumling Youth Organisation raises alarm over PMGSY road delay



Guwahati, Aug 03: The Jalukie Pumling Youth Organisation (JPYO) has expressed serious concern over the deteriorating condition of the road stretch from Jalukie Town to Kamdi Bazaar under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

In a press release issued by JPYO president, Azuna Hiekha stated the agency responsible for the project has significantly delayed its completion, causing severe inconvenience to the public.

With the onset of the monsoon season, the situation has worsened, affecting several villages and institutions including Panjang, Jalukie Ram, Jalukie Kam, Beisumpuikam, Samziuram, the Veterinary College and the ZBCC Prayer Centre. Students, villagers and commuters have been forced to endure tremendous hardship due to the poor road condition. The JPYO has urged the executing agency and implementing authority to prioritise the work and ensure early completion of the road. As an immediate relief measure, the organisation has called upon the agency to lay Granular Sub-Base (GSB) material along the affected stretch within two weeks of the press release. The organisation also highlighted that the drainage system constructed along the route has proven inadequate, with several sections overflowing during the current monsoon. JPYO demanded that a proper drainage system be put in place to prevent further damage and recurrence of such issues. Warning of possible action, JPYO stated that if the agency fails to take necessary measures, it will be compelled to pursue its own course in the larger public interest. The prolonged delay, it said, has already caused immense hardship to the affected villages and institutions and any further delay will not be tolerated. The organisation expressed hope that the authorities concerned will respond promptly and take immediate steps to address the grievances of the people.

Congress condemns detention of indigenous rights activist Pranab Doley under NSA in Assam

Guwahati, Aug 03: The Congress on Sunday slammed the Assam government over indigenous rights activist Pranab Doley being detained under the National Security Act, alleging that the use of the NSA against him was part of a growing pattern of BJP governments “weaponising” extraordinary laws to silence dissent.

The opposition party also said this is a “blatant misuse” of preventive detention laws and “overreach” by the state.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said that on July 30, the Assam Government invoked the National Security Act (NSA) against land rights activist Doley, just a day after the district court granted him bail.

“This is a blatant misuse of preventive detention laws and overreach by the state,” Ramesh said on X.

Doley has been arrested for supporting villagers who protested against a proposed five-star resort near the Kaziranga National Park that the Assam chief minister had backed, he said. Since 2022, indigenous residents of Golaghat have protested and even petitioned the Gauhati High Court against the project, arguing the land was forcibly acquired from them, Ramesh said.

While granting him bail on July 29, the sessions court had observed that “where ecological preservation intersects with indigenous survival, criminal law cannot be used to suppress legitimate local anxieties”, Ramesh said.

It is clear that the Assam government invoked the NSA to do exactly that, he alleged.

Doley’s NSA detention order relies on vague and speculative allegations, including that Doley had engaged in “suspicious foreign transactions from doubtful sources”, which is the Modi government’s familiar script, the Congress leader said. “The use of the NSA against Doley is part of a growing pattern of BJP governments weaponising extraordinary laws to silence dissent,” Ramesh said.

Similar attempts have been witnessed in Uttar Pradesh, where the NSA was invoked against labour activists protesting against exploitative working conditions in Noida, he said.

BJP governments across the country cannot suppress legitimate grievances of

working-class, indigenous, and marginalised communities through arrests and draconian laws, he said.

“The Assam Government continues to show utter disregard for the rule of law and for democratic dissent. The Supreme Court and several high courts have repeatedly cautioned that preventive detention laws must not be used as a device to defeat or circumvent judicial orders granting bail, or merely to prolong a person’s incarceration,” the Congress leader said.

His remarks come after Doley was detained under the stringent NSA, a day after securing bail in a case related to protests against a proposed five-star hotel near Kaziranga National Park in Assam.

Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi, criticising the move on Saturday, maintained that it shows the state government does not allow dissent, as he also mentioned Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma “threatening” to use NSA against artists over a mural of singer Zubeen Garg in Guwahati.

Doley, who was arrested in Guwahati on July 13 and lodged in Golaghat district jail, was granted bail by a court on Wednesday in connection with the June protest. However, the state government invoked the NSA against him on Thursday, ensuring his continued detention in the same jail, according to the order.

The order issued by the Political (A) Department said the government was satisfied that Doley’s activities were “prejudicial to the maintenance of public order as well as security of the state” and that there was a “real and imminent possibility” of him continuing such activities if released.

Stating that preventive detention was necessary, the order, issued under Section 3(2) of the NSA, 1980, directed that Doley be detained and kept in custody at the Golaghat District Jail.

Doley has been spearheading protests against the proposed five-star hotel near the UNESCO World Heritage Site Kaziranga National Park, alleging that the project poses a threat to the area’s fragile ecology.

A peasants’ rights activist, Doley had also unsuccessfully contested the April assembly elections from the Bokakhat constituency against AGP president Atul Bora, a state cabinet minister.

‘Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyaan’ observed across NE

Guwahati, Aug 03: Along with the rest of the country, Several NE states also joined in the nationwide ‘Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyaan’ held on Sunday.

Drug free youth essential for Viksit Bharat: Manipur CM Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh on Sunday said that the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 can only be realised with a healthy, disciplined and drug-free youth.

Singh made the statement while attending the nationwide launch of the ‘Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyaan’ held at the Manipur University..

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the ‘Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan’ with nationwide virtual interaction with youth across the country from New Delhi.

Addressing the gathering, Singh said that the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 can only be realised



with a healthy, disciplined and drug-free youth.

He also urged the young people of Manipur to actively participate in nation-building by staying away from drugs and contributing positively towards the development of the state and the country.

Recalling the period when drug abuse was at its peak, Singh said that he consciously chose to remain away from narcotic substances, which enabled him to

dedicate himself to public service and encouraged the youth to make similar choices and become responsible citizens capable of leading Manipur towards a brighter future.

Expressing concern over the increasing incidence of substance abuse, Singh said that interactions with various NGOs revealed disturbing instances of organised networks supplying drugs to young people, even through various

means.

He said the government is committed to intensifying its fight against drug trafficking and protecting the youth from the harmful effects of narcotics.

Highlighting the state’s strategic importance under the Act East Policy, Singh stated that Manipur is poised to become the gateway to Southeast Asia and said that the government is working towards completion and utilisation of the railway network to Imphal by December 2028, which will further strengthen connectivity, trade and economic opportunities extending towards Moreh and neighbouring countries.

Singh also said that peace is the foundation of development.

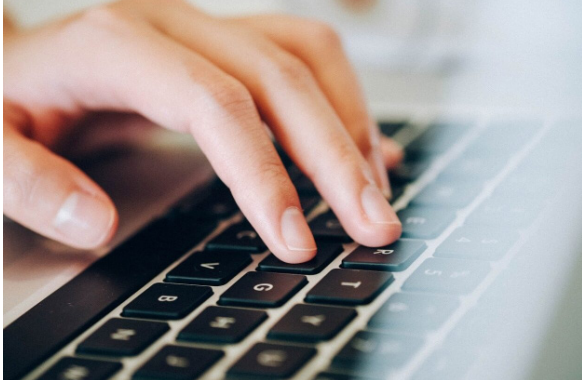
Referring to the unprecedented crisis that has affected the state over the past three years, he appealed to all communities to move forward with mutual understanding and work collectively towards restoring lasting peace.

MoU signed to support Longsa students

Guwahati, Aug 03: A three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on August 1 in Dimaapur between Wokha district BJP Youth president Shanthoing A. Ezung, in collaboration with the Longsa Village Students’ Union and Edufy Institute, Dimapur, to provide coaching support for aspirants from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in Longsa village. This arrangement is expected to significantly ease the financial burden on aspiring candidates and enable them to prepare effectively for various examinations.

Meghalaya govt to award laptops to meritorious class 10, 12 students

Guwahati, Aug 03: The Meghalaya government will award laptops to meritorious students who passed the 2026 Class 10 and Class 12 examinations conducted by the Meghalaya Board of School Education (MBOSE), the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), the Indian School Certificate (ISC) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). According to a public notice issued by the Directorate of Information Technology and Communications (DITC), students who passed the MBOSE SSLC, MBOSE HSSLC, ICSE, ISC and CBSE ex-



aminations in 2026 and fulfilled the prescribed eligibility criteria will be considered for the award. In the case of ICSE, ISC and CBSE students, only those who appeared for the examinations from schools affil-

iated with their respective boards and located within Meghalaya will be eligible.

The provisional list of eligible meritorious students has been uploaded on the DITC website. Students whose names have been

included in the list but who have not received any communication regarding the award have been asked to approach.

Directorate of Information Technology and Communications with their original marksheets, valid photo identity proof and other relevant supporting documents for verification.

Students may submit their queries or objections in writing to the directorate on or before September 3, 2026.

The online registration portal for the laptop award will remain open from August 3 to September 3, 2026, the notice stated.

NEISSR and Vitamin Angels have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance community health education

Dimapur, Aug 03: In a significant initiative to strengthen community health and professional social work education in Nagaland, the North East Institute of Social Sciences and Research (NEISSR) formally launched its collaboration with Vitamin Angels through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at a programme held at the Institute’s BAM Hall on August 1.

The partnership will provide community health fieldwork and practical learning opportunities for Master of Social Work (MSW) students while supporting evidence-based public health initiatives in Dimapur, Niuland and Chümoukedima districts.

Addressing the gathering as the chief guest, State Program Officer for RMNCAH+N, National Health Mission (NHM) Nagaland, Dr. Khelito Zhimomi, lauded the collaboration as a timely partnership that bridges higher education and public health. She

noted that improving community health requires strong institutional partnerships and appreciated the initiative for preparing future social work professionals through direct engagement with communities. She further observed that the collaboration complements the State’s ongoing efforts to improve maternal and child health and strengthen community-based health services.

The programme was also graced by special invitees Block Programme Manager (BPM), NHM Chümoukedima, Senti Jamir; director ProRural NGO, Paul Lokho; project coordinator ProRural, Imliakum Imsong; and project coordinator ProRural Tolivi N Sumi.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal NEISSR, Dr. Fr. C. P. Anto, said that the partnership reflects the Institute’s commitment to producing socially responsible professionals through experiential

learning. He emphasized that social work education must go beyond classroom instruction, enabling students to integrate knowledge, skills and values while serving vulnerable communities. He added that the collaboration represents NEISSR’s vision of fostering academic excellence through meaningful partnerships that contribute to sustainable community development. Established as Nagaland’s pioneering institute dedicated to professional social work education, NEISSR continues to strengthen its engagement with government agencies, civil society organizations and international partners in addressing contemporary social and developmental challenges.

Representing Vitamin Angels in Nagaland, State Project Manager, Alice Kamei, shared that the organization is committed to working alongside the National Health Mission (NHM) Naga-

land, academic institutions and local communities to improve maternal and child nutrition. The representative highlighted that engaging social work students in community-based public health programmes will nurture a new generation of professionals equipped to respond to complex health and social challenges through evidence-informed practice in the state and the region.

Vitamin Angels, a globally recognized US-based non-profit organization working in more than 65 countries, has maintained a sustained presence in Nagaland since 2011. Through its partnership with the National Health Mission (NHM) Nagaland, and local organizations, it has supported initiatives aimed at strengthening maternal and child nutrition, including evidence-based interventions to improve vitamin A supplementation coverage among children in the state.

A 17-kilometer railway line will improve access to the India-China-Bhutan trijunction

New Delhi, Aug 03: With the Khunia More to Jaldhaka railway project, a recently approved 17-kilometer strategic rail link in North Bengal with an estimated cost of Rs 272 crore, India intends to improve access to the border along the India-China-Bhutan tri-junction. Additionally, the project seeks to enhance and expand tourism in the Dooars area.I'm happy to announce that the Ministry of Railways has approved a new 17-kilometer line to Jaldhaka for about Rs 272 crore. In a social media post, Siliguri MP Raju Bista stated, "The route will start from Khunia More near Chalsa and pass through Jalpaiguri and Kalimpong forest divisions." The Jaldhaka River is a 186 to 233-kilometer-long trans-boundary river flowing through Sikkim and West Bengal in India, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. It originates from the Kupup (Bitang) Lake near the Jelep La pass



in Sikkim and ultimately empties into the Brahmaputra River. "The rail link will increase tourism in the Jaldhaka-Bindu-Todey Tangta area and enhance connectivity to the India-China-Bhutan tri-junction." Following the monsoon, a joint survey for the proposed new line would be conducted by the West Bengal Forest Department and the railroads," Bista continued.Bista congratulated Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "giving top priority to devel-

oping modern infrastructure in our region" in a lengthy Instagram post."Given that the Jaldhaka River rises from a lake near the Doklam tri-junction boundary between China, India, and Bhutan, a railway line along its course is extremely important. With Indian Railways proposing a crucial 200-km line from Chalsa (Jalpaiguri) into the border area, the launch of the railway project shows that India is also consolidating its infrastructure in the region. Surveys for the project would start after the monsoon season. According

to railway officials, the proposed line is anticipated to fulfill numerous objectives by enhancing connectivity to isolated border areas, enabling tourism, and bolstering vital infrastructure in the region. The area is well-known for the Doklam standoff, a 73-day military confrontation between China and India in 2017 on a plateau close to the intersection of China, Bhutan, and India. In order to halt Chinese road development in Bhutanese territory, Indian troops had to step in. Under bilateral accords, India backs Bhutan's claims over Dokalam. China has maintained long-term infrastructure consolidation in the region, according to reports and satellite data.The Sivok-Rangpo railway project will be the second to link the strategically significant and delicate border region with China, with ambitions to eventually extend it to the Nathu La Pass.

The Supreme Court mandates that pedestrian spaces along roads be properly demarcated



New Delhi, Aug 03: On Monday, the Supreme Court ordered the Center to make sure that every route has a clearly marked, pedestrian-only area free of encroachment.Additional Solicitor General K M Nararaj, speaking on behalf of the Center, was directed by a bench of Justices P S Narasimha

and Alok Aradhe to direct the relevant authorities to ensure that the area designated for walking is not invaded and is appropriately divided from motor vehicle lanes.Just make sure that the walkers' space is properly demarcated without making any significant building or investment. There should

be a walkers' area wherever there is a road. The bench instructed Nataraj to "do it with a rope or anything and make sure it is not encroached." The bench emphasized that pedestrians should have faith that the area is intended for them and that they can stroll freely without fear of passing cars while giving him two weeks to give instructions to the authorities.After two weeks, the top court scheduled a follow-up hearing.In a landmark decision on June 19, the Supreme Court ruled that walking on a clearly marked path is a basic right. It decided that this right, which is a component of the right to movement protected by Article 19(1)(d) and other fundamental rights like Article 21 (right to life and liberty), will take precedence over motorized vehicles on designated paths.

On August 5, CJP will have its first core committee meeting to talk about future goals

New Delhi, Aug 03: The first core committee meeting of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) will take place in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar on Wednesday to debate the party's future direction, organizational growth, and the public issues it intends to address in the upcoming months.Members from all around the nation have been invited to the gathering, according to CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke. "The purpose of this meeting is to determine our agenda. We'll talk about how to grow the organization, de-

cide which topics we should address for the benefit of the public, and plan the organization's future. Dipke stated on Monday. He dismissed speculation that CJP could transform into a political party, asserting that it will continue to function as a people's movement. "We have no intention of turning the organisation into a political outfit. We want it to continue as a people's movement." "Given the current circumstances, I see no reason to convert CJP into a political party," he continued. "Forming a politi-

cal party is not the solution when votes are being deleted, people are losing faith in the electoral process, when they vote for someone in the morning and by the evening someone else gets elected, when they elect MLAs and MPs from one party and they switch their allegiance to another political party, and when political parties are split with the help of the ED (Enforcement Directorate) and the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation)." "I am prepared to make all of my documents pertaining to my educational loan and

scholarship public if Prime Minister Modi ji is willing to make his degree public." I trust the Prime Minister's degree is authentic, just as I have my original degree. "Let him release his documents, and I'll follow suit," he declared. Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned on July 25 as a result of the 36-day student protest led by the CJP over the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) paper leak and other purported exam irregularities in Delhi's Jantar Mantar.

Rain-Related Incidents in Kerala Have Left 15 Dead and 7 Missing

Thiruvananthapuram, Aug 03: Chief Minister VD Satheesan announced on Monday that there are now 15 fatalities from rain-related accidents in Kerala, with seven individuals remaining unaccounted for.According to Satheesan, three deaths were reported from the Kottayam district, including a toddler who drowned after slipping into a water tank and two individuals from the Poonjar Assembly constituency.Ernakulam reported two deaths, while one person each died in Idukki and Muvattupuzha. There were two fatalities in Kollam, four in Malappuram, one in Kannur, and one in Kozhikode.Seven people are still missing in Kollam, two in Kannur, one in Malappuram and one apiece in Idukki and Mu-



vattupuzha, Satheesan said. After discussing the state's flood situation with top officials, the chief minister informed a press conference that as of Monday morning, 316 relief camps were operational around the state, providing shelter to 11,018 persons displaced by the rain and flooding.According to the India Meteorological Department, the state could have significant rains on August 3 and 6 along with high winds that could reach

speeds of 40 to 50 kmph. Due to the possibility of severe gusts of up to 60 kmph and choppy sea conditions, it urged fishermen not to travel along the Kerala-Karnataka-Lakshadweep coast on August 2 and 3.The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services cautioned fishermen and coastal dwellers to exercise caution due to large waves that could reach heights of 2.7 to 3.5 meters along the northern Kerala coast.

MPs from the opposition demonstrate in parliament against the theft of donations from Ram Temple



New Delhi, Aug 03: On Monday, opposition MPs, including Congress national secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, demonstrated in the Parliament House complex against "police excesses" against student demonstrators and alleged donation theft at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.Slogans like "chhanda chor, gaddi chor" and "Amit Shah sadan mein aao" were raised by the MPs when they demonstrated in front of Makar Dwar of Parliament.

temple. To represent the gifts provided and the "theft" that occurred subsequently, some MPs also placed money in the box.Besides Priyanka Gandhi, SP's Dimple Yadav and Dharmendra Yadav, TMC's Mahua Moitra, JMM's Mahua Maji, RSP's NK Premchandran, among others, participated in the protest.Behind a large banner that said, "Why Amit Shah absent from Parliament," the protesting MPs formed a line. They chanted anti-Shah slogans that seemed to allude to the orders given to security guards to use deadly force on student demonstrators during the most recent protest against

the NEET paper leak.Regarding the alleged theft of contributions at the Ram temple and the deployment of "brutal force" against students during their protests last week, the INDIA group has promised to corner the administration. During their demonstration in the Parliament House complex on Friday, the members of the INDIA group performed a skit.

In order to symbolize the alleged theft at the Ram temple, Rajesh Ranjan, also known as Pappu Yadav, slipped money into his pockets while the MPs, including Rahul Gandhi, placed money inside contribution boxes.The BJP and Hindu organizations have called the demonstration an insult to Sanatan dharma, sparking a controversy.

To finalize the opposition's plan for this week, the floor leaders of the INDIA bloc parties convened earlier in the day in Rajya Sabha Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge's chamber in the Parliament complex.

Days after being arrested for comments against Chief Minister Vijay, a DMK MLA is granted bail



Chennai, Aug 03:Opposition Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) assembly member GV Markandayan was granted bail by the Madras high court on Monday in a case filed against him for allegedly making threatening and disparaging remarks against chief minister C Joseph Vijay. However, this was contingent upon his filing an affidavit promising not to make such remarks in the future. Markandayan, a member of the Tamil Nadu assembly from the Vilathikulam seat, was ordered by Justice GK Ilanthiraiyan to appear before the investigating officer twice a day for

two weeks, excluding days when the assembly is in session. Markandayan allegedly made "highly derogatory, abusive, and threatening remarks" against Vijay at a DMK meeting to express gratitude to voters on July 18. The prosecution alleged that he had insulted Vijay and said that the chief minister will be "dealt with" inside the legislative assembly, that his "bones will be broken" and he will be harmed if certain actions were taken.Markandayan was booked on July 19 under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Sections 351(3), 352, and 353(2) related to criminal intimi-

dation, intentional insults, and promoting enmity, hatred, or ill will, on a ruling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam functionary's complaint. Markandayan was arrested on July 20, and remanded to judicial custody until August 3. Additionally, Markandayan contested a magistrate's remand order, claiming that the charges against him carried a maximum seven-year prison sentence.

He said that he should not have been detained without being given the chance to appear for an investigation in accordance with Section 35(3) of the BNS.After the magistrate denied him bail last week, Markandayan went to the high court.Senior attorney P Wilson, who represented Markandayan at the top court, contended that the magistrate disregarded the guidelines established by the Supreme Court about arrests in situations where the potential sentence was seven years in jail. The state will not challenge Markandayan's bail, according to public prosecutor John Sathyan, but he ought to be barred from saying such things going forward. After recording the arguments, Justice Ilanthiraiyan granted Markandayan's request for release.

Meta, X, Google, and Snapchat are called before a parliamentary inquiry about digital safety

New Delhi, Aug 03: Representatives from Meta, X, Snapchat, and Google were called by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology to testify before the panel today at 4 PM.The Committee on Information Technology and Communications of Parliament was supposed to meet in order to assess the more comprehensive framework of internet safety. Ensuring the digital safety of women and children, protecting the data privacy of farmers, rural residents, laborers, and general people, and evaluating how social media platforms adhere to government regulations governing law and order were the three main topics of debate. Nishikant Dubey, a BJP MP and the chair of the Parliamentary Standing Committee, described the precise areas of investigation for the internet platforms when he announced the summons earlier.Our Parliamentary Committee on IT and Communication has summoned Meta (Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp), X (Twitter), Snapchat, and Google on August 3, 2026 at 4 PM," Dubey said.

What measures will be taken to safeguard the privacy of women, children, farmers, rural residents, workers, and the general public? "How do these businesses maintain public order under the government?" he continued.The development comes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Facebook video discussing action against exam paper leaks was momentarily taken down from Meta before being reinstated. "The content was removed in error and has since been restored," a Meta representative said in a statement, blaming the removal on a technical glitch. During the 36-day Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)-led protest against the irregularities in the NEET-UG 2026 exam, Prime Minister Modi made his first direct appeal to Generation Z in the video, which was released on July 23.During the speech, the Prime Minister gave students assurances that the government would fortify the legal system against paper leaks by establishing Special Fast-Track Courts and enacting new laws that would impose harsher penalties. Following that, the Center presented the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, which called for Special Fast-Track Courts, increased monetary penalties, and up to ten years in prison for violations of the Act.

The Punjab government is ordered by the court to clear the dearness allowance due within 15 days

New Delhi, Aug 03: After rejecting the state's Letters Patent Appeal (LPA), the Punjab and Haryana High Court ordered the Punjab Government to settle its outstanding Dearness Allowance (DA) arrears within 15 days, providing a significant relief to approximately six lakh Punjab government employees and retirees.The High Court affirmed that the government is responsible for releasing the unpaid balances to qualified employees and pensioners, upholding the previous ruling made by the single-judge bench. The projected obligation for the order to release the Dearness

Allowance is Rs 14,191 crore. The Punjab Government is required by the court to make sure that the arrears are paid within 15 days.Additionally, the Chief Secretary has been instructed to confirm compliance with the order by filing an affidavit with the court following the completion of the payment. In a significant direction, the court has restrained the Punjab Government from spending on advertisements and other non-essential schemes until the pending dues of employees and pensioners are cleared. The order further states that if the government fails to make the payment within the



stipulated one-month period, the outstanding amount will attract 6 per cent annual interest. Both

parties have responded politically to the judgment.Pargat Singh, a Congress MLA, questioned

the government's budgetary objectives while applauding the ruling. He claimed that although money was available for other programs, retirees' and employees' rightful payments had not been made. He described the ruling by the High Court as a win for workers and retirees awaiting their due compensation. Manpreet Singh Ayali, an MLA and leader of the Warris Punjab De, also praised the ruling and declared that his party would bring up the matter on the Punjab Assembly floor. He encouraged the administration to follow the High Court's orders and refund the outstand-

ing arrears as soon as possible. MLA Manwinder Singh Gaspura responded on behalf of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party, stating that the administration supports workers and retirees. He said he was confident Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will figure out a way to make sure the money was paid according to the court's ruling. In addition to providing much-needed relief to thousands of active workers and retired pensioners throughout the state, the High Court's decision is anticipated to have major financial ramifications for the Punjab government.

North East Chronicle

AUGUST 04 2026 VOL 02 NO. 161



The cost of screen addiction in children

It's a slightly old story. A 16-year-old boy was sitting in a police station in Uttar Pradesh. He had been detained for threatening to kill Prime Minister Narendra Modi, chief minister Yogi Adityanath, and then Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar. The boy, from a rural background, wanted overnight fame and hence resorted to the online stunt. As it involved VIPs, the police zeroed in on him in no time. Later, the court took a lenient view considering his age and granted him bail. But this is no isolated case. There are thousands of such incidents where children or young adults perform such acts, compelled by their on-line addiction.

Online addiction has started affecting children in many adverse ways. The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AMRC) has categorised online addiction as a public health emergency. AMRC rates the addiction on a par with smoking. The doctors participating in the survey confirmed that they receive at least one young patient every day who has been suffering mental or physical ailments due to excessive online engagement. The doctors warned that tech companies design their apps in a manner that turns people into addicts. We are well aware of insomnia, irritation, violent outbursts and other problems that online addiction causes. Even the Norwegian government is going to take revolutionary new steps from August 1. Norway was the first country in the world to digitalise

even the primary classes. The government of Norway and the country's society are now reversing the initiative. Norwegian education minister Kari Nesa Nordtun says that excessive screen use in schools is affecting children's core cognitive abilities. It's adversely impacting their physical and mental health. As a result, many children are turning to cyberbullying. The Norwegian government is terming the initiative as "back to basics".

The government in Oslo dedicated a budget of millions of kroner two years ago to bring back textbooks in classrooms. The results are visible. From August 1, the use of screens for students of class 1 to 4 was completely stopped. A zero-screen law is already in place for children under two years of age. The government has tripled the grant for school libraries. This move will definitely be a milestone in preserving the human mind and cognition. China, too, has restricted screen time for children under 8 to 40 minutes per day. At 10 in the night, 'internet curfew' is imposed which lasts till six in the morning. Beijing has restricted all those services that can make children AI addicts. Even South Korean classrooms became out of bounds for mobile phones last month. The government has also established internet rescue schools. Here, minors are kept in the lap of nature without any electronic gadgets so they can revert to their natural human self.

The vigilante threat to India's democracy

When citizens don't believe they can get justice, they often take the law into their own hands. This is called vigilantism, and it has been on the rise in India for the past several decades. Vigilantism is commonly summarised as "taking the law into one's own hands", or "trying to punish someone for breaking a law even though one does not have the right to do that". A vigilante practices or engages in vigilantism. According to the political scientist Regina Bateson, vigilantism is "the extra-legal prevention, investigation, or punishment of offences". This definition comprises three components: Extra-legal, meaning actions taken outside the law (not necessarily in violation of it); Prevention, investigation, or punishment, which require specific actions, not merely attitudes or beliefs; and Offence, which is a response to a perceived crime or violation of an authoritative norm. Scholars and analysts studying vigilantism in India point out that there is also "collective vigilantism", as "group violence to punish perceived

offences against a community". Traditional societies practise vigilantism either because the judicial system isn't available or because people don't believe they can obtain justice from it. But in a so-called modern society like India, why is vigilantism fairly common?

India's criminal justice system is severely strained by delays in justice caused by case backlogs and procedural complexities; overcrowded prisons and inadequate rehabilitation facilities; corruption and politicisation within law enforcement, which affect impartiality and efficiency; and misuse of investigative powers and occasional police brutality, all of which undermine public trust. It is impossible to cover the history of vigilantism in India due to the many diversities and polarisations in religion, class, caste and privilege. I will take three important cases that share, as their common denominator, issues of injustice, poverty, caste and religion. The first, the Naxal movement, began in the early 1960s as a land-grab movement at Naxalbari in West Bengal. It was led by

a group of radical leftists who believed it would mark the start of a violent revolution to eradicate poverty, inequality, and injustice. Known as Naxalites, they spread their violent tactics and militarised actions to other regions within India. In response, non-state actors, such as landlords and upper castes, formed private armies to protect their land and prestige and to defeat the "Naxalite menace". The most notorious of these private armies was the Ranvir Sena, formed in Bihar in 1994. The Indian State also created forces to defeat the Naxalites, whom it viewed as a serious menace to society.

The emergence of Naxalite/Maoist movements can be traced to the Indian State's inability to meet expectations and solve socio-economic problems post-Independence in 1947. This included the disregard for the social oppression of disempowered castes, the economic oppression of marginal communities due to the failure to implement land reforms, and the failure to implement schemes to promote economic development, as well as the parliamentary

parties' disinterest in solving these problems. However, in the 21st century, recent vigilante groups are distinct in character from the militant groups of the 20th century. Vigilantism now appears to have created new relationships with the State, not only drawing on the latter for support but also increasingly targeting the Indian Constitution and pressing for extra-legal actions. Analysts point out that rather than a State deficit, the situation is a reversal: vigilante groups are increasingly drawing their impetus from State support. For example, the "Salwa Judum", or purification hunt, was a State-supported militia in Chhattisgarh mobilised to counter the Naxalite insurgency. It was later declared illegal by the Supreme Court for human rights violations.

Recent vigilante groups appear to have emerged not only to fill the vacuum created by the State's deficit but also to serve as de facto "agents of the State". This marks a new trend in the history of militant vigilante groups in India. Since 2012, there has been a rise in organisations af-

filiated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a paramilitary right-wing organisation and a member of the Sangh Parivar. The Bhartiya Gau Raksha Dal (BGRD), or the Indian Cow Protection Organisation, regularly engages in cow vigilante violence against the minorities, primarily Muslims and Dalits. It has close ties with the State machinery, including the ruling parties at both the Central and state levels, the police, and a Gau Commando Force. Vigilantes patrol state borders to prevent people from smuggling cows and conduct raids on slaughterhouses. Contrast this with a movement in which women, particularly minority and poor women, came together to protect themselves against routine violence. The Gulabi Gang, or the Pink Sari Brigade (named after the group's electric-pink sari uniform), was formed in 2006 and is a rare vigilante group that did not emerge from "political cadre-land". It was a response to the needs of unlettered village women on the ground, particularly violence against women. Based in Uttar Pradesh, the

Pink Gang is considered the world's largest women's vigilante group, with an estimated membership of over 270,000 women between 18 and 60 years old.

They protect community women from domestic and sexual violence, and challenge the oppression of lower-caste communities, especially Dalit members. They intervene in cases of abuse, sometimes using non-violent persuasion and, when necessary, physical action with lathis against perpetrators. Since 2014, when the BJP came to power at the Centre, there has been a rise in vigilantism by right-wing groups, sanctioned by the government. They target Muslims and other minorities, viewing them as threats to their agenda of creating a Hindutva state. The terror and fear unleashed on citizens by these vigilante groups have resulted in lynching, beatings, deaths and the destruction of entire neighbourhoods, which is horrifying. Minority groups and civil society, when they speak out, face reprisals. Vigilantism is a blot on and a threat to democracy in India.

Journalism's crossroads: why conviction cannot replace objectivity



The Supreme Court has rightly underlined the need for a fair process in the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and election commissioners (ECs) while hearing a petition challenging the current system of

appointment.

Under the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, appointments of the CEC and ECs are made by a committee

comprising the prime minister, a Union minister, and the leader of the opposition. This law was enacted after the apex court, in the Anoop Baranwal case, directed that the selection committee include the prime minister, the leader of the opposition, and the Chief Justice of India (CJI).

The court laid down this procedure to ensure equal representation of the government and the Opposition, with an independent, neutral person of eminence as the third member to guarantee fairness in the choice. A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and S C Sharma has, in earlier hearings, noted that the committee created by the 2023 law lacked even "one absolutely neutral person."

The presence of a neutral person on the committee is essential because elections are the most important democratic process, and the body that conducts them must be neutral and independent. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta defended the law, arguing that it was wrong to assume that the prime minister and the minister would "not act in the interest

of democracy" merely because they hold a majority in the committee. He said that the office of the prime minister carries constitutional authority and high sanctity, and demanding a neutral member implied a lack of trust in the prime minister. The court made it clear that the issue was not one of trust or distrust in the prime minister, but imbalance in the committee's composition, which tilts power toward the executive. Democratic processes must not only be fair but also be seen to be fair. The sanctity of the office of the prime minister does not ensure fairness and neutrality. The government rushed the legislation to override the Anoop Baranwal judgment and secure control over the appointment of the next CEC.

The consequence is visible in the conduct of the Election Commission of India, which increasingly mirrors the government's interests. The Solicitor General offered a weak defence of a wrong position, while the court's questions and observations were fair and valid, and affirmed the need for institutional checks and balances in the system.

India's national interest in de-escalating global conflict

Are we in the midst of World War III? The war in Europe has become a Eurasian war with North Korean troops joining and Chinese support propping up Russia. Ukraine remains in play, at least in part due to the support from Western Europe and the United States. The war in West Asia, yoyoing up and down depending on President Donald Trump's attention span, has drawn in many countries. The United States has made its military presence felt in Latin America, virtually "occupying" Venezuela and imposing a siege on Cuba. Africa has its own little wars from time to time. Its northern and eastern flanks have been drawn in one way or another into one conflict or another.

While there is no war going on currently in Asia to India's east, many of the countries in the region are being drawn into the two major ongoing conflicts in Western Europe and West Asia. North Korea is a direct recruit, while Japan is a declared ally of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) countries. Pakistan is embedded in the West Asian conflict in more ways than one. India has suffered collateral damage, with US gunboats entering the Indian Ocean region and Indians being killed in both the major wars. Do we, therefore, declare that we are now in the midst of World War III? The question has been raised by scholars and commentators. In answering this question, it would be wrong to look for parallels from World War I and II. Both of them were essentially military campaigns in which the armed forces of rival countries were directly engaging each other. Millions died, cities were destroyed, normal life was totally disrupted in the nations that were at war, except for the United States. The same cannot as yet be said of the ongoing conflicts in Europe and West Asia. The damage to life and property has been limited to countries directly engaged in conflict, but countries around the world are paying an economic price already.

The impact of both conflicts has been felt globally. Energy and food prices have shot up. Global trade has been disrupted. The world's most powerful economies the Group of Seven have weaponised finance, energy and trade and many citizens of countries around the world, including India, trapped in conflict zones due to their employment have been killed. The Indian people are bearing the burden of these conflicts. There is as yet relative peace in Asia to our east and southeast, and China is holding its fire in the Taiwan Strait. Most countries in this region have increased their defence spending and war preparedness. Even as India deals with President Donald Trump's trade offensive and a sweeping sanctions regime, it is maintaining defence relations with the US, as it indeed is with Russia. India has also increased defence spending, and is also exporting arms: selling arms to Israel, a perpetrator of war, and selling BrahMos missiles to various Asian countries. During World Wars I and II Indian citizens were drawn into the conflict, dying on European and Asian frontlines in defence of the British Empire. Today, Indian soldiers are not yet engaged but Indian citizens are dying as a consequence of the two wars. More importantly, the Indian economy has already paid a huge price as a result of both wars. The rise in energy and food prices, the disruption in supplies and the decline in global demand for manufactures and services have all negatively impacted India. After suffering the consequences of demonetisation and the Covid-19 pandemic, India is now burdened by the consequences of both wars. Clearly India has a huge stake in bringing both conflicts to an end. Prime Minister Narendra Modi once famously declared that "this is not an era of war", but India's ability to intervene and make a difference has been limited by the fact that in both conflicts India has friendly relations with both sides. India's relations with Russia are as important for her as relations with the European Union and the United States, even if Ukraine is a lesser consideration. In West

Asia, India has a stake in maintaining good relations with all sides.

India is currently seeking membership of the United Nations Security Council. It is not clear why the external affairs ministry has thrown India's hat into the ring at this late stage. But, having done so, it could consider strengthening its case by in fact being a peace activist on the world stage. India has a direct stake in ending both conflicts. It also has a stake in ensuring that all the major powers -- the US, Russia and China -- respect international law and the UN Charter in their own neighbourhoods. India is hosting the Brics summit in September this year. While Russia and Iran are directly involved in a war, most Brics countries have a stake in a return to a more peaceful and stable global environment. Can Indian leadership articulate a vision for world peace and build a coalition of nations that seek an end to both the Ukraine and Gulf conflicts? Equally, they should insist that each of the major powers desist from asserting their hegemonism in their own neighbourhood.



The new dual-track strategy: how to engage China without sacrificing security

China-India relations appear to be on the mend. Take a look at the last ten days of July. On July 22, external affairs minister S Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Manila, on the margins of the East Asia Summit. Five days later, foreign secretary Vikram Misri was in Beijing, meeting vice-minister Hua Chunying, where both sides said the customary things about peace and tranquillity along the border.

On July 30, our Mandarin-speaking ambassador in Beijing called on a Chinese vice-minister to discuss trade and market access, with Indian pharmaceuticals reportedly on the table. That is a lot in 10 days for two countries that are known to move slowly. Are we warming up to the Chinese too fast? Have we forgotten the winter of Galwan? There are two schools of thought in Delhi. One says, in criticism of course, that India is "drifting" fast into accommodation with China: that Galwan has been written off and that we are trading our way back into a dependence vis-à-vis China. The second set of arguments holds that Quad is ending, the rupture with the US is perma-

nent, our Indo-Pacific commitments were always thinner than we admitted, and so the reset with China is the real story. Both sides assume that India must eventually settle into one clear posture: Balance China or trade with China. Both have been predicting such a clear decision, one way or another, for two years. But a closer look would suggest that the policy has been more complicated and, I think, in the right direction. Mostly.

I think there is a vocabulary problem in our assessment of our relationship China. Multi-alignment, currently in fashion in Delhi, describes a choice among partners, while strategic autonomy, also in fashion, describes freedom from other countries' choices. But neither of them describes a single relationship that runs in two opposite directions at the same time. Multi-alignment describes India's behaviour across its partnerships, but says nothing about what happens where a single country is a partner and adversary at the same time. In my upcoming book (India After Nonalignment), I call that political simultaneity. Hypocrisy is when you claim to take a position,

but actually have more than one position; simultaneity is when you openly take two positions and face the consequences. It is possible for a country to take two competing positions at the same time, both incurring costs in different ways. China is perhaps the best case in the Indian context, because the balancing and the engagement of China is done by the same government since China is a security challenge, a trade partner and a next door neighbour, and a lot more, all at once. India's ongoing balancing of China is taking place in Ladakh, where roads, bridges, tunnels and logistics hubs have gone up, the Shyok Tunnel among them, with the Arunachal Frontier Highway and the Nyoma airfield behind it. None of it has been paused or slowed, for or because of the reset, even if I personally think we have to do lot more of balancing. And the (re)engagement of China is taking place in the FDI regime. In March this year, the Union Cabinet amended Press Note 3, notified as Press Note 2 of the 2026 series and operationalised from the first of May. Investors carrying up to 10% of Chinese beneficial own-

ership may now use the automatic route, and proposals in capital goods, electronic components, polysilicon, and ingot-wafer manufacturing are to be cleared in 60 days, so long as Indian residents keep majority ownership and control. Direct Chinese investment still needs prior approval.

So, the larger question then is whether the diplomatic activity we witnessed in July, the activity before that, and the activity that is likely to follow, means that Delhi is finally giving up on balancing China? I hope not. It doesn't need to, because Delhi can balance and engage China at the same time. The national security pundits who argue that China must be balanced are right; so is Indian industry that urges Delhi to continue with trade. There is no contradiction. In fact, Delhi is not the only capital that does it. US secretary of state Marco Rubio came to the Quad ministerial meet in Delhi on May 26, 10 days after his President had made a warm State visit to Beijing, almost looking for a G2 with Beijing even though he got nothing in return.

Corrosion Costs India Rs 14.1 Lakh Crore Annually

Mumbai: Corrosion is estimated to cost the Indian economy ₹14.1 lakh crore, or about \$180 billion, every year, with infrastructure, energy, telecommunications and transport among the sectors facing the heaviest burden from the deterioration of metal and other materials.

The annual loss is equivalent to 4.3 per cent of India's gross domestic product, considerably higher than the global average of 3.4 per cent, highlighting the economic scale of a problem that is often treated primarily as an engineering and maintenance issue.

The findings were outlined in a study titled Built to Last: Adopting Global Best Practices to Reduce Corrosion Losses in India's Infrastructure, which called for corrosion management to be elevated into a broader economic and public policy priority.

The issue has gained greater importance as public and private capital expenditure expands rapidly across roads, railways, urban housing and power generation.

The study estimated that systematic adoption of standardized corrosion-management practices could save India nearly ₹5 lakh crore, or about \$63 billion, every year. Such savings could potentially increase national economic output by around 1.5 per cent,



underlining the wider economic benefits of preventing structural deterioration rather than addressing damage after it occurs.

The power generation and transmission industry was identified as having the highest corrosion intensity among major sectors. Annual corrosion-related damage in the segment was estimated at 10.1 per cent of its total sectoral GDP. The rapid expansion of renewable energy installations, electricity-grid networks and associated power infrastructure has increased exposure to corrosion and reinforced the need for stronger engineering and protective measures.

Telecommunications infrastructure also faces substantial vulnerability. India has more than 813,000 telecom towers, creating a large network of steel-intensive structures that require improved protection, particularly for auxiliary steel components exposed to environmental deterioration.

The transport sector faces similar challenges. Indian Railways alone is estimated to suffer corrosion-related losses of around ₹23,788 crore annually, reflecting the scale of the maintenance and replacement costs associated with deterioration across a vast railway network.

The economic impact is expected to become increasingly significant as India continues to invest heavily in physical infrastructure. Roads, railway systems, urban housing, electricity generation and transmission networks involve large quantities of steel and other materials whose durability directly affects long-term project costs and operational reliability.

The study therefore recommended that public procurement practices move beyond assessing projects primarily on their initial construction cost.

Instead, authorities should adopt comprehensive lifecycle cost models that account

for maintenance, corrosion protection, repairs, replacement and the long-term durability of infrastructure.

It also called for the Bureau of Indian Standards to update relevant guidelines in line with international durability benchmarks. Stronger standards would help ensure that infrastructure projects incorporate corrosion resistance and longer service life from the design and construction stages.

The report further recommended mandatory protective coatings for steel-intensive industries and the introduction of modern inspection systems. Regular and technology-enabled monitoring could help identify deterioration earlier, allowing preventive intervention before corrosion develops into more expensive structural damage.

The findings underline that controlling corrosion could deliver benefits extending beyond infrastructure maintenance, including lower long-term public expenditure, improved asset durability, greater efficiency and stronger economic output. With infrastructure investment continuing to expand, systematic corrosion prevention could therefore become an important component of India's broader economic and development strategy.

Global Commodity Shock Pushes India's Wholesale Inflation Higher

New Delhi: Rising international commodity prices and higher energy import costs have contributed to a further increase in India's wholesale inflation, with the government telling Parliament that targeted supply and trade measures have helped limit the impact on retail consumers.

Wholesale Price Index-based inflation rose to 9.87 per cent in June 2026 from 9.68 per cent in May, reflecting continued pressure from global supply disruptions and volatile energy markets.

The wholesale fuel and power segment remained the biggest contributor, with inflation rising 27.41 per cent year-on-year in

June. Inflation in primary articles stood at 7 per cent, while manufactured products recorded a 7.48 per cent increase, driven mainly by higher prices of basic metals, chemicals and mineral oils.

Despite the sharp rise in wholesale prices, consumer inflation remained relatively contained and within the government's policy framework. The difference between wholesale and retail inflation was attributed partly to measures aimed at improving domestic supplies and limiting price transmission to households.

These measures include open-market sales of government-held food grains,



larger buffer stocks of essential agricultural commodities and calibrated changes in import and trade duties. The government has also worked to improve domestic logistics and ensure adequate availability of raw materials for key manufacturing industries.

Higher wholesale in-

put costs continue to pose margin pressures for industrial producers, but authorities maintained that adequate food reserves and supply-management measures would help prevent a sharp pass-through of global commodity and energy shocks into household prices.

Digital payment boom prompts NPCI to step up awareness against SMS fraud

Mumbai: Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd has introduced its new 'Jio Home' range of connectivity and entertainment plans, with prices starting at Rs 400 a month. The offerings are designed to combine television, broadband and streaming services under simplified subscription options for different household needs.

The portfolio includes three categories: TV-only plans, standalone Wi-Fi connections and 3-in-1 packages combining high-speed internet, satellite television and over-the-top streaming services. New subscribers will also receive complimentary doorstep installation.

The entry-level TV plan



costs Rs 400 per month and provides access to more than 1,000 live television channels, along with features such as live-stream controls and video streaming optimized for television. Introductory offers also include access to 12 digital content

applications.

For customers seeking only internet connectivity, Jio's Wi-Fi plans begin at Rs 450 per month for speeds of 30 Mbps. A 100 Mbps plan is available for Rs 600 a month. Customers can also choose longer billing cycles

covering two or five months across the available speed tiers.

The 3-in-1 plans combine unlimited fibre broadband, live television and multiple streaming applications. The 30 Mbps package is priced at Rs 555 per month, while the 100 Mbps option costs Rs 707 monthly.

Jio has also introduced promotional upfront-payment offers under the bundled plans, allowing subscribers to receive additional months of service without extra charges. The new portfolio is aimed at consolidating multiple home digital services into a single subscription and billing arrangement.

LTIMindtree Surges 8% on Strong AI Momentum

Mumbai: Shares of LTI-Mindtree Ltd surged more than 8 per cent in intraday trading on Monday, touching Rs 4,715.50 on the BSE and reaching their highest level since April 22. Trading activity also jumped sharply, with around 1.8 million shares changing hands across the BSE and NSE.

The stock traded around Rs 4,705.70, outperforming the benchmark BSE Sensex. LTIMindtree has gained 26 per cent over the past month, significantly ahead of the 1.2 per cent rise in the Sensex and the 12.7 per cent gain in the BSE Information Technology index.

The stock has recovered nearly 34 per cent from its 52-week low of Rs 3,529.60 recorded on June 30, although it remains below its 52-week peak of Rs 6,430 reached on January 19.

Investor interest has been supported by rising commercial adoption of LTIMindtree's artificial intelligence-led platforms, including its BlueVerse suite. Revenue from its business, creative and industrial AI applications has reached a quarterly run-rate of around \$150 million, accounting for nearly 12 per cent of total company revenue.

Motilal Oswal Financial Services maintained a positive outlook on the stock and projected compound annual earnings-per-share growth of 13 per cent over the next two financial years. The brokerage said historical account productivity adjustments had largely concluded, allowing it to raise its price target to Rs 4,900 based on a 21-times multiple of projected fiscal 2028 earnings.

The combination of strong recent stock performance, higher trading volumes, growing AI-related revenue and improving earnings expectations has strengthened investor sentiment towards LTIMindtree.

Digital payment boom prompts NPCI to step up awareness against SMS fraud

Aizawl: India's fast-growing digital payments market is witnessing renewed emphasis on consumer protection, with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) launching an awareness campaign to help users identify and prevent text message scams that increasingly target digital payment customers.

The initiative comes at a time when digital payments have become widely accessible across the country, supporting India's transition towards a digital-first economy. NPCI noted that fraudsters are increasingly using social engineering techniques by sending fake SMS messages that create

urgency, fear or curiosity to manipulate users into making quick financial decisions. These scams typically encourage recipients to click fraudulent links, call fake customer care numbers, download malicious applications, disclose confidential information such as OTPs, UPI PINs and passwords, or transfer money based on deceptive payment alerts.

From a market perspective, strengthening consumer confidence remains critical for sustaining the growth momentum of India's digital payments ecosystem. NPCI has advised users to verify requests through official channels, install apps only from trust-

ed app stores, avoid suspicious links, review app permissions carefully, and confirm transaction credits through bank account statements. It has also encouraged users to document suspicious interactions and report them via the national cybercrime helpline 1930 or the Department of Telecommunications' Sanchar Saathi portal.

As the operator of key payment platforms including UPI, RuPay, IMPS, NACH, AePS and e-RUPI, NPCI continues to reinforce the security framework supporting India's rapidly expanding retail digital payments market while promoting financial inclusion nationwide.

West Asia Investment Boom Opens Rs 1 Lakh Crore EPC Opportunity for Indian Firms



Aizawl: Indian engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) companies are seeing a sharp increase in business opportunities across West Asia as governments and energy companies accelerate spending on oil and gas infrastructure, power networks, renewable energy and water projects.

Industry estimates put the addressable opportunity for Indian engineering firms in the region at around ₹1 lakh crore in the current financial year. The pipe-

line includes new energy projects, utility upgrades, facility modernization and potential reconstruction work following regional conflicts.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Kuwait are driving much of the demand. While periodic conflict and shipping disruptions have affected project execution and timelines, long-term investment plans remain largely intact, supported by regional efforts to strengthen energy security and diversify economies

beyond hydrocarbons.

Leading Indian companies such as Larsen & Toubro, Kalpataru Projects International, Waaree Renewable Technologies, Waaree Energies and Thermax are expanding their regional presence through major contracts and bids for large infrastructure projects.

Larsen & Toubro recently signed a six-year framework agreement with Petroleum Development Oman for on-shore engineering and construction services, following a major export facility contract from Kuwait Oil Company. West Asian projects accounted for nearly 20 per cent of L&T's international order inflows in the first quarter of fiscal 2026-27.

Kalpataru Projects International has also expanded beyond its traditional oil and gas transmission business after securing its first water infrastructure contract in the region.

Waaree Renewable Technologies is pursuing solar engineering contracts totaling 11 GW across the UAE and Kuwait, while Waaree Energies has submitted bids worth ₹4,000-5,000 crore across several West Asian markets.



Mumbai: Domestic institutional investors have strengthened their position as the leading force in India's equity market, absorbing a significant share of foreign selling and steadily increasing their ownership of the country's largest listed companies.

Domestic institutions deployed a record \$166 billion over the 22 months through June 2026, with around \$58 billion of the investment effectively offsetting selling by offshore investors. Their ownership of Nifty 500 companies reached an unprecedented 21 per cent by June, while foreign institutional ownership declined to a record low of 17 per cent.

The shift marked nine consecutive quarters of increasing domestic institutional ownership, signalling a structural change in the Indian equity market. Foreign investors had traditionally played a major role in influencing market direction, but sustained domestic capital flows have

increasingly reduced the impact of overseas selling on local equities.

Retail participation through monthly systematic investment plans has emerged as a key source of this domestic liquidity.

SIP contributions provided an average liquidity cushion of about \$3 billion each month, allowing domestic funds to absorb periods of heightened global volatility and heavy foreign selling while supporting the stability of Indian equities.

The trend became particularly pronounced in the second quarter of 2026. Domestic institutional investors invested \$22.8 billion in Indian equities during the three-month period, while foreign institutional investors recorded net sales of \$13.2 billion. Foreign selling moderated towards the latter half of June, with some recovery in buying activity, but the overall quarterly flow remained negative.

Domestic investors have

increased their presence across companies of different sizes and sectors. Their equity ownership rose in 73 per cent of Nifty 500 constituents during the preceding year, including 82 per cent of companies forming the benchmark Nifty 50.

Their buying was also spread across a broad range of industries. Domestic institutions increased exposure in 19 of 24 major industry groups, with significant accumulation recorded in private-sector banking, telecommunications, real estate, technology, healthcare and insurance.

Foreign institutional investors followed a markedly different strategy. Their exposure declined across 19 industry classifications over the same period, while their net buying remained concentrated in a narrower group of sectors. Metals, public-sector banks, non-banking financial companies, capital goods and logistics were among the areas where foreign inves-

tors continued to add exposure.

Despite the contrasting investment patterns, financial companies remained the largest portfolio component for both domestic and foreign institutional investors.

Financials accounted for a record 29.4 per cent of domestic institutional portfolios, while their allocation among foreign institutional investors was considerably higher at 34.6 per cent.

The widening role of domestic institutional capital reflects the increasing importance of household savings and systematic investment flows in India's financial markets. The steady accumulation by local funds has provided an important counterweight to foreign outflows, particularly during periods of global uncertainty and risk aversion.

The changing ownership pattern could have significant implications for market behaviour. As domestic institutions continue to build larger positions across leading companies, Indian equities may become less dependent on foreign portfolio flows to sustain liquidity and absorb global market shocks.

The development also highlights the growing influence of domestic savings in determining equity-market trends. While foreign investors remain important participants, the sustained rise in domestic institutional ownership indicates that local capital is increasingly capable of shaping market direction and providing stability during periods of external volatility.

Chaos of border crossing gives way to limbo for Moroccans on Ceuta’s streets

spain: Four days ago, Youssef El Abbas saw an opportunity to reclaim the life he had lost seven years earlier. News was circulating that about 400 people had swum from Morocco to the neighbouring Spanish enclave of Ceuta on the north African coast, approximately 12 miles (19km) across the strait of Gibraltar from mainland Spain.

Here was a chance for the 44-year-old Moroccan father of four to return to Spain, from which he had been deported when his residency expired after the loss of his job in Bilbao in 2019.

El Abbas took a taxi and headed to the city of Tétouan, south of the enclave. While en route, he saw Facebook posts and news reports claiming that the Moroccan authorities were allowing people to pass through their side of the border. That meant that unlike those who had crossed the previous night, he could simply travel overland before swimming

for just five minutes across the border from Moroccan to Spanish territory to avoid the Spanish border controls.He reached Tétouan to find the city completely overwhelmed. “Young men were running through the streets, flooding every corner,” he said. By the time a second taxi took El Abbas to Fnideq, the town bordering Ceuta, he realised that the usual blockades and checkpoints preventing people without European documents from even approaching the frontier had been removed.“The Moroccan police were shouting at us: ‘Go, go, go! Run now, run into Spain,’” he said. “The night before, they were beating people. But that morning they were letting us through. Nothing made sense.” Despite the crowds, El Abbas noticed the police were only letting Moroccans cross over. “All the sub-Saharan migrants were being pushed back by force.”

He reached the border at 2.45pm on Wednesday. By 3pm,



after a short swim, he was standing on Spanish soil. Not everyone was so lucky.

“In just 10 minutes in the water, I saw four people floating dead

in Moroccan waters,” he said. “People were pulling their bodies out.” They were among at least 72 people who drowned or were crushed trying to reach the Span-

ish territory.

El Abbas is just one of the 50,000 or so people to have crossed into Ceuta this week, in what Spain’s prime minister,

Pedro Sánchez, described as “a violation of Spain’s territorial integrity”.Madrid has attributed the latest influx to “human-trafficking mafias” that have taken advantage of a decision by Spain’s supreme court, which recently ruled that those intercepted at sea while trying to enter Ceuta or Melilla – the other Spanish enclave on the north African coast – could not be summarily returned under special rules.But there has also been speculation that the Moroccan authorities may have opened the border to signal their displeasure at Sánchez’s recent visit to Algeria, which supports efforts to free the disputed territory of Western Sahara from Moroccan occupation.

Morocco’s ambassador to Spain, Karima Benyaich Millán, said Rabat was not happy about the mass crossing, adding that it hoped those in Ceuta would return.

Moroccan government sources told the Europa Press news agen-

cy that the surge of people entering Ceuta was down to “criminal organisations” and insisted that Rabat’s cooperation with Spain remained “exemplary”.

In May 2021, Rabat loosened border controls – allowing 10,000 people to cross into Ceuta over the course of two days – during a diplomatic standoff triggered after Madrid allowed a Western Sahara independence leader to be treated for Covid-19 in Spain.El Abbas said he had never stopped dreaming of returning to Spain, where he had worked mainly in the hospitality sector for 14 years. Since being deported to Morocco in 2019, he has lived apart from his wife and four daughters, who remain in the northern Spanish city of Bilbao, while scraping by with occasional work repairing mobile phones alongside his father.

“I never stopped thinking about coming back,” he said. “In Morocco, I was alive, but I wasn’t really living.”

Chinese Engineers Developing Nuclear Bomb-Based Asteroid Destruction Technology - Reports

Tokyo: The Japanese Finance Ministry announced that it, together with the US Treasury Department, had conducted a currency intervention to purchase yen.

The intervention took place on July 31.

“This joint action was taken pursuant to the U.S.-Japan Finance Ministers’ Joint Statement issued in September 2025 and countered excessive volatility and disorderly movements in the Japanese yen in recent months,” the statement says.

The Japanese Finance Ministry continues to monitor the situation and maintains close contact with the US ministry.

“We will not hesitate to conduct further joint intervention,” the ministry em-



phasized.

Japan also plans to continue to use the US Federal Reserve’s FIMA Repo Facility, a repo facility for foreign and international monetary

July 30, the Japanese government conducted currency intervention for the first time since May 2026. This resulted in the yen rising to 157.97 yen per dollar.

According to the Kyodo news agency, the scale of the intervention ranged from 6 to 7 trillion yen (\$38.11 billion to \$44.5 billion).

Then, on July 31, Japan time, the yen fell again to 160.2 yen per dollar. After this, another intervention, the scale of which has not yet been announced, was presumably conducted overnight on Saturday, but it pushed the yen to 157 yen per dollar.

As of 00:15 GMT Monday, the yen was trading at 157.8 yen per dollar.

Hindu Monk Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari Bail in Two More Cases

Dhaka: The Bangladesh High Court has granted bail to prominent young Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari in two more criminal cases, taking the total number of cases in which he has secured bail to four. However, he will remain in judicial custody as bail is still pending in two other cases. The monk has been in prison for nearly 20 months, and his arrest has drawn strong criticism from India and several other countries.



Chinmoy’s counsel, Apurba Kumar Bhattacharya, confirmed the development, stating that six cases have been registered against his client. Of these, bail has now been granted in four cases.

According to the Dhaka Tribune, a division bench comprising Justice K.M. Zahid Sarwar and Justice Sheikh Abu Tahir passed the bail order on Sunday evening. Bhattacharya said that despite securing bail in four

cases, Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari will not be released immediately because he has yet to obtain bail in the remaining two cases.

He added that one of the pending cases is a murder case related to the death of lawyer Saiful Islam in Chittogram, which is currently under trial.

Apart from that, the High Court’s stay order remains in force in the sedition case

registered against the monk over the alleged disrespect of Bangladesh’s national flag. Bail petitions in the remaining two cases are scheduled to be heard on August 16.

Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari was arrested in Dhaka on November 25, 2024, in connection with the sedition case involving the alleged insult to the national flag. He has remained behind bars since his arrest.

What are the new military strategies that the United States is gainst Iran

Washington: The United States is considering a new phase of military operations against Iran that could include strikes on energy infrastructure and a proposal to disrupt electricity across Tehran, according to multiple US officials cited by CBS News.

Discussions have heated up as Washington considers more comprehensive measures to put pressure on Tehran amid the ongoing war. However, President Donald Trump has not yet provided final authority.

CBS News reported that high-level discussions

about cutting electricity across Tehran had also taken place, but no decision had been made as of Friday afternoon. Officials also stressed that Trump has not yet given the final go-ahead for any expanded operation.

Energy infrastructure among possible targets

According to CBS News, the United States and Israel have discussed what could become one of the largest coordinated strikes yet on Iran’s energy sector. Potential targets include power plants, electricity infrastructure and oil refineries.

Officials reportedly considered completing any military operation before financial markets reopen on Monday. They were concerned the strikes could affect global energy prices and financial markets. However, no fixed timeline has been finalized.

According to the Wall Street Journal, these military operations could begin as early as the weekend and continue for several days.

CBS News reported that Israeli officials have been informed about the planning and are coordinating with Washington. However,

Israel has denied any knowledge of the same. The talks come after Trump warned in a previous Truth Social post that for each attack on ships in the Strait of Hormuz, the US would hit an Iranian power plant or bridge.

“I think we just want to win.”

Speaking during a Cabinet meeting at Camp David, Trump signaled a hard-line approach toward Iran.

“We’ll be hitting them very hard. At some point, they’re going to say, ‘We just can’t take it anymore,’” the president said.

When asked whether diplomacy remained an option, Trump replied, “I think we just want to win.”

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt reiterated the administration’s position in a statement to CBS News. “As President Trump said at his cabinet meeting today, the United States will win, and Iran will not have a nuclear weapon under his watch,” Leavitt said.

Meanwhile, Chief Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell declined to discuss specific targets before presidential approval.

\$1 bn US Embassy upgrade cancellation in Delhi

New Delhi: US Ambassador to India Sergio Gorrer has decided to cancel a planned upgrade and expansion of the American Embassy in New Delhi over ballooning costs, causing consternation among some in Washington.

The renovation – which first broke ground before Donald Trump left office in 2021 and was estimated to cost nearly \$874 million at the time – was one of the largest such projects undertaken by the US anywhere in the world. In a June interview with the New York Times, US ambassador Ser-

gio Gorrer announced that the project’s costs ballooned to \$1.2 billion with an expected completion date of 2036, nine years behind the original 2027 deadline.

A US state department spokesman told HT that the decision to cancel the expansion was taken in December 2025.

But some former senior US officials as well as figures on Capitol Hill expressed dismay that the project – which represented a long overdue upgrade to an ageing embassy built in the 1950s - was cancelled midway

“This is an important diplomatic mission, and canceling its expansion has real consequences. If the Delhi embassy project was facing insurmountable delays, the State Department should have notified Congress all these months?” asked Congressman Gregory Meeks, the top Democratic Party lawmaker on the House Foreign Affairs

Committee.

HT has learnt that as recently as May this year, the State Department indicated that work on the Embassy expansion was ongoing. It did not indicate that a major cancellation or disruption of expansion plans was already underway, although the decision to cancel the project occurred in December.

Another point of contention is Gorrer’s assertion that the Embassy project’s cost had ballooned to \$1.2 billion and would be completed only in 2036. However, HT has learnt that informa-

tion on the project circulated by the State Department in May indicated the project’s cost stood at \$1.048 billion with an expected completion date of October 2029. The divergences between the stated reasons for the cancellation and the available information have raised questions from former officials and other persons aware of the matter about the decision-making involved.

In 2021, Washington announced that it had broken ground on an \$874 million effort to renovate the embassy in New Delhi.

er place to 10th in the latest index, where it is now tied with Iceland.

America: The US passport has slipped to its lowest position in a decade, ranking 10th in the 2026 Henley Passport Index as countries across Asia and Europe continue to widen visa-free travel access for their citizens. Singapore retained the top spot, while according to the latest rankings, more than 30 countries now offer greater travel freedom than the United States.

The Henley Passport Index, one of the world’s most closely watched passport rankings, evaluates travel freedom by measuring how many destinations passport holders can enter without obtaining a visa before departure. The 2026 edition compares 199 passports across 227 travel destinations, making it a widely used benchmark for assessing the strength of passports based on visa-free or visa-on-arrival access.

A decade-long slide

The latest ranking continues a gradual decline for the US passport over the past decade. After holding fourth place in 2016, it slipped to fifth in both 2017 and 2018, dropped to sixth in 2019 and then remained in seventh place through 2024. The passport fell to ninth last year before dropping another

India has improved from its 85th position in 2025, the number of visa-free destinations has declined from 57 to 55, reflecting changes in visa policies by some countries rather than a significant expansion in travel access.

Singapore leads, Asia stays strong

Singapore retained the title of the world’s most powerful passport in the latest rankings. Japan, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates shared second place, while Sweden secured third. Several European nations, including Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain, were also among the highest-ranked passports, underscoring the continued dominance of Europe and Asia in global mobility.

Countries such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada, Switzerland, Austria and Greece also featured in the top 10.

The latest rankings underline the changing dynamics of international travel, where visa-free mobility has become an increasingly important measure of global connectivity.

Utilizing Multani Mitti for Addressing Tanning, Pigmentation and Achieving Radiant Skin

Multani Mitti is particularly suitable for individuals with oily and acne-prone skin, as it effectively absorbs surplus oil and aids in maintaining clean pores.

Healthy skin, rather than skin tone, is what contributes to a natural glow. This is why Multani Mitti has been a revered beauty component for centuries. Abundant in minerals such as magnesium, calcium, and silica, it thoroughly cleanses the skin, resulting in a fresh and radiant appearance. Is Multani Mitti Right For Your Skin? Multani Mitti is ideal for oily and acne-prone skin, as it absorbs excess oil and helps keep pores clean. If you have combination skin, apply it only to the T-zone, where oil production is usually highest. Are You Using It Correctly? For the best results: Leave the face pack on for 15–20 minutes. Wash it off when it's about 80% dry—don't wait until it cracks completely. Al-



ways follow up with a hydrating moisturiser to prevent your skin from feeling dry. DIY Face Pack For A Healthy Glow: Mix 2 tablespoons Multani Mitti, raw milk, a few drops of rose water. Blend into a smooth paste and apply it for about 15 minutes. This pack helps remove dirt, excess oil and impurities, leaving the skin looking

brighter while reducing the chances of blackheads and whiteheads. For tan removal: Mix Multani Mitti with a pinch of turmeric and rose water. For brighter-looking skin: Combine Multani Mitti with curd to nourish and refresh dull skin. While Multani Mitti won't lighten your natural skin tone, it can make your complexion look clearer, fresher and more even by

deeply cleansing pores. DIY Pack For Spots And Pigmentation: To help improve the appearance of blemishes and uneven skin tone, mix 2 tbsp Multani Mitti, 2–3 tsp lemon juice, a pinch of turmeric, sandalwood powder and rose water. Apply the paste to your face and neck for 15–20 minutes, rinse with cool water, pat dry and moisturise. Use 2–3 times a week. However, keep in mind that Multani Mitti alone is not a cure for acne.

Important Precautions Before You Apply: Avoid frequent use if you have very dry or sensitive skin, as it can make dryness worse. If you have active acne, skip lemon juice in your face pack, as it may irritate inflamed skin. If you have eczema, psoriasis or any chronic skin condition, consult a dermatologist before using Multani Mitti. Always do a patch test before trying any DIY face pack, especially if you have sensitive skin.

How to pair the vibrant heritage print with contemporary attire this monsoon

Step aside florals and stripes; a new print is subtly dominating wardrobes, drawing inspiration from Indian heritage. Madras checks, previously linked to classic shirts and traditional lungis, are experiencing a significant fashion resurgence in 2026. Ranging from oversized shirts and airy dresses to coordinated sets and loose trousers, this vibrant checked pattern has adopted a modern identity that is both nostalgic and effortlessly stylish. Loved for their vibrant colours, lightweight appeal and handcrafted charm, Madras checks are the perfect answer to monsoon dressing. They add visual interest without feeling loud and bring a playful, kitschy vibe that's impossible to ignore.

What exactly is Madras Check? Originating from Chennai, Madras checks are a distinctive checked pattern traditionally woven using lightweight cotton. Known for their bright colours and breathable texture, these fabrics have long been a staple in Indian wardrobes before finding popularity across global fashion. Today, designers are reimagining the print across shirts, dresses, skirts, trousers and accessories, giving this heritage textile a distinctly modern twist. Why everyone is wearing them Fashion's biggest trend right now



is authenticity. Instead of overly polished prints, people are gravitating towards textiles with history and personality. Madras checks tick every box. They're colourful without being overwhelming, timeless without feeling boring, and work equally well for casual weekends, vacations and everyday dressing. The trend also taps into the growing appreciation for Indian textiles and slow fashion, making heritage fabrics feel relevant for a younger generation. How to style Madras Check: Pair a checked shirt with denim The easiest way to wear the trend is with an oversized Madras check shirt. Wear it over a white tank top with relaxed jeans and sneakers for an effortlessly cool everyday outfit. Try a matching co-ord

Checked co-ords instantly make a statement while taking the guesswork out of styling. Keep accessories minimal and let the print become the hero. Mix it with white

White balances the colourful checks beautifully. Think checked skirts with crisp white shirts or checked trousers with a simple white tee.

Add it through accessories Not ready for head-to-toe checks? Start small with scarves, tote bags, bucket hats or even footwear featuring the iconic print. Layer with linen

Madras checks pair beautifully with linen jackets, cotton shirts and woven accessories, creating an easy summer-meets-monsoon aesthetic.

The best colours to choose Traditional combinations like red, green, yellow and blue remain timeless, but softer pastel versions are equally stylish if you prefer understated dressing. Earthy browns, sage greens and muted pinks also make the print feel more contemporary.

Why it's perfect for monsoon Since Madras fabrics are traditionally woven using lightweight cotton, they're naturally breathable and comfortable during humid weather. The colourful checks also hide minor creases better than solid colours, making them ideal for everyday wear.

Lip Liner Guide: How to use it and why we keep asking you not to misuse it

Lip liner is frequently overlooked as a makeup essential, but it can significantly enhance your overall appearance. Although lipstick tends to steal the spotlight, a quality lip liner serves to define your lips, extend the wear of your lip color, and provide a refined finish.

Regardless of whether you favor a striking red lipstick, a delicate nude shade, or a shiny lip gloss, incorporating a lip liner into your regimen can immediately enhance your makeup.

If you've been skipping this step, here's why lip liner deserves a place in your makeup bag and how to use it like a pro.

5 lip liners you cannot miss

1. REVLON Colorstay Longwear Lip Liner: REVLON ColorStay Longwear Lip Liner helps define your lips and keeps lipstick from feathering for hours. Its creamy formula glides on smoothly, making it easy to create precise lines or fill in the lips for longer-lasting colour. The formula contains synthetic waxes, emollients, silica, and vitamin E (tocopheryl acetate) to offer a comfortable feel and improved wear. Amazon customers appreciate its smooth application, long-lasting finish, and flattering shades, although a few mention that the tip needs frequent sharpening.

2. Colorbar Definer Lip Liner, Matte Finish - Berry Rose, 1.45g: Colorbar Definer Lip Liner is designed to give your lips a neat, defined shape while helping lipstick stay in place for longer. Its creamy texture allows effortless application without tugging. The formula includes castor oil, hydrogenated vegetable oil, candelilla wax, carnauba wax, and vitamin E to provide a comfortable finish. According to Amazon customer reviews, users like its rich pigmentation, affordable price, and easy blending, while some feel the pencil could be slightly more long-lasting.

3. e.l.f. Love Triangle Lip Filler Liner, 2-in-1 Lip Liner Pencil For Sculpt-



ing & Filling, Long-Lasting Intense Colour, Light Brown: e.l.f. Love Triangle Lip Filler Liner features a unique triangular tip that makes lining and filling your lips quick and easy. The creamy formula delivers even colour with a soft matte finish. It contains jojoba oil, shea butter, sunflower seed oil, and synthetic waxes to keep lips feeling smooth throughout wear. Amazon customers praise its comfortable texture, beginner-friendly design, and impressive pigmentation, though some reviewers wish it lasted a little longer after eating.

4. Milani | Understatement Lipliner 200 Sassy Cherry | Creamy Long-Wear Lip Pencil | Defines, Shapes & Fills Lips | Smudge-Proof, Vegan & Cruelty-Free: e.l.f. Love Triangle Lip Filler Liner features a unique triangular tip that makes lining and filling your lips quick and easy. The creamy formula delivers even colour with a soft matte finish. It contains jojoba oil, shea butter, sunflower seed oil, and synthetic waxes to keep lips feeling smooth throughout wear. Amazon customers praise its comfortable texture, beginner-friendly design, and impressive pigmentation, though some reviewers wish it lasted a little longer after eating.

5. SHISEIDO Lipliner InkDUO Beige-02: SHI-

SEIDO Lipliner delivers precise definition with a lightweight, creamy formula that blends seamlessly with lip colour. It helps prevent lipstick from bleeding while creating a polished finish. The formula contains silicone-based emollients, synthetic waxes, silica, and conditioning ingredients for smooth application and comfortable wear. Amazon customers appreciate its luxurious texture, long-lasting performance, and natural-looking shades. A few reviewers feel it is more expensive than other lip liners, but many believe the quality justifies the price.

Why does lip liner matter?

1. Defines the shape of your lips: Lip liner creates a clean and precise outline that enhances the natural shape of your lips. It gives your lipstick a structured appearance, making your lips look more symmetrical and well-defined.

2. Prevents lipstick from bleeding: One of the biggest benefits of lip liner is that it acts as a barrier, preventing lipstick from feathering or bleeding into the fine lines around your mouth. This is especially useful when wearing creamy or highly pigmented lipsticks.

3. Makes lipstick last longer: Lip liner provides a base for your lipstick to grip onto, helping the co-

lour stay in place for longer. Filling in your lips completely with liner before applying lipstick can improve wear time and reduce the need for frequent touch-ups.

4. Creates the illusion of fuller lips: A lip liner can subtly enhance the appearance of your lips. By tracing just outside your natural lip line, you can create a fuller look without making it appear unnatural. The key is to keep the overlining minimal for a realistic finish.

5. Enhances lipstick colour: Using a lip liner that matches your lipstick can intensify the colour and create a seamless finish. Alternatively, pairing a slightly deeper liner with a lighter lipstick can add dimension and make your lips appear more defined.

How to choose the right lip liner

Selecting the right shade is just as important as learning the application technique.

Choose a liner that closely matches your lipstick for a natural look.

A nude lip liner is a versatile option that pairs well with many lipstick shades.

If you enjoy ombre lips, opt for a liner that is one or two shades darker than your lipstick.

Creamy formulas glide smoothly, while long-lasting matte liners are ideal for extended wear.

The Importance of Female Bonds in the Context of Menopause and Perimenopause



Many women discover at some point in their midlife that they have been painstakingly prepared for all but one of their milestones. It explains puberty. Pregnancy is talked about. Even the broad definition of aging has become a topic of public discussion. However, perimenopause, the years-long transition leading up to menopause, and menopause itself continue to come with remarkably

little preparation, leaving many women wondering why no one had warned them that it could feel this way. Beyond the physical symptoms of hot flushes and irregular periods lies a far less visible experience: brain fog that interrupts familiar routines, anxiety that arrives without warning, nights fractured by poor sleep, changing libido and an unsettling feeling of no longer recognising one-

self. Research increasingly suggests that one factor consistently helps women navigate this transition more successfully than many realise: strong social connections. Studies have shown that supportive friendships can help regulate stress, reduce feelings of loneliness and depression, and improve overall psychological well-being during periods of

significant hormonal and emotional change. While friendships cannot eliminate menopausal symptoms, they often make the experience feel less isolating and considerably more manageable. For Tamanna Singh, Certified Menopause Coach and Co-founder, MENOVEDA, this isn't simply an academic finding. It's something she has witnessed repeatedly while working with women navigating perimenopause and menopause.

"The women who cope best with menopause aren't the ones with the fewest symptoms. They're the ones with the strongest friendships."

Over years of coaching women through this life stage, Singh says one pattern has become increasingly clear: emotional support often matters as much as symptom management.

"How a woman experiences perimenopause or menopause isn't determined only by the number

of symptoms she has," she explains. "It is also shaped by the support system she has around her, particularly other women who understand what she is going through."

That understanding can be surprisingly powerful.

Unlike partners or family members who may struggle to comprehend the emotional unpredictability of hormonal change, female friends, especially those experiencing similar transitions, often require little explanation.

They understand cancelled plans after another sleepless night, unexpected tears during ordinary conversations or sudden irritability that seems to appear without reason.

Their empathy doesn't necessarily solve the problem, but it removes something equally significant: the feeling of being alone.

That sense of isolation has long shaped the menopause experience.

For generations, meno-

pause has been spoken about quietly, if at all. Many women entered the transition believing they were the only ones struggling with exhaustion, forgetfulness or emotional overwhelm, when in reality millions were navigating similar experiences in silence.

Today, that silence is beginning to change.

Across WhatsApp groups, neighbourhood communities, workplace circles and social media platforms, women are increasingly comparing notes on symptoms, recommending doctors, discussing treatments and sharing practical advice that once remained confined to private conversations.

Singh believes these informal networks are transforming the experience of menopause.

"What has struck me most is that this generation of women isn't willing to go through menopause silently the way many of their

mothers did," she says. "They're creating spaces where they can ask questions, talk openly about symptoms and support one another without embarrassment."

Those friendships often become valuable in ways that extend beyond emotional comfort.

According to Singh, they help normalise experiences that many women initially mistake as personal failings, encourage earlier recognition of symptoms that deserve medical attention and, perhaps most importantly, give women permission to ask for help without guilt or shame.

Professional care remains essential when symptoms begin affecting quality of life, but friendship occupies a different role, one that medicine alone cannot replace.

A doctor may recommend hormone therapy, sleep interventions or lifestyle changes. A close friend reminds you that what you're

experiencing is real, that you are not imagining it and that someone else has walked this path before.

Perhaps that is why friendship becomes especially meaningful during menopause.

It offers continuity during a period defined by change.

As hormones fluctuate, routines shift and identities evolve, the steady presence of someone who simply listens can become one of the most effective forms of emotional resilience available.

If there is one lesson emerging from today's conversations around menopause, it is that no woman should have to navigate it alone.

Sometimes the most powerful support isn't found in another supplement or wellness trend. It is found in a friend who answers the phone, understands without explanation and reminds you that this chapter, like every other, is easier when shared.

ENTERTAINMENT

Shivangi, Harshad trolled over lock upp

Mumbai : Shivangi Joshi and Harshad Chopda's friendship took an unexpected turn when both tried to "manipulate" each other to become the first finalist of Lock Upp 2 on Netflix. Both remained close friends throughout the show, and while many wondered if either Shivangi or Harshad was using the other person, both actors continued to stand up for one another. However, during the final-ist task, Harshad Chopda, after days of denial, admitted that he had purpose-ly lost a previous task to make Shivangi win. This eventually led to his earli-er eviction from the show. Meanwhile, Shivangi Joshi teared up and tried to "de-lay" her loss in the last task, hoping that Harshad would let her win instead, as per fans. Fans of the show have taken to social media to troll both Shivangi and Harshad for "emotional manipula-tion". One person wrote, "Situation ka faida uthakar Harshad has always used Shivangi's emotions. And who are these people claim-ing that Harshad played the entire season for Shivangi and gave everything to her? Seriously, what game did he even play? He couldn't play for himself, let alone for someone." Meanwhile, the latest episode of Lock Upp ended on a cliffhang-er. It will be revealed today whether Shivangi Joshi has been eliminated by Shreya Kalra or if she will remain on the show.

Sunny Deol & Son Karan seek blessings at Patna Sahib ahead of Batwara 1947

Mumbai : Sunny Deol is gearing up for the release of his upcoming film Batwara 1947 and, ahead of the film's big release, the actor visited the revered Takht Sri Patna Sahib Gurudwara in Bihar along with his son, actor Karan Deol. Visuals from Sunny Deol's visit have surfaced on social media, drawing the attention of the actor's fans.

In the visuals that have surfaced from Sunny Deol's visit to the spiritual place, he is seen offering prayers to Guru Gobind Singh Ji and spending time in prayer. Takht Sri Patna Sahib is a very important and revered place in Sikhism, as it is the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. This Gurudwara is among the five Takhts, and it holds immense value for Sikhs. The Gurudwara witnesses thousands of dev-



otees from across the world throughout the year. Following his visit, Sunny also took to Instagram and shared pictures. While sharing the post, he wrote, "Feeling truly blessed to have visited Takht Sri Harimandir Ji Patna Sahib, the sacred birth-place of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji."

Sunny Deol delivers a commanding performance as a man who refuses to sur-render his conscience, while

Shabana Azmi is extraordi-nary as an elderly woman whose grace and wisdom be-come the film's moral centre. Preity Zinta brings warmth, grit, and emotional depth to a woman fighting to hold her family together through impossible circumstances. The trailer offers a glimpse into the devastation caused by the Partition while also focusing on the resilience of those who lived through it. Blending large-scale visuals

with emotionally charged moments, it sheds light on the human cost of one of his-tory's most painful events. Led by performances from Shabana Azmi, Sunny Deol, Preity Zinta, and the rest of the cast, Batwara 1947 ap-pears to be aiming for an emotionally powerful cine-matic retelling of the era.

The film also stars Karan Deol, Ali Fazal, and Abhi-manyu Singh and marks the much-awaited reunion of Rajkumar Santoshi and Sunny Deol after nearly three decades. Produced under the banner of Aamir Khan Productions, Batwara 1947 is directed by Rajku-mar Santoshi. The music is composed by A. R. Rahman, while the lyrics are penned by Javed Akhtar. The film is slated for a worldwide theat-rical release on August 14, 2026.

Deepika Padukone's latest meme post strikes a chord with fellow parents

Mumbai : Deepika Padukone has shared a relatable meme as she ex-pects her second child. Already a proud mother to her daughter, Dua, Deepi-ka reposted an Instagram reel highlighting the strug-gles of managing pregnan-cy while taking care of a toddler.

The video features a preg-nant woman being advised not to lift heavy weights, only to end up carrying her toddler alongside the baby inside her. The caption on the video reads: "Don't lift anything over 20 pounds during pregnancy. Me this entire pregnancy."

Deepika is expecting her second child with her hus-band, actor Ranveer Singh. In April, she officially announced her second pregnancy through a joint Instagram post featuring her daughter, Dua, hold-



ing a positive pregnancy test kit. On the work front, Deepika was last seen in Rohit Shetty's Singham Again. She will next be seen in King, starring Shah Rukh Khan in the lead role

alongside Suhana Khan and Abhishek Bachchan in prominent roles. Produced by Red Chillies Entertain-ment, the film is scheduled to hit the big screens on December 24.

Nick Jonas shares cute peek into family life with Priyanka and Malti

Washington : Singer Nick Jonas has given fans a glimpse into his family life by sharing a heartwarming Instagram photo dump cap-turing some of his favourite moments from July. Accom-ppanied by the caption, "July was one for the books," the post features intimate snap-shots of his downtime with his wife, actor Priyanka Chopra, and their daughter, Malti Marie. The Instagram carousel offers a mix of can-did family moments, person-al portraits and scenic views, reflecting a quieter chapter for the Jonas family after an extended period of travel.

The Instagram carousel of-fers a mix of candid family

moments, personal portraits and scenic views, reflecting a quieter chapter for the Jo-nas family after an extended period of travel. teen's apol-ogy video post Jantar Man-tar protest row The post sees Nick striking a pose in front of a mirror, dressed in a black cowboy hat, blue jeans and an embroidered dark green shirt. Another creative frame captures a mirrored image of Priyanka Chopra displayed on the screen of a small pink toy camera, adding a playfu-l touch to the collection. One of the standout photographs features Malti Marie gazing at a sweeping view of the sea, rolling hills and a bright blue sky from a high terrace.

The serene image offers a rare glimpse of the couple's daughter, whom they have largely kept away from the spotlight while occasionally sharing moments from their family life.

The carousel also includes a candid photograph of Nick and Priyanka enjoying an outdoor dinner together. In the image, Priyanka leans towards Nick across a table filled with food and drinks, capturing a quiet moment between the couple. Another picture shows Nick fully fo-cused during a game of foos-ball in a recreation room, highlighting his relaxed downtime. The post comes at a time when the family



has been enjoying a slow-er pace of life in New York City. Speaking to People magazine during the open-ing of his Broadway musical 'The Last Five Years', Nick reflected on how fatherhood

has helped him appreciate spending time in one place. "We're so used to being in 10 different cities in 10 different days... And so to be in one place and have this time to-gether has been really nice,"

Sagar family legacy meets modern 'Ramayana': high praise for Sai Pallavi and Yash

Mumbai : Amid the debate over Sai Pallavi's casting as Sita in Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana, Shiv Sagar, grandson of leg-endary filmmaker Ramanand Sagar, has come out in support of the actress. While a section of social media has questioned whether Sai fits the role, Shiv said he was impressed by her casting. However, he admitted he has reservations about Ranbir Kapoor playing Lord Ram because of the image he carries after Animal.

Shiv Sagar shared his views after watch-ing the recently released Ramayana trail-er. Ramanand Sagar, his grandfather, cre-ated the iconic television series Ramayan (1987), which is still regarded as one of the most-loved adaptations of the epic. React-ing to the trailer, Shiv said he was happy with Yash's look as Ravan and believed Sai Pallavi was a strong choice for Sita. "I saw the trailer that was released yesterday,



and of course, the trailer was much better than the teaser because the previous teaser they had put out had very little informa-tion. This was a longer trailer where we could see more of the characters, more of the VFX, and there was also the reveal of Ravan, who is played by Yash."He added, "Overall, I really like the casting of Yash as Ravan, and I also really like Sai Pal-lavi as Sita because they're from South India, and these actors really understand our mythology. These are stories that have been told to them from a very young

age by their grandparents. So they really know the mannerisms and understand these characters very well. I think that's why Yash and Sai Pallavi were really able to incorporate these characters into their performances."His remarks come at a time when Sai Pallavi has been facing criticism online over her suitability for the role. Much of the debate has centred on her appearance, costume, Hindi fluency and whether she fits audiences' expecta-tions of Sita, although many others have defended her casting and argued that per-formance matters more than language or looks. While praising Yash and Sai Palla-vi, Shiv was less convinced about Ranbir Kapoor's casting as Lord Ram. He said mythological roles like Ram have tradi-tionally been played by relatively fresh faces, making it easier for audiences to accept them.

Sidhant Gupta steps in for Farhan Akhtar in 'lalkaara' after scheduling conflict



Mumbai : Farhan Akhtar has dropped out of Aamir Khan and Ashutosh Gowar-iker's much-awaited sports drama Lalkaara. According to reports, Sidhant Gupta has been roped in to replace him. According to a Bolly-

wood Hungama report, Far-han Akhtar has reportedly stepped away from the proj-ect because of a scheduling clash with his upcoming film on legendary music composer R. D. Burman, which is being directed by

Neeraj Pandey. According to the report, Farhan's packed schedule played a key role in his decision to leave the project. The actor is expect-ed to spend several months preparing for his upcoming R. D. Burman biopic, di-rected by Neeraj Pandey. With Lalkaara also requiring extensive cricket training and a long filming schedule, Farhan reportedly chose to prioritise the biopic and mu-tually parted ways with the sports drama.

Although Farhan is no longer part of the film's cast, he remains attached to Lalkaara as a producer. The sports

drama is being produced by Excel Entertainment, head-ed by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani, in associ-ation with Rajkumar Hirani Films. Farhan Akhtar's exit is reportedly not expected to delay the film, with the makers already finding a replacement for his role.Ac-cording to reports, Sidhant Gupta has been brought on board to replace Farhan. The actor, who has been seen in projects like Inside Edge, Jubilee, Black Warrant and Freedom at Midnight, will reportedly play one of Aamir Khan's close friends in the sports drama.

Ramayana release facing heat as Delhi Ramlila Mahasangh issues warning against scriptural distortions



Mumbai : The Shri Ramlila Ma-hasangh has requested a preview screen-ing of the upcoming film 'Ramayana' which stars Ranbir Kapoor, before its worldwide theatrical release to avoid al-legged inaccurate depictions of this myth-ological epic similar to Prabhas-starrer Adipurush, which was released in 2023.

According to the press note by the Ram-lila Mahasangh, Arjun Kumar, President of Shri Ramlila Mahasangh, has written a formal letter to the 'Ramayana' filmmak-ers demanding that the film be screened for a delegation of the Mahasangh before its theatrical release this Diwali, both in India and overseas. In his letter addressed to director Nitesh Tiwari and the film's production company, Arjun Kumar re-called the controversy surrounding the

earlier mega-budget film Adipurush, which involved several objections from members of the Sanatan community and those associated with traditional Ramli-la performances after the release of the movie.

Among the concerns raised were "the depiction of Lanka in black instead of gold, and the portrayal of Ravana and his army in a manner that did not align with traditional beliefs," as per the press note, which also impacted the film's box office performance. "According to infor-mation received by the Mahasangh, Ra-mayana may also contain certain scenes that could hurt the sentiments of Hindus living in India and abroad. In light of this, the organisation has requested a special preview screening to ensure that any

potentially objectionable scenes or dia-logues are identified and removed prior to release," said Arjun Kumar as quoted in a press note. The President of Shri Ramlila Mahasangh also warned that if the mak-ers fail to comply with this request, Shri Ramlila Mahasangh, along with various Hindu organisations, will stage protests and demonstrations outside cinema halls in Delhi and other states.

Ramayana's trailer was released during the auspicious Brahma Muhurat and opened with the introduction of Yash as Ravana. He is seen emerging from the shadows before entering his grand pal-ace and declaring his rule over the three worlds.As darkness spreads, Lord Vish-nu is reborn on Earth as Prince Rama. Ranbir Kapoor appears as Lord Rama, while Arun Govil plays King Dasharatha, introducing Rama to the people of Ayod-hya.

The trailer also gives a glimpse of Rama and Sita's wedding, with Sai Palla-vi playing Sita. The emotional moments continue as Rama accepts Kaikeyi's wish and begins his 14-year exile along with his brother Lakshmana, played by Ravie Dubey. The trailer also features impor-tant moments from the epic, including Shurpanakha, played by Rakul Preet Singh, Sita's abduction, and the build-up to the grand battle between the forces of good and evil, with large-scale action se-quences and mythical creatures.

Kangana Ranaut links faith and purpose in latest remarks on spiritual awakening

New Delhi : Actor and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut, who was recently in the news for calling Gen Z pro- testers "generation gutter", on Monday said she used to be a moderate Hindu and now wants to "convert" and become an awakened Hindu.

In a video on Instagram, the latest in a series, Ranaut criticised those questioning her present stance on issues given her past as an actor. "I am taunted, 'When did you become a Sanghi?' I want to become a Sanghi. I want to convert to the BJP and RSS ideology, which is an awakened Hindu. Why can't I?"

"When it comes to Hindu daughters, then so called custodians of society... start looking into our life from a decade ago and say, 'You used to party, you used to do this.' Yes, I used to but now I want to convert. Why is that door closed for me?" The MP from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh said



she did not want to defend her past but pointed out that she had fought for is-sues like pay parity, against nepotism and item num-bers. Ranaut, who has been the focus of debate for her provocative comments, de-scribed videos of protesters at Jantar Mantar as a dis-play of "filth, garbage and

ugliness". "So much ugliness in one place, these reels from GenZ protests are puke-in-duc-ing, the way they speak and the kind of language they are using, never in my life I have seen everything in each and every frame so jarring and so crass all at once, ewwww who is birth-

ing and raising them?" the 39-year-old said last week. She also said, "Here is a new generation of so called westernised Indian women. I call them generation gutter." Ranaut's statements went viral on social media with many criticising the actor for her "crass com-ments".

Delhi Police Sources No Case Against Minor Accused of Abusing PM Modi



New Delhi, Aug 03:According to sources who spoke to NDTV on Sunday, the Delhi Police have chosen not to prosecute a young girl who was allegedly cursing Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a widely shared video during the Cockroach Janta Party’s demonstration at Jantar Mantar last month.A “Zero” First Information Report (FIR) was filed by the Noida Police against the kid for making derogatory comments about Prime Minister Modi. She was identified as a 25-year-old woman in the FIR. She then stated in an apologetic video that she was just 15 years old and that “others” at the protest loca-

tion had influenced her remarks. “I am only 15 years old. Whatever I did was not worthy of forgiveness. I have said a lot of bad things. This is my first and last mistake. I apologise to the entire country. I am so ashamed. I can’t even look at myself. Please forgive me,” she said in the video earlier this week.Amid appeals for leniency on social media, PM Modi said last Friday that he forgave “misguided children” who abused him.“Punishing them and dragging them through courts and harassing them will not change the circumstances. I want to forgive them. I request society also to accept what I am saying,” he said

in an Instagram reel. The minor’s mother had appealed to PM Modi to direct the authorities to cancel the FIR against the minor.“PM Modi has shown greatness by forgiving a daughter of the country who had used such dirty words. I thank him with folded hands. Today is her new birth. The prime minister has given her je-evandaan (a new life),” the mother said.“I request Prime Minister Narendra Modi, please revoke the FIR filed against her under the wrong name and age...Now she is under your supervision,” she added.She also urged PM Modi to ban social media for minors. “I humbly ask PM Modi to prohibit youngsters under the age of 18 from using Facebook and Instagram. They should only be permitted to study. They shouldn’t be permitted to participate in protests. These kids are readily used. “They have no knowledge of the world,” she said. For more than five weeks, the CJP had demonstrated at Delhi’s Jantar Mantar, demanding that the central government take responsibility for the NEET paper leak. The agitation of the satirical Instagram group was supported by thousands of individuals, primarily students. The group called off the protest last month after Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned and the government agreed to their other demands, including no coercive action against protesters.

PM Narendra Modi praises the Indian team for winning 39 medals at the 2026 CWG

Glasgow: India won 39 medals, including 13 gold, at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the team’s success on Monday. PM Modi commended the athletes for their extraordinary talent, tenacity, and commitment at the Games in a post on X. “I’m pleased with our team’s performance in the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. I’m thrilled that India has won 39 medals, 13 of which are gold. “Congratulations to the medal winners,” stated Prime Minister Modi. “Our gifted competitors have demonstrated extraordinary talent, tenacity, and commitment throughout the Games. Their diligence will continue to motivate our children,” he continued. The Prime Minister expressed his hope that the athletes would continue to perform well and bring more honor to the country, and he wished the whole Indian delegation the best of luck in their future endeavors.I wish the whole Indian contingent the best of luck in their next endeavors.



ors. PM Modi stated, “May they keep giving it their all and bring more glory to the country.” The curtains came down on the 2026 Commonwealth Games after 11 days of competition, with Scotland formally handing over the Commonwealth Games flag and ceremonial baton to India, hosts of the landmark centenary edition in 2030, during a glittering closing ceremony.The 2030 Commonwealth Games will be held in Ahmedabad, making India only the second nation after Australia to host the multi-sport event on more than one occasion. India had previously staged

the Games in New Delhi in 2010.The Commonwealth Games flag and baton were presented to India’s representatives, Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president PT Usha, and Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi as part of the official handover ceremony.India also had plenty to celebrate on the sporting front, finishing fourth in the medals table with a haul of 39 medals, 13 gold, 17 silver and nine bronze, to cap off a successful campaign. Although India’s tally was lower than the 61 medals won in Birmingham in 2022, the

context tells a different story. Of those medals, thirty had come from sports that were no longer part of the Glasgow schedule. India produced an even greater medal conversion rate, with 38 competitors coming home with medals, and managed to preserve its fourth-place standing with just 122 participants compared to 210 four years before.Gulveer Singh, a long-distance runner, was the only Indian to take home two medals. Now that the ceremonial transfer is finished, attention will turn to Ahmedabad, which will host the Commonwealth Games’ centennial in 2030.

Farooq Abdullah wants J&K to become a state following terror attacks “Illogical Theory,”

Srinagar, Aug 03: Farooq Abdullah, the leader of the National Conference, urged the restoration of statehood on Sunday, claiming that the removal of Jammu and Kashmir’s special status under Article 370 of the Constitution had not put a stop to terrorism in the Union Territory. The remarks are made in the midst of a huge crack-down that has resulted in hundreds of detentions over the past ten days in response to two terror attacks in south Kashmir.Identify these murderers for us. You have been claiming that there is no longer any terrorism. Who are these murderers if that is the case?Abdullah spoke such words. The BJP and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) strongly criticised Abdullah for linking terror attacks with statehood restoration, and called the comments “illogical conspiracy theories”. Iltija Mufti, the daughter of PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, said National Conference leaders and ministers should not politicise terror attacks to push for their statehood demand.

“Statehood seems to be the end all and be all for the Jammu and Kashmir government. Unfortunate to see the ruling party’s senior leaders and ministers create illogical conspiracy theories about pointing fingers about the two innocent labourers gunned down in a shameful act of terror. A moment of grief shouldn’t be politicised,” Iltija Mufti said. National Conference leaders have been demanding an investigation into the killings. Abdullah has raised the issue of terror and statehood in the same sentence twice in the last two days, following the attacks on migrant workers. After the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 25 tourists and a local resident, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had said he would never use the tragedy as an opportunity to demand restoration of statehood. The Pahalgam attack had triggered India’s strong response in the form of Operation Sindoor, with Indian cruise missiles hitting terror and military infrastructure deep inside Pakistani territory.

Sunil Chhetri calls on the Tata Group to “punch to the gut” Jamshedpur FC’s decision to leave the ISL

New Delhi: In an emotional plea to the Tata Group to re-evaluate its decision to close Jamshedpur FC’s first-team operations, former India captain Sunil Chhetri called the move “a punch to the gut” and cautioned that Indian football cannot afford to lose one of its most ardent institutional supporters. In a post on X on Sunday, Chhetri responded to the club’s decision by discussing the challenging situation of Indian football and the significance of long-term stakeholders. “Being involved in Indian football requires a lot of work. That’s how things have been for a while. But you rely on family to support one another when everything else seems to be falling apart. And when you need reassurance, you usually go to the elders in the household,” Chhetri added.“All of you at the TATA Group, through TFA first, and then JamshedpurFC, have been one of our pillars,” the seasoned striker said, honoring



ing the Tata Group’s dedication to the sport through the Tata Football Academy and then Jamshedpur FC. Expressing his disappointment over the club’s withdrawal, Chhetri said, “To know that Jamshedpur has folded first team operations is a punch to the gut.”He also highlighted the immediate impact of the decision on players and staff, noting that while many may eventually find new opportu-

nities, Indian football stands to lose much more.“The players and staff will be without clubs, and they might find one by the end of it all. The League will have a team less, but the season will go on. However, not having the TATA group involved in the top tier of Indian football - that would be a disaster with no alternative,” he said. Despite acknowledging that business realities sometimes impact athletic

decisions, Chhetri urged the Tata Group to reevaluate. “I am aware that certain difficult choices in sports depend on what makes sense in the boardroom. However, all I can do is ask and hope that TATA’s thought tank decides to reconsider this decision. Even if it would be a bad commercial move, Indian football will need it the most right now,” he continued. Jamshedpur FC had announced on Friday that it would withdraw from the Indian Super League (ISL) from the 2026-27 season onwards. The decision was confirmed by Jamshedpur Football and Sporting Private Limited (JF-SPL), the Tata Steel-owned entity that operates the club. While confirming its exit from the ISL, JFSPL said it would continue contributing to Indian football through grassroots development and youth programmes, reiterating its commitment to identifying and nurturing young talent across the country.

The BJP criticizes Congress Leader Nana Patole’s “Culture” in a foot-washing video



Mumbai, Aug 03: In Maharashtra, a video of two men washing senior Congress politician Nana Patole’s feet on Guru Purnima has caused political controversy. The BJP has mocked the video, calling it a peek of “Congress culture”. However, Patole maintained that the people who were observed stroking his feet were young people from his “family.”In the widely shared video, two guys are seen washing Patole’s feet and showering

him with flowers while he sits on a sofa. The footage revealed that some fruits were also put close to his feet.Social media users reacted sharply to the video, with the BJP criticizing the former head of the Maharashtra Congress, who had also been the assembly speaker. State minister and BJP leader Chandrashekhhar Bawankule said it reflects the “culture of Congress leaders” and that such incidents only invite criticism and negative publicity.

“It is the culture of Congress leaders to indulge in such activities. They should have learnt lessons from such incidents. Why indulge in such practices where you will only earn criticism and negative publicity and nothing else?” the revenue minister said. However, Patole dismissed any controversy around the matter and maintained that he had not requested nor coerced anyone to carry out any such rite. It was Guru Puja that day. There were two of my younger family members there. They wanted to do this as a sign of respect since they insisted that I was their Guru,” he stated.The Congress politician retaliated by saying that the BJP has no right to teach people about customs and culture. “Those who loot donation funds from need not advise us,” he remarked, seemingly alluding to the heist from the Ram temple.

Prashant Kishor Gets an Early Advantage in Bihar’s Bankipur Bypoll



New Delhi, Aug 03: Prashant Kishor, a former poll strategist who is now a politician, has an early advantage in the Bihar seat of Bankipur. In addition to Bankipur, the BJP-ruled states of Datia in Madhya Pradesh and Manjalpur in Gujarat are also counting ballots for the important by-elections. Since the widespread nationwide student demonstrations over the paper leaks, these are the first elections. It is anticipated that the results would reflect the sentiment of the nation, particularly among young voters. Bihar’s Bankipur No BJP candidate has ever lost from Bankipur, the party’s stronghold. Nitin Nabin, the leader of the BJP, was the last person to occupy the position before he was elected to the Rajya Sabha. However, a hitch in the BJP camp and the long-awaited arrival of Prashant Kishor in

the electoral arena will make this election noteworthy.BJP candidate Abhishek Kumar Sinha withdrew last month, citing “family reasons,” only one day after submitting his candidacy papers. Neeraj Kumar Sinha, a leader of the youth wing, was then selected as the BJP’s candidate. It had sparked much mirth in the Opposition camp. Its leaders took a jibe at the BJP, saying the party was “jittery at the prospects of a defeat” in the seat vacated by the party chief. Tejashwi Yadav, the leader of the Rashtriya Janata Dal, had predicted an unexpected result, claiming that his party’s nominee, Rekha Gupta, had garnered support from people of all class, religious, and caste backgrounds and would win.Madhya Pradesh’s Datia Following Congress MLA Rajendra Bharti’s disquali-

fication on April 2 under the terms of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the Datia Assembly seat in Madhya Pradesh became vacant. Ashutosh Tiwari of the BJP is now running against Ghanshyam Singh of the Congress in his first assembly election. The seat, though, is seen to be the pocketborough of former state Home Minister Narotam Mishra, who represented it for three straight terms from 2008 to 2018. Mishra, however, lost the seat in the 2023 assembly elections. This time, the change in candidate has incensed Mishra’s supporters, who have held a series of protests in the state.Kunwar Ghanshyam Singh is a two-time former MLA and a member of the erstwhile royal family who won the seat in 1993 and 2003. He is relying on old loyalties, personal goodwill and dissatisfaction among sections of BJP workers. The Manjalpur seat fell vacant following the death of its sitting MLA -- the BJP’s Yogeshbhai Narandas Patel, who held it for three straight terms.The main contest here is between the BJP’s former Vadodara Municipal Corporation councillor, Satish Govindbhai Patel, and former minister and Gujarat Congress vice president Bhikhabhai Rabari.

TVK vs. Opposition in Tamil Nadu Regarding the Cauvery Conflict: Vijay’s First Serious Test



Chennai, Aug 03: C Joseph Vijay is up against his first significant challenge as Tamil Nadu’s chief minister. The long-running Cauvery water issue between the state and neighboring Karnataka is the topic of contention.The TVK government has been under increasing pressure from the opposition to call an all-party conference to address the matter. The administration has rejected the proposal, claiming that rather than operating in Tamil Nadu’s best interests, the opposition is trying to cause political problems for the chief minister. The ruling party claims that since opposition parties are

reportedly approaching the matter with political intentions, there is no reason to host an all-party conference.The chief minister has been asked by the DMK why he is hesitant to convene an all-party meeting. In order to put more pressure on the TVK administration to take a similar stance, the opposition has also noted that the Karnataka government has already called an all-party meeting on the Mokedatu Dam issue. Senior TVK leader CTR Nirmal Kumar rejected the demand, claiming that the Tamil Nadu Assembly has previously addressed the matter.All political parties supported

a resolution that was unanimously passed by the Legislative Assembly. So why is an all-party meeting necessary? “The DMK doesn’t care about the welfare of Tamil Nadu; they are just trying to cause problems for our Chief Minister,” he stated. CTR Nirmal Kumar also alleged that the Karnataka chief minister has close ties with the DMK’s first family.In the past, both the DMK and AIADMK governments convened all-party meetings during major developments in the Cauvery dispute. The TVK government, however, appears to be adopting a different strategy.Vijay had planned to initiate direct talks with the Karnataka Chief Minister by visiting Bengaluru, but the visit was reportedly called off due to the prevailing tense situation in Karnataka.Despite the criticism, sources in the TVK government say they are confident of handling the issue and have assured that Tamil Nadu’s rights over Cauvery water will be protected.The DMK will hold a massive protest in Thanjavur on August 3 condemning the TVK government over the Cauvery and farmers’ issue.

Following CWG Silver, Praveen Chithravel's father promises a large gold medal

Glasgow: When Indian athlete Praveen Chithravel won the silver medal in the men’s triple jump in the 2026 Glasgow Commonwealth Games, the humble house of an agricultural daily wage worker in Settisathiram burst into excitement. While considering the family’s modest origins, Praveen’s father, Chithravel, expressed great pleasure in his son’s accomplishment on a global scale. He said, “I am an agricultural daily wage worker,” to PTI Videos. “We educated our children and supported their dreams with the income I earned through daily wage work,” he said. Recalling the early days of Praveen’s athletic journey, he said, “Wherever I went, I took him on my bicycle. I showed him the world little by little, and step by step, he improved and went on to compete at the international level.” Praveen clinched the silver medal on Saturday with a best leap of 16.58 metres in freezing conditions, narrowly missing the gold medal.Acknowledging the close finish, his father said the family had hoped for gold but was immensely proud of his achievement.

CWG 2026: India Finish Fourth as Australia Top Medal Table Again

Glasgow: India signed off from the 2026 Commonwealth Games with another impressive medal haul, finishing fourth in the pecking order with 39 podium finishes despite competing in a significantly trimmed sporting programme that excluded some of its traditional strongholds. TrendingVideos India won 13 gold, 17 silver and 9 bronze medals. Australia topped the table with 171 medals, including 70 gold, while England (110 medals), and Canada (62) were second and third respectively. Hosts Scotland ended fifth with a total of 39 medals, same as India but with less number of silver. The Indian contingent produced a series of standout performances over the 11-day competition in Glasgow, collecting medals across disciplines such as boxing, athletics, judo, para sports, and weightlifting to reinforce its status as one of the Commonwealth's sporting powerhouses. Boxing emerged as one of India's biggest contributors, accounting for 10 medals, including seven gold and three silver, while many track and field and para athletes too produced



a string of podium finishes. While the boxers delivered consistently, the judokas added crucial medals to the tally. Although the absence of sports such as shooting, badminton, wrestling, hockey, and table tennis, along with the reduced overall programme, affected India's medal prospects compared to previous editions, the contingent adapted well to the changed landscape and remained among the most successful teams at

the Games. There were, however, a few disappointments, with India's campaign suffering an early setback when judoka Tulika Maan was ruled out before the Games after being provisionally suspended for three whereabouts failures under anti-doping regulations. With the Glasgow chapter coming to an end, India's focus now shifts to the 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad. The official handover during Sun-

day's closing ceremony will mark the beginning of preparations for the centenary edition, with the country set to host the Games for the second time after New Delhi in 2010. Sports Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday said that the government wants all four to be part of the 2030 sports programme, but there is every chance that two out of four will be included once the full sports programme comes out.

Tanvi Sharma Becomes Youngest Taipei Open Champion Ever

Hoshiarpur: Actor Kangana Ranaut slammed Hrithik Roshan for making "unreasonable comments" and called him out for encouraging online trolling. Roshan recently reacted to a post on Instagram, which read "We need to apologise to Hrithik Roshan". The post was shared following Ranaut's recent remarks on student protests. The actor responded by stating people should not be swayed by online narratives and that he would wait for the right context and facts before taking any position.

"My friend, siding with 'A' just cause you don't like 'B' anymore is a small part of the larger systemic issue plaguing our society. I'll wait, for when the context to it is the right one, and motivated by facts. That would be fair. But then again, who cares anymore right," he wrote in the comment. Re-sharing the article about his response on her Instagram story on Saturday, Ranaut said the actor should rather condemn all those who are harassing and bullying her using Roshan's name. "Dear Hrithik I am happy that you have found your perfect match, Saba Azad, and you both look great together, you are in a committed relationship and it doesn't suit you to tease a woman like this," she wrote.

"Instead, you should condemn all those who are harassing and bullying me using your name, stop adding fuel to fire and em-



barrassing your partner, hope better sense prevails and you stop making unreasonable comments," she added. Roshan hasn't responded to the comments. The feud between both the actors dates back to 2016 when both had a dispute over whether they shared a romantic relationship, escalating into legal battles, leaked emails, and periodic public clashes. Ranaut claimed they were together for a brief period, with Roshan denying all the claims.

India's Glasgow Medal Haul Impressive, Yet Greater Success Was Possible



New Delhi: India's fourth-place finish at the 2026 Commonwealth Games was, on paper, another successful campaign. The contingent returned home with 39 medals, including 13 gold, 17 silver and nine bronze, despite competing in one of the leanest editions of the Games in recent history. Only Australia, England and Canada finished above India in the medal standings, while hosts Scotland ended with the same

overall tally of 39 medals but were ranked lower because they won fewer silver medals. Yet, as impressive as India's performance was, the final medal count only tells part of the story. The Glasgow Games featured a heavily reduced programme of just 10 sports, leaving out several disciplines that have traditionally been India's biggest medal factories. Shooting, wrestling, badminton and table tennis were all absent, significant-

ly reducing India's medal opportunities. Those four sports have consistently delivered some of India's biggest returns at the Commonwealth Games. Shooting fetched an incredible 27 medals the last time it featured in Gold Coast in 2018. Wrestling added 12 medals at Birmingham 2022, while badminton contributed six. Table tennis was another major contributor, with India winning seven medals in Birmingham.

Ravi Shastri Welcomes Jude Bellingham With Grand IPL-Style Reception

Mumbai: Ravi Shastri's booming introductions have long been part of cricket's theatre. On Saturday, August 1, it was England and Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham's turn to receive the kind of animated, crowd-hyping welcome that IPL and cricket fans around the world have become familiar with before a toss. The former India captain greeted Bellingham ahead of Birmingham Phoenix's The Hundred clash against Welsh Fire at Edgbaston, drawing a huge roar from the home crowd.

The clip quickly found its way across social media, with football and cricket fans alike enjoying the crossover between two of sport's biggest personalities. Bellingham walked onto the outfield alongside Birmingham Phoenix captain Donovan Ferreira and Welsh Fire skipper Phil Salt before the toss. The 22-year-old later spent time signing autographs and posing for photographs with supporters, many of whom had gathered around the boundary just to catch a glimpse of the Birmingham-born footballer. Shastri, meanwhile, appeared every bit as delighted by the meeting."Great to

have Birmingham's own galetico, @BellinghamJude, in the house for the toss at The Hundred. What a player. What a World Cup. Class written all over him. Good luck for the season ahead!" Shastri posted on X. The pair also shared one of the day's lighter moments after Bellingham signed a cap for Shastri. "I wouldn't have been allowed home without it," Shastri laughed, revealing that the autograph was actually for his daughter. Bellingham's appearance at Edgbaston was more than a guest visit. Earlier this year, the England midfielder acquired a reported 1.2 per cent stake in Birmingham Phoenix, becoming one of the franchise's minority owners. His visit marked a return to his hometown franchise, with supporters turning out in large numbers to welcome one of Birmingham's biggest sporting icons. While the Real Madrid star was there to support his team, it was his interaction with Ravi Shastri that quickly became one of the standout moments from the day. Ravi Shastri warmly welcomed England and Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham at a Birmingham Phoenix cricket match, creating a vibrant crossover moment



for football and cricket fans. Bellingham, a minority owner of Phoenix, engaged with supporters and shared lighthearted moments with Shastri, including signing a cap. The event highlighted Bellingham's deep ties to his hometown and showcased the camaraderie between two prominent sports figures, drawing significant attention on social media and from the crowd at Edgbaston. Ravi Shastri surprised football star Jude Bellingham with a lively IPL-style welcome, creating a memorable crossover moment

between cricket and football. The former India head coach and commentator greeted the Real Madrid midfielder with the same energy and enthusiasm often seen during Indian Premier League events. The interaction highlighted the growing connection between global sports personalities and Indian sporting culture. Bellingham, one of football's biggest young stars, received a warm reception from Shastri, whose charismatic style has made him a popular figure among cricket fans worldwide.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar Not Obsessed With India Comeback, Reveals His Reason

New Delhi: Bhuvneshwar Kumar has reached a stage in his career where the biggest battle is no longer against batters, but against expectation. The 36-year-old isn't consumed by thoughts of an India comeback any more. Ironically, that change in mindset has coincided with one of the most impressive phases of his career. While Indian cricket has embraced a new generation of fast bowlers, Bhuvneshwar has quietly rediscovered his rhythm. Since moving to Royal Challengers Bengaluru, the veteran seamer has found a second wind, establishing himself as one of the side's most dependable performers. His control with the new ball, composure at the death and ability to outthink batters have played a key role in RCB winning back-to-back IPL titles. His resurgence has come in an era when T20 cricket is arguably at its most unforgiving for bowlers. Batters attack from the first ball, 200-plus totals have become commonplace and margin for error is almost non-existent. Yet, Bhuvneshwar has shown that skill, discipline and game awareness can still thrive amid the chaos, once again earning recog-



nition as one of the format's finest bowlers. Naturally, his performances have reignited conversations around an India comeback. But unlike previous years, the speculation no longer dictates his happiness. "I'm playing the IPL and domestic cricket because I love the game," Bhuvneshwar said. "When you're young and playing for India, you say you love the game. But honestly, things like 'control the controllable', 'don't overthink', or 'playing for the passion of the game' -- I can actually feel those things now." Those

words offer a glimpse into how much Bhuvneshwar's perspective has evolved. Earlier in his career, every performance carried the weight of selection, expectations and the constant pressure to justify his place. Today, he speaks with the calmness of someone who has already lived the dream. "I've already played for India. That's not something I have to achieve now. If I get another opportunity, that's great, but I've been there. Everything I'm doing now is because of my love for the game. I know I have to stay disciplined." It

is not a retirement speech, nor is it an admission that the international chapter is over. Instead, it reflects the outlook of a player who understands that another India cap would be a bonus rather than a measure of his career. That freedom has perhaps been the biggest factor behind his revival. Without the burden of constantly chasing selection, Bhuvneshwar has concentrated on refining his craft, proving that even in the new age of T20 cricket, where bowlers are routinely targeted, intelligence can still triumph over brute force.

CWG 2026: India's 39-Medal Haul Led by Boxing, Athletics Success

Glasgow: India wrapped up its campaign at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow with a fourth-place finish in the medal standings, collecting 39 medals (13 gold, 17 silver and nine bronze) despite competing in a significantly trimmed sporting programme that excluded several of its traditional medal-winning disciplines. Australia dominated the Games with 171 medals, including 70 gold, while England (110) and Canada (62) finished second and third respectively. India edged hosts Scotland into fourth after both nations ended with 39 medals, courtesy of a superior silver-medal tally. Competing without sports such as shooting, badminton, wrestling, hockey and table tennis, which have historically contributed a significant chunk of India's Commonwealth Games medals, the contingent adapted impressively to the revised programme to remain among the leading nations over the 11-day competition. Athletics and para athletics emerged as India's most successful discipline, accounting for 16 medals, including three gold, eight silver and five bronze. Former Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra won silver in the men's javelin throw, while para athletes starred through gold medals from Dilip Mahadu Gavit, Sharmila and Soman Rana. Gulveer Singh also enjoyed an impressive Games, winning silver in the men's 10,000m and bronze in the 5000m. Boxing delivered India's biggest haul of gold



medals, producing 10 medals overall, including seven gold and three silver. Ankush (80kg), Sachin (60kg), Arundhati Choudhary (70kg), Priya (60kg), Sakshi (51kg), Jaismine (57kg) and Preeti (54kg) all finished on top of the podium, highlighting India's growing strength in the sport. Weightlifting added another nine medals, headlined by Olympic medalist Mirabai Chanu, who clinched gold in the women's 48kg event. The discipline also contributed seven silver medals and one bronze through a consistent showing across multiple weight categories. Judo chipped in with four medals, including historic golds from Harsh Singh and Asmita Dey, while Yamini Mourya won silver and Unnati Sharma claimed bronze. Para powerlifting added one more medal through Jhandu

Kumar's bronze in the men's heavy-weight category. August 1 proved to be India's most successful day of the Games, with the contingent collecting a remarkable 18 medals. The boxers dominated the finals with seven gold medals, while athletics and para athletics added seven more podium finishes, including Neeraj Chopra's silver in the javelin throw. The haul effectively sealed India's place among the top four nations heading into the final day. India, however, failed to add to its tally on the concluding day. The country's last realistic medal hope rested on 19-year-old judoka Ishroop Narang, who reached the women's -78kg bronze-medal bout after an impressive repechage victory over Cameroon's Georgika Wesly Djengue Moune.