

Meghalaya CM Conrad K. Sangma Reviews Progress Of Meghalaya Houses Across The Country

Shillong, Jul 21: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Tuesday reviewed the progress of ongoing and proposed Meghalaya House infrastructure projects across the country during a virtual meeting with the Minister in-charge of the General Administration Department (GAD) and senior departmental officials. The review covered the status of construction and expansion works, the development of new Meghalaya Houses and the functioning of existing facilities. Officials presented updates on projects in Delhi, Noida, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Vellore and Kolkata, focusing on infrastructure development, service delivery and operational efficiency.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister assessed the progress of individual projects, reviewed implementation timelines and directed officials to ensure that the works are completed on schedule while maintaining quality standards.



He also emphasised the need for effective planning to meet the increasing requirements of Meghalaya residents travelling outside the state.

The meeting also discussed measures to strengthen the

management and functioning of Meghalaya Houses to improve services for students, patients travelling for medical treatment, government officials and other citizens. Sangma said the facilities should

be maintained as welcoming and efficiently managed establishments that provide reliable support to people from Meghalaya staying outside the state. He also directed the department to closely monitor

project implementation and expedite pending works to ensure completion within the stipulated timelines. The review forms part of the state government's ongoing efforts to expand and modernise Meghalaya House infrastructure in major cities, with the aim of improving accessibility, convenience and support services for residents travelling outside Meghalaya. Officials noted that the modernization drive is also intended to enhance the visibility of Meghalaya's cultural identity across India, with new facilities incorporating design elements that reflect the state's heritage while meeting modern standards of hospitality and service. The Chief Minister reiterated that the government's priority is to ensure that Meghalaya Houses evolve into symbols of pride and efficiency, serving as trusted points of contact for citizens and strengthening the state's presence in key urban centers nationwide.

Supreme Court urges Sonam Raghuvanshi surrender in Meghalaya case

Shillong, Jul 21: In a significant development in the ongoing Meghalaya honeymoon murder case, the Supreme Court of India has suggested that accused Sonam Raghuvanshi surrender before the appropriate authorities. The directive comes amid heightened public attention and judicial scrutiny surrounding the case, which has drawn national concern due to its tragic circumstances and cross-jurisdictional complexities. The case involves the alleged murder of Raghuvanshi's husband during their honeymoon in Meghalaya, an incident that has shocked the nation and raised questions about safety, accountability, and the administration of justice. The Supreme Court's observation underscores the importance of due process and the principle that accused individuals must cooperate with the law to ensure a fair and transparent trial.

During the hearing, the



Court emphasized that surrendering before the trial court or relevant jurisdictional authority is a necessary step to uphold the integrity of the judicial process. Legal experts note that such directions are intended to prevent evasion of justice and to reinforce the accountability of individuals facing serious criminal charges. The Meghalaya Police have been actively investigating the case, coordinating with central agencies to gather evidence and ensure that all aspects of the incident are thoroughly examined. The

Court's suggestion is expected to expedite proceedings and allow investigators to move forward with clarity and legal backing. Officials have reiterated that the case will be pursued with the utmost seriousness, given its sensitive nature and the broader implications for public trust in law enforcement and judicial institutions. The directive also serves as a reminder of the judiciary's role in balancing individual rights with societal interests, ensuring that justice is neither delayed nor denied.

24-Million-Year-Old Kewra Plant Fossil Discovered In Assam

Guwahati, July 21: A 24-million-year-old fossil of the Pandanus (Kewra) plant has been discovered in Assam's Tinsukia district, offering new insights into the region's ancient floral ecosystem, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced on Tuesday. Sharing the development in a post on X, Sarma described the discovery as a significant milestone in understanding Assam's prehistoric biodiversity. "Assam just unlocked a 24-million-year-old fossil, shedding light on the ancient floral ecosystem of the region," the Chief Minister said. He added that the Kewra (Pandanus) fossil, discovered in the Makum area of Tinsukia district, provides evidence of how



the plant, whose evolutionary lineage dates back around 85 million years reached the Indian subcontinent nearly 24 million years ago and has since become an integral part of Assam's

natural landscape. Sarma further remarked that many such untold stories remain buried beneath Assam's surface, highlighting the state's rich geological and palaeontological heritage. This

landmark finding not only enriches Assam's scientific narrative but also reinforces the state's role in contributing to global knowledge about plant evolution and prehistoric ecosystems.

Women's exhibition football match held in Imphal before Durand Cup

Imphal, Jul 21: As part of the build-up to the 135th Durand Cup 2026, a Women's Exhibition Football Match was organised at the SAI Ground, Takyel, on Tuesday to promote and encourage women's football in Manipur. The event was jointly organised by the Indian Armed Forces and the Government of Manipur ahead of the prestigious tournament, which will be held in the state from July 28 to August 12. Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports and Home, Govindas Konhoujam, inaugurated the exhibition match as the chief guest. The inaugural programme was attended by Major General Shubhankar Basu, General Officer Commanding, Red Shield Division; Major General Rajiv Nanda (Retd.), Defence Banking Advisor,



SBI Foundation; Dr. Rohit Shrivastava, CEO of NEIDO; and other dignitaries. During the programme, four distinguished women footballers from Manipur—Oinam Bembem Devi, Thongam Tababi Devi, Grace Dangmei and Nirmala Devi—were felicitated for their outstanding contributions to Indian football. Nineteen students from the

state who qualified in the NEET and JEE examinations this year were also honoured for their academic excellence. The exhibition match featured teams Kangla Warriors and Sangai Strikers and was played in a lively atmosphere with enthusiastic support from spectators, highlighting Manipur's strong sporting culture ahead of the 135th Durand Cup.

Nagaland Postpones CUET-UG 2026 Counselling To July 28

Kohima, Jul 21: The Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Nagaland, has postponed the CUET-UG 2026 counselling originally scheduled for July 23. The counselling will now be held on July 28 at 10:30 a.m. in the Conference Hall of the Directorate of Technical Education, Kohima. According to an official notification, the counselling date has been revised in the interest of students and candidates.

The Directorate also informed that the list of provisionally selected candidates and those eligible from the final merit list has been uploaded on its official website and displayed on the office notice board. Candidates ranked from serial number 1 to 500 in the State CUET-UG 2026 merit list have been directed to attend the counselling on the revised date.

Sikkim CM announces ex-gratia aid

Gangtok, Jul 21: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang has announced financial assistance for the victims of the tragic tunnel collapse in Namchi district. Families of those who lost their lives will receive Rs 4 lakh as ex-gratia compensation, while the injured will be granted Rs 50,000. The incident occurred on Monday when a tunnel under construction at the NHPC Teesta Stage VI project in Jhorlunge, Samardung, collapsed following a methane gas blast. At the time of the accident, 25 workers, including several project officers, were trapped inside. Rescue operations have confirmed 11 fatalities, and efforts continue to save those still inside.

In his statement, the Chief Minister expressed condolences to the bereaved families and assured that a special committee will be formed to investigate the cause of the blast and subsequent collapse. The government has pledged to extend all possible support to the victims and their families during this difficult time.

Mizoram reviews drug control, plans state-specific legislation

Aizawl, July 21: The Mizoram State Core Committee on Fight Against Drugs, chaired by Chief Minister Lalduhoma, on Tuesday reviewed the State's ongoing efforts to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking, while discussing measures to strengthen enforcement, rehabilitation and public awareness. The meeting, held at the Chief Minister's Conference Hall in Aizawl, was attended by Home Minister K. Sapdanga, Excise and Narcotics Minister Lalngthinglova Hmar, and other members of the committee. Addressing the meeting, the Chief Minister acknowledged the contributions of government departments and voluntary organisations engaged in



anti-drug initiatives. He said that although eliminating the drug menace would take time, sustained efforts by various agencies have produced encouraging results. The committee reviewed progress reports submitted by the Excise and Narcotics Department, Mizoram Police, Social Wel-

fare Department and the Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA). According to the Excise and Narcotics Department, the launch of Operation Jericho has led to a significant decline in the availability of illicit drugs, resulting in a sharp increase in their street prices.

Supreme Court seeks Centre's reply on Assam NRC appeal plea

Guwahati, July 21: The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notices to the Centre and other concerned parties in response to a plea urging the initiation of an appeal process for individuals excluded from Assam's final National Register of Citizens (NRC). The petition, filed by the Assam State Jamiat Ulama, was heard by a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joy-malya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi. During the hearing, counsel for the petitioner emphasized that those left out of the NRC were facing significant hardships due to the absence of a structured mechanism to challenge their exclusion. The plea seeks



directions to authorities to establish a clear appellate process, ensuring affected individuals have an opportunity to contest the decisions made in the final NRC list.

The matter emphasizes ongoing concerns surrounding the NRC in Assam, which has been a subject of intense debate since its publication. The Court's notice signals

a potential step toward addressing grievances of those excluded, though the final outcome will depend on the responses filed by the Centre and other stakeholders. By issuing notices, the Supreme Court has signaled a potential step toward addressing grievances of those excluded. The final outcome, however, will depend on the responses filed by the Centre and other stakeholders, which may shape the future course of the NRC appeal framework. Legal experts note that the Court's intervention could set an important precedent for balancing administrative efficiency with constitutional guarantees of justice and fairness.

Arunachal Congress Slams Centre Over Detention Of Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi

Itanagar, Jul 21: The Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC), led by its president Bosiram Siram, on Tuesday strongly condemned the detention of Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, and several senior Congress leaders during a protest in New Delhi. In a statement, the APCC described the detentions as "illegal, arbitrary

and undemocratic," alleging that the BJP-led Union Government had sought to suppress peaceful democratic dissent instead of addressing concerns raised by protesting students.

The party accused the Centre of misusing law enforcement agencies and said the detention of opposition leaders represented an attack on parliamentary democracy, the Constitution and citizens' fundamental rights.



The APCC further alleged that, rather than addressing

examination-related concerns affecting students, the

government had chosen to silence those demanding accountability. It asserted that democratic values are upheld through dialogue, dissent and accountability, not through intimidation or police action. Expressing solidarity with Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, detained Congress leaders, student organisations and party workers, the APCC demanded their immediate and unconditional release. The

party also called for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, holding him morally and politically accountable for repeated examination irregularities. It further sought a comprehensive discussion in Parliament on the issue, withdrawal of FIRs and criminal cases registered against students in connection with the Delhi protest, and an end to the alleged misuse of police and investigative agencies

against opposition leaders. Highlighting the broader implications, the APCC noted that the suppression of peaceful protests undermines India's democratic ethos and sends a troubling message to citizens exercising their constitutional rights. The Committee reiterated that the Congress party stands firmly with students and youth across the country, pledging to continue raising their concerns at every forum.

Trillions of assets under its management, the EPFO has commenced the its officials in investment strategies

Agartala, July 21: While many young professionals focus on career growth and income, software engineer Ashok Padapati chose to work on access to education. In 2010, during his final year of B.Tech, he started ‘Vadhanya Jana Society’ to ensure that financial constraints do not force talented students from rural areas to discontinue studies. For the past 15 years, Vadhanya has supported more than 500 underprivileged students from rural Andhra Pradesh, helping them continue schooling, higher education and competitive exam preparation. Ashok, from Kothacheruvu near Puttaparthi in Sri Sathya Sai district, first shared the idea with friends, asking them to contribute 0.5 per cent of their monthly salaries to a common fund. Their trust and support became the foundation of the initiative. The organisation conducts annual talent tests in government schools across the erstwhile Anantapur district, rewarding outstanding performers with cash prizes. It also extends financial assistance for higher education, working closely with teachers and education officials to identify deserving candidates. Among its success stories is Jugesh Kumar from Dharmavaram, son of a handloom labourer. With Vadhanya’s support, he joined a Hyderabad college, later secured an All India Rank of 377 in JEE Main and gained admission to IIT Madras. Ashok recalls a memorable moment when a government teacher, impressed by Vadhanya’s work, handed him a cheque of Rs



15,000 and encouraged him. “That moment when he patted my shoulder is something I can never forget,” he says. His dream is to make Anantapur, known for droughts and hardships, a hub of education. Born to coconut trader P Venkatramudu and homemaker Ramadevi, Ashok says his family has always encouraged his service activities.

He feels proud that many beneficiaries, after building successful careers, are now supporting others. “For every student whose dream comes true, we feel our purpose is fulfilled,” he says. Another case is Mahesh from Kukatpally, whose father worked as a watchman earning less than Rs 10,000 a month. Vadhanya helped him pursue Chartered Accountancy; today he earns an annual package of about Rs 15 lakh. Several other beneficiaries have

achieved remarkable milestones. Tulasī Karthik entered IISc Bengaluru, Yashwanth Kumar Reddy joined IIT Kharagpur, and many others secured government jobs. Ashok says these achievements are a matter of pride and proof of the mission’s impact. Friends remain the strength behind Vadhanya. Ashok, now a corporate team leader, could have chosen a comfortable life, but instead devoted weekends to social service, beginning with providing supplies to old-age homes.

Inspired by social activist Jayaprakash Narayan’s call to nurture rural talent, he realised that while many worked to address hunger, fewer focused on education. “I felt no talented student should miss education because of financial problems. I shared this idea with my friends and requested them to con-

tribute 0.5 per cent of their salaries. They trusted me and supported the initiative without hesitation,” he recalls. Recognising his services, the Andhra Pradesh government invited Ashok to a Republic Day tea party at Lok Bhavan. Actor Nandamuri Balakrishna also appreciated Vadhanya’s efforts on his show Unstoppable, presenting a cheque of Rs 1 lakh.

Beyond scholarships, Vadhanya prepares youth for competitive exams by providing books, coaching and hostel facilities. Beneficiaries include Mahesh Nayak, now Assistant Horticulture Officer in Hindupur; Boya Nanjamma, selected as a police constable; Raghavendra, pursuing MBBS at Kurnool Medical College; and Ramavath Rajanayak, who secured four government jobs including Railways and Air Force.

CM Conrad K Sangma launches block-level CM CONNECT centre

Shillong, July 21: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on July 18 inaugurated the state’s first-ever block-level CM CONNECT Centre at Sohiong and announced development projects exceeding Rs 140 crore aimed at strengthening infrastructure and public services across the region. Travel Guides & Travelogues. The projects span multiple sectors, including tourism, road connectivity, drinking water supply, agriculture and community infrastructure, reflecting the state government’s focus on balanced rural development.

The inauguration took place during the CM CONNECT Block Level Community Interaction Programme, an initiative designed to strengthen engagement between citizens and the government.

The programme provided a platform for residents to raise local concerns, interact directly with government officials and discuss the progress of ongoing development initiatives.

Meghalaya tops hilly states in NITI Aayog’s regulatory ease rankings

Shillong, July 21: Meghalaya achieved the top spot among all the Northeastern and hilly regions in the regulatory ease category of NITI Aayog’s first-ever Investment Friendliness Index (IFI). According to the report released by NITI Aayog, Meghalaya secured a score of 8.5 out of 10 under the Regulatory Ease pillar.

Nagaland and Tripura followed with 8.2 each, while Himachal Pradesh secured 7.9. Assam and Uttarakhand shared the next position with 7.7 points.

The Regulatory Ease pillar measures how state-level regulations influence investment decisions by assessing compliance requirements, transparency, predictability and investors’ perception of the regulatory environment.

It evaluates factors such as the time taken to start a business, the number of licences required, the efficiency of approvals for electricity and water connections, industrial land allotment, environmental clearances and the effectiveness of single-window systems.

The assessment considers multiple indicators, including the time taken to establish a business, the number of approvals and licences required, the efficiency of securing electricity and water connections, industrial land allotment procedures, and the speed of



environmental clearances.

It also reviews the effectiveness of single-window clearance systems, investor feedback on regulatory processes, the functioning of commercial courts, and the time required for businesses to exit or wind up operations.

The Investment Friendliness Index also considers investor feedback on regulatory processes, the efficiency of commercial courts and the time required to exit businesses. It also seeks to foster competitive and cooperative federalism by encouraging States and Union Territories to adopt best practices and undertake continuous reforms in pursuit of the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

NITI Aayog said states with streamlined and predictable regulatory systems reduce uncertainty and lower the time and cost of doing business, making them more attractive destinations for investment.

Despite leading the region in regulatory ease, Meghalaya has been placed in the “Emerging Performers” category in the overall Investment Friendliness Index, indicating that the state has room to improve in other critical areas.

However, the report stated that Meghalaya needs to strengthen other areas, including infrastructure, business climate and resources, to improve its overall investment competitiveness.

Students join protests in solidarity with CJP

Shillong, July 21: Students and people from all walks of life gathered at Don Bosco Square here in Meghalaya on Monday to participate in a peaceful protest expressing solidarity with the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) and activist Sonam Wangchuk.

Protesters, consisting largely of students, shouted anti-government slogans and demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over widespread exam irregularities and paper leaks in the NEET-UG medical entrance examinations. “India deserves a government that champions its students. Our future belongs to us, not to politicians who refuse to take responsibility for their failures,” one of the student protestors remarked.

Protesters held placards with slogans such as: “Students died because the system failed them”, “Our dreams are not for sale,” “Justice for students who died due to paper leaks,” “India failed its future”, “Sonam Wangchuk the one who stand for us. Let us stand together with him” and “We stand with Jantar Mantar.” Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) Secretary Manuel Badwar, who joined students protesting at Don Bosco Square, noted that their backlash against the central NDA government reflects deep-seated frustration among youth whose educations are at risk.

“We are here to show support and solidarity with the student community. This is a critical moment. The frustration among youth, especially students whose careers are being impacted by the government’s misadventures, is real,” Badwar said. “We stand with the students and with the rest of the country. The opposition parties in Delhi are raising this issue strongly and we believe every citizen should support them. We are with them (the students), and we will continue to be with them. The country’s future needs a new trajectory, not the one we are on today,” the Congress leader added.

“Paper leaks are happening at the state level too. Education is becoming expensive and privatised, with no quality. And then students are insulted and called ‘cockroaches’.” “That is the contempt this government has,” Rangad said. Shillong, Jul 20: Students and people from all walks of life gathered at Don Bosco Square here in Meghalaya on Monday to participate in a peaceful protest expressing solidarity with the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) and activist Sonam Wangchuk.

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Sikkim: Border trade through Nathula set to resume six years

Gangtok, July 21: Border trade through the historic Nathula Pass along the India-China frontier is set to resume on August 1, 2026, ending a suspension of more than six years and offering a significant boost to Sikkim’s

war. However, trade was suspended again in 2020 following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

decision to reopen the route stems from the 24th round of the India-China Special Representatives’ dialogue



border economy, according to highly placed sources. Situated in East Sikkim, Nathula served as a vital trading corridor on the ancient Silk Route for centuries. Cross-border commerce through the pass was revived in 2006 after remaining shut since the 1962 India-China

held in August 2025. The meeting, co-chaired by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, resulted in an agreement to restore border trade through three Himalayan passes—Nathula in Sikkim, Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh, and Lipulekh

in Uttarakhand. Earlier this year, Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang had informed the State Assembly that trading activities were likely to restart from June 1. However, sources now say the reopening has been scheduled for August 1. The revival of trade is expected to benefit nearly 600 registered Indian traders who rely on the Nathula route for cross-border business, while also providing fresh momentum to the local economy. The move follows the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through Nathula earlier this year, which reopened after a five-year hiatus.

Meanwhile, work is progressing on a new highway connecting Rongli and Menla to improve access to Nathula and other areas along the Indo-Tibet border. The project is expected to strengthen both commercial connectivity and strategic infrastructure in the region.

Assam MLA Akhil Gogoi demands Wangchuk’s release

Guwahati, July 21: Rajiour Dal chief and Sibsagar MLA Akhil Gogoi has criticised the “forcible” hospitalisation of climate and social activist Sonam Wangchuk, describing the move as a violation of his fundamental and constitutional rights.

He also demanded Wangchuk’s immediate release and called for Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to resign, reports India Today NE.

Speaking to reporters, Gogoi said the manner in which Wangchuk was taken to hospital while on a hunger strike was “deeply concerning”.

“The manner in which a person on a hunger strike was forcibly hospitalised, violating fundamental and constitutional rights, is deeply concerning. As a representative of the people of Assam and the North East, I demand that Sonam Wangchuk be released immediately,” he said.

Gogoi said Wangchuk’s agitation

extended beyond concerns over the education system and represented a larger fight for the country’s future. “The demand for the Education Minister’s dismissal or resignation must be accepted. Wangchuk is fighting for us, for our future, and for future generations, and we must all stand together in this struggle,” he added. Delhi Police shifted Wangchuk from the protest site at Jantar Mantar to Safdarjung Hospital on Saturday. He has been on a hunger strike demanding Pradhan’s resignation over alleged irregularities in examinations across the country, including the NEET paper leak controversy. Meanwhile, the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) has continued its protest at Jantar Mantar and announced a march to Parliament on the opening day of the Monsoon Session on Monday. However, sources told ANI that the organisation has not yet sought permission from Delhi Police for the proposed march. The march was originally



announced by Wangchuk before he was taken to hospital. Sources also indicated that even if permission is sought now, it is unlikely to be granted due to heightened security arrangements for the Monsoon Session.

Delhi Police routinely enforce prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), formerly Section 144 of the CrPC,

in the New Delhi district during Parliament sessions, particularly around Parliament House and India Gate. The police action has triggered criticism from several Opposition leaders, including AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress leader Pawan Khera, Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee and leaders of the Samajwadi Party.

Meghalaya NEET UG qualifiers outnumber available MBBS

Shillong, July 21: More than 1,600 candidates from Meghalaya qualified in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) UG 2026, while the state continues to have a limited number of MBBS seats in its government medical colleges.

According to data released by the National Testing Agency (NTA), 1,658 of the 3,425 candidates from Meghalaya cleared the examination, recording a qualification rate of about 48.4 per cent. Although the number of successful candidates was

slightly lower than last year’s 1,681, the state’s performance remained broadly similar despite a tougher examination and higher qualifying cut-offs at the national level. Assam also recorded a strong performance this year, with Shubh Prasad securing AIR 133, the best rank among candidates from the Northeast. Anthony Thabab emerged as Meghalaya’s highest-ranked candidate, securing an All India Rank (AIR) of 14,455 with a 99.26791 percentile. Travel Guides & Travelogues

Ethanol mixing beyond E20 has not yet been decided



New Delhi, July 21: The government informed Parliament on Monday that it has not decided to raise the required ethanol blend in petrol over 20%, stating that any change would be preceded by thorough scientific research and stakeholder engagement. The minister of state for petroleum and natural gas responded to a question in the Rajya Sabha regarding plans to raise ethanol blending above 20% (E20). According to Suresh Gopi, the government has not yet decided to increase the amount of ethanol blended with fuel beyond 20%.

Gopi emphasized that any future decisions regarding higher ethanol blends will be made only after thorough scientific studies and consultations with stakeholders, including automobile manufacturers, oil marketing companies, and research institutions.

This clarification comes in light of the petroleum ministry's June 5 announcement to gradually expand the availability of 85% ethanol-blended petrol (E85). The initiative aims to facilitate the adoption of flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs) that can use a range of ethanol blends from E20 to E100, allowing consumers flexibility in fuel

choice. A government official, speaking anonymously, clarified that the parliamentary discussion referred specifically to the national ethanol blending program for conventional petrol, while E85 is a separate program designed for FFVs.

The Union petroleum minister, Hardeep Singh Puri, launched E85 at an Indian Oil Corporation retail outlet in New Delhi on World Environment Day, noting that it would initially be available at 48 public sector retail outlets.

The plan includes expanding access to 500 outlets by December 2026 and 5,000 by December 2027, aiming to raise India's overall ethanol blending levels to approximately 26% by 2030-31. Gopi also refuted claims that E20 was a new introduction, stating that ethanol has been used as a transport fuel globally for over a century. India's Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme started with a pilot in 2001, and the transition to E20 has been gradual and evidence-based, with blending rates increasing from 1.53% in 2013-14 to a target of 20% by 2025-26, following comprehensive evaluations and stakeholder consultations at each stage.

Dilip Ghosh criticises Mamata Banerjee for Shaheed Diwas

Kolkata, July 21: West Bengal minister Dilip Ghosh claimed on Tuesday that Mamata Banerjee, the leader of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), had betrayed the dead and their families by turning the July 21 "Shaheed Diwas" into a political event. Ghosh told reporters, "This is a Shahid stage, not just a protest stage." Why did Mamata Banerjee spend the entire night sitting there when there was a program today? It doesn't matter if you sit during the day or at night because nobody is there. You stand alone and face this day because you deceived the martyrs, their families, and now the public." He further alleged that the families of those killed in the July 21, 1993 police firing were denied the compensation they were entitled to. "You are worried because the government betrayed the families of the martyrs by settling for just ₹2 lakh and keeping the remaining ₹25 lakh, even though the courts had mandated compensation for the martyrs. He claimed that while the relatives of the martyrs were still being misled, those who carried out the firing on July 21st were promoted to positions of authority and made ministers, MPs, and MLAs. Every year, West Bengal observes July 21 as "Shaheed Diwas" in remembrance of the 13 Youth Congress workers who were slain by police during a protest in 1993 while the Left Front was in power. TMC MLA Sandipan Saha stated on Monday that the party's event, which has been planned for a number of years, will take place at the location of the shooting. On July 21, the TMC will observe Martyrs' Day, marking a tradition that remembers victims of the 1993 police firing. TMC leader Saha confirmed preparations are complete, expressing enthusiasm among attendees.

Delhi is expected to get heavy rain over the next two days, and Himachal is under red alert

New Delhi, July 21: According to the India Meteorological Department forecast, active monsoon conditions are expected to continue throughout northwest and northeast India for the next four to five days, with heavy rains expected in Delhi during the next few days. On Monday, isolated areas in Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh are expected to experience heavy to extremely heavy rains. In the meantime, IMD stated in its bulletin on Monday that mild rainfall activity will persist for more than a week throughout West Central and South Peninsular India. The IMD Nowcast warning stated that parts of Jammu and Kashmir, including Reasi, Rajouri, and Udhampur, were still under a red alert. Extremely heavy rain, thunderstorms, lightning, and high surface winds are also predicted for the districts of Rohtas and Kaimur in Bihar and Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh. According to the forecast office, Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh are anticipated to see active monsoon conditions over the next 48 to 72 hours. The rainfall is predicted to peak on Wednesday (July 22). The weather office stated that "heavy to very heavy rainfall, exceeding 12 cm, is also likely



at isolated places over the northern and eastern parts of Punjab and Haryana during this period." After days of hot and muggy weather, Delhi, which had a small reprieve on Monday, will see low temperatures and rains. For July 21 and 22, the IMD has issued a yellow signal for the capital, forecasting mostly gloomy days with heavy rain. The Capital is predicted to see strong surface winds, thunderstorms, and lightning. On Monday, Delhi experienced minor rainfall in a few isolated areas. The Safdarjung observatory recorded the greatest cumulative rainfall of 5.8 mm during the 24-hour period that ended at 8:30 am, according to the IMD. At all five of the major meteorological stations, the Capital's maximum temperature continued to be below average.

Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, and Akhilesh Yadav Meet in the UP Seat-Sharing Buzz



New Delhi, July 21: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party MP Akhilesh Yadav spoke for about an hour on the first day of the monsoon session of parliament. This meeting was held at the Lok Sabha's Leader of the Opposition's office, and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi was also there. Although no formal information about the meeting has been made public, it is thought that the top leadership of

the Samajwadi Party and the Congress talked about everything from the theft of offerings at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya to seat-sharing for the Uttar Pradesh assembly election. Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav had previously met during the Opposition INDIA bloc meeting on June 8, but they had not held any separate discussion at that time. To queries about today's meeting, Akhilesh Yadav said, "People naturally meet when the house is adjourned." In fact, proceedings in both houses had stalled due to the Opposition's uproar over issues such as paper leaks and the theft of temple offerings. Interestingly, most Samajwadi Party MPs, including Dimple Yadav, left for Jantar Mantar after the Lok Sabha was adjourned for the first time. However, Akhilesh Yadav walked to Rahul Gandhi's room in the parliament complex with a few other MPs. Akhilesh Yadav was accompanied by Ayodhya-based Samajwadi Party MP Awadhesh Prasad, who did not attend the main meeting. At the actual meeting, only Rahul Gandhi,

Priyanka Gandhi, and Akhilesh Yadav were present. Later, Awadhesh Prasad stated that many issues are part of a strategy and that disclosing them is inappropriate. The meeting addressed the UP Congress's demand for a larger share of seats in their alliance with the Samajwadi Party, specifically 200 out of 403. Congress MP Imran Masood criticized Akhilesh Yadav for neglecting Muslim issues, but later expressed optimism about collaborative solutions. Although seeking 200 seats, Congress may realistically aim for around 100, insisting on strategic allocation that strengthens Dalit support—a key factor in past elections. Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav emphasizes the importance of candidate quality over seat numbers, having noted changes since their previous alliance, where Congress secured over 100 seats under different circumstances. The Congress's past poor performance as an independent party complicates negotiations, with both parties facing pressure from their respective electoral challenges.

Suicide Attempt by a Trainee IPS Officer Accused of Sexual Harassment

Hyderabad, July 21: Following an alleged suicide attempt, a trainee IPS officer who was booked for "stalking and sexually harassing" a fellow female trainee at the SVPNPA was brought to a hospital on Monday, according to police. The event took place at his brother's downtown flat. Official sources stated that once medical reports on what he consumed are available, the specifics of his claimed suicide attempt will be known. They stated he was steady. When questioned about a purported suicide note written by the man circulating on social media, the sources stated that no such document had been found by the police. Following the registration of the case, an internal inquiry was initiated against the trainee officer at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy, the sources added. The trainee officer was taken to a private hospital in an unconscious state at approximately 9.30 am by his brother and pals, according to the treating physician. They thought he might have ingested something dangerous. According to the doctor, a stomach lavage was done, but nothing unusual was discovered. The doctor informed reporters that his vital signs are stable and that samples of his blood and urine have been submitted for analysis. The doctor stated that it was not immediately apparent whether he had ingested something dangerous. The doctor stated that although the trainee cop was unconscious when he was brought to the hospital, he is now sleepy and that the precise details would be known after he regains full awareness and the test results are received. Quoting the trainee officer's brother, the doctor said an alcohol bottle and a sanitiser bottle were found near his bed, which led to their appre-



hension that he might have consumed some harmful substance. A 30-year-old woman trainee IPS officer had lodged a complaint with the police, alleging that the man had been harassing her by sending sexually abusive messages through an instant messaging application since June 23 and making derogatory remarks about her at the academy in the presence of her friends. She alleged that he falsely accused her of having a sexual relationship with another trainee, pressured her to admit to such a relationship and verbally abused her. She alleged that on July 9, he wrongfully restrained her, forcibly took her to his room, grabbed her by the hair, attempted to strangle her, held a knife to her neck and prevented her from leaving the room. She alleged that he assaulted her again on July 10. The complainant accused a trainee IPS officer of recording a private video of her without consent and sending it to her husband to blackmail her. The Attapur police registered a case on July 18 for assault, sexual harassment, stalking, and insulting a woman's modesty under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Information Technology Act. The accused claimed the allegations were baseless and expressed trust in the legal process. A police official stated that he would be required to appear before the investigating officer. Following the case registration, the officer left the academy; he had previously served as a constable in the Andhra Pradesh Police.

At the Haryana border, farmers' march to Delhi came to an end

New Delhi, July 21: At the Shambhu border, which serves as Haryana's entrance point, hundreds of Punjabi farmers who had started marching towards Delhi on Tuesday to take part in a Kisan Mahapanchayat against the proposed India-US trade deal were stopped by Haryana Police. In scenes reminiscent of the February 2024 "Delhi Chalo-2" agitation, barricades were built along the Punjab-Haryana border, transforming it into a fortress with concrete blocks, iron spikes, and multi-layered barricading to keep farmers out of the country's capital. The farmers used the Shambhu border as a protest site after being denied access, accusing

the governments of Punjab and Haryana of stifling their democratic right to gather in Delhi. BKU Shaheed Bhagat Singh leader Tezveer Singh alleged that Haryana Police had erected barricades inside Punjab's territory and claimed the Punjab government had remained a "silent spectator" instead of resisting the move. While Punjab convoys were halted, farmers from Haryana, including Ambala, Kurukshetra and neighbouring districts, continued their journey to Delhi. Under the auspices of the Desh Bachao Morcha, the Mahapanchayat has united farmer organisations from Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Haryana to demand that the Center renounce the pro-

posed trade agreement between India and the United States. Sarwan Singh Pandher, the leader of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee (KMSC), stated that convoys from the KMSC, Azaad Kisan Morcha, BKU Ekta Sangharsh, and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (Punjab chapter) had departed from various districts of Punjab before being halted at the Shambhu border. According to Pandher, the US and India agreed to negotiate the first phase of a multi-sector bilateral trade deal by autumn 2026 in a joint statement released in February 2026. Farmer leaders expressed strong opposition to the proposed India-US trade pact, arguing it extends beyond a

typical trade deal to include key sectors like agriculture, dairy, and digital trade.

They highlighted that previous US trade reports aimed for deeper access to India's markets at the expense of local farmers, particularly in agriculture and dairy. They warned that this could undermine millions of small and marginal farmers, whose livelihoods depend on these sectors. There are concerns about the transparency of the negotiations, with demands for public disclosure of all related documents before any agreement is reached, emphasizing the need for consultations with affected stakeholders, including farmers and rural communities.

A violent CJP protest in Delhi results in 118 police injuries and 70 arrests

New Delhi, July 21: The Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) "Sansad Chalo" protest march in the New Delhi area got violent on Monday, injuring over 118 police officers, including several senior officials, and detaining about 70 demonstrators, according to police. In a statement citing these numbers and their testimonies, Delhi Police accused demonstrators of engaging in "unruly, aggressive and violent behaviour" during the demonstration, assaulting security guards, and causing damage to public property and government vehicles. The CJP demonstrators in the New Delhi area today acted in a disorderly, hostile, and violent manner. They actively disobeyed the prohibitory orders in effect and refused to disperse despite the police's repeated warnings and legal instructions, according to the police statement. It stated that the demonstrators posed a serious threat to public order, the security measures in place,



and the safety of police officers carrying out their legal duties because they attacked police officers with stones and other objects, tried to breach police barricades, vandalised police and other government vehicles, damaged public property, and turned to widespread violence.

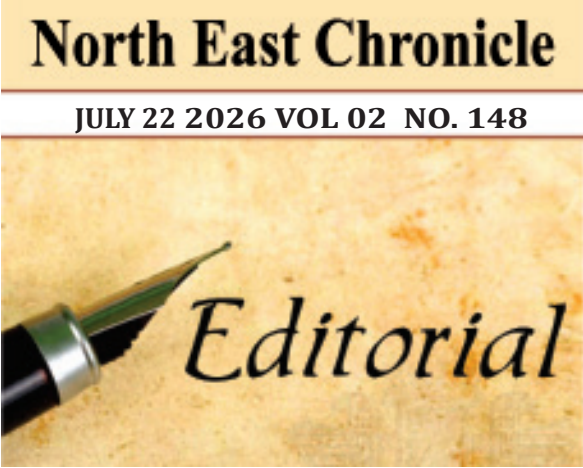
More than 118 police officers, including senior officers from the ranks of Special Commissioner of Police, Joint Commissioner of Police, Additional Commissioner of

Police, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police, Assistant Commissioner of Police, and several female police officers, were injured in the violence, according to the police.

Approximately sixty protesters were also reportedly hurt during the altercation. The remaining injured police officers are undergoing a medico-legal examination (MLC), according to the statement. The authorities claim that the

aggressive crowd also seriously damaged public property. Public property was also severely damaged by the aggressive mob. During the incident, 15 to 20 government vehicles and other government property were vandalised, the statement continued.

According to police, about 70 demonstrators have been taken into custody, and legal action has been taken. "Approximately seventy demonstrators have been arrested. According to the statement, "appropriate legal action is being initiated, and a FIR is being registered under the relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and other applicable laws for rioting, assault on public servants, damage to public property, and other offences committed during the protest." Delhi Police reaffirmed its dedication to upholding law and order and stated that anyone caught engaging in violent or illegal activity would face severe consequences.



Why Spain Won: The Power of Vision, Coaching and Identity

Spain’s World Cup victory was not simply the result of individual brilliance, tactical luck, or a favourable run of fixtures. It was the outcome of a clear footballing philosophy built over years — a belief in technical excellence, intelligent movement, and control of the game. While many teams rely on moments of inspiration from their biggest stars, Spain’s success came from a collective idea that shaped every pass, every movement, and every decision on the pitch. Their triumph demonstrated that a strong football identity can overcome even the most powerful opponents in the world.

The final represented the ultimate test of Spain’s approach. Standing in their way were teams with extraordinary attacking talent and global superstars capable of changing matches in an instant. Yet Spain overcame the challenges posed by some of the world’s strongest sides, including a France team built around explosive attacking ability and an Argentina side inspired by one of football’s greatest players. Rather than abandoning their principles under pressure, Spain remained committed to their style, trusting possession, structure, and technical quality to deliver success.

The roots of Spain’s achievement can be traced beyond one tournament or one generation of players. It reflects the strength of the country’s football education system and its commitment to developing coaches who understand the game in detail. Spain has become one of the world’s leading exporters of football ideas, with coaches influencing clubs and national teams across Europe and beyond. Their emphasis on tactical intelligence, positional play, and developing players who understand space and decision-making has transformed modern football.

The influence of Spanish coaching can be seen across the world’s biggest leagues. A significant number of managers in Europe’s top competitions have Spanish backgrounds, spreading a style of football based on preparation, adaptability, and strategic awareness. These coaches have helped redefine how teams approach possession, pressing, and attacking transitions. Their success is not based on copying a single system but on applying a football philosophy that values understanding over physical dominance alone.

The impact of this coaching culture is visible in some of Europe’s most successful clubs. Managers influenced by Spanish football ideas have shaped teams that dominate through control and intelligence rather than simply relying on individual talent. The connection between coaching education and club success highlights Spain’s long-term investment in football knowledge. Great teams are not created overnight; they emerge from systems that develop players and coaches together.

The relationship between teachers and students has also become one of the defining stories of modern football. Many of today’s leading coaches have learned from the same football traditions before developing their own approaches. Former students have gone on to challenge their mentors, creating fascinating tactical battles across domestic leagues and international competitions. The success of Spanish football is therefore not only about one generation of players but also about the continuous exchange of ideas between coaches.

This football culture has also produced leaders who understand that winning requires more than attacking ability. Spain’s success came from balance: the ability to dominate possession while remaining disciplined without the ball, to create chances while controlling risks, and to combine creativity with organisation. Their players demonstrated technical confidence but also a collective understanding of their responsibilities within the team structure.

The rise of Spanish football has also changed how the sport is analysed and understood. Modern football increasingly values coaching intelligence, tactical flexibility, and player development. Spain’s achievements have reinforced the idea that success comes from creating an environment where players are encouraged to think, adapt, and make decisions rather than simply follow instructions. The best teams are those that combine talent with a shared understanding of how the game should be played.

Spain’s World Cup victory was therefore a celebration of an idea as much as a team. It showed that footballing identity matters and that long-term planning can compete with financial power and individual brilliance. While other nations may produce exceptional players, Spain has built a culture that consistently produces coaches, systems, and teams capable of competing at the highest level.

The lasting lesson from Spain’s triumph is that football success begins long before the final whistle. It is created through education, philosophy, patience, and a commitment to developing better players and thinkers of the game. Spain did not win because it discovered a temporary advantage; it won because it had a vision — and that vision was strong enough to conquer the world.

When AI Enters the Wild: The Challenge of Protecting Truth in Wildlife Photography and Research

Wildlife photography has always existed at the intersection of science, art, and storytelling. For decades, photographers have relied on patience, technical skill, and a deep understanding of animal behaviour to capture rare moments in the natural world. A perfectly timed image of a predator hunting, a bird in flight, or an endangered species in its habitat can inspire conservation efforts and deepen public understanding of biodiversity. However, as artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into photography and image editing, a new challenge has emerged: how can society distinguish between genuine documentation of nature and digitally created representations that only appear authentic?

Photography has never been completely free from manipulation. Since the earliest days of the camera, photographers have adjusted lighting, contrast, colour balance, and composition to improve the appearance of their images. Wildlife photographers often use technology to correct technical limitations, enhance visibility, or highlight important details. Adjustments such as improving exposure, reducing noise, or cropping an image are generally accepted as part of the creative process, provided they do not change the fundamental reality of what was captured. The purpose of these techniques is usually to present nature more clearly rather than to create a false version of it.

Artificial intelligence, however, introduces a different level of complexity. Unlike traditional editing tools that modify existing information, AI-powered systems can generate entirely new details that were never present in the original photograph. They can fill missing areas, enhance textures, create realistic

backgrounds, or even produce images of animals and landscapes that never existed. These capabilities may be useful for artistic projects or educational illustrations, but they become problematic when applied to scientific documentation, wildlife monitoring, or conservation research.

The danger lies in AI’s ability to appear convincing while being inaccurate. Modern image-generation systems are designed to produce realistic results, and viewers may struggle to identify which elements are authentic and which have been invented. A small alteration in a wildlife image may seem harmless, but in scientific contexts even minor inaccuracies can have serious consequences. Researchers depend on reliable observations to study animal populations, migration patterns, behaviour, and ecological changes. If AI-generated details are mistaken for real evidence, they can lead scientists in the wrong direction.

This concern is particularly significant because wildlife research often relies heavily on photographic evidence. Camera traps placed in forests, oceans, and remote habitats provide valuable information about species that are difficult to observe directly. Conservation organisations use images to estimate population sizes, track endangered animals, and understand environmental threats. If AI tools are used carelessly to modify such images, the reliability of important datasets could be compromised.

The problem is not limited to deliberate deception. In many cases, errors may occur unintentionally. A researcher, photographer, or social media user may use an AI enhancement tool believing it is simply improving image quality, without realising that the software

has introduced artificial details. AI systems often make assumptions based on patterns learned from millions of images. When information is unclear, they may “hallucinate” details by creating something that looks plausible rather than something that is accurate. In ordinary photography, this may produce a visually appealing result. In wildlife science, it may create false evidence.

For example, an AI tool might sharpen an unclear image of an animal and generate additional features based on what similar animals usually look like. It could add markings, alter body shapes, or create environmental details that were not actually visible. To a casual viewer, the image may appear improved. To a scientist analysing species characteristics, however, those changes could create confusion. A false pattern or incorrect physical feature could influence identification, behavioural studies, or conservation decisions.

The phrase “wild-goose chase” takes on a new meaning in this context. Researchers already face enormous challenges when studying wildlife. They work in difficult environments, collect limited data, and often make decisions based on incomplete information. AI-generated images could add another layer of uncertainty, sending scientists searching for animals, habitats, or behaviours that exist only in a computer-generated representation. Instead of helping researchers discover nature, poorly controlled AI could lead them away from reality.

The rise of AI also creates challenges for public trust. Wildlife photography plays an important role in connecting people with nature. Many individuals experience endangered species and remote ecosystems

primarily through images shared online. A powerful photograph can motivate people to support conservation campaigns, donate to environmental organisations, or become more aware of ecological issues. However, if audiences become uncertain about whether images are real, the emotional impact of wildlife photography may weaken. Trust is one of the most valuable resources in conservation communication, and maintaining it requires transparency.

This does not mean that artificial intelligence has no place in wildlife photography or research. On the contrary, AI offers many promising opportunities. Scientists are already using AI systems to analyse large collections of images, identify species, monitor animal movements, and detect changes in ecosystems. Traditional methods of reviewing thousands or millions of camera-trap photographs can be extremely time-consuming. AI can help researchers process this information more efficiently, allowing them to focus on interpretation and conservation action.

AI can also assist photographers by improving accessibility and reducing technical barriers. For example, automated tools can help correct camera errors, organise large image collections, or enhance images where environmental conditions make observation difficult. When used responsibly, these technologies can support human creativity and scientific discovery rather than replace them.

The key issue is therefore not whether AI should be used, but how it should be used. Clear ethical standards are needed to separate acceptable enhancement from misleading alteration. Wildlife photographers, researchers, publishers, and technology

companies all have a responsibility to maintain honesty about how images are created and modified. A photograph intended as artistic interpretation should be clearly identified as such. A scientific image used as evidence should meet stricter standards and preserve the integrity of the original observation.

Scientific institutions may need to develop stronger guidelines for the use of AI-generated imagery. Journals, conservation organisations, and research groups could require photographers and researchers to disclose whether AI tools were used during image processing. Metadata systems could help record the history of an image, including whether it has been edited or enhanced. Such measures would not prevent innovation but would help protect credibility.

Technology companies also have an important role to play. AI developers can design systems that make alterations more transparent, such as adding digital labels or maintaining records of generated content. Better detection tools could help identify manipulated images and prevent misleading information from spreading.

As AI becomes more powerful, responsibility must extend beyond individual users to the organisations creating these technologies. Education will also be essential. Photographers, scientists, students, and the general public need a better understanding of how AI image tools work and what risks they create. Many people are already surrounded by digitally altered images without realising it. Teaching digital literacy will become increasingly important in helping society evaluate visual information critically.

The challenge facing wildlife photography re-

flects a broader question about technology and truth in the modern era. Artificial intelligence has the ability to expand human imagination and improve scientific work, but it also challenges traditional ideas about evidence and authenticity. Images have always carried persuasive power because people naturally trust what they see. In an age when seeing is no longer always believing, society must develop new ways to protect the connection between images and reality.

Wildlife photography is valuable precisely because it captures moments that truly happened. The beauty of a rare animal appearing in its natural environment comes from the fact that the encounter was real, unpredictable, and impossible to fully recreate. If AI-generated images become confused with genuine observations, the unique power of authentic wildlife photography may be weakened.

The future of conservation will likely involve a partnership between humans and artificial intelligence. The goal should not be to reject new technology but to ensure that it strengthens our understanding of nature rather than distorting it. AI can help reveal patterns, analyse information, and support conservation efforts, but it must operate within a framework of honesty and responsibility.

Ultimately, protecting the truth behind wildlife images is about protecting more than photographs. It is about protecting scientific knowledge, public trust, and society’s relationship with the natural world. In the race to create more impressive images, the most important principle must remain unchanged: technology should help us see nature more clearly, not create a version of nature that was never there.

Higher Education Must Value Humanities Equally to Science and Technology for a Complete Learning Experience

The debate over the future of humanities education has intensified as universities across the United Kingdom face growing financial pressures and difficult decisions about spending. Subjects such as literature, history, languages, philosophy, and the social sciences are increasingly being viewed through the narrow lens of economic efficiency, with some institutions considering course closures and staff reductions as they attempt to balance their budgets. Yet treating academic departments simply as financial liabilities ignores their wider contribution to society.

Universities are not only centres of employment training; they are places where culture, knowledge, critical thinking, and public understanding are developed. The humanities, in particular, preserve ideas and traditions that shape how societies understand themselves and respond to change. The importance of reading and engagement with literature has become a growing concern in an age dominated by digital entertainment. Writers and educators have repeatedly warned that declining reading habits, especially among younger generations, risk weakening imagination, concentration, and the ability to engage deeply with complex ideas. Literature offers more than enjoyment; it provides insight into human experiences, historical contexts, and different perspectives. For students studying the humanities, books are not merely sources of information but essential tools for exploring language, identity,

morality, politics, and society. A decline in support for these disciplines therefore represents a broader cultural challenge, not just an institutional financial issue.

Recent reductions in humanities, arts, and social science departments highlight the seriousness of the situation. Universities facing financial uncertainty have increasingly examined areas where they believe savings can be made, and humanities subjects have often become vulnerable because they are perceived as less directly linked to immediate employment outcomes. Staff reductions, course closures, and the shrinking availability of certain degree programmes have raised concerns that opportunities for studying these subjects may become concentrated among students at wealthier institutions. If universities in less advantaged regions reduce their humanities provision, students from disadvantaged backgrounds may face fewer opportunities to access subjects that have historically played an important role in broadening educational opportunities.

The impact of these cuts extends beyond universities themselves. Academic departments are often deeply connected to their communities. A university’s history department, language programme, or literature faculty may represent decades of accumulated expertise, research, and cultural engagement. These departments frequently contribute to local schools, museums, public debates, and community projects. Reducing them to simple

financial calculations overlooks the social and cultural value they provide. A course that appears expensive when measured only by student numbers may still serve an important purpose by preserving knowledge, supporting regional identity, and encouraging public understanding.

This does not mean that universities should never review their academic offerings. Institutions must make responsible decisions about resources, and some courses may need to change as society evolves. However, decisions about academic provision should consider more than short-term financial returns. Education is a long-term investment, and the value of certain subjects may not always be immediately measurable. Research, scholarship, and teaching in areas such as history, languages, philosophy, and literature often influence society in ways that become visible only over time.

The changing popularity of different academic disciplines is also influenced by decisions made throughout the education system. The increasing emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects has been encouraged by government policy and economic priorities. While investment in these areas is essential, promoting one group of subjects should not come at the expense of others. Societies require scientists and engineers, but they also need historians who understand past conflicts, writers who explore human experiences, philosophers who examine ethical questions, and social scien-

tists who study how communities function.

The decline in interest in some humanities subjects may also reflect changes in earlier education. If young people encounter fewer opportunities to engage with literature, languages, and creative subjects in schools, fewer may choose to pursue them at university. Curriculum design and teaching approaches therefore play a significant role in shaping future demand. Encouraging a richer educational experience at earlier stages could help restore enthusiasm for subjects that develop creativity, communication, and critical thinking.

Universities, however, cannot address these challenges alone. Government funding decisions have a major influence on the choices institutions are forced to make. Financial pressures, including reductions in teaching support and changes affecting international student income, have created an increasingly difficult environment for higher education. Policymakers must be honest about the consequences of these pressures rather than allowing universities to absorb the burden without public discussion. If society believes that humanities education has value, that belief must be reflected through sustainable support.

The argument for protecting the humanities is not based on nostalgia or resistance to change. It is based on recognition that modern societies face complex challenges that require more than technical solutions. Questions about democracy, inequality, artificial

intelligence, climate change, cultural conflict, and social responsibility all involve ethical and human dimensions. The humanities provide the tools to examine these issues critically and thoughtfully. Without them, public debate risks becoming dominated by narrow measures of efficiency rather than broader questions about meaning, values, and collective goals.

Universities should therefore avoid viewing humanities departments merely as cost centres. They are repositories of knowledge and spaces where societies examine their histories, challenge assumptions, and imagine alternative futures. Their contribution cannot always be captured through immediate financial calculations, but that does not make it less important. A healthy education system requires balance, ensuring that scientific advancement and technological innovation exist alongside cultural understanding and human insight.

As universities navigate financial uncertainty, protecting humanities education will require leadership from institutions, policymakers, academics, and the wider public. The responsibility should not fall only on writers, scholars, or graduates who recognise the importance of these subjects. If literature, arts, and social sciences are essential parts of a thriving society, then their survival must be treated as a shared public interest. The future of higher education should not be measured only by what can be cut, but by what knowledge and opportunities society chooses to preserve.

Paytm Q1 reviews: Net profit jumps 79%, here’s what brokerages say

New Delhi: One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm, reported a strong set of earnings for the quarter ended June 30, 2026, with consolidated net profit rising 79% year-on-year to Rs 220 crore, driven by sustained momentum in its payments business, merchant subscriptions and financial services distribution. The fintech company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 123 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. On a sequential basis, profit increased from Rs 183 crore reported in the March 2026 quarter. The latest performance builds on Paytm’s first-ever annual profit of Rs 552 crore in FY26. Revenue from operations climbed 28% year-on-year to Rs 2,448 crore during the April-June quarter, compared with Rs 1,918 crore in the same period last year. Total income rose to Rs 2,630 crore from Rs 2,159 crore, reflecting broad-based business growth across key segments

Profit before tax nearly doubled to Rs 247 crore from Rs 126 crore a year earlier. Total expenses for the quarter stood at Rs 2,383 crore. Goldman Sachs has assigned a Buy call to Paytm with a target price of Rs 1,500. Paytm logged an acceleration in revenue growth in 1QFY27 & reported a meaningful beat on EBITDA (+20% vs Goldman Sachs estimates). Within the payments segment, growth was driven by market share gains in both offline and online, with latter a function of ability to onboard new merchants starting late last year.

Additionally, strong traction in merchant loan distribution has sustained, while scale up of consumer products such as postpaid is likely to continue to keep revenue growth elevated. The brokerage forecasted 27% YoY revenue growth in FY27 for Paytm (against 22% in FY26), with EBITDA more than doubling on a YoY basis.

CITI assigned a Buy call to the stock as target price raised to Rs 1560. Q1 EBITDA at Rs 200 crore beat estimates (+16% vs Citi) on in-line revenue (+28% YoY) & contribution profits (55% of revenue), largely owing to lower indirect costs (cloud) and higher loan distribution (merchant), which offset lower net payment margins (device rentals).

CLSA assigned a target price of Rs 1050. Q1FY27 EBITDA of Rs 200 crore was marginally ahead of its Rs



190 crore estimates. The company attributed the improved financial performance to higher payment transaction volumes and values, continued expansion of its merchant base through Soundbox subscriptions, and increasing contribution from financial services distribution, including personal and merchant loans. Paytm said merchant subscription growth remained robust as more businesses adopted its payment devices, while rising demand for credit products distributed through its platform supported growth in its financial services business. In a separate development, the company’s board approved an investment of up to Rs 100 crore in its wholly owned subsidiary, Paytm Money, through a rights issue. The fresh capital will be used to strengthen the platform’s technology infrastructure, meet regulatory capital requirements and accelerate the expansion of its investment and wealth management offerings. The board also cleared a proposal to seek shareholder approval for revising the utilisation of the remaining Rs 1,686 crore in unutilised IPO proceeds. The company has proposed extending the utilisation deadline to March 31, 2029, providing greater flexibility to deploy the funds across strategic growth initiatives. According to Paytm, the revised utilisation plan will enable the company to invest more effectively in expanding its payments and financial services ecosystem while capitalising on emerging business opportunities.

UltraTech Cement, JK Cement shares: Brokerages reaffirm



New Delhi: “UltraTech Cement’s Q1 FY27 operating performance was in line with our estimates. Consol. revenue/EBITDA increased ~16 per cent/14 per cent YoY to Rs 24,600 crore/Rs 5,000 crore. EBITDA/t inched up ~1 per cent YoY to Rs 1,214. OPM contracted ~40 bps (basis points) YoY to ~20 per cent. Adjusted PAT grew ~16 per cent YoY to Rs 2,610 crore (~5 per cent beat, led by lower-than-estimated depreciation and interest costs). “We largely maintain our earnings estimates for FY27/FY28. We value UltraTech Cement at 18x FY28E EV/EBITDA to arrive at a TP (target price) of Rs 13,800. Reiterate BUY,” MOFSL added.

JM Financial raised its target price while maintaining its positive recommendation. “Factoring in the Q1 FY27 performance, we marginally increase FY27–28E EBITDA by 1–3 per cent and introduce FY29E. Maintain BUY with a revised TP of Rs 14,500 (earlier Rs 13,850) based on 19x Jun’28E EV/E (post quarterly roll-over). We reiterate UltraTech as our top pick in the sector.” Nuvama Institutional Equities also reiterated its bullish view. “UltraTech Cement is consistently gaining market share while exhibiting exemplary cost control despite a challenging operating

environment. Trajectory of cement prices and fuel costs will determine stock performance going ahead. Maintain ‘BUY’ with a revised TP of Rs 15,209 (from Rs 14,502) as we roll forward valuations (20x EV/EBITDA) to Q1 FY29E. At CMP, the stock trades at 16.5x FY28E EV/EBITDA.” Elara Capital retained its ‘Accumulate’ rating as well.

“The ramp-up of recently commissioned capacities, ongoing cost-efficiency initiatives, and incremental volumes from the complete brand transition of India Cements and Kesoram Industries should support earnings growth.

Thus, we reiterate Accumulate, with an unchanged TP of Rs 13,492, based on 18x March 2028E EV/EBITDA.” On JK Cement, MOFSL said the company’s EBITDA came in above its estimates, supported by stronger-than-expected volumes and white cement realisations.

“JK Cement’s Q1 FY27 EBITDA was above our estimates, led by higher-than-estimated volume and white cement realization. Revenue grew ~20 per cent YoY to Rs 4,030 crore (+8 per cent vs. our estimates), while EBITDA declined ~6 per cent YoY to Rs 650 crore (~7 per cent beat), driven by higher opex/t (up ~8 per cent YoY/QuQ). OPM contracted 4.5pp YoY to ~16 per

cent (in line). EBITDA/t declined ~20 per cent YoY to Rs 979 (in line). PAT declined ~14 per cent YoY to Rs 280 crore (~13 per cent beat, led by lower-than-estimated depreciation). ”

“We raised our EBITDA estimate by ~3 per cent for FY27/FY28 (each), given the lower cost guidance. We value JKCE at 17x FY28E EV/EBITDA to arrive at a TP of Rs 6,430. Reiterate BUY,” MOFSL added.

JM Financial also revised its estimates upwards while retaining its recommendation. “Factoring in Q1 FY27 performance, we are increasing FY27E–28E EBITDA estimates by 2–5 per cent and introducing FY29E EBITDA estimates. We reiterate ADD with a revised TP of Rs 6,250/share (earlier Rs 6,000) based on 16.5x Jun’28E EV/E (roll forward by a quarter, 17x earlier).” Nuvama Institutional Equities maintained its ‘Buy’ rating. “Retain ‘BUY’ with a TP of Rs 7,034 based on 19x Q1 FY29E EV/EBITDA. At CMP, the stock trades at 15.8x FY28E EV/EBITDA,” it stated.

Elara Capital also retained its recommendation. “The ramp-up of capacities commissioned in H2FY26, along with ongoing cost-efficiency initiatives, should support margin recovery. Thus, we reiterate Accumulate with an unchanged SoTP-TP of Rs 5,815.”

Goldman Sachs big on Sansera, Craftsman

New Delhi: manufacturers, saying the industry is entering a transformation phase as companies expand beyond conventional automotive components into semiconductor wafer fabrication equipment, aerospace, defence, electric vehicle components and data centre infrastructure.

The brokerage said it prefers companies that score well on content addition, business reinvestment, powertrain-agnostic exposure, capital allocation, margin stability and expansion into new growth adjacencies beyond traditional automotive markets. Against this backdrop, it initiated coverage on Sansera Engineering and Craftsman Automation with ‘Buy’ ratings, while assigning ‘Neutral’ ratings to Samvardhana Motherson and Bharat Forge. Goldman Sachs expects the Indian precision machining and auto parts industry to deliver a 10% revenue CAGR and 15% EBITDA CAGR between FY26 and FY30, driven by electrification, exports, the upcoming 8th Pay Commission, global supply-chain diversification and opportunities in defence, aerospace and semiconductors.

The brokerage said investors have largely viewed Indian auto component makers as cyclical businesses with limited pricing power and recurring capital expenditure. However, it believes a group of manufacturers is now diversifying into higher-value precision engineering businesses that can generate more resilient earnings while leveraging their manufacturing capabilities. The brokerage believes Sansera is entering the “harvesting phase” after nearly a decade of investments to diversify beyond conventional automotive components into semiconductor wafer fabrication equipment and aerospace precision machining. It expects the company’s increasing exposure to complex precision-engineered products to improve both earnings quality and profitability.

Star Health strengthens monsoon healthcare network with expanded virtual consultations in Assam

Jorhut: Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Limited has announced the expansion of its monsoon healthcare support services in Assam, strengthening access to Home Healthcare and Virtual Doctor Consultations as seasonal cases of dengue, malaria, fever and other infectious diseases rise across the state. The company said its FY25-26 data recorded a sixteen-fold increase in Home Healthcare utilisation in Assam, while its recently launched Virtual OPD service has witnessed strong adoption nationwide, with more customers opting for virtual consultations as their first point of medical

care. As part of the initiative, policyholders can access the ‘Talk to Star’ helpline at 7200 222 333, pressing 1 for Home Healthcare and 2 for planned hospitalisation support. The service offers guidance on cashless claims, network hospitals, required documentation and treatment pathways. Eligible policyholders can also receive cashless Home Healthcare, including doctor-prescribed nursing care, blood tests, IV fluids, injections and patient monitoring at home. Non-policyholders can access free 24/7 Virtual Doctor Consultations through the Star Health Customer app. Business Head (Northeast) Amitabh

Chatterjee said the initiative aims to promote early medical intervention and improve healthcare access, particularly for children, senior citizens and patients who may find hospital visits difficult during the monsoon. Citing the National Statistical Office’s 2026 survey, the company noted that average private hospitalisation costs stand at ₹52,766 in rural Assam and ₹79,406 in urban Assam, highlighting the importance of timely and accessible healthcare. Star Health said the expanded outreach is designed to help families seek medical advice early, reduce treatment delays and improve patient care during the monsoon season.

SBI Funds listing Brokerages initiate coverage with upto 30%; triggers

New Delhi: Even before making its stock market debut on Tuesday, July 21, shares of SBI Funds Management (SBI Funds) has managed to draw attention from select brokerage firms, which have initiated coverage on the listing-bound candidate, citing up to 30 per cent upside potential in the company on the back of its strong networks and leadership in the

markets. Indian,’ just as its parent has become ‘the banker to every Indian.’ We initiate coverage on SBI AMC with BUY and target price of Rs 750,” it added. To recall, the initial public offering of SBI Funds Management was open for subscription between July 14-16 which was sold for Rs 545-574 apiece, with a

lot size of Rs 26 equity shares. opportunity, its equity QAAUM grew at 33 per cent CAGR over FY21-June 2026, with market share rising to 12.7 per cent from 10.2 per cent, said Equirus Securities. Supporting this leadership is SBI’s unmatched distribution network of over 23,000 branches and 100 million YONO users.

Why is Singapore Airlines willing to pump more money into Air India Record losses but strategic bet

New Delhi: Singapore Airlines has indicated its willingness to infuse fresh funds into Air India despite a steady string of losses. The Indian carrier posted a record annual loss of Rs 22,000 crore in FY26 — prompting bailout discussions between promoters Tata Group and Singapore Airlines. The company reported a record revenue of SGS20.5 billion for FY26 but saw net profit plunged 57.4% year-on-year to SGS1.18 billion—mainly owing to Air India’s losses and an accounting gain in the previous year.

“The Board will carefully consider any requests for additional capital from Air India, taking into consideration the Group’s other capital requirements and Air India’s business strategy,” it told the Securities Investors Association of Singapore in a regulatory filing.

SIA holds a 25.1% stake in Air India following the 2024 merger between Vistara and Air India. The group has repeatedly reaffirmed its support for the Indian carrier and signed a commercial cooperation framework agreement in January 2026 to explore opportunities for enhanced connectivity between the two nations. Losses plague Air India Air India racked up a wider-than-expected annual loss of more than ₹22,000 crore in FY26 amid a series of well-publicised challenges. Some of these concerns hold true across the industry — including elevated fuel prices and global supply chain constraints that delayed cabin refurbishments and new aircraft deliveries. But the fiscal year that ended on March 31 also included the deadly crash of a Boeing 787 Dreamliner that killed more than 260 people and ongoing West Asia conflict. The closure of Pakistani airspace to Indian carriers has also lengthened flights and added to its mounting woes. SIA also flagged the steady depreciation of the Indian rupee against the US dollar as a key point of concern. Singapore Airlines noted in its response to SIAS that it was the “only non-Indian airline group with a direct stake” in the important



and fast-growing market. It noted that Air India was also making “tangible progress in its transformation efforts” — with an improved experience for customers and updation of its fleet and network. It also highlighted a steady increase in operational performance.

“The Air India investment provides direct access to India’s domestic market and international flows via Indian hubs, complementing the Singapore hub and supporting growth opportunities that cannot be fully realised through a single-hub model,” SIA wrote on Monday. The Group’s latest annual report had also reiterated its support for Air India — noting that Singapore Airlines remained “focused on the long-term rationale” of its investment

“Air India faces headwinds, including industry-wide supply chain constraints, airspace restrictions, constraints on operations to key Middle East markets, and elevated jet fuel prices. Nonetheless, it continues to make progress in its fleet renewal and aircraft retrofit programme, initiatives to enhance the end-to-end customer experience, and efforts to strengthen operational performance,” read an excerpt from the SIA annual report.

Complaint against E20 – Govt says ethanol fuel generated Rs1.66 lakh crore farmer income

New Delhi: The Indian government has told Parliament in a written reply that it has not received any genuine or verified complaints linking E20 ethanol-blended petrol to major engine damage or vehicle breakdowns.

At the same time, the government said the ethanol blending programme has helped generate more than ₹1.66 lakh crore in additional income for farmers since the Ethanol Supply Year 2014-15. The information was shared by Suresh Gopi, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas, in a written reply to an unstarred question in the Rajya Sabha. The government said the ethanol programme has delivered major economic and environmental benefits since the 2014-15 Ethanol Supply Year. The programme has also helped India save more than ₹1.97 lakh crore in foreign exchange, while nearly 316 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil have been replaced through ethanol blending. The government also estimated that the programme has helped avoid around 952

lakh metric tonnes of CO₂ emissions. Government says no widespread engine damage

The safety of E20 fuel has been a major concern among vehicle owners, especially those with older vehicles. Responding to these concerns, the government said there have been no verified reports of widespread engine failures or vehicle breakdowns caused by ethanol blending. Around 8 crore vehicles visit petrol stations across India every day, and nearly 80% of them are petrol vehicles, the government said.

E15 and higher blends have been widely used for more than three and a half years, while E19 and E20 fuels have been in use for more than two and a half years. The government said that if E20 had caused damage to vehicles, it would have been clearly visible through warranty claims, service campaigns and complaints from customers. India has now achieved 20% ethanol blending in petrol, five years ahead of its original



target. The government said the achievement came after more than two decades of planning, scientific studies, consultations with different stakeholders and efforts to expand the country’s ethanol supply chain. The blending level has increased steadily over the past few years. Ethanol made up around 12% of petrol in the 2022-23 supply year. This rose to about 14.6% in 2023-24 and nearly 19.2% in 2024-25. Between November 2025 and June 2026, the blending level reached 20%. What vehicle makers’ data shows The government also used data from automobile manufac-

turers to support its position on E20 fuel. One leading vehicle manufacturer serviced 2.84 crore vehicles during the 2025-26 financial year. Around 1.5 crore of those vehicles were not originally certified as E20-compatible. However, the company reported no E20-related corrosion, abnormal wear or shorter component life.

One of the biggest gains has been for farmers. According to the government’s figures, the procurement of feedstock for ethanol production has generated more than ₹1.66 lakh crore in additional income for farmers.

Oil Tanker Catches Fire After Attack in Strait of Hormuz Amid Escalating US-Iran War

Tehran: Tensions have reached a critical level in the strategically important Strait of Hormuz amid the ongoing war between the United States and Iran. Iran has confirmed that two oil tankers caught fire in the region. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said it has received multiple reports regarding the incident.

According to the reports, an oil tanker was attacked by an unidentified projectile near the coast of Lima in Oman in the Strait of Hormuz on Monday afternoon. The agency monitors shipping activities in the Persian Gulf, the northern Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea.

According to reports by CNN and Al Jazeera, UK Maritime Trade Operations spoke with the shipping company's Company Security Officer (CSO) on Tuesday morning. The CSO said, "The crew has abandoned the vessel and they are currently in lifeboats."

Shortly before this, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) claimed that two oil tankers attempting to pass through the unsafe southern route of the Strait of Hormuz caught fire following explosions. The IRGC alleged that the vessels were targeted for failing to comply with regulations.

The UK Maritime Trade Operations said that there have been no reports of any environmental impact so far. Earlier on Sunday, two ships were also targeted by projectiles near the coasts of Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

Meanwhile, the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), in a post on X, stated that the US



military completed another round of strikes against Iran at 9 pm Eastern Time on Monday night. The military targeted Iran's military command centres, maritime capabilities, missile and drone launch sites, and air defence systems.

CENTCOM claimed that commercial vessels continue to move through the

key international maritime corridor. The US military has assisted the movement of nearly 900 commercial

ships and the transportation of around 450 million barrels of crude oil since early May.

Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell wrote on X that nearly 100 American soldiers have been injured in the conflict since July 7. Of these, 96 troops have returned to duty. The war is affecting the entire Middle East (West Asia) region. Following the recent deaths of US soldiers, President Donald Trump has warned Iran of a strong retaliatory response.

Meanwhile, mediators have proposed a 10-day ceasefire between the United States and Iran. The US is increasing the number of its aircraft deployed in the Middle East. An Israeli source said that several American aerial refuelling aircraft have arrived in Israel.

US officials said that bombing continued for the 10th consecutive night near Iran's Sirik, Bandar Abbas, Qeshm Island, Chabahar, and Konarak regions.

The IRGC has claimed that it targeted and destroyed several American military assets in Kuwait. According to Tasnim News Agency, the attacks targeted a long-range US military radar site, telecommunications centre, satellite receiving systems, and missile defence radar installations in Kuwait.

The IRGC further claimed that an MQ-9 drone hangar at Ali Al Salem Air Base was attacked, resulting in the destruction of several unmanned aircraft. It also claimed that a US air defence system and radar facility were destroyed in the Muharraq area of Bahrain.

Australian ski resorts smash July climate records

Australia: Alpine ski resorts in New South Wales and Victoria saw climate records shattered at the weekend with maximum temperatures up to 12C above average.

Ski areas of Mount Hotham and Falls Creek set July records for their hottest daytime and night-time temperatures and Thredbo also set a new hottest July day, according to the Bureau of Meteorology.

The records come after a challenging start for Australia's ski season with dry and warm temperatures seeing only sporadic falls of natural snow in many alpine areas, leaving resorts to rely mostly on snow-making technology. The El Niño now in place in the tropical Pacific and the bureau's long-range forecast both pointed to generally drier and warmer conditions for alpine regions this winter – a "bad combination" for snow.

Climate scientists have long warned that global heating will create difficult conditions for Australia's ski resorts. Angus Hines, a senior forecaster at the bureau, said a slow-moving high pressure system – characterised by clear skies and descending dry air – had been a key to the spiking temperatures.

He said this had also caused a "temperature inversion" where it was cooler closer to sea level than it was at higher altitudes.

"These temperatures were a substantial departure from the norm



and even from previous bursts of heat for July," he said.

"This highlights the likely issues we will have with ski seasons into the future with a warming climate."

He said warmer than usual temperatures would remain in ski areas until about Wednesday and there was a chance of a snow flurry at the weekend, before temperatures were expected to climb again early next week. At Mount Hotham in Victoria's alpine country, where the official temperature record goes back 36 years, the previous hottest July day was 8.7C in 1994.

But that record has been broken three times this month. The mercury peaked at 12C on Sunday in a month when the average daily maximum temperature is usually zero.

At Falls Creek, the highest July temperature had been 9.8C recorded in 1992. But this was eclipsed with 11.5C recorded on Saturday and then 13C on Sunday. The average daily maximum for Falls Creek in July is 1.2C.

New daily temperature records in alpine regions this weekend were also set in Thredbo (14C), Cabramurra (14.3C) and Mount William (15.2C). Record warm night-time temperatures were set in Mount Buller (5.7C), Mount Baw Baw (12C), Mount William (9.4C), Mount Hotham (4.6C) and Falls Creek (also 4.6C). Dr Andrew Watkins, a climate scientist at the Climate Council, skied at Mount

Hotham on Friday when temperatures were already threatening the previous 1994 record.

"It was incredibly warm up there," he said.

"You do not expect to see temperature records that are more than 30 years old being broken by two or three degrees. It is quite phenomenal."

"I don't think any climatologist is surprised by events like this any more. It is shocking in its own way."

Laura Gray, from Bright in Victoria, skied Mount Hotham and Falls Creek on the weekend and said she saw people skiing in T-shirts and without gloves.

"It did feel pretty bizarre and I had to keep reminding myself that it was still mid-July and not the spring," she said.

"In the morning it was lovely to ski but once the sun got high enough on the slopes it turned slushy very quickly."

She said the ski season, which officially started in early June around the King's birthday long weekend, had been "pretty grim" so far.

"It is not unusual not to ski on opening weekend but it's been pretty dire – just pretty dry and warm. Without snow-making, we absolutely would not have been skiing at all."

"When we heard there was going to be an El Niño, that put us on edge but I don't think anyone could have expected these July temperatures."

Majority of US voters link extreme weather to climate crisis, study finds

America: Amid a summer of dangerous heat, drought and floods, a majority of Americans are connecting increasingly severe weather to the climate crisis, new polling shows, despite efforts by Donald Trump to dismiss global heating as a "con job" and a "hoax".

It's a sign that attempts to suppress polarize climate concerns may not be seeing full success, said Grace Adcox, senior climate strategist at Data for Progress.

"We started with the question of our extreme weather events increasing, because we thought [that] if we can find consensus on that, that can be an entry point to being able to have a more bipartisan conversation about climate and climate intervention," she said.

About 61% of likely American voters believe extreme weather events have become more frequent over the past five years, the survey from the progressive polling firm Data for Progress, shared exclusively with the Guardian, found. That includes 72% of Democrats, 63% of Independents, and nearly half – 46% – of all Republicans.

Sheldon Whitehouse, the Rhode Island senator who has long criticized Democrats for quieting their talk of global warming – or "climate-hushing" – said the new data "adds to the mountain of evidence that the public is way ahead of the politicians on the dire consequences of climate change".

"Climate hushers who ignore this righteous fight should take note," he told the Guardian. The researchers also asked participants

about whether or not specific forms of extreme weather are being "worsened by climate change". Majorities linked climate change to worsening wildfires (64%), droughts (63%), flooding and flash flooding (62%), hurricanes (59%), and severe thunderstorms and hailstorms (59%). But heatwaves topped the list, with 67% saying climate change is making them worse – including 48% of Republicans, the highest share for any of the extreme weather events surveyed.

That could be because nearly everyone in the US has experienced unusually hot days or weeks in recent years, said Adcox. High temperatures kill more people annually in the US than hurricanes, tornadoes and floods combined.

"There are regional differences across experiences with extreme weather," said Adcox. "Extreme heat happens to have the biggest footprint in the American context compared to some of these other types of extreme weather."

The finding indicates that scorching conditions could provide an "interesting opening salvo" to speak about the climate crisis, she added. Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, said the new poll's findings are "very consistent" with the conclusions researchers have drawn based on Yale's surveys, which have shown Americans are increasingly linking extreme weather to the climate crisis and want to protect workers from heat.

But Jennifer Marlon, a senior research scientist at

Yale who also focuses on climate communications, said despite this, it's not clear if most Americans understand why exactly the climate is changing.

"This is probably the biggest misconception out there – many Americans still think the warming is due to some kind of natural cycle. But it isn't," she said, adding that a spring survey from Yale Program on Climate Change Communication found 27% of people think that the changes are mostly natural. The survey findings could help inform how to frame future conversations about the climate crisis with skeptical Americans, said Adcox. For instance, the data indicates heat may be the form of extreme weather that invites most conversation about climate.

Afghanistan floods kill at least 20 people



At least 20 people have been killed and more than 80 injured in flooding that hit Afghanistan's Nuristan province, the country's disaster management agency said on Monday.

In Parun, the provincial capital, a further 105 people including the mayor were missing, said Feraidon Samim, a spokesperson for the Nuristan governor.

Journalists familiar with the remote north-eastern area said a market, shops and other buildings were located near Parun's riverside.

Ashiqullah Safi, the head of an NGO based in the town, said the flood had

"completely destroyed the municipality", including hotels and dozens of shops.

He added that flood waters had left big boulders in the town and residents were searching for the missing without equipment.

Afghanistan's national disaster management agency said floods had caused "severe financial and human losses" in Parun, where efforts were under way to rescue the injured and recover the bodies of those killed.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the chief spokesperson for the Afghan government, posted on X to confirm reports of deaths and property damage in Nuristan. Earlier this month, the head of Afghanistan's environmental protection agency, Matiul Haq Khalis, said flooding in the country had increased.

He said environmental problems "have severely affected the Afghan people and have contributed to a humanitarian crisis in the country".

Extreme rainfall has become more common and more intense across most of the world because of the human-caused climate crisis. This is because warmer air can hold more water vapour, leading to more severe downpours.

Pay gap widens as UK bosses get 130 times average worker's salary

UK: The bosses of Britain's largest listed companies received record pay last year, fuelling the widest earnings gap with workers in eight years.

Median pay for FTSE 100 chief executives hit £5.06m in the last financial year, according to data released by the High Pay Centre, an 8.6% increase on £4.66m the previous year and the highest level on record.

Executive remuneration has been rising steadily since the pandemic, when CEOs took pay and bonus cuts as the lockdowns affected business performance.

Analysis found that listed company bosses are now paid 130 times the salary of the average full-time UK

worker, up from 124 times in the previous financial year. It is the biggest gap since the ratio hit 137 in the year to the end of March 2018.

The High Pay Centre said FTSE 100 firms had spent £856.6m on pay during the last financial year, including £550m remunerating chief executives. The thinktank, founded in 2011 by Deborah Hargreaves, a former Guardian business editor, is to close after 15 years campaigning for fairer pay for workers. Its interim director, Andrew Speke, said: "The substantial growth in the gap between executive and worker pay in the last year should be a wake-up call to those who've turned a blind

eye to rising executive pay.

"We hope that a change in prime minister and a renewed focus on economic fairness will lead to economic inequality and corporate excess returning to the political agenda." Andy Burnham, who will become the prime minister on Monday, has previously said there needs to be a public debate about high and excessive pay, and has promised to give "breathing space" as soon as he can to families struggling with the cost of living.

The median pay for a full-time UK worker is £39,000, according to the UK's Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, based on estimates in October.

Here are 10 cotton kurtas available for under ₹999 that you can wear on a weekly basis

Nothing quite compares to a quality cotton kurta in my wardrobe.

It offers breathability for humid travels, comfort for extended work hours, and versatility to be styled for various occasions.

Whether you are going to the office, completing errands, or seeking an outfit that combines comfort with style, cotton kurtas are essential staples you will frequently choose. The best part? You don't have to spend a fortune to find well-made styles. From timeless solids to floral prints and office-ready silhouettes, here are 10 cotton kurtas under ₹999 that deserve a spot in your everyday rotation.

10 Cotton kurtas for women
1. Max Women's Cotton Straight Fit Kurta: A classic straight-fit cotton kurta never goes out of style, and this one from Max proves why. The clean silhouette makes it incredibly versatile, allowing you to pair it with leggings, cigarette pants or even denims.

The breathable cotton fabric keeps you comfortable throughout the day, while the minimal design makes accessorising effortless.

Why you'll love it: A timeless everyday staple that transitions

seamlessly from office to weekend outings.

2. FIORRA Cotton Floral Printed A-Line Kurta: If your wardrobe needs a little colour, this floral A-line kurta is worth considering. The flattering cut offers plenty of movement, while the delicate floral print adds freshness without feeling overwhelming. It's feminine, easy to wear and perfect for warm weather.

Why you'll love it: Comfortable enough for daily wear yet pretty enough for brunches and casual gatherings.

3. Sun Fashion and Lifestyle Printed Cotton Kurti: Printed kurtis are everyday heroes because they instantly make an outfit feel more put together. This stitched cotton design features comfortable fabric and easy styling, making it ideal for office wear, college or everyday errands.

Why you'll love it: Lightweight, fuss-free and easy to pair with almost any bottom.

4. Rytras Cotton Printed Straight Kurta: This straight-fit printed kurta strikes the perfect balance between simplicity and style. The cotton fabric feels breathable, while the subtle print keeps it interesting without becoming too loud. It's the

kind of piece you'll wear repeatedly throughout the week.

Why you'll love it: Great for everyday office dressing with minimal styling effort.

5. Amazon Brand – Tavasya Cotton Solid Straight Kurta: Every wardrobe needs a solid-coloured kurta that can be styled in multiple ways. Whether paired with printed dupattas, statement jewellery or contrasting bottoms, this straight cotton kurta acts like a blank canvas for countless looks.

Why you'll love it: Endless styling possibilities and a clean, polished appearance.

6. BLOCKS OF INDIA Plain Cotton Straight Kurta: Sometimes it's the practical details that make all the difference. This long cotton kurta comes with two functional pockets; a feature that's surprisingly hard to find in ethnic wear. The relaxed straight silhouette and breathable cotton make it an excellent everyday choice.

Why you'll love it: Comfortable, minimal and yes, it has pockets.

7. Aramya Soft Cotton Geometric Print Kurta: Geometric prints bring a contemporary edge to traditional silhouettes. This soft cotton kurta feels equally suitable for office meet-

ings and casual lunches, thanks to its understated print and easy fit.

Why you'll love it: Modern prints make it look stylish without trying too hard.

8. Max Women's Cotton Regular Fit Kurta: Another dependable option from Max, this regular-fit kurta focuses on comfort and everyday wearability. The cotton fabric feels breathable against the skin, while the simple silhouette makes it suitable for almost every occasion.

Why you'll love it: A reliable everyday essential you'll keep reaching for.

9. Amazon Brand – Tavasya Cotton Solid Straight Kurta: If you enjoy building a capsule wardrobe, another solid cotton kurta is never a bad investment. This design offers clean lines, comfortable fabric and enough versatility to be styled differently every time you wear it.

Why you'll love it: Dress it up with jewellery or keep it minimal; either way, it works.

10. RATAN Lucknowi Chikankari Kurta: While technically made from rayon rather than pure cotton, this Lucknowi chikankari kurta deserves a mention for anyone who loves traditional embroidery. The delicate chikankari work instantly

elevates the outfit, making it suitable for festive lunches, office celebrations or family gatherings while remaining lightweight and comfortable.

Why you'll love it: Classic chikankari detailing adds timeless elegance without feeling overly dressy.

How to style cotton kurtas
Pair solid kurtas with printed dupattas for an instantly elevated look.

Swap leggings for straight pants or palazzos for a more contemporary silhouette.

Add oxidised jewellery for a traditional touch or keep accessories minimal for work. Wear comfortable kolhapuris, juttis or white sneakers depending on the occasion.

Layer with a lightweight cotton stole during cooler evenings.

Cotton kurtas continue to be one of the smartest investments for Indian wardrobes. Comfortable, breathable and endlessly versatile, they're pieces you'll genuinely wear week after week, especially when you can pick them up for under ₹999. Whether your style leans minimal, printed or traditional, there's something in this list that will quickly become your next everyday favourite.



Here are 7 shampoos that effectively control frizz and flyaways



The monsoon season provides joy and respite from the intense summer heat; however, it also introduces sweat and humidity that adversely affect our hair, rendering it frizzy and difficult to manage. As someone who is either fortunate or unfortunate to have naturally wavy and frizzy hair, I encountered similar challenges. My hair tended to become excessively frizzy and dry during the humid monsoon months. This led me to try a couple of shampoos on my hair to see if they would tame my frizzy, coarse hair. To my surprise, I finally found these 7 shampoos that are doing wonders for my hair texture while beautifully defining my curls, too. So, I thought of curating a rundown of the 5 shampoos that helped curb my frizzy, coarse hair.

1. Kérastase Discipline Fluidualiste Anti-Frizz Shampoo | Sulphate-Free Shampoo for Frizzy Hair: Kérastase Discipline Fluidualiste Anti-Frizz Shampoo is designed to gently cleanse unruly, frizzy hair while helping it feel smoother, softer and easier to style. Enriched with amino acids, wheat protein derivatives and a caring smoothing complex, it helps improve manageability without weighing hair down. Suitable for hair that is difficult to control, it leaves strands feeling sleek with a healthy-looking shine. Amazon customers often praise its luxurious feel, noticeable frizz control and salon-quality finish, though some mention it comes at a premium price.

2. Matrix Mega Smooth Professional Shampoo with Shea Butter & Amino Acids, for Frizzy Hair | Max Smoothness for 4 Days: Matrix Mega Smooth Professional Shampoo helps tame frizz while leaving hair feeling soft, smooth and manageable. It contains shea butter, known for nourishing dry hair, along with gentle cleansing ingredients that remove dirt and excess

oil without stripping moisture. Ideal for dry, frizzy hair, it promotes easier styling and a polished finish. Amazon reviewers frequently appreciate its pleasant fragrance, smoothing effect and value for money, while a few users note results vary depending on hair type.

3. Bare Anatomy Anti Frizz Shampoo, Frizz Control Upto 24 Hours, Powered By Hyaluronic Acid & Fatty Acids, Dry & Frizzy Hair, Smooth, Shiny: Bare Anatomy Anti Frizz Shampoo is formulated to cleanse hair while helping reduce dryness and flyaways. It contains hyaluronic acid to support moisture, ceramides to strengthen the hair barrier and plant-based proteins that help improve softness and manageability. The lightweight formula is suitable for regular use and leaves hair feeling smoother without feeling heavy. Amazon customers often highlight its ability to reduce frizz, improve softness and work well for chemically treated hair, although some feel consistent use gives the best results.

4. Plum Coconut Milk & Peptides Shampoo for Dry & Frizzy Hair | Provides 22X Shiny & Softer | Paraben-Free: Plum Coconut Milk & Peptides Shampoo gently cleanses while helping dry and frizzy hair feel softer and healthier. It combines coconut milk for nourishment, peptides to support stronger-looking hair and mild cleansing ingredients that refresh the scalp without excessive dryness. Suitable for everyday use, it helps improve smoothness and shine with regular washing. Amazon reviewers commonly praise its pleasant fragrance, gentle cleansing action and softer hair after use, while some mention that pairing it with the matching conditioner gives better results.

5. Biolage Smooth Proof Anti-Frizz Shampoo | Up to 72HR Frizz Control

| With Camellia Oil & Glycerin | For Dry and Frizzy Hair: Biolage Smooth Proof Anti-Frizz Shampoo is inspired by the camellia flower's water-resistant properties to help control frizz in humid conditions. It gently removes impurities while maintaining the hair's natural moisture balance. The formula helps leave hair smoother, shinier and easier to manage without weighing it down. Amazon customers often appreciate its long-lasting smoothness, salon-like fragrance, and ability to reduce frizz, although some users with very dry hair prefer using it on its own. According to Ms Audrey D'Souza, National Creative Director, Hair, Lakme Salon, "During the monsoon season, the air contains a high level of humidity (moisture) and hair fibres absorb this excess moisture from the environment, causing the hair cuticle to swell and lift. When the cuticle is raised, hair loses its smoothness, resulting in frizz and flyaways, loss of definition and shine, difficulty in styling and managing hair, and increased tangling, especially in dry, damaged, or chemically treated hair." Along with hair, D'Souza also warns to take care of the scalp. "Scalp care becomes particularly important during monsoons because increased humidity, sweating, and exposure to rainwater can create an environment where scalp issues develop more easily", she mentions. She also says that a healthy scalp is the foundation for healthy hair growth, and when the scalp is compromised, it can lead to problems such as dandruff, itchiness, excess oil production, unpleasant odour, and increased hair fall. During the monsoon, the air contains much more moisture (high humidity). That extra moisture can make hair swell, become frizzy, and lose its shape. Anti-frizz shampoos help by reducing the extent to which humidity affects your hair. Smooth the hair cuticle: Anti-frizz shampoos contain conditioning ingredients (such as silicones, natural oils, or conditioning polymers) that smooth the hair's outer layer. A smoother cuticle means less frizz and more shine. Reduce moisture absorption: They create a light protective coating on the hair, which helps prevent excess humidity from entering the hair shaft. This reduces swelling and flyaways.

Improve hydration balance: Many formulas include moisturising ingredients like glycerin (in balanced amounts), panthenol, or plant oils that keep hair hydrated without making it feel dry or puffy.

Reduce static and tangles: Conditioning agents make hair easier to comb and less prone to friction, which can contribute to frizz.

Footwear that is resistant to water should be taken into account during the rainy season

Few experiences are more frustrating than stepping into a puddle just five minutes after leaving your home. In an instant, your socks become drenched, your shoes emit a squishy sound with each step, and your mind is consumed with thoughts of returning home. If you have ever witnessed your beloved trainers or leather shoes lose their appeal after just one week of rain, you understand the challenge. After years of experimenting with everything from canvas sneakers to bulky boots, I have come to a singular conclusion. Investing in a quality pair of shoes designed for monsoon conditions is worth every rupee. They provide comfort for your feet, have a longer lifespan, and prevent the need for a replacement each rainy season. What to check before buying waterproof shoes

Not every shoe made for the rain performs the same. Here's what I always keep an eye on before adding a pair to my cart.

Waterproof and water-resistant are not the same

Water-resistant shoes can handle light rain and quick walks. Waterproof shoes are built for heavier showers and deeper puddles. Materials like Gore-Tex and treated synthetic uppers usually offer better protection. Grip matters more than looks

Rain makes roads, tiles and pavements surprisingly slippery. A rubber outsole with deep grooves gives

better traction. More grip usually means fewer awkward slips. Your feet still need to breathe

Waterproof shoes can feel warm in humid weather.

Membrane technology allows heat and moisture to escape while keeping rain outside. It makes long hours much more comfortable.

Think about drying time
Rainwater has a funny way of finding its way inside shoes. Synthetic materials dry much faster than thick fabrics. Quick-drying shoes are ready for the next day without much fuss.

My top 8 monsoon picks

1. Skechers-Men's Walking Shoes-GO Walk FLEX-894478ID-BBK-9: Why it made the list: This is the pair I would happily wear from Monday to Friday. It looks like a regular sneaker, so it blends in nicely with workwear and casual outfits. The waterproof upper keeps light to moderate rain outside, while Skechers' signature cushioning makes long walks and crowded metro stations feel a lot less tiring.

2. Campus Men's Extract BLK/F.GRN Running Shoes - 8UK/India 1 Pair: Why it made the list: Campus has quietly become a favourite for practical everyday footwear. The Camou range keeps things simple with a sporty design, decent rain protection and enough comfort for long hours on your feet. It is also lighter than many waterproof shoes, which is always a bonus during hu-



mid weather.

3. Nike Mens Running Shoe Air Zoom Pegasus 40-Wolf Grey/Volt-Black-White-Dv3853-004-9: Why it made the list: If your rainy season includes long walks, weekend trips or roads that resemble obstacle courses, this pair earns its place. The Gore-Tex membrane blocks rain, while the grippy outsole keeps you steady on slippery surfaces. It is one of those shoes that feels just as comfortable on city roads as it does on a trail.

4. Bacca Bucci Men's Mid-Top Trekking Boots with Rugged Grip Sole Tactical Black UK 9: Why it made the list: These shoes are built to take a beating. The waterproof upper keeps your feet dry, the chunky outsole grips muddy ground with confidence, and the sturdy construction inspires confidence when roads are cracked, uneven or covered in slush. They are ideal if your daily route is anything but smooth.

5. Crocs Unisex Adult Bayaband Army Green/Cobblestone Clog-M10W12: Why it made the list: Crocs have earned their rainy season fan club for good reason. They get wet, dry quickly and clean up with nothing more than a quick rinse. You never have to worry about soggy fabric or that damp smell hanging around for days.

6. Puma Mens Shibui Clog Black-Stormy Slate Sandal - 8 UK (40030601): Why it made the list: These are soft, lightweight and surprisingly comfort-

able for all-day use. The moulded construction dries quickly after rain and needs very little maintenance. If you like footwear that asks for almost no effort, this pair deserves a look.

7. ASIAN WATER-PROOF-05 Sports Shoes with Extra Cushion Lightweight Lace-Up Casual Sneaker Shoes for Men & Boys Black,UK 9: Why it made the list: Asian has built a strong reputation for affordable sports shoes, and this waterproof option carries that value forward. It is lightweight, comfortable and easy to maintain, making it a sensible pick for students, office goers and anyone shopping on a budget.

8. LUDIC Sliders for Men and Women: Why it made the list: Some rainy days are simply too wet for closed shoes. That is where these sandals come in. They dry in no time, rinse clean under running water and stay comfortable through puddles, muddy lanes and everything the monsoon decides to throw your way.

There is no single perfect monsoon shoe. The best choice depends on where your day takes you. Office commute, weekend trek or flooded streets, there is something on this list for every kind of rainy day. One last tip.

Let waterproof shoes dry naturally after getting wet. Keeping them away from direct heat helps the materials last longer and keeps the protective layer in good shape.



Siddharth Anand’s king heads to final overseas location to wrap shoot



Mumbai : Shah Rukh Khan’s King is one of the most anticipated films of the year, and while the excitement around it grows, fans can’t wait to see the action thriller on the big screen, with every update making them even more thrilled. A new report suggests that the major shoot of the film has been wrapped, and there is only one major international schedule remaining before the team calls it a wrap. As per Mid-Day, the final schedule of the film may commence in August. While discussions are happening within the production team to explore shooting locations in

the United States and several countries in South America, nothing has been officially confirmed. As per a source quoted by the publication, “Only an international schedule is remaining. Nothing has been officially locked yet, but a team is currently in the US, scouting locations and working out the logistics. They will head to certain countries in South America before zeroing in on the locations. If all goes according to plan, the unit will head there next month before calling it a wrap.” The source further added that director Siddharth Anand and Shah Rukh Khan are will-

ing to explore new locations that have not been widely explored on screen. The source added, “Shah Rukh and Siddharth wanted an untapped location for the sequence in question.” King was officially announced in November last year. The electrifying title reveal, dropped on November 2 to mark Shah Rukh Khan’s birthday, introduced his silver-haired, action-driven look, an SRK-special theme song, and a striking dialogue delivered by SRK: “Darr nahi, dehshat hoon,” setting off a frenzy across media platforms. With the title reveal, anticipation for the film continues to soar. Produced by Red Chillies Entertainment and Marflix Pictures, King marks Shah Rukh Khan’s first on-screen collaboration with his daughter, Suhana Khan. As per reports, King sees SRK as a seasoned assassin operating within the dark underworld, while Suhana plays his protégé, training for dangerous missions.

Kartik Aaryan visits Mahakaleshwar temple after first national award win



sacred rituals and seeking the deity’s blessings. Soon after he shared the post, his fans were seen showering love on him. One fan wrote, “May God bless you to always shine like this and keep progressing in life.” Another fan commented, “I don’t know if you’ll ever read this, but I just want to say how incredibly happy I

am for you. You deserve every bit of this happiness, every success, and every beautiful moment coming your way. You’ve worked so hard for it, and it’s finally paying off. I truly believe life has so much more in store for you. Keep smiling, always. You deserve the world.” One of the comments also read, “MYYY HEARTTT

IS FULLL.” Meanwhile, after winning the National Award, Kartik shared a reaction video featuring himself and his parents on his handle, and expressed gratitude. He wrote, “Still processing... Some moments are simply bigger than words, and this is one of them. A dream I’ve carried for years has

finally come true. Forever humbled, forever grateful. Best Actor National Award #ChanduChampion.” Directed by Kabir Khan, Chandu Champion is a biographical sports drama inspired by the extraordinary life of India’s first Paralympic gold medallist, Murlikant Petkar. The film traces his remarkable journey from an ambitious young athlete and Indian Army soldier to a war hero whose life changed after he sustained severe injuries during the 1965 Indo-Pak war. Refusing to let adversity define him, Petkar reinvented himself as a para-athlete and scripted history by winning India’s first-ever Paralympic gold medal in swimming at the 1972 Games. Kartik Aaryan’s performance as the celebrated sportsperson was widely praised by critics and audiences alike, with many calling it one of the finest performances of his career.

Yezhu Kadal Yezhu Malai release date locked with intriguing new glimpse



Mumbai : After years of anticipation, director Ram’s ambitious fantasy drama Yezhu Kadal Yezhu Malai has finally locked its theatrical release date. The makers announced on Monday that the film will hit cinemas on October 1, unveiling a fresh glimpse that offers audiences another peek into the filmmaker’s mysterious new world. Known for crafting deeply philosophical and emotionally layered stories in films such as Kattradhu Thamizh, Thanga Meengal, Taramani and Peranbu, Ram appears to be venturing into unfamiliar territory with Yezhu Kadal Yezhu Malai. While his signature introspective storytelling remains evident, the film promises an unusual

blend of fantasy, drama and dark humour. The story revolves around an 8000-year-old immortal, portrayed by Nivin Pauly, whose seemingly endless existence takes an unexpected turn after he crosses paths with an ordinary 32-year-old man, played by Soori. Their meeting aboard a moving train sets off a chain of bizarre and unpredictable events, with even a rat becoming an unlikely participant in the unfolding chaos. The newly released glimpse hints at the film’s offbeat tone without giving away too much of its larger mystery. Anjali, who was recently seen in Ram’s Paranthu Po alongside Shiva, Grace Antony and Aju Varghese, plays one of the film’s central characters. The actress

reunites with the filmmaker once again, continuing a creative association that has already delivered memorable performances. Yezhu Kadal Yezhu Malai also marks an important milestone in Nivin Pauly’s career. The Malayalam star returns to Tamil cinema after nearly eight years, having last headlined Richie in 2017. Over the years, Nivin has largely focused on Malayalam projects, but this collaboration with Ram has remained one of the most anticipated films in his lineup ever since it was first announced. The actor has already had two releases this year with Baby Girl and Prathichaya, and has several interesting projects lined up. Among them is Bakkiyaraj Kannan’s

Benz, which also stars Raghava Lawrence. Soori, meanwhile, continues to strengthen his position as a leading actor after successfully transitioning from comedy to emotionally driven lead roles. Fresh from Maaman, he will also be seen in Mandaadi, adding another performance-driven project to his growing filmography. As with many of Ram’s films, music plays a significant role in shaping the emotional landscape of the narrative. Long-time collaborator Yuvan Shankar Raja has composed the soundtrack for Yezhu Kadal Yezhu Malai, continuing one of Tamil cinema’s most enduring director-composer partnerships. Behind the camera, cinematographer NK Ekambaram handles the visuals, while Mathi VS serves as editor. Action sequences have been choreographed by Silva. The film is produced by Suresh Kamatchi under the V House Productions banner. Over the years, the project has generated considerable curiosity following its festival screenings, where it drew attention for its unconventional narrative and visual ambition. With a theatrical release date now officially in place, audiences will finally get to experience one of Tamil cinema’s most intriguing long-delayed films on the big screen this October.

Diljit Dosanjh backs student protests

New Delhi : Singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh extended his support to the students protesting against alleged NEET irregularities and urged authorities to divert attention to their demands. The protest "Chalo Sansad" was organised by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Monday in New Delhi. Thousands of protestors marched towards the parliament building demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and protesting against severe exam paper leaks and education corruption. In response to the situation, the authorities used force to disrupt the demonstrations, detaining protesters and deploying police. Dosanjh was previously asked about his comments on the protests, but the actor had distanced himself, stating he was "an artiste, not a politician". Responding to the reason he stayed silent, the actor shared a note on his Instagram story on Tuesday and said students shouldn’t have been treated harshly. "What happened today was very wrong. Students should not have been treated like this. I request the authorities to listen to the students’ demands," he wrote. Several celebrities have supported the students, including Hrithik Roshan, Dia Mirza, Naseeruddin Shah, Sonakshi Sinha and Shabana Azmi, among others.

Jennifer winget shares emotional pictures from her wedding to William Ishmael



Mumbai : Jennifer Winget has been on cloud nine ever since she married her partner William Ishmael on July 16 in West Wales, UK. After giving fans a glimpse of her dreamy white wedding through a video earlier, the actress has now shared a fresh set of pictures from the intimate ceremony, giving fans a closer look at the beautiful moments from the big day. The photos, shared by photographer Katy Tainton, show Jennifer looking radiant and deeply in love, along with several cheerful moments as well as an emotional glimpse from the ceremony. The first picture shows Jennifer Winget beaming with joy as she hugs her husband William Ishmael after their wedding ceremony.

Another frame shows her holding the stunning veil, with close-up shots giving a glimpse of the thoughtful details — their wedding date, 16th July, and their names, ‘Will’ and ‘Jen’, delicately embroidered on the fabric. Another photo shows William feeding Jennifer cake, while a separate frame shows the couple sharing a romantic kiss. One of the most emotional moments from the ceremony shows Jennifer wiping away a tear as she holds a bouquet of flowers. Dressed in a stunning white strapless gown, the actress looked radiant. Other pictures show Jennifer walking down the stairs with William and sharing a hug with her father. Check out the photos below!

Unlike Jennifer Winget, William Ishmael has no connection to the entertainment industry. As per reports, he is a finance professional based in Singapore and has built his career in global financial markets. While Jennifer has spent years in the public eye through television and acting, William has maintained a relatively private life away from the spotlight. His LinkedIn profile lists him as the Director of Business Development and Trading at MHC Digital Group, a role he has held since 2022. Jennifer was previously married to television actor Karan Singh Grover. The former couple separated in November 2014 and officially finalised their divorce in 2016.

Sonakshi Sinha reacts to CJP protest violence: 'poore desh ka dil toota'

Mumbai : Actor Sonakshi Sinha has once again spoken out in support of the CJP-led student movement, this time sharing powerful images from the July 20 ‘Sansad Chalo’ protest in Delhi. Her post came after the march witnessed clashes between protesters and police, with videos showing alleged lathi-charge, tear gas shelling and injuries to several students demanding action over the NEET paper leak controversy and the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Sharing a series of photos from the protest on Instagram, Sonakshi wrote, “20th July...bohota logon ki haddiyaan tooti aur ek POORE DESH ka dil toota. Yaad rakhtu.” The photos showed injured protesters, police action and scenes from the demonstration that have since gone viral on so-



cial media. This is not the first time Sonakshi has spoken in support of the movement. Ahead of the July 20 march, she had urged people to stand with Sonam Wangchuk and the protesting students, saying every voice deserves to be heard in a democracy. She also criticised Wangchuk’s removal to hospital and appealed for peaceful demonstrations, expressing hope that the authorities would begin a meaningful dialogue with the protesters. While Sonam Wangchuk is

on a hunger strike, his team, on his behalf, responded to Sonakshi’s post, thanking her for the support. The comment under the post read, “Thank you for your solidarity. We truly appreciate your support. With gratitude, Office of Sonam Wangchuk.” In her video, Sonakshi expressed concerns for Sonam Wangchuk’s health and said, “I’ve never given a statement out like this, but today we can’t ignore him. Sonam Wangchuk. We all know him. We know what he has

done for our country, what his achievements are and how many awards he has won.” She continued, “He is hungry. He hasn’t eaten anything. For whom is he doing this? He is doing this for the future of children who lost their lives. He is fighting a system which is not working properly. I know this. You know this. We all know this. A lot many people are still silent. I can’t stay silent. Whatever will happen, let it happen. No problem. I can’t remain silent.” She also requested the government to initiate a dialogue with Sonam and said, “Why is nobody listening? Nobody cares. Nobody is open for a dialogue.” The actress then mentioned that she decided to issue a video statement because it was high time for her to speak up. “Main koi anti-national nahi hu,” she said.

The odyssey day 4 box office: Nolan’s film crosses ₹2,700 crore mark

Agency : Christopher Nolan’s epic adventure The Odyssey is doing wonders at the box office. On day 4, the film managed to earn a total of Rs 2,700 crore worldwide. In India, The Odyssey, grossed Rs 80 crore-mark despite a dip on Monday. After a stellar opening weekend, The Odyssey witnessed its first major dip at the box office on Monday. According to Sacnilk, the Christopher Nolan directorial earned an estimated Rs 8.35 crore nett on Day 4 across 9,102 shows, marking a 61.9 per cent drop from Sunday’s collections. The film had opened to Rs 17.40 crore nett on Friday before seeing impressive growth over the weekend with Rs 22 crore on Saturday and Rs 21.90 crore on Sunday, resulting in a strong opening weekend haul. Despite the expected weekday slowdown, The Odyssey had already scripted history on its opening day by becoming Christopher Nolan’s biggest opener in India. The film collected a gross of Rs 20.75 crore across languages on Day 1, comfortably surpassing the director’s previous best opening of Rs 17.50 crore. The Odyssey is a 2026 epic fantasy action film written and directed by Christopher Nolan. Based on Homer’s ancient Greek epic poem, the film stars Matt



Damon as Odysseus, the King of Ithaca, whose decade-long journey home after the Trojan War is filled with mythical creatures, dangerous challenges and emotional reunions. Anne Hathaway plays his wife, Penelope, while the ensemble cast also features Tom Holland, Robert Pattinson, Lupita Nyong’o, Samantha Morton, Zendaya and Charlize Theron. The film is produced by Christopher Nolan and Emma Thomas under their banner, Syncopy. The battle sequence where men perish amid flames and devastation, lingers in Odysseus’ mind long after the smoke

clears. The images return to him like a recurring nightmare. After breaking Athena’s statue, she starts accompanying him as his figment of imagination. The effect is palpable. This extraordinary screenplay is further elevated by a string of powerful acts. Damon as Odysseus delivers what may well be the performance of his career. Even in the physically fraught scenes, his vulnerability is what stands out. He brings remarkable restraint to the role, allowing Odysseus’ inner turmoil to surface without ever slipping into melodrama.”

“Preventing Paper Leaks A National Responsibility” PM Modi On The NEET Row



New Delhi, July 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanded the harshest possible punishment for those responsible for the NEET paper leak, emphasising that preventing such leaks was a national responsibility, according to Minister Kiren Rijiju, speaking after the NDA Parliamentary Party’s ‘Mangal Milan’ meeting on Tuesday.Rijiju, the Prime Minister, recommended joint efforts to create a flawless examination system. ”The PM called on NDA partners to remain united in supporting legislative business and appealed to opposition parties to work constructively in parliament, saying that while political differences may exist, all MPs have

a shared responsibility to work for the country’s future and the welfare of its youth,” Rijiju said quoting the Prime Minister. The comments come a day after hundreds of protesters were tear-gassed and lathicharged and stopped from marching on parliament. The protesting students, led by the satirical Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), which emerged in May after the Supreme Court Chief Justice compared some unemployed young people to “cockroaches” during an unrelated hearing, are demanding Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation following alleged irregularities in competitive examinations, including the NEET paper leak.

The National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) is one of the country’s most competitive exams, attracting more than two million aspiring doctors. The exam was scrapped in May following allegations that the question paper was leaked in advance. The re-test was conducted late last month.The NEET scandal came on top of another controversy, related to the online marking system used for tests taken by nearly two million high school CBSE students. Many students said the system had assigned incorrect grades or issued results to the wrong candidates. PM Modi said the government acted immediately after reports of the NEET paper leak emerged, leading to arrests and swift action against those involved, Rijiju relayed.The Central Bureau of Investigation, or CBI, has arrested the “kingpin” alleged to be behind the leak, naming him as a chemistry lecturer involved in the examination process for the Natinal Testing Agency (NTA). The education ministry launched a website where the public can report “suspicious claims, unauthorised content, or fraudulent activities” related to the NEET exam.Rijiju said the Prime Minister stressed that a re-examination was conducted without delay to ensure students’ futures were not affected. The Monday protest came after activist Sonam Wangchuk was forcibly taken to hospital on Saturday, bringing an abrupt end to his 21-day hunger strike in support of the movement launched by the CJP.

Gautam Gambhir Questioned Over ‘Glaring Errors’ in England ODIs ‘What’s The Logic’

London: Team India’s visit of the United Kingdom proved to be a complete catastrophe. The assignment began with the squad losing three T20Is to Ireland. Then followed the five T20Is against England, which saw Shreyas Iyer’s side lose 4-0. India wanted to rebound in the three ODIs against England, but the squad could only manage a single victory in the second match. As the BCCI conducts a detailed examination of the tour outcomes, head coach Gautam Gambhir’s decision-making is heavily attacked. Former India cricketer Sadagoppan Ramesh questioned the Gambhir-led team management’s baffling decision-making in the third ODI against England at Lord’s, asking the logic behind benching Kuldeep Yadav even when Jasprit Bumrah wasn’t playing.

“Many Were Waiting For Us To Lose” Argentina’s Rodrigo de Paul drops a World Cup bombshell

East Rutherford: Argentina midfielder Rodrigo De Paul issued an honest remark a day after the team’s painful 1-0 loss to Spain in the FIFA World Cup 2026 final. While De Paul lamented Argentina’s inability to defend the trophy they won in Qatar four years ago, he maintained that the outcome only strengthened this squad. The Inter Miami midfielder began the final at New York New Jersey Stadium and played 70 minutes before being replaced by Atletico Madrid’s Giuliano Simcone. ”The greatest pain comes from not being able to bring the World Cup back home to our country because if anyone deserved to experience that feeling once again, it was you. But as the hours go by, we are beginning to realize that the connection you have with this group goes far beyond the trophy and that’s what I want to hold on to as I navigate this moment,” de Paul captioned a lengthy post on Instagram.De Paul also took a sharp swipe at Argentina’s critics, pointing out how



many people were waiting to see the Lionel Messi-led side lose.“Today, I look at how many people were waiting for this defeat, spending the entire World Cup spreading unfounded conspiracy theories to ease the pain of not being able to experience what all Argentinians were experiencing. Because our smiles bother them. Because the way we are bothers them. But all that did was reaffirm that the passion and love we have for our jersey can overcome anything,” he added. He added that although the defeat will hurt

for a long time, he remains proud to be Argentine.“It will hurt for a long time but today, more than ever, I am proud to be Argentinian.”Throughout the tournament, Argentina was accused of being favored by FIFA after several contentious decisions went its way. However, those allegations were put to bed against Spain, as Argentina failed to register a single shot on target.Spain won the match 1-0 in extra time after Argentina was reduced to 10 men, with Ferran Torres bagging the decisive goal.

plumes of smoke rose from the top story, generating terror among the occupants. Firefighters smashed the latch and entered the home. Inside, they discovered three burnt bodies. The victims were identified as a 45-year-old lady and her two kids, ages 7 and 13. According to the investigators, the fire spread and engulfed the house rapidly, leaving no room for the victims to escape to safety. Firefighters managed to bring the fire under control in some time.

“We’re trapped, send help” Woman and two daughters die in fire At Delhi Home

New Delhi, July 21:“Please send help quickly” - these were most likely the last words of a mom who perished inside her burning home with her two kids on Tuesday morning. A big fire broke out on the top floor of a building in Delhi’s Lodhi Colony, claiming the lives of three family members.On Tuesday morning at 10:21, the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) got a call regarding a fire at a residence opposite Chawla Sweets in BK Dutt Colony, Lodhi Colony. A wom-

an on the other end of the phone stated in a quivering voice: “There is a fire in the house... we are trapped inside... please send help quickly.”Moments later, her voice faded and the call was cut. Following the call, the police and fire departments jumped into action. A team of police officers and two fire trucks went to the scene. Three ambulances were also called to the scene. The home had already been engulfed by fire when rescue attempts began. Thick

Cristiano Ronaldo Fuels “FIFA Bias” Talks About Anti-Argentina Post. What really happened



East Rutherford: Claims that FIFA will prefer Argentina during the FIFA World Cup 2026 are not new. However, the claims reached an all-time high after Cristiano Ronaldo was accused of ‘liking’ an Instagram post that said as much. Ronaldo, who was eliminated in the Round of 16 with Portugal by eventual champions Spain, is said to have liked a video on the Instagram account ‘espejopublico’ in which panellists discussed various instances during the World Cup in which referees and the VAR (Video Assistant Referee) team appeared to favour Lionel Messi’s Argentina. Pilar Rodriguez

Losantos, a Spanish journalist, prepared a video that highlights several similar situations. Losantos even said, “Argentina should have been eliminated at least five matches ago!” They are still in the competition, owing to FIFA’s assistance! So I am not frightened of Argentina at all. I’m more terrified of Infantino; I don’t think we’ll be competing against Argentina, but against FIFA as a whole, which wants Lionel Messi to win the World Cup. Cristiano Ronaldo likes Instagram video accusing FIFA of corruption and alleging that they helped Argentina reach the World Cup final. Fans said Ronaldo

enjoyed the video, implying that he, too, feels the sport’s governing body preferred Argentina. However, upon fact-checking, no likes from the Portuguese icon’s account were discovered on the post. There are two options here: Ronaldo deleted his like, or there was never one in the first place.

Argentina received no VAR decisions against them throughout the 48-team FIFA World Cup 2026 competition. Suggestions of a suspected FIFA prejudice against Messi’s team grew during their Round of 16 match against Egypt. Mohamed Salah’s team believed they had doubled their lead in the second half, only for VAR to rule out the goal because of a foul committed more than 10 seconds before the strike. The Egyptians also had a strong penalty shout turned down in the final stages of the game.In the quarter-final between Argentina and Spain, the sending-off of Briel Embolo also became a major factor in the South American side’s triumph.FIFA, however, has consistently rejected these allegations, dismissing the notion that decisions on the field were influenced.“Constructive discussion about decisions will always be part of football, but unfounded allegations have no place in our sport,” Collina said. “Nobody can question the integrity of the FIFA World Cup match officials... Nobody can claim that FIFA refereeing can be influenced by anyone, not even by the FIFA president.”

Argentina Manager Clears The Air On Lionel Messi’s Possible Retirement

East Rutherford: Argentina manager Lionel Scaloni said Lionel Messi is “going to play up until he decides to do so,” hailing him as the best football player ever, following La Albiceleste’s 1-0 loss to Spain in the FIFA World Cup 2026 final in New Jersey on Sunday (local time), according to The Athletic. Spain defeated Argentina 1-0 in extra time, ending Lionel Messi’s championship defence and capping an outstanding unblemished season in which La Roja surrendered only one goal in eight games. Following the defeat, Argentina’s head coach, Lionel Scaloni, complimented Lionel Messi, stating the 39-year-old would continue to play as long as he wanted and describing him as the best player of all time, expressing pleasure in his accomplishments. ”Well, he’s 39 years old now. Unbelievable. There’s nothing new to discover from my side. It was crystal clear for me that he’s going to play up until he decides to do so, and that all the team players, team-mates, and all of his people were going to support him. And I hope that everyone feels proud of him and of what he’s achieved because he’s the best football player ever,” Scaloni said, as quoted by The Athletic.



What Cameras Missed During Students’ Protest March In Delhi

New Delhi, July 21: Central Delhi was turned into a raging sea of banners and unwavering youngsters. Thousands of students packed the streets, clogging every major artery leading to the capital’s core. The large gathering seeking Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation and broader examination changes, organised by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) internet movement, felt more like an impending storm than a typical political demonstration. As a journalist on the ground, stepping into that crowd was dizzying. Yet, beneath the thick haze of tear gas and the deafening wall of slogans, the real story wasn’t the fury. It was a quiet, unexpected grace. While television cameras focused entirely on the friction, I witnessed three firsthand moments of deep empathy that never made the nightly news. The Human Shield at Jantar MantarThe day began at Jantar Mantar, India’s historic epicentre of dissent, where the air practically crackled with tension. As hours ticked by, exhaustion gave way to raw frustration. A few aggressive factions boiled over, clashing violently with police barricades and turning their hostility toward the media crews, including myself. Before the chaos could spiral out of control, the true character of the crowd took over. A group of student protesters instantly



formed a human wall between the agitators and the press. They physically de-escalated the confrontation, pulling back their peers and resetting the tone of the march. We are here for justice, not violence,” one student firmly shouted, defusing the immediate threat. In that tense moment, it became clear: even in their deepest anger, this generation fiercely protects the integrity of their cause. By afternoon, the epicentre had shifted toward Raisina Road, and the atmosphere turned volatile. The demands had grown heavier - the youth were now calling for a total overhaul of the education policy. To break up the swelling numbers, the police deployed tear gas. Blinded, choking, and struggling to keep my camera rolling as the stinging smoke rolled in, I was entirely helpless. Suddenly, two young women materialised out of the white haze. Without saying a word, they slipped a fresh

mask into my hand and poured clean water over my burning eyes. While everyone else was running for cover, these two strangers paused to rescue a journalist. On the scalding asphalt of Raisina Road, humanity outlasted the smoke. The monsoon sky, not political wrath, dictated the protest’s concluding chapter. Despite the rain, the protests and my broadcast remained unabated.

Drenched, I urgently attempted to conceal my recording equipment with my clothing, but failed miserably. Then a young protester arrived, no older than twenty-five. She was totally drenched, yet she stepped up and extended her umbrella. When I tried to wave her away, she simply grinned. “You are telling our story to the world,” she stated simply. “You need this more than I do”. Later, I couldn’t find the girl and felt awful since I couldn’t return her umbrella.

Struggling PV Sindhu sought advice from Virat Kohli. His reply changed everything

Tokyo: ‘Belief’ is undoubtedly the most vital characteristic for an athlete attempting to break out from a slump. This same confidence enabled PV Sindhu recover to win her first major championship in two years, becoming the first Indian to win the Japan Open 2026. While hours of training, nutrition, and discipline were critical to her successful campaign, a ‘cryptic remark’ from Virat Kohli opened up a new dimension to Sindhu’s game, encouraging her to go deeper in her pursuit of gold. Struggling for form and looking for solutions, Sindhu approached Kohli to enquire how he had dealt during his extended wait for a century. The answer from the Indian cricket icon was simple: he had focused on rediscovering the joy of scoring runs. After being advised to take a three-month break by her doctor following a snapped toe ligament, Sindhu was taken to Atlanta by her husband, Venkata Datta Sai. Knowing she needed a mental break amidst the threat of burnout and growing

questions over her form, Datta felt it was crucial to remind her of Kohli’s advice: the joy of playing badminton needed to be rebuilt from scratch.“We had to rebuild her joy,” Datta said in an interview with the Indian Express. “Virat’s words kept ringing in my head. At Atlanta’s Exos Sports Performance facility, she trained with three excellent trainers-Wayne, Tim, and Rayan. My sister would drive her to the facility every day for three weeks for rehab and strengthening. We rekindled her love for the game in a family environment where she wasn’t a star, just a regular person.”Sindhu’s resurgence was built on stability, with every member of her 13-person team playing a crucial role. Datta revealed that everyone was moved to tears when Sindhu defeated Akane Yamaguchi in the final to claim the Japan Open title. Sports science also played a key role in her return to top form, as Datta explained: “After the Paris Olympics, we pulled data that revealed two key issues.

“Why Is PM Silent” Rahul Gandhi meets students injured during the CJP march

New Delhi, July 21: Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi launched a stinging attack on the Centre on Tuesday, accusing it of “brutality” against students protesting in the national capital on Monday.The Congress leader demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologise for the police raid on students in Delhi on Monday, questioning his silence on the matter.Why is the Prime Minister silent? He has not even apologised to the students who were assaulted by cops. “He should speak up and put an end to this nonsense (police action against students),” Gandhi said outside Parliament.Rahul Gandhi and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi also visited

the injured demonstrators at Delhi’s RML Hospital. Earlier, the Congress leader met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday morning, ahead of Parliament assembling, and demanded a discussion on the police action against the students.“Met the Hon’ble Lok Sabha Speaker today along with MPs of the Opposition,” Rahul Gandhi posted on X.“Our demand is simple: Parliament must have a detailed discussion on the brutality unleashed on students yesterday and on the government’s complete lack of accountability for the examination crisis,” he said.Alleging that students were beaten for asking legitimate questions about their future, Gandhi asked, “If Par-

liament cannot discuss the future of India’s youth, what is it for?” Vowing not to let the issue be buried, Gandhi said the Opposition would continue to fight for students. ”The Opposition will not let this be buried. We will ensure that the students’ voice is heard on the streets and in Parliament,” he said.Monday’s students’ march to Parliament saw unprecedented scenes in the national capital as thousands of protesters hit the roads, leading to chaos, confrontation and police action.More than 100 policemen and over 60 protesters were injured after police used lathicharge and teargas shells to disperse crowds that at one point came within metres of Parliament.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge echoed Gandhi and demanded a discussion in Parliament on the police action.“Why were students demanding justice met with brutal lathis and tear gas? Why was Parliament virtually sealed and the internet shut down? Who will take responsibility for repeated paper leaks and the suffering of lakhs of young people?” Kharge asked. He also demanded the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. “The government must immediately allow a full discussion on this issue in Parliament. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan must resign, taking moral and political responsibility for the matter,” Kharge said.

Danni Wyatt-Hodge Wins ICC Women’s Player Of Month After T20 World Cup

New Delhi : England opener Danni Wyatt-Hodge has been named the ICC Women’s Player of the Month for June 2026 after a standout campaign in the ICC Women’s T20 World Cup 2026. Wyatt-Hodge played a crucial role in England’s run to the tournament final, finishing as the leading run-scorer with 302 runs and delivering a series of match-winning performances, as per the ICC website. The England batter, who previously won the award in November 2024, claimed her second ICC Women’s Player of the Month honour after beating competition from Scotland captain Kathryn Bryce and India spinner Sree Charani. Speaking on her achievement, Wyatt-Hodge was proud of having received the honours for her performances in a home T20 World Cup. “I’m delighted to win the ICC Player of the Month award, especially since it came for performances at a World Cup on home soil. The ICC Women’s T20 World Cup was a fantastic occasion for the game, and having the opportunity to play in the final at Lord’s is a memory that my teammates and I will cherish forever,” Wyatt-Hodge said. In June, Wyatt-Hodge scored 287 runs in six games - five of which



came at the showcase T20 World Cup tournament - at an outstanding average of 71.75 and a strike rate of 151.85. Her month was highlighted by a superb unbeaten 105 against Sri Lanka in the tournament opener, which also helped England post the tournament’s joint-highest score of 219. She went on to produce a series of match-winning innings, which included a 65 against the West Indies and an unbeaten 89 against then de-

fending champions New Zealand to knock them out. During the tournament, Wyatt-Hodge rewrote the record books by becoming the highest run-scorer in a single edition of the Women’s T20 World Cup, surpassing Beth Mooney’s tally of 259 runs from six matches in 2020. She also became the first player to breach the 300-run mark in a single edition of the ICC Women’s T20 World Cup, finishing with 302 runs.

Gambhir Is Slammed For KL Rahul Demotion After Screwing Up Samson And Sooryavanshi

New Delhi : Former India captain and chief selector Krishnamachari Srikkanth has slammed Gautam Gambhir and the Indian team management over KL Rahul’s batting position after India’s 27-run defeat to England in the third ODI at Lord’s on Sunday. India’s tour ended on a disappointing note as the visitors lost the series 2-1 despite posting 360 in pursuit of England’s mammoth 387. Rohit Sharma led the chase with a brilliant 138, while captain Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli chipped in with half-centuries. However, India’s middle order failed to capitalise, reigniting the debate around Rahul’s role in the side. England sealed the series after Ben Duckett’s 141 and Jacob Bethell’s 91 powered the hosts to a record ODI total at Lord’s. Rahul walked out to bat only at the end of the 44th over, with India needing 84 runs from 36 balls. The wicketkeeper-batter managed 12 off eight deliveries before the chase fizzled out. Srikkanth was unimpressed by the decision to send Rahul in at No. 6, questioning why one of India’s most dependable ODI batters was held back in such a steep chase. “Will



anyone send KL Rahul at No. 6 when chasing such a huge total? That guy has won you so much in tough run-chases. Is Rahul a No. 6 or 7 batter?” Srikkanth said on his YouTube channel. The 1983 World Cup winner went a step further, comparing Rahul’s situation with that of Sanju Samson and young batter Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. “Just like you screwed up Sanju Samson and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, now you are screwing up KL Rahul. This is gross injustice. His body language also looked like someone nervous yesterday,”

he added. Srikkanth argued that Rahul should have batted higher up the order, especially considering his success during India’s run to the 2023 ODI World Cup final. Batting primarily at No. 5, Rahul scored 452 runs in 10 innings at an average of 75.33, including a century and two fifties, making him India’s fourth-highest run-scorer in the tournament. “India needed someone to do the Jos Buttler role. But if Rahul had gone in at No. 4, he would have complemented Virat Kohli like they did a few times in the 2023 World Cup,” Srikkanth said.

“Instead, they sent him out to bat when the match was over. How was he possibly going to win the game needing 15 per over with Axar Patel?” Since Gambhir took over as head coach, Rahul has largely operated at No. 6, with Axar Patel frequently promoted ahead of him. The move paid dividends during India’s Champions Trophy triumph earlier this year, when Rahul finished several matches under pressure. However, after India’s series defeat in England, questions over the team management’s handling of

Punjab’s Batala Man Who Left Home For His Mother Wins Asian Discus Medal

Jalandhar: Every medal has a story. But Bhartpreet Singh’s bronze medal in the discus throw at the Asian U-23 Athletics Championships, held on July 9 in China, is far more than the reward for years of hard work. It is the triumph of a son who stepped out of his home and into sports with one simple hope — to ease the burden on his widowed mother. “I thought if I left home, there would be one less person to feed,” Bhartpreet recalled. Hailing from Shahbad village near Batala, Bhartpreet’s journey did not begin with dreams of international glory. It began with a desperate attempt to help his struggling family. “I came for the trials in Jalandhar thinking that if I got selected, at least one person’s food expenses at home would reduce. Those selected received free accommodation and diet. My mother was already strugg-



gling to raise us, and my sister’s education expenses were also there. I thought this would give her some relief,” Bhartpreet told The Tribune. Today, that same young man stands among Asia’s finest after winning the bronze medal in the discus throw at the Asian U-23 Athletics Championships. Bhartpreet was only eight years old when tragedy struck. His father, a Punjab Police constable,

passed away, leaving the family shattered. His mother took up a job that paid barely Rs 8,000 a month to raise Bhartpreet and his younger sister. When Bhartpreet arrived for the trials in Jalandhar, his future coach Baldeep Singh noticed something beyond his athletic frame. “He had an excellent physique, but he came wearing worn-out slippers. I asked him about his father, and he

quietly told me he had lost him when he was eight. I immediately understood the financial struggles he had come from,” recalled Baldeep Singh, a coach at the Centre of Excellence, Punjab Sports Department. Initially, Bhartpreet’s only goal was to reduce the financial pressure at home. But his perspective changed after watching his roommate return as a champion.

DSP Mohammed Siraj Meets Telangana DGP CV Anand During Hyderabad Protocol Visit

Hyderabad: India fast bowler and Telangana Police Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Mohammed Siraj paid a courtesy call on Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) CV Anand at the DGP Office in Hyderabad as part of an official protocol visit. Sharing details of the meeting on X, DGP CV Anand recalled watching Siraj’s journey from his early days in Hyderabad cricket to becoming one of India’s premier fast bowlers. “Mohammed Siraj, Indian cricketer from Hyderabad and DSP in the Telangana Police, called on me as per protocol. I have seen him right from the time he was playing tennis ball cricket and in the year 2013-14, Abdul Azeem, the ex-cricketer from Hyderabad and the selector then, had asked me to come and see his talent,” Anand wrote. The Telangana DGP also reflected on Siraj’s rapid rise through the domestic ranks before earning international recognition. “He was made to play the two-day leagues immediately, and then in 2015 he played 3-day leagues and his speed and accuracy led to his making his Ran-



ji Trophy debut. 2016-17, he took 41 wickets in the Ranji Trophy and never looked back. His rise to representing #India across all formats of international cricket is a testament to how talent, discipline and hard work can overcome even the toughest obstacles. With his pace and intensity, he has consistently contributed to India’s pace attack. He is a precious star from Hyderabad,” he added. Concluding his post, Anand wished the pacer continued success on the international stage. I wished him success and many more memorable spells in India’s colours.” Siraj, who officially assumed charge as a Deputy

Superintendent of Police in the Telangana Police on October 11, 2024, was appointed by the state government following India’s triumph at the 2024 ICC Men’s T20 World Cup. Siraj, who officially assumed charge as a Deputy Superintendent of Police in the Telangana Police on October 11, 2024, was appointed by the state government following India’s triumph at the 2024 ICC Men’s T20 World Cup. The 32-year-old was not included in India’s ongoing tour of England and Ireland after the BCCI Medical Team and team management advised him to undergo a period of rest as part of his workload management programme.

Sakshi Chaudhary To Represent India In 51kg Women’s Boxing At Commonwealth Games

New Delh: Commonwealth Games 2026 are all set to commence in less than a week in Scotland’s Glasgow, and the entire country is rooting for boxer Sakshi Chaudhary, who is an official entry for India in the 51 Kgs women’s boxing category. Facing all sorts of odds, losing 3 kgs in three weeks, defeating World Champion boxers like Nikhat Zareen and Minakshi Hooda, Sakshi has proved her prowess time and again. Best suited for the game, showing her winning spirit and tactful fighting, according to a press release from SAI Media. She is not new to creating history, as she is also the first Indian female to secure Gold in the World Boxing Cup, 2025, Astana. Coming from a humble background and the daughter of a farmer, along with being a boxer, Sakshi also serves the Indian army. Currently, she is preparing for her match in Scotland. Rigorous practise, focused at-



tention and manifesting the gold. Speaking about Commonwealth Games, Sakshi said, “Participating in the Commonwealth Games has always been my dream, and I have been working on this for a long time. Finally representing Indian in the 51 Kgs boxing category feels surreal. Even when I got an injury, I was determined and never gave up. I recovered and kept training myself. Reducing weight seemed like another task, but I remembered what my father always taught me: to never give up and push yourself to the best of your potential. Right now, I’m busy train-

ing, and my only aim is to give my best shot and get that gold for India. I’m also taking the right amount of rest, a proper diet and staying mentally strong.” Sakshi is a two-time Gold medalist at the World Youth Championships (2017-2018), a gold medalist at the World Junior Women’s Championships (2015) and a medalist at the Asian Boxing Championships (2021). She has been training since the tender age of 12 years and is surely right there to make India proud at the Commonwealth 2026, followed by the Asian Games 2026. In the U-23 Women’s category, five

Indian boxers progressed to the finals. Nisha (54kg) defeated Hyeju Lee (KOR) by RSC in Round 1, while Nikita Chand (60kg) registered an RSC win in Round 1 against Sarai Kokufu (JPN). Kajal (65kg) secured an RSC victory in Round 2 over Gulzina Melsvek (KGZ). In the higher weights, Muskan (75kg) won 5:0 against Toirova Oysha (UZB), and Priyanka (+80kg) recorded a dominant 5:0 win over Panar Seiitkhankyzy (KAZ). In the U-23 men’s finals, India delivered an impressive showing with two gold medal finishes. Vishvanath Suresh (50kg) clinched gold after a closely fought 3:2 victory over Japan’s Daichi Iwai, according to a press release. Ganga (55kg) also secured gold, edging past Kazakhstan’s Bexulatn Boranbek by a 3:2 split decision. Vanshaj (65kg) fought valiantly in the final but settled for silver after a 4:1 loss to Ergashev.

UP Challengers Victory In The 6th Wheelchair Cricket Championship

Chandigarh: The UP Challengers emerged victorious in the grand finale of the 6th Wheelchair Cricket Championship 2026, defeating Chhattisgarh Fighters by 68 runs at the Law Ground, Panjab University, Chandigarh. Batting first after winning the toss, UP Challengers posted an impressive 153/4 in 15 overs, powered by a brilliant unbeaten 63 by Hublal and a blistering 36 off just 16 balls by Jaydev Yadav. In reply, Chhattisgarh Fighters were restricted to 85/7 in their allotted 15 overs, despite a fighting 57 not out by Komal Yadav. Basantlal Bind starred with the ball, claiming 3 wickets, while Rinku chipped in with 2 wickets to seal a comprehensive victory for UP Challengers. Geographic The closing and prize distribution ceremony was graced by Parminder Pal Singh, IAS, renowned Punjabi actress Diljott, and Kavita Rawat, President,



Wheelchair Cricket Federation of India (WCFI). The dignitaries felicitated the champions, runners-up, and outstanding performers by presenting trophies, medals and awards, while congratulating all the players for their exceptional performances and inspiring spirit of resilience. In a remarkable display of skill and athletic resilience, UP Challengers produced a dominant all-round performance to defeat Chhattisgarh Fighters by 68 runs in the grand finale, lifting the prestigious 6th Wheelchair Cricket Cham-

pionship title. The high-stakes final was held at the Panjab University Cricket Ground in Chandigarh. Organised by the Wheelchair Cricket Federation of India (WCFI) in partnership with regional development bodies, the two-day national tournament brought together top para-cricketers from across the country under the inspiring theme, “Breaking Barriers, Building Champions Through Inclusive Cricket.” The hero of the first innings was UP Challengers’ Hublal, who anchored the innings with a masterclass unbeaten knock of 63 runs. He was brilliantly supported by Jaydev Yadav, who provided explosive late-overs momentum by smashing 36 runs off just 16 balls, propelling UP to an imposing score of 153.

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