

The Supreme Court considers specialized courts and highlights obstacles and delays in Manipur violence investigations

New Delhi, July 26: The Supreme Court announced on Friday that it is thinking of establishing special trial tribunals to hold daily hearings in criminal cases related to the ethnic violence in Manipur in 2023. It also instructed investigating agencies to speed ongoing investigations. The Manipur government was instructed by a bench made up of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohan, to give the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Special Investigation Teams (SITs) all the support they require. The bench noted that the agencies have reported encountering numerous obstacles in conducting their investigations. The Supreme Court stated, “We tentatively propose to constitute special courts with the concurrence of the State of Manipur and the High Courts of Manipur and Guwahati in order to take up



trials on a daily basis.” The SITs are investigating 3,020 instances pertaining to the violence in eight districts of Manipur, the bench was informed. Of these, 301 cases have charge sheets submitted, 41 cases have charges framed, and just

10 cases have started trials. The prosecution plans to question 2,924 witnesses in all of these instances, the Supreme Court added. With regard to the investigations being carried out by the CBI, the agency informed the apex court that it has

filed charge sheets in 21 of the 31 cases transferred to it. It submitted that supplementary investigations are underway in 11 cases, while closure reports have been filed in six matters, three of which have been accepted by the competent court.

Four cases continue to remain under investigation. Citing the state’s precarious peace and order situation, the CBI further informed the court of the practical challenges impacting the investigations. It claimed that because many witnesses had been relocated as a result of the violence, it had been especially difficult to record statements and question them. Attorneys also told the bench that field investigations in areas affected by violence had been hampered by movement restrictions and that extended internet outages had negatively impacted the gathering of digital evidence. Taking note of these limitations, the Supreme Court noted that even if the investigating agencies were dealing with real challenges, the investigations could not continue in an open-ended manner and had to be finished in a reasonable amount of time. The court

directed the Manipur Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police to extend all necessary assistance to the investigating agencies and assess what additional logistical or administrative support could be provided to facilitate the investigations. Additionally, it requested a new status report on the investigations’ progress and instructed the authorities to gather information on all FIRs in which charge sheets have already been filed or investigations are still ongoing. The International Meitei Organization’s application for a CBI investigation into the disappearance of roughly thirty people was also taken into consideration by the top court. The applicants were instructed to contact the Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court, who may decide to assign the matter to a SIT or any other suitable forum.

In a statewide crackdown, Manipur security forces apprehend a woman drug dealer and four militants

Imphal, July 26: As part of increased counter-insurgency and anti-drug operations around the state, Manipur’s security forces have detained four hardcore militants from various insurgent groups and a female drug trafficker in the last 24 hours, officials said on Friday. The four detained militants are members of the United Kuki National Army (UKNA), Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), and Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), according to a senior police official. During different operations, they were captured from the districts of Tengnoupal, Bishnupur, and Imphal East. A 9mm pistol with a magazine and 11 live rounds of ammunition of different calibres were recovered from the possession of the arrested KYKL militant, identified as Mayanglabam Tomba Singh alias Lakpa (39). Police said the arrested militant was involved in an explosion at a petrol pump in Moirang earlier. The arrested UKNA militant, identified as S. Palal Kuki alias Lalboi Singson, is the outfit’s Finance Head and is allegedly involved in multiple incidents of firing and extortion, the official said. The police official also said that acting on a request from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Patna, the Manipur Police detained T.H. Kaoni, a proclaimed offender wanted in a case being investigated by the central agency. The accused was then turned over to the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the CBI in Imphal. The accused has been charged under several sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for allegedly utilizing fake and forged legal documents, according to police. After reportedly avoiding an investigation and trial, the Special Judicial Magistrate, CBI, Patna, issued a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against him and labeled him a proclaimed offender. The police officer added that Leila, a 30-year-old drug dealer from the Thoubal district’s Lilong Police Station, was apprehended by Manipur Police. Ten soap cases containing 389 grams of heroin were found in her possession by the police during the operation. In the meantime, major crackdowns against militants have been carried out by the security forces, who are made up of Central and state agencies. Search operations and area dominance exercises are currently taking place in vulnerable, mixed-population, and periphery areas around the state. To stop the passage of militants, other hostile elements, and suspicious vehicles, 112 nakas and checkpoints have been set up throughout Manipur’s valley and hill regions.

Assam’s chief minister congratulates Jhandu Kumar on India’s first medal at the 2026 CWG

Guwahati, July 26: On July 25, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma congratulated Jhandu Kumar, a para powerlifter, on earning India’s first medal at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. India won its first medal of the Games when Jhandu Kumar won the bronze in the Men’s Heavyweight Para Powerlifting competition. Sarma expressed his congratulations on X, praising the athlete’s incredible accomplishment and inspirational journey, saying that his feat has made the country proud.

“This is India’s first medal from #CWG2026! Kudos to Jhandu Kumar for taking home the bronze in the Men’s Heavyweight Para Powerlifting competition. The country is proud of his inspirational path and outstanding accomplishment. The Chief Minister add-



ed, “I wish him continued success and many more accolades for India.” India’s campaign at the multi-sport event got off to a positive

start with Jhandu Kumar’s podium finish, which represents the country’s maiden medal at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

A delegation from the Tiwa Students’ Union meets with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

Guwahati, July 26: In the best interests of the Tiwa people, a special delegation from the All Tiwa Students’ Union (ATSU) central committee visited Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Chief Minister of Assam, and presented him with six fundamental demands. The chief minister addressed the concerns in de-



tail and responded favorably to their requests. The chief minister promised to provide

the Tiwa Autonomous Council (TAC) ST status as soon as possible. Additionally, the chief minister pledged to organize elections for the TAC as soon as the constituency delimitation procedure, the verification of the voter lists of the newly added 113 revenue villages, and the reversion of earlier voter lists

were finished. Reconsidering the government’s plan to construct a hydroelectric facility in Karbi Anglong was another topic of discussion during the conference. Soon after the MP by-election, the chief minister also promised land pattas to indigenous tribes and eviction drives in PGR, VGR, and NC holdings.

Innovation, Branding, and Market Connections Meghalaya MLA: Crucial to Expanding Northeast’s Indigenous Products Worldwide

Shillong, July 26: Dr. Mehtab Chandee A. Sangma, a Gambegre MLA, stated on Friday that the region’s distinctive heritage products have the potential to become globally competitive businesses and urged greater branding, innovation, and market connections to turn the Northeast’s indigenous products into globally recognized brands. Speaking at the opening of the National Buyer-Seller Meet-cum-Exhibition on Indigenous and Heritage Products of North East India at the College of Community Science, Central Agricultural University, Tura, Sangma encouraged manufacturers, craftspeople, and business owners to look beyond local markets by fusing traditional craftsmanship with cutting-edge technology, creative de-

sign, and quality standards. “Today, I would like to tell you all that we have to look beyond the local market. We must create brands recognised globally from the Northeast by combining our traditional craftsmanship with modern technology and design, while ensuring high-quality products,” he said. According to Sangma, the region’s Geographical Indication (GI) products have enormous potential if they are backed by more robust market connections. “I invite all of the buyers and investors here today to consider the Northeast as a partner in sustainable and inclusive growth, in addition to a sourcing destination,” he continued. Sangma emphasized the wider importance of indigenous businesses, saying

that funding them would support women’s empowerment, cultural preservation, wildlife conservation, and rural development. He called on academic institutions, manufacturers, investors, and other interested parties to create an environment that promotes creativity, increases market access, and guarantees producers receive just compensation. Referring to the country’s vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, he said the Northeast should leverage its diversity, natural resources and resilient people to build an economically vibrant, sustainable and socially inclusive development model. By giving craftsmen, startups, entrepreneurs, investors, and buyers a common platform, the buyer-seller meet was designed to close



the gap between the Northeast’s rich indigenous production base and market access, according to Dr. Jyoti V. Vastrad, dean of the College of Community Science. With 178 artists enrolled, 72 exhibition stalls, and 15 live demonstration units, she said the festival had drawn participation from all eight Northeastern states. In order to increase market potential for indigenous and heritage products, the exhibition seeks to promote direct interaction be-

tween producers, consumers, and investors. Satinder Kumar Bhalla, Secretary of the North Eastern Council; Prof. Dipjyoti Rajkhowa, Vice-Chancellor of Assam Agricultural University; former Vice-Chancellor Dr. K.M. Bujar Baruah; Ankur Jain, Deputy Inspector General of Police (AP), Assam; and Prof. Anupam Mishra, Vice-Chancellor of the Central Agricultural University, who oversaw the program, were among those in attendance.

COTU calls on the Center to examine the Manipur blockade

Imphal, July 26: The Committee on Tribal Unity (COTU), Sadar Hills, Kangpokpi, has vehemently denounced what it called persistent physical assaults, intimidation, and extortion of non-tribal communities in Manipur’s hill districts. It claims that these acts are being committed under the pretense of the ongoing inter-district economic blockade. In a news release on July 25, COTU claimed that during the blockade of supply routes to Kuki-Zo inhabited areas, non-tribal people of Kangpokpi’s hill regions had been harassed. The group cited a recently released video that allegedly showed a non-tribal person being beaten by a group at Namdulong, asserting that the incident was part of a larger pattern of cash extortion and intimidation connected to the blockade. COTU further claimed that the blockade has persisted despite the arrest of suspects in relation to the murders of six people, characterizing it as a politically motivated exercise rather than an actual battle for justice.

The group said that multiple Kuki-Zo villages in the districts of Noney, Tamenglong, Ukhrul, and Kamjong were desecrated and mentioned the deaths of three church leaders and fifteen other Kuki-Zo community members during the ethnic conflict. COTU called for quick action and asked the Manipur and Indian governments to examine what it called a “appeasement policy” toward the organizations imposing the blockade. It stated that Kuki communities, Gorkhas, Bihari settlers, and other local residents have all been impacted by the protracted economic embargo.

In Brief

At Orang, Minister Charan Boro participates in the return Rath Yatra

Guwahati : The return Rath Yatra of Jagannath Mahaprabhu took place on July 24, concluding a festival celebrated from July 16 to 24, originating from Roumari to Baligaon in the Udalguri district’s Mazbat Assembly constituency. The Rath Yatra commenced on July 16 and involved a journey to the Jagannath Temple in Baligaon, where the Gundicha festival was organized by Gopal Mandal with support from local residents. During the festival, various religious rituals were observed, including Balya Bhog, community meals, and Aarti. The return journey featured the participation of Mazbat MLA and Transport Minister Charan Boro, alongside many devotees and locals. The minister also attended another Rath Yatra program at Lamabari, with notable presence from BPF leaders and members such as Benudhar Adhikari, Saurabh Saikia, Nabajyoti Kurmi, and Mitali Basumatary.

In Doomdooma, students demonstrate against the NEET paper leak

Guwahati: On Wednesday and Friday, students from various educational institutions demonstrated against the NEET paper leak in front of the Gandhi statue in the town center. Supporting the nonviolent protesters at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, they denounced the police brutality against the students and called for the immediate resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who they claimed chose to remain silent rather than address the issue with the students. They claimed that as an Education Minister, he has not demonstrated the kind of accountability that he ought to have.

Axam Xahitya Xabha provides flood relief in Jorhat and Golaghat

Guwahati: Under the direction of its President, Dr. Basanta Kumar Goswami, a delegation from the Axam Xahitya Xabha’s central office visited flood-affected regions of Baliati and Goalgaon in the Golaghat district on Friday and gave relief supplies to about 300 flood victims. Drinking water bottles, ORS packets, cookies, chira-muri (flattened and puffed rice), soap, medications, incense sticks that repel mosquitoes, candles, and matchboxes were among the relief supplies. Dr. Goswami spoke with the residents affected by the flood and conveyed his sympathy for their plight. The team also partially distributed relief supplies in the Jorhat district’s Sholmora and Chengelijati regions on its way back. It should be noted that a few of Xabha supporters also provided vital supplies for the flood relief effort.

NCB breaks up a cross-border drug network and apprehends a drug lord from Myanmar in Manipur

Imphal, July 26: An international drug trafficking network that operates throughout Northeastern India has suffered a significant setback with the arrest of an alleged drug kingpin from Myanmar by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in Manipur’s Churachandpur district. The NCB named the accused as Nengzatuau, also known as Tuanpi, a resident of Haichin in Chin State, Myanmar, in a statement released on Wednesday, July 22. After months of coordinated interstate activities, technical surveillance, intelligence collection, and ongoing investigations, the arrest was made. According to the agency, investigations revealed that Nengzatuau was one of the principal international suppliers operating from Chin State,



controlling a cross-border drug trafficking network that smuggled methamphetamine and heroin through Manipur, Mizoram, Assam and Tripura for distribution across different parts of India and Bangladesh. The NCB said the accused was wanted in multiple cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and is the principal accused in three NCB cases involving the seizure of 28.22 kg of methamphetamine tablets and 1.278 kg of heroin, with an estimated value of more than

₹25 crore. He is also linked to seven other NDPS cases registered by Churachandpur Police, Singnat Police in Manipur and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI). The syndicate operated through a well-organized network of foreign suppliers, cross-border couriers, transport coordinators, local facilitators, receivers, and financial handlers, according to investigators. The NCB claims that the network has so far been connected to the recovery of heroin, methamphetamine, and proceeds of crime totaling more than ₹53 crore. Through intelligence-driven operations that led to the arrest of many key agents in Manipur and Assam, the agency claimed to have methodically dismantled the syndicate over the course of several months.

Three New Helipads for Meghalaya Are Approved by the Center

Shillong, July 26: According to Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, the Center has approved three new helipads for Meghalaya, runway development at Umroi Airport in Shillong is scheduled to start in a few weeks, and Baljek Airport is starting an expansion phase under a Union Civil Aviation Ministry project. The activities are anticipated to help the Center’s efforts to extend aviation infrastructure throughout the Northeast, enhance access to rural locations, and promote regional air connectivity. According to Sangma, the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation has decided to approve three of the nine helipads proposed by the State government right away. Following August 15, Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu is anticipated to visit Meghalaya and announce the final locations. Speaking about the Umroi Airport project, Sangma said the tender process had been completed and the work awarded, with construction expected to begin within the next few weeks. “The expansion of the runway at Umroi Airport is moving in the right direction. The tender has been completed, the work has been allotted and we expect the physical work for the runway extension to begin within a few weeks. Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu intends to visit Meghalaya after August 15 to monitor the expansion work,” he said. On Baljek Airport in West Garo Hills, the Chief Minister said the airport would be expanded under a new Civil Aviation Ministry scheme. “We talked about Baljek Airport as well. Baljek Airport is expanding under the Aviation Ministry’s new plan. Under order to operate smaller planes, the Ministry would invest more than Rs 60 crore, and talks with operators are under progress,” Sangma stated. Sangma emphasized the Center’s emphasis on enhancing helicopter connectivity throughout the Northeast and stated that the Ministry was eager to increase aviation connections by building more helipads. “The Indian government plans to build additional helipads in the northeast. The Ministry has agreed to approve three of the nine locations we suggested right away. We are finalizing the places, which will be revealed after August 15 when the Minister is scheduled to visit Meghalaya,” he stated.

Meghalaya will move the stalled Pohkseh water project, while the New Shillong scheme is scheduled for 2027

Shillong, July 26: The Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department was instructed by the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly’s Estimates Committee on July 22 to find a new location for the Pohkseh Water Supply Scheme, which has been halted since the project’s pumping mechanism failed a few years ago. The committee added that the New Shillong Water Supply Scheme’s first phase is still scheduled to be finished by December 2027. The committee received the instructions while inspecting the Pohkseh Water Supply Scheme, the New Shillong Water Supply Scheme at Mawpdang, and the Shillong Technology Campus’s second IT Park

Building. The inspection was led by committee chairman Mayralborn Syiem and attended by members Miani D Shira, Renikton Lyngdoh Tongkhar and Remington G Momin, along with officials from the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Secretariat, the PHE Department and the Information Technology Department. Speaking after the inspection at Pohkseh, Syiem said the existing pumping system had collapsed several years ago, forcing the committee to recommend relocation of the project. He said the department has been instructed to identify a suitable site and prepare revised estimates so work can resume at the earliest. He also acknowl-



edged the Dorbar Shnong of Pohkseh for providing land for the project and said construction can begin once the new location is finalised. The committee was briefed by officials at Mawpdang on the status of the New Shillong Water Supply Scheme,

including the treatment plant and other infrastructure that has already been put in place. The first phase of the project, which includes the dam, main gravity line, and treatment plant, is anticipated to be finished and put into service by December 2027,

according to Syiem, who also stated that the project’s financial and physical progress was satisfactory. According to him, the second phase will entail building a distribution network to provide water to several New Shillong neighborhoods.

According to Tripura Chief Minister Saha, Agartala is on a fast track to become a significant Northeast urban hub

Agartala, July 26: Tripura Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha on Thursday said the state government is committed to transforming Agartala into one of the most promising urban centres in the Northeast and is working towards that goal through sustained infrastructure and civic development. Addressing a gathering at Astabal Maidan after inaugurating a series of development projects undertaken by the Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC), Saha stressed the need to keep the city clean, green, healthy, technology-driven and cit-



izen-friendly. Emphasising transparency and accountability in governance, he said improving the quality of life of citizens remains the government’s central objective and reaffirmed its commitment to providing modern, accessible and quality civic services. In the presence of Mayor Dipak

Majumder, the Chief Minister said the government’s goal is to deliver efficient public services through the effective use of technology. He also stressed the importance of ensuring the direct transfer of benefits to people so that citizens continue to have confidence in government programmes and services. Saha expressed hope that the newly inaugurated civic projects would benefit every resident of the city. He said the transformation witnessed in Agartala over the past few years was clearly visible and that the new projects would

further accelerate the city’s development. Taking a swipe at the Opposition, the Chief Minister said its leaders were concerned over the increasing number of people joining the government’s development initiatives. He alleged that, out of frustration, the Opposition was attempting to mislead the public through misinformation campaigns. He also accused the Opposition of disrupting development works in the name of protests and urged it to refrain from such activities, warning that doing so would further isolate it from the people.

CM Sangma Promises a Special Fund for Equitable Development in Every Meghalaya District

Shillong, July 26: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Thursday said the government remained committed to ensuring equitable development across all districts by supporting locally identified priorities, asserting that the CM’s Special Development Fund (CMSDF) has become an important instrument for addressing the immediate developmental needs of communities across the state. Speaking after distributing sanction letters under the CMSDF at his official residence here, CM Sangma said the fund enables the government to provide timely assistance for projects that directly improve the quality of life of people while complementing larger development programmes. “The CMSDF continues to serve as an important instrument for responding to the immediate developmental needs of communities. It allows us to extend timely support to projects that have a direct impact on people’s lives,” the Chief Minister said.

He urged beneficiaries and implementing agencies to ensure that the sanctioned projects are executed efficiently and completed within the stipulated timeframe so that local communities receive maximum benefit from the initiatives. The financial assistance has been extended to a wide range of community institutions, educational establishments, sports organisations and local bodies for infrastructure development and public service projects across Meghalaya. Among the beneficiaries were Synjuk Rangbah Shnong Dorbar Raid Mathan, Chibak Agalgitim Sports & Cultural Club, Laitnongrim Upper Primary School, Church of God (M&A), Sohryngkham, Rangthong Cultural Club and Sports Association, Reach Shillong Ministries, Mizo Women Welfare Society, Umpling Presbyterian Secondary School, St. Anthony’s Higher Secondary School, besides community representatives from different district.

Assam CM talks about Koch Rajbongshi community issues with a delegation from AKRSU



Guwahati, July 26: On July 25, a delegation from the All Koch Rajbongshi Students Union (AKRSU) met with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at Loksewa Bhawan to discuss concerns pertaining to the Koch Rajbongshi community. Assam Minister Ashwini Ray Sarkar, MLAs Jibesh Ray, Dharmeswar Roy, and Rupam Chandra Ray, Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Executive Member Karmeswar Ray, and Kamatpur Autonomous Council Chairman Hiteswar Barman were present at the meeting. The Chief Minister stated that the conversation was on the goals, growth, and well-being of the Koch Rajbongshi community. The conversations addressed a range of topics intended to advance the community’s general well-being and socioeconomic advancement. According to the Chief Minister, the state administration is still dedicated to resolving the Koch Rajbongshi community’s issues through ongoing communication and development-focused programs.

In a statewide crackdown, Manipur security forces apprehend a woman drug dealer and four militants

Imphal, July 26: As part of increased counter-insurgency and anti-drug operations around the state, Manipur’s security forces have detained four hardcore militants from various insurgent groups and a female drug trafficker in the last 24 hours, officials said on Friday. The four detained militants are members of the United Kuki National Army (UKNA), Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), and Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), according to a senior police official. During different operations, they were captured from the districts of Tengenoupal, Bishnupur, and Imphal East. A 9mm pistol with a magazine and 11 live rounds of ammunition of different calibres were recovered from the possession of the arrested KYKL militant, identified as Mayanglambam Tomba Singh alias Lakpa (39). Police said the arrested militant was involved in an explosion at a petrol pump in Moirang earlier. According to the official, the arrested UKNA member, S. Palal Kuki, also known as Lalboi Singson, is the group’s Finance Head and has allegedly been engaged in several fire and extortion events. The police officer added that the Manipur Police held T.H. Karoni, a declared offender wanted in a case under investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Patna, at their request. The accused was then turned over to the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the CBI in Imphal. The accused has been charged under several sections of the Indian Penal Code



(IPC) for allegedly utilizing fake and forged legal documents, according to police. A non-bailable warrant (NBW) had been issued against him by the Special Judicial Magistrate, CBI, Patna, and he had been declared a proclaimed offender after allegedly evading investigation and trial. The police official further said that Manipur Police arrested a woman drug trafficker, identified as Leila (30), from her locality under Lilong Police Station in Thoubal district. During the operation, police seized 10 soap cases containing 389 grams of heroin from her possession. In the meantime, major crackdowns against militants have been carried out by the security forces, who are made up of Central and state agencies.

The center has approved Rs 60 crore for the Baljek renovation, and the Shillong airport runway expansion would start in a few weeks

Shillong, July 26: On July 22, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma announced significant advancements in the state’s aviation infrastructure. He said that the Center has approved more than Rs 60 crore to upgrade Baljek Airport in Garo Hills, and that the long-awaited expansion of the Umroi Airport runway will start in the coming weeks. After visiting New Delhi, Sangma briefed reporters that he met with senior ministry officials and the Union Civil Aviation Minister to discuss a number of aviation projects that would enhance Meghalaya’s air connectivity. “The tender has been completed, the



work has been allotted, and we expect that within a few weeks,

the actual physical work for the extension of the runway will start,” Sangma added. The Union Civil Aviation Minister is anticipated to travel to Shillong after August 15 to personally assess the state of the runway expansion works, he continued. Additionally, the Chief Minister declared that Baljek Airport expansion will be pursued under a new aviation plan by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. He stated that in order to improve the airport’s infrastructure and facilitate airline operations, the Center will invest more than ₹60 crore. Addition-

ally, the ministry is negotiating with operators to launch 19-seater Dornier aircraft services from Baljek. “We have been waiting for this for quite some time. Despite several challenges in the past, things are finally moving in the right direction, and I expect work at Baljek Airport to begin soon after the necessary paperwork is completed,” Sangma said. In another boost to regional connectivity, the Chief Minister said the state government has proposed nine locations for new helipads and heliports under the Centre’s plan to expand helicop-

ter connectivity across the Northeast. According to Sangma, the ministry has given in-principle approval for three locations, with the state currently finalising the details. “The Indian government is eager to enhance helicopter connectivity in the Northeast and Meghalaya. “The three locations will be announced once they are finalized and approved,” he stated. Sangma also stated that during his planned visit to Meghalaya after August 15, the Union Civil Aviation Minister is expected to formally announce the approved heliport locations.

At Sukhna Lake, BRICS delegates participate in a walkathon



New Delhi, July 26: Chandigarh, On Thursday morning, the participants in the sixteenth BRICS Health Ministers’ meeting participated in a walkathon at Sukhna Lake.”The ‘BRICS Mission for a Healthy Lifestyle’ is one of the agenda items for this BRICS meeting,” stated Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava, who also participated in the walkathon.On Wednesday morning, she claimed, there was a yoga class, and on Thursday, they went for a stroll around Sukhna Lake.This walkathon’s goal is to encourage healthy living, emphasizing both exercise and a balanced diet, so that we can spread the word about “Stop Obesity” to everyone,” she stated. According to her, the delegates enthusiastically participated, walking considerably farther than the intended path.We are optimistic and convinced that the message of preventing obesity and adopting a healthy lifestyle will spread throughout the

entire world through these events, the yoga classes, and the walkathon,” she stated. The sixteenth BRICS Health Ministers’ meeting, which India is hosting from July 22–24 as part of its BRICS chairmanship 2026, will bring together senior health officials and health ministers from the bloc nations to strengthen collaboration on pandemic preparation, digital health, and health security.In order to accomplish the health-related Sustainable Development Goals, greater multilateral cooperation is required, according to Srivastava, who opened the meeting of senior officials on Wednesday. Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa are among the key emerging economies that make up BRICS, an international organization.As part of its BRICS 2026 chairmanship, India successfully held the BRICS meeting on Traditional, Complementary, and Integrative Medicine here on Tuesday. The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Ayush collaborated to organize the four-day BRICS Health Track events in Chandigarh, which included the summit.

Seven men get life imprisonment for 2012 murder of Zainal Ali in Rangia

Rangia, July 26: In a landmark judgment, the Additional District and Sessions Judge of Rangia, Mukul Chetia, sentenced seven convicts involved in the death of one Zainal Ali to life imprisonment and fined them Rs 5,000 each. The convicts were identified as Atabar Rahman, Ayeb Rahman, Mojibur Rahman, Abdul Ali, Achan Ali, Haider Ali, and Hus-sain Ali.

According to the Additional Public Prosecutor Debojit Saikia, the incident took place on January 26, 2012, when an argument

broke out in front of Zainal Ali’s house over road work in the village. The accused later attacked Zainal Ali with knives, shovels, and sticks, seriously injuring him. He was initially given first aid in Rangia but was admitted to GMCH in critical condition after his health deteriorated. He died 20 days later while undergoing treatment. A case (No. 37/2012) was registered in connection with the incident. After a lengthy trial of 14 years, the court convicted and sentenced the seven men on Wednesday.

India is increasing medical education; since 2014, the number of medical colleges has more than doubled

New Delhi, July 26: New Delhi According to Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel on Friday, there are now 844 medical institutions in India, up from 387 in 2014. Additionally, undergraduate MBBS seats have increased from 51,348 to 1,39,489.The minister added that post-graduate medical seats had grown from 31,185 to 86,360 within the same time period in a written response to a question in the Lok Sabha.The minister stated that the expansion of MBBS seats and the creation of new medical institutions in underprivileged and distant areas are anticipated to increase the number of physicians available and improve healthcare delivery nationwide.Patel also emphasized how the MBBS curriculum incorporates the Family Adoption Program. Under the programme, medical colleges adopt villages, while MBBS students adopt families within those villages to provide regular follow-up on vaccination, growth monitoring, menstrual hygiene, iron and folic acid supplementation, nutrition, healthy lifestyle practices, vector control and medication adherence. She mentioned that as part of their training, postgraduate medical students must



complete a three-month posting at district hospitals under the National Medical Commission’s District Residency Program.The program’s goal is to improve healthcare services in underprivileged and rural communities.

In response to a query about the effect of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, Patel stated that an assessment carried out on behalf of NITI Aayog revealed positive results, such as better infrastructure and increased community traffic as a result of increased access to all-inclusive primary healthcare services. Better access to non-communicable illness care, outpatient services, free medications, and diagnostic facilities were mentioned in the study.The minister claims that while digital platforms like e-Sanjeevani have increased access to expert consultations,

the deployment of Community Health Officers has improved frontline health-care delivery.According to Patel, the National Health Mission uses review meetings, field visits, mid-term evaluations, service delivery benchmarks, and yearly Common Review Missions to routinely analyze the effectiveness of health programs.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has started a number of initiatives to improve service delivery, such as the Swasth Bharat Portal to improve digital interoperability, integrated training modules in partnership with regional training institutes, and increased use of the Drugs and Vaccine Distribution Management System to improve supply chain management and drug inventory. In order to increase community involvement, the ministry has also created standardized information, education, and communication materials for beneficiary outreach, updated guidelines for village health, sanitation, and nutrition committees and Jan Arogya Samitis, and implemented incentive programs at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs to improve healthcare staff retention, she continued.

Bijendra Gupta, the primary suspect in the Maharashtra TET paper leak, was detained in Bihar

New Delhi, July 26: Bijendra Kumar Gupta, the primary suspect in the Maharashtra Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) paper leak case, was taken into custody by the Bhiwandi Police from Bihar.Gupta has been transported to Pune Airport and will be moved to Bhiwandi for additional legal processes, according to the police.Three workers of an Agra-based printing press were detained by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) looking into the Maharashtra TET-2026 paper leak on July 5 for allegedly leaking the exam paper during the printing process. This brings the overall number of arrests in the case to ten, as HT previously reported. Gupta had remained absconding at the time.The accused have been identified as

Nareshkumar Puranchand Mahore (35), Sanjaykumar Sureshchandra Chandra (44), and Babulal Narayansingh Kushwaha (45). They were brought from Delhi and produced before a Bhiwandi court on Saturday, which remanded them to police custody till July 9. According to the SIT, Mahore allegedly leaked the question paper from the printing press and passed it on to former employee Sanjay Kumar Sharma and another absconding accused, Sonu Kumar. Investigators alleged that the two then supplied the leaked paper to Bijendra Gupta, who is believed to be the mastermind behind the racket.Police said Sharma had worked as the printing press’s packaging head until two years ago, while Sonu Kumar had previous-



ly worked in the same department.Investigators suspect the accused used their familiarity with the printing process to gain access to the confidential question papers.Sumit Jadhav, the public prosecutor, told HT at the time, “We requested the remand of the accused before the court to ascertain since when they had been associated with Gupta, the amount they were paid for leaking the papers, and to investigate their ex-

act role and involvement in the conspiracy.

The court gave us their remand till July 9.” Three live rounds were also found by police in one of the detained suspects.”The recovery of three live cartridges from one of the accused also makes the investigation significant,” stated Vijay Marathe, ACP, Bhiwandi. We must find out where he obtained the cartridges and why he had them.

Dimapur’s DoT and BSNL Pension Adalat Set



Kohima, July 26: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), in coordination with BSNL NE II Telecom Circle, will organise a dedicated Pension Adalat for pensioners of DoT and BSNL under the North East-II Telecom Circle on July 31 at the BSNL NE II Circle Office, Dimapur.The programme, scheduled to begin from 10 am onwards at the Conference Hall of the Circle Office, is aimed at providing a direct platform for retired employees to raise and resolve pension-related grievances. The initiative is part of the government’s broader effort to ensure timely disposal of pension complaints and improve services for retired personnel.According to officials, the Pension Adalat will address issues related to pension processing, payment discrepancies, delays in settlement of retirement benefits and other concerns faced by pensioners. The platform will allow beneficiaries to interact directly with concerned officials for faster resolution of pending matters.The NE II Telecom Circle, which includes Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, conducts Pension Adalats on a rotational basis every quarter to ensure that pensioners across the region have easier access to grievance redressal mechanisms. Besides Dimapur, such programmes are organised at

locations including Imphal and Itanagar, as well as other centres where a large number of pensioners are residing.Officials encouraged pensioners to submit their grievances before the event to enable proper review and timely action. Complaints can be submitted through various channels, including email, the SAMPANN portal, Speed Post, physical submission at offices, or WhatsApp. The SAMPANN (System for Accounting and Management of Pension) platform is used by the Department of Telecommunications to streamline pension processing and provide digital services to telecom pensioners. The grievance mechanism aims to reduce delays and improve transparency in pension-related services. The DoT and BSNL have urged pensioners to make use of the opportunity and participate in the Adalat to seek resolution of pending issues.

For further information and assistance, pensioners may contact the toll-free number 1800 345 3809 or the office contact number 03862 229061.The initiative is expected to benefit retired employees across the North East-II Telecom Circle by bringing pension-related services closer to beneficiaries and strengthening the grievance redressal system.

A Review of Dharmendra Pradhan’s Political Career Following His Resignation

New Delhi, July 26: Amidst the continuing statewide demonstrations over paper leaks and irregularities in exams, Dharmendra Pradhan submitted his resignation as education minister on Saturday. Dharmendra Pradhan was born in Talcher, Odisha, on June 26, 1969. His parents are Debendra Pradhan and Basant Manjari Pradhan. He graduated from Utkal University in Vani Vihar, Odisha, with a master’s degree in anthropology. During his time in college, Pradhan started his political career with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP).In 1983, while attending Talcher College, he became an ABVP activist. He was elected president of the Talcher College Students’ Union in 1985. He advanced through the organization’s ranks over the course of the following ten years, becoming ABVP’s State Secretary in 1993 and National Secretary in



1995. In 1998, he became a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).From 2000 to 2004, Pradhan was a member of the Odisha Legislative Assembly after entering the state’s election system.During this time, he was named National Secretary of the BJP in 2002 and president of the BJP Youth Wing (BJYM) in Odisha in 2001.He was elected to the 14th Lok Sabha in 2004. He was named National President of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) in the same year. Pradhan was a member of a number of committees and parliamentary bodies. After joining

the Lok Sabha in 2004, he served on the Committees on Petitions and Energy.He was a member of the Standing Committee on Energy starting in August 2007.He served on the Committee on Government Assurances from 2012 to 2014. Additionally, from May 2012 to October 2013, he was a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee that looked into matters pertaining to the distribution and cost of telecom licenses and spectrum.He was elected to the 18th Lok Sabha in June 2024 after serving as a member of parliament from April 2012 to 2018.

Over the years, Pradhan held a number of important positions in the Union government.He was appointed Minister of Natural Gas and Petroleum as well as Minister of Entrepreneurship and Skill Development in September 2017.He was Minister of Steel and Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas from May 2019 to July 2021.His appointment as Minister of Education and Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship on July 7, 2021, was a significant turning point in his political career.On June 9, 2024, he became the Union Cabinet Minister of Education after being elected to the 18th Lok Sabha in June 2024. Additionally, Pradhan received the Odisha Legislative Assembly’s highest legislative honor, the Utkalmani Gopabandhu Pratibha Sanman.On December 9, 1998, Dharmendra Pradhan wed Mridula Thakur Pradhan. A girl and a son are the couple’s two children.

Army commemorates Kargil heroes with a motorcycle display and Shaurya Sandhya

New Delhi, July 26: A number of events are scheduled for July 25–26 to commemorate the 27th anniversary of Operation Vijay, including Dras, a Shaurya Sandhya honoring the unwavering bravery shown by Indian soldiers during the Kargil conflict, a musical performance by the Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre Band, and a motorcycle display by “Shwet Ashwa.”These themed events, which will take place in a number of locations, including a forward post area called Sando Top in the Dras Sector, will center around the famous Kargil War Memorial at Dras. On Saturday, the eve of the anniversary, Yudh Sansmaran will start the celebration at the scenic Lamochoen viewpoint, which has a view of the old Kargil battleground. The occasion marks the glorious victory of 1999 when Indian soldiers, braving snow-clad peaks and relentless firing by Pakistani troops, reclaimed the heights of Kargil with unmatched courage and unwavering resolve, officials said.On Saturday morning, a ‘Yudh Sansmaran’ will commence with a 33-minute video clip, recounting the Kargil war and the country’s triumph under Operation VijayIt will be followed by a 17-minute commemorative clip honouring the 40 Kargil bravehearts whose next of kin will be in attendance, highlighting their extraordinary acts of courage, valour and supreme sacrifice, the officials said. Senior Army officers, Kargil war veterans, “Veer Naris” and “Veer Matas,” Major General Amit Prakash Singh, General Officer Commanding, Forever in



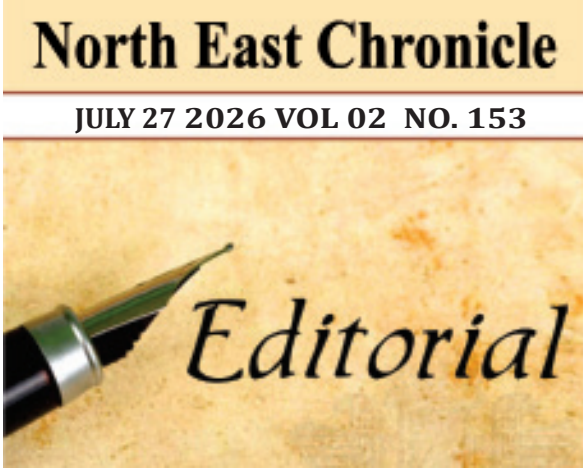
Operations Division, and others will be there, they added. Following Pakistan’s incursion in 1999, India launched a limited war against Pakistan known as Operation Vijay.On July 26, 1999, Kargil Vijay Diwas honors the conclusion of Operation Vijay.The Vishwanathan Stadium in Dras will host a “Gauravmaya Sanskriti” event on Saturday afternoon. This lively cultural display honors the Indian Army’s bravery, professionalism, and spirit of patriotism. The main guest at the function will be Lt Gen Madanraj Pande, GOC of the Fire and Fury Corps located in Leh.The event will include a number of performances, starting with the Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre Band’s patriotic musical performance, which will be followed by “Shwet Ashwa” Motorcycle’s motorcycle exhibition.According to the officials, riders demonstrated discipline, precision riding, and daring moves by Army riders.The Army will celebrate the triumph of Operation Vijay in the afternoon with a lavish feast called “Vi-

jay Bhoj” at the 16 Grenadiers Officers’ Mess.Defense Minister Rajnath Singh, who is expected to arrive here on Saturday, will attend the Army’s evening “Shaurya Sandhya” at the Kargil War Memorial. According to the officials, Singh will be the main guest at the event, which will be a somber homage to the unmatched bravery, selflessness, and unwavering spirit of the bravehearts of the Kargil conflict.Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Northern Command Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, and GOC of Fire and Fury Corps Lt Gen Pande will also be present at the occasion, according to the statement. To honor the heroes of the 1999 battle, the Army will hold a “Shradhanjali Samaroh” (wreath-laying ceremony) at the Kargil battle Memorial on Sunday. According to the officials, Singh will attend the event with the Army commander, along with a number of senior army officers, veterans of the Kargil War, the bravehearts’ families, civil dignitaries,

and active soldiers.”Gaurav Gatha,” which recounts the tremendous bravery, sacrifice, and victory of the Indian armed forces during the Kargil War, will be performed as part of the ceremony. The defense minister will then open a virtual walkthrough portal. During the nearly three-month-long struggle, these celebrations honor the fallen soldiers and celebrate India’s triumph in the pivotal engagements fought on the ice heights of Kargil. The ‘Shaurya Vijay Yatra’ flag-in from the National War Memorial in New Delhi to the Kargil War Memorial in Dras will mark the program’s conclusion and serve as a symbol of India’s unwavering commitment to preserving the legacy of its bravehearts.The anniversary serves as a potent reminder of the tenacity and solidarity that characterize India and is more than just a date on the calendar. According to the officials, it is a tribute to the warriors who bravely battled in frigid temperatures and rarefied air, making each peak a monument to their valor.

As the Modi government caves and a minister steps down, Abhijeet Dipke’s message to CJI Surya Kant

New Delhi, July 26: “I appreciate you referring to us as cockroaches.” That was what Abhijeet Dipke said to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday from the stage at Jantar Mantar, just minutes after Dharmendra Pradhan resigned as Union education minister due to pressure from the campaign that got its start and name from a statement made by the country’s highest court.The founder of the Cockroach Janta Party thanked supporters, saying, “I wouldn’t have come to India if he hadn’t called us cockroaches.” Without it, this movement would not have begun. The comment ties the movement’s history back to the Supreme Court hearing on Senior Advocate designation on May 15, when the Chief Justice said, “There are youngsters like cockroaches, who don’t get any employment and don’t have any place in the profession.” Later, Kant clarified that the statement was not intended for young people without jobs in general, but only for those with phony legal degrees.Since then, he has reaffirmed that he was misquoted by some media outlets. The comment went viral despite the explanations. Dipke, a Boston-based student with a background in communications for the Aam Aadmi Party, humorously launched the Cockroach Janta Party on May 16, targeting the unemployed and online commentators. This satirical initiative gained traction amid rising anger over the NEET-UG paper leak. After returning to India in early June, Dipke led protests demanding the resignation of Education Minister Pradhan. The movement intensified when educator-activist Sonam Wangchuk began a 26-day hunger strike on June 28, resulting in government assurances regarding protester safety and promises for examination reforms. Despite the end of Wangchuk’s fast, the call for Pradhan’s resignation persisted, even after police violence against protesters. Pradhan eventually resigned, citing student welfare and concerns over potential unrest at protests nationwide.



Why Small Shops Still Matter

The neighbourhood shop may not have the scale or technology of a large retail chain, but it offers something different—familiarity, convenience, and personal trust. Local shopkeepers often know their customers, understand neighbourhood needs, and provide services that large businesses cannot easily replicate.

At Jantar Mantar, juggling public ambitions, ideological changes, and pressing state needs

The Jantar Mantar has become the focal point of a complex movement to prevent industrial exploitation of Ladakh’s glacier ecosystem, especially with reference to local discourse. Climate change in Ladakh, a dubious constitutional march regarding Ladakh’s border region, and a youth-led demonstration demanding administrative responsibility in administering entrance exams like NEET-UG are all intersecting at this location. It poses a significant sociopolitical problem. A developing nation must strike a balance between the pressing demands of infrastructural development and national security while also upholding the freedom to protest, safeguarding the environment, and reforming governmental institutions. The Genesis of Discontent: From the Himalayan Frontier to Educational Transparency, the current unrest cannot be viewed through a single lens, as its roots are scattered across different sectors of governance. In the north, the movement led by Mr Sonam Wangchuk has flagged concerns regarding the Union Territory of Ladakh. Following the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which separated Ladakh from Jammu and Kashmir, a new administrative landscape emerged. A sizeable majority of the population in Leh welcomed the Union Territory status. Later on, a section of people either raised or nurtured the slow demand for statehood. A section of people are nurtured. Conversely, the population in the Kargil region has consistently voiced distinct political preferences, highlighting internal regional variations. The goal of Mr. Wangchuk’s fast is to immediately raise awareness of the need for Sixth Schedule administration, which offers constitutional protections for areas with a majority of tribal people. At first, Mr. Wangchuk expressed worry about safeguarding Ladakh’s glacier environment from industrial exploitation, especially with regard to the mining of essential minerals and rare-earth elements required for India’s technological future. Building military infrastruc-

ture, strategic tunnels, and all-weather highways to protect critical border regions next to China, however, is a conflicting goal for the state. In protest of the leaks and irregularities found during the NEET-UG entrance exam, student groups and organizations such as the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) have invaded the capital at the same time. The current unrest in India, particularly around competitive examinations, reflects broader systemic issues as young aspirants demand transparency in the examination system. Protests at Jantar Mantar are seen by security analysts as indicative of a geopolitical strategy, with fears that external forces, notably China, might exploit local grievances to propagate an anti-establishment narrative, akin to upheavals seen in Bangladesh and Nepal. Critics highlight that the enforcement of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act has hindered NGOs involved in these movements, while government supporters assert that the protests have been co-opted by anti-India factions. The situation is further complicated by the ongoing debate surrounding the New Education Policy and its revisions of school curricula, with a push to emphasize native Indian history over Mughal influences, stirring ideological disputes. While the government cites advancements in the educational sector and the need to address past paper leaks, opponents argue that these changes distort history and stifle genuine student concerns. Historical protests, like those against the Citizenship Amendment Act, serve as reminders that peaceful movements can be overtaken by disruptive elements, complicating the narrative and the struggle for meaningful discourse. Effective resolution may require fostering institutional discussions rather than engaging in protests, aiming for a balance between preserving indigenous rights and advancing educational infrastructure. Combining accountability with transparency could pave the way for a cohesive future amidst domestic challenges.

The increasing frequency of extreme weather events, such as sudden, intense rainfall in a brief period of time in Assam and nearby northeastern states, supports climate scientists’ warnings that global warming is causing climate change and that efforts to reduce carbon emissions must be intensified to lessen its effects. It is still crucial to accelerate the implementation of renewable energy projects in the area in order to greatly raise their proportion of the overall energy mix and lower the amount of fossil fuels used in the production of electricity. Rooftop solarisation (RTS) under the central government’s flagship scheme – PM Surya Ghar-Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSG-MBY) – is a crucial intervention to increase renewable electricity generation, but more households installing RTS projects hinge on the timely disbursement of subsidies provided by both the central and state governments. However, the

delay in releasing the state share of subsidies has significantly hindered more households in the state from adopting solar power for their electricity needs. The state made a remarkable achievement in building awareness among the people about the importance of the RTS project as the number of applicants surpassed the 4-lakh mark. However, the slow pace of installations compared to the surge in applications highlights the significant gap between public aspirations, enthusiasm, and the actual delivery by institutions. In contrast to large renewable energy projects, like large solar power projects, hydropower projects, pumped storage projects, etc., which involve issues of land acquisition, transmission infrastructure, and grid-connected RTSRTS, these projects are simple to install as long as the local power distribution companies grant timely approval; net metering systems are transparent and

user-friendly; and there are no systemic or procedural delays in the release of government subsidies to approved applicants. Since PMSG-MBY is a demand-driven program, demand for RTS project installation won’t increase until applicants are certain they will receive their subsidies on schedule. This situation requires the state government to address the timely release of its share of subsidies to help other applicants expedite their RTS project installations. The increasing adoption of solar power by households in the state will significantly contribute to the exclusive use of green energy for charging electric vehicles, whose numbers are projected to grow in the coming years. Currently, a large number of electric two- and three-wheelers in Guwahati city and elsewhere in the state are charged with electricity supplied through the grid, which is mostly fed by thermal power projects in the country. Evidently, the

rise in household electricity demand for charging EVs is also increasing due to a lack of a robust system of public charging facilities. More households adopting RTS projects can significantly reduce the demand for coal-fired power in the grid by meeting a substantial share of their charging load through clean and decentralised electricity generation. While more EVs on the roads will certainly reduce vehicular pollution to zero carbon emissions, a mere increase in their number is not going to help the country achieve the goal of carbon emission reduction if their charging load, be it at the public charging facility or through household electrical charging, is met by coal-fired power. Only when the demand for coal-fired power starts to decrease will the nation reach its goal of using renewable energy to cover 50% of its energy needs by 2030. The grim truth is that coal still accounts for the majority of

electricity generation, despite notable advancements in the production of renewable energy sources, such as solar power.

A spike in electricity demand brought on by economic and industrial expansion would only result in a rise in the demand for coal-fired power if the gap between the actual generation of electricity from coal-fired projects and renewable energy projects is not closed. Reversing the trend may cause India to stray from its 2030 renewable energy trajectory, further delaying the country’s goal of net zero carbon emissions. The states contributing their share in reducing demand for coal-fired power through an increase in solar and other renewable energy generation remain crucial. This situation demands that states like Assam and other north-eastern states prioritise RTS and other solar power projects to increase clean power generation in this ecologically fragile region.

Ecological risks associated with large hydropower projects in the high seismic zone comprising NE states also demand that the region first focus more on environmentally sustainable solar power projects, including RTS projects and small hydro projects, to meet the projected peak-hour demands of each state through clean power generation. To guarantee that RTS and other renewable energy projects go beyond establishing deadlines and conducting regular progress reviews, it is crucial to develop institutional capability for time-bound project implementation.

The nation’s renewable energy push to decarbonize the energy sector would continue to be mired in procedural delays if the state-level project implementation bottleneck is not eliminated. Assam will reach its renewable energy targets more quickly if the gap between applications and RTS project installation is closed.

Assamese post-disaster need assessment templates

A Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) is an important exercise for the rehabilitation of disaster-affected persons to help them reconstruct their lives from the ground up. It places a high priority on gathering data, analyzing it to accurately determine how disasters affect monsoon rainfall patterns and exacerbate landslides that cascade down from the mountains, choosing restoration priorities, and figuring out how much money to spend. Climate change’s effects on monsoon rainfall patterns and worsening landslides that cascade down from neighboring states’ hills have significantly altered Assam’s flood dynamics. Flexible, adjustable PDNA templates can assist capture the real post-disaster needs of an impacted hamlet or town, unlike standardised formats for the entire state or country. Enlarging the list of items included in damage assessment remains important to ensure that the post-disaster needs of a particular village or area are addressed comprehensively and that no affected households are deprived of proportionate compensation due to the exclusion of certain damaged properties. The central and state governments and local administration need a

comprehensive assessment for deciding the quantum of financial assistance and prioritising rehabilitation projects, fixing the compensation amount based on the availability of funds and the framework of disaster management.

The PDNA tools developed by the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) seek to establish a standardised mechanism for conducting assessments of post-disaster needs for long-term recovery and reconstruction. The standard operating procedures of PDNA, developed by NIDM, rightly highlight the critical gap in relief-centred recovery and reconstruction needs assessments.

It highlights how the current system effectively determines the amounts of relief aid for the impacted people based on predetermined criteria and permits the timely distribution of this aid. It does not, however, compute the financial requirements for these goals, scientifically evaluate recovery and reconstruction needs, or provide a full analysis of the total disaster implications. Assam’s ability to conduct scientific PDNAs that accurately capture the damage impact across various sectors of the economy, including house-

holds with varying income levels, the private sector, and local industrial units, depends on training officials, employees, and professionals involved in rehabilitation exercises. In addition to material loss, the trauma of losing the sole breadwinner, anxiety over livelihood loss, loss of livestock, concerns about the continuation of children’s education, and healthcare needs trigger serious mental health issues for many individuals. More focus on reconstruction priorities such as repair of damaged roads, bridges, and embankments often overshadows this important PDNA component. This situation requires equal priority for addressing the mental stress and mental health conditions of affected individuals, helping them overcome trauma and anxiety, and ensuring that the mental health needs of households do not remain overlooked amidst the overwhelming damage statistics.

Another gap identified by the NIDM while developing the SOP is that the amounts of response assistance provided are clearly insufficient in rehabilitation measures and boost confidence among them about getting maximum possible government support for rebuilding their lives. While post-disaster re-

homes and other assets using lower quality standards and inadequate construction materials, which increases disaster risk rather than reducing it. Addressing this crucial gap is necessary to improve resilience against worsening and recurrent annual flood waves in the state because compromising construction quality during home repair and reconstruction due to inadequate rehabilitation assistance increases these homes’ vulnerability to damage from subsequent floods, which is a serious concern. Careful estimate is required when pooling resources under different government programs and initiatives to increase the availability of rehabilitation aid to impacted individual families. The application of artificial intelligence needs to be explored to improve such estimation based on scientific PDNA conducted by disaster management authorities. Building awareness among flood-hit people about the importance of PDNA and the current status of its application and adaptation is essential to increase transparency in rehabilitation measures and boost confidence among them about getting maximum possible government support for rebuilding their lives. While post-disaster re-

lief and rehabilitation remain crucial interventions by the government to increase flood resilience, the pragmatic approach must be to strengthen disaster risk reduction through both structural and non-structural measures. The construction of flood shelters, which continue to receive sufficient financing support from the central government, and the strengthening of roads, bridges, culverts, embankments, and drainage channels must be the top priorities for flood control in Assam. Paradoxically, non-structural strategies like floodplain zoning, community preparedness, basin-level coordination, and early warning systems—which cost less but necessitate the implementation of better mechanisms—continue to be given less priority despite their equal importance in reducing the risk of disaster and preventing fatalities.

Effective disaster risk reduction lowers post-disaster rehabilitation costs and keeps yearly and recurrent disasters from becoming major crises. However, PDNA is essential for enhancing rehabilitation, directing recovery planning, and implementing treatments that are in line with the actual needs of flood victims.

Cloudburst: Causes, effects, and preparedness for disasters

Over the past few decades, extreme weather events have become more frequent worldwide. Heat waves, cyclones, landslides, floods, and periods of very high rainfall are happening more frequently than in the past. The rising global temperature and climate change are the main causes of this increasing trend, according to scientists.

One of the most abrupt, localized, and damaging natural phenomena among these extreme weather events is a cloudburst. It can cause massive destruction in a matter of minutes, even though it typically only impacts a small geographic area and lasts for a little time. A cloudburst can transform a calm mountain valley into a torrent of floodwater, washing away homes, roads, bridges, agricultural fields, forests, and even entire settlements. Cloudbursts occur in many parts of the world, particularly in mountainous regions where the landscape strongly influences weather patterns. In India, they are most common in the Himalayan states, including Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh. Recent years have also seen similar incidents reported from Nagaland. The effects of these events, while primarily focused in hilly areas, frequently reach well beyond the mountains. Rivers carrying giant volumes of water from the Himalayas frequently

overflow into the plains, causing severe floods downstream. Destructive floods have repeatedly struck Assam, partly due to intense rainfall and cloudburst events in the Himalayan catchments. The recent flooding in districts such as Charaideo, Sivasagar, and Jorhat once again demonstrated how weather events occurring hundreds of kilometres away can have serious consequences for downstream regions. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) defines a cloudburst as rainfall of more than 100 millimeters in a single hour over an area of roughly 20–30 square kilometers. In contrast to broad heavy rainfall, a cloudburst is highly localized, which means that although the affected area sees an exceptional downpour, nearby locations may receive little or no rain. Because of the intense rainfall, natural drainage systems are unable to swiftly remove the water, resulting in flash floods and extensive damage. The term “cloudburst” frequently conveys the idea that a cloud actually explodes. Such an explosion doesn’t actually happen. The term simply refers to the sudden release of an exceptionally large amount of rainwater from a cloud over a very short period. The rainfall is so intense that it appears as though the cloud has burst open. Understanding a cloudburst requires understanding how clouds are formed. Solar energy continuously heats water in

oceans, seas, rivers, lakes, wetlands, soil, and vegetation. Water vapor is released into the atmosphere when this water evaporates. The rising warm air takes a lot of water vapor upward because it can contain more moisture than cold air. The air cools as it ascends to greater altitudes because the temperature of the atmosphere drops with altitude. Microscopic water droplets and ice crystals are created when the water vapor condenses around minute particles like dust, smoke, pollen, or sea salt.

Clouds are made up of billions of tiny droplets and crystals. Meteorologists classify clouds according to their altitude and appearance. Low-level clouds include stratus, stratocumulus, cumulus, nimbostratus, and cumulonimbus, while middle-level clouds include altostratus and altocumulus. High-level clouds such as cirrus, cirrostratus, and cirrocumulus consist mainly of ice crystals because temperatures at those heights are extremely low. Among all cloud types, the towering Cumulonimbus cloud is the most significant because it produces thunderstorms, lightning, hail, strong winds, and the heaviest rainfall. These enormous clouds may extend from near the Earth’s surface to heights of 12-18 kilometres, making them among the tallest weather systems in the atmosphere. Rainfall is a typical component of the

hydrological cycle on Earth. Under normal circumstances, small water droplets inside a cloud progressively combine to become larger droplets. Gravity draws them toward the Earth’s surface as rain once they are heavy enough. But during a cloudburst, the procedure is very different.

A massive amount of water builds up inside a Cumulonimbus cloud during a rapidly intensifying rainstorm. The majority of the water is released nearly simultaneously over a limited region when atmospheric conditions are no longer able to sustain this stored moisture, creating an extraordinarily powerful deluge. Mountainous regions are especially vulnerable to cloudbursts because of a process known as orographic lifting. Moist air carried by the monsoon from the Bay of Bengal or the Arabian Sea is forced to rise when it encounters mountain slopes.

As the air rises, it cools rapidly, causing large quantities of water vapour to condense. Strong upward air currents keep bringing in more moisture, which enables the cloud to expand quickly. Water droplets and ice particles constantly clash inside the cloud, creating ever-larger droplets. The cloud eventually reaches a point where it is unable to hold onto its massive water load. A cloudburst is created when the stored water falls almost immediately. These occurrences are of-

ten accompanied by thunder, lightning, hailstorms, and strong winds, which exacerbate the devastation. These occurrences are frequently accompanied by thunder, lightning, hailstorms, and strong winds, which exacerbate the devastation. The Himalayan region is considered one of the world’s most vulnerable zones for cloudbursts. Its steep slopes, narrow valleys, and fragile geological structure create ideal conditions for flash floods and landslides. Rainwater from intense storms cannot spread over a broad area and instead rushes downhill with tremendous force. Furthermore, the Himalayas are geologically young mountains, making them more susceptible to landslides during heavy rainfall. Human activities such as deforestation, hill cutting, unplanned urbanisation, road construction, tourism-related infrastructure, and hydropower projects have significantly increased environmental vulnerability in these regions.

One of the biggest problems in weather research is still predicting cloudbursts. Cloudbursts form quickly and only impact a small area, in contrast to cyclones, which build over several days and cover large areas. Even with the use of weather satellites, Doppler weather radars, automated weather stations, high-resolution numerical weather prediction models, and artificial intelligence-based fore-

casting techniques, it is still not currently possible for scientists to accurately predict the precise location and timing of every cloudburst. However, ongoing advancements in weather monitoring networks have greatly improved heavy rainfall early warning systems. Scientific studies indicate that climate change is increasing the likelihood of extreme rainfall events worldwide. According to the Clausius-Clapeyron relationship, the atmosphere can hold about 7 percent more water vapour for every 1°C increase in temperature.

As global temperatures continue to rise, clouds are capable of storing greater amounts of moisture, increasing the potential for exceptionally intense rainfall. Researchers concur that global warming is fostering circumstances that favor increasingly frequent and powerful extreme precipitation occurrences, even though climate change cannot be held responsible for every single cloudburst. There have been numerous devastating cloudburst disasters in India. One of the worst happened in June 2013 at Kedarnath, Uttarakhand, where heavy rains caused landslides and flash floods that killed over 6,000 people. Homes, roads, bridges, and pilgrimage sites were all severely damaged by the overflowing Mandakini River and the abrupt release of water from Chorabari Lake.

The addition of three Airbus A320 planes caused SpiceJet's stock to rise by 10%

Mumbai: On Thursday, July 23, shares of the troubled airline SpiceJet surged 10% to reach the upper circuit following multiple media reports indicating that the business had added three Airbus A320 aircraft to its fleet under a damp-lease deal. SpiceJet's share price increased by 10% after this report, reaching the upper price band of ₹12.32 on the BSE from its previous closing price of ₹11.20. Of the two stocks listed on Dalal Street, the small-cap airline saw volumes that were above average. 10.76 million SpiceJet shares had been exchanged as of 12.55 AM, compared to an average of 3.94 million shares during the previous two weeks. At the time this report was written, there were only buy orders for 7.60 million shares. The spike in SpiceJet shares comes at a time when it is struggling from the impact of higher crude oil prices and declining market share. So far in 2026, its stock has declined 59 per cent while in a year it has lost 69 per cent.

The 52-week high for SpiceJet shares is ₹40.84, and the 52-week low is ₹9.53. All three of the Airbus A320s have allegedly landed in India and will start commercial operations later this week, according to SpiceJet,



which primarily operates Boeing aircraft. The airline's operational capacity would be strengthened as a result.

The aircraft have been introduced on a damp lease basis, which means that the airline supplies the cabin crew and runs the flights, while the lessor provides the aircraft, pilots, and maintenance. The airline also stated that it is in advanced talks with other lessors to introduce more aircraft in the upcoming months, according to a TV news channel report. In another development, as domestic air traffic fell nearly 12 per cent to 13.5 million in June compared to 15.3 million passengers flown by the carriers in May, SpiceJet

faced a decline in its market share.

In the wake of surging fuel prices due to the West Asia conflict, airlines had temporarily curtailed their networks. The data from Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), released on July 21, showed that SpiceJet's market share dropped to 1.9 per cent last month from 2.5 per cent in May. At the same time, India's biggest airline IndiGo saw an increase in market share to 66.3 per cent in June from 64.9 per cent in May. SpiceJet last reported its financial results for the December quarter (Q3) of fiscal 2025-26 (FY26), wherein it recorded a loss of ₹269.27 crore.

Due to a crude increase, HPCL loses 5% for the first time in 14 quarters



Mumbai: Following the state-owned refiner's sharp loss in its Q1FY27 reports, HPCL's stock price dropped

on Thursday. A significant increase in crude oil prices during the continuing West Asia crisis had an impact

on the performance for the April-June quarter. The share price of HPCL was down 2.64 percent at ₹383.75 per share on the NSE at 11:05 AM. By contrast, the Nifty 50 was down 0.39 percent at 23,986.80. The stock dropped 4.8% during intraday trading to reach the day's high of ₹376.55 a share. Compared to a profit of ₹4,110 crore in Q1FY26, HPCL reported a net loss of ₹12,264 crore in Q1FY27. For the first time since Q3FY23, HPCL experienced a quarterly loss. From ₹1.20 trillion in Q1FY26 to

₹1.45 trillion in Q1FY27, the company's overall income increased by 21% year over year. Product sales at HPCL increased 0.6% year over year to 13.12 mt in Q1FY27, while sales of gasoline and diesel increased 8.1% to 8.8 mt. During Q1FY27, HPCL's refineries processed 6.52 mt of crude oil while running at 107% of their installed capacity. The Mumbai refinery processed 2.55 mt of crude oil at 108% capacity, while the company's flagship Visakh refinery processed 3.97 mt at 106% capacity utilization.

2W stocks: HeroMoto and Eicher rise to 4%; Bajaj Auto and TVS reach 52-week highs

Mumbai: Two-wheeler (2W) company shares were in high demand; TVS Motor Company and Bajaj Auto reached new 52-week highs, while Hero MotoCorp and Eicher Motors saw increases of up to 4%. Strong earnings announced by TVS Motor and Bajaj Auto are the reason for the purchases at these counters. Among individual equities, Bajaj Auto surged 3% on the BSE in intraday trading, reaching a new 52-week high of ₹11,310.75. The company's stock price increased by 9% over the last two days. On September 27, 2024, the stock reached a record high of ₹12,772.15. Shares of TVS Motor Company rose 2 per cent to ₹3,974, soaring 11 per cent in the past three trading days. The stock hit a record high today, surpassing its previous high of ₹3,970 touched on February 26, 2026. Meanwhile, the share price of Hero MotoCorp surged 4 per cent to ₹5,190.25, while Eicher Motors gained 2 per cent at ₹7,788.80 on the BSE in intra-day deals. Bajaj Auto's consolidated net profit rose 46 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to ₹3,225.63 crore in the first quarter of 2026-27 (Q1FY27), while revenue increased 65 per cent to ₹21,688.8 crore, supported by record vehicle volumes. Higher realisations, and broad-based growth across domestic and export markets, internal-combustion and electric vehicles (EV), and two- and three-wheelers also aided growth. In Q1FY27, TVS Motor Company's net profit increased 67.1% year over year to ₹1,019.4 crore. Operational revenue increased 33.5% year over year to ₹16,295 crore. During

the post-results earnings call, management credited the increase in profits to increased sales volumes, a better product mix, ongoing cost reduction, and operating leverage. During the quarter, the business also profited from a fair valuation gain on investment. GST 2.0 enhanced sentiment in the domestic market and had a beneficial impact on the auto industry. 2W volumes performed well in Q1FY27, with sales of 5.63 million units, up 20% year over year. The 150cc+ sector is developing much more quickly, and Bajaj Auto is gaining market share through its updated Pulsar lineup, even though overall industry growth is predicted to slow down in the near future due to inflationary pressures and price increases. With a premiumisation strategy in the 125cc+ motorcycle category, Bajaj Auto is entering a strong product cycle with multiple launches across its highest-margin segments while simultaneously benefiting from structural demand tailwinds, analysts at ICICI Securities said in the post Q1 result update. A robust export outlook, strong positioning in the domestic EV segment and a differentiated product launch pipeline are expected to drive sustained growth for Bajaj Auto. With export-supported margin resilience, the brokerage firm remains positive about the medium- to long-term earnings prospects at Bajaj Auto & maintains a 'BUY' rating on the stock, valuing it at ₹12,550, or 25x P/E on FY28E EPS. TVS Motors anticipates strong domestic 2W demand in Q2FY27, with slight moderation in Q3FY27



due to El Niño and high base effects. The company projects double-digit growth in the FY27E ICE sector, with faster E2W growth. Analysts expect a 12.7% volume growth for TVS in FY27E, driven by market share gains and a robust product lineup. Export activity remains strong, and the company is expanding capacity across ICE and EV segments. Management aims to mitigate commodity inflation impacts through price increases and cost optimization. The Indian 2W industry enters FY27 positively, bolstered by strong retail demand and improving conditions, while EV adoption is set to grow as ecosystem constraints lessen. Despite risks from inflation and geopolitical issues, opportunities in various segments remain strong.

After Q1, Tanla Platforms shares surged 17%; PAT increased 20% and sales increased 18%

Mumbai: Tanla Platforms posted impressive results for the June quarter (Q1 FY27), with net profit increasing 20% year over year. As a result, the company's shares rose as much as 17% on Thursday. On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), the stock began the day 5% higher at ₹589.55 and continued to rise, reaching an intraday high of ₹656. The stock was up 10.4% at ₹620.45 at 12:20 PM. Exchange data showed that more than 20 million shares had been traded on the NSE. By contrast, the Nifty 50 was down 96 points, or 0.44 percent, at 23,890. Tanla Platforms reported a 20.1% Yo-Y growth in its earnings after tax for the April-June quarter of FY2027, totaling ₹142.16 crore. In the

same quarter last year, the company made ₹118.40 crore in profit. From ₹1,040 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year to ₹1,226 crore in Q1FY27, its revenue increased by 17.8% year over year. According to the company, its Q1 Ebitda was ₹201 crore, representing an annual growth of 22.7% driven by higher gross profit and somewhat offset by higher indirect expenses. Uday Reddy, CEO, said that Q1 is a strong start to FY27, with "gross profit and Ebitda growing faster, reflecting an improving quality of growth". "Our objective isn't revenue growth at any cost. It is profitable growth that consistently converts into cash," he said. At the end of the quarter on June 30, 2026, the company said

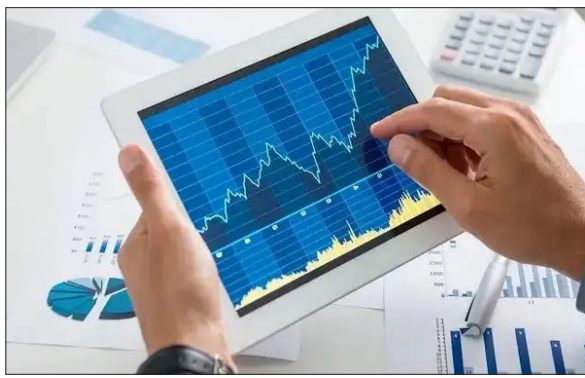
that its free cash flow stood at ₹126 crore, translating into 89 per cent of the total profit. Tanla Platforms has been in a continuous downturn for a considerable amount of time, according to Hitesh Rath, research analyst at Angel One. The company has been trading within a clearly defined falling channel and producing a succession of lower highs and lower lows, which are indicative of a sustained bearish trend. Nevertheless, the stock has established a solid support base around the ₹440-400 range, and the recent downward thrusts have failed to gain significant traction. "This support is reflected in the formation of a Bullish 100 per cent Pole on the higher timeframe Daily 3% × 3 Point & Figure chart,

underscoring the presence of strong demand at lower levels.

The improving technical setup is further reinforced by the development of a probable Follow-through Double Top Buy on the same chart, suggesting that buying interest is gradually strengthening," he said. "However, the stock continues to face a significant long-term hurdle in the ₹650-660 zone, where a 45-degree objective trendline coincides with strong overhead supply. A decisive breakout above this resistance band would provide further confirmation of a primary trend reversal and could pave the way for an advance towards the ₹800-850 zone over the medium term," he added.

After the June quarter results, SRF fell 9%, and the board approved RS. 250 cr in capital expenditures

Mumbai: Despite posting strong June 2026 quarter (Q1FY27) results across all segments, SRF's share price fell 9% to ₹2,617.50 on the BSE during Thursday's intraday trading. Profit booking is responsible for the counter sales. Among the BSE 150 midcap index, the stock was the biggest drop. SRF was down 8.7% at ₹2,624.30 at 02:26 PM, while the BSE Sensex was down 0.5%. With a total of two million equity shares exchanging hands on the NSE and BSE, the average trading volume at the counter more than doubled. In the meantime, commodities chemicals' stock price increased by 28% from its 52-week low of ₹2,313.75 on March 2, 2026. The stock fell 12% from its peak of ₹2,972.75 on the BSE on Wednesday. SRF's sales increased 32% year over year (YoY) to ₹4,939 crore in Q1FY27, with Chemicals driving the growth of 26% YoY to ₹2,315 crore. In a similar vein, Technical Textile increased 28% YoY to ₹597 crore and Packaging Films increased 42% YoY to ₹2,017 crore. At ₹759 crore, the company's profit after tax (PAT) increased 76% year over year. Consolidated earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) rose 49 per cent YoY at ₹1,237 crore, translating to margins of 24.6 per cent, up 280 bps YoY while Chemical Business EBIT came in at ₹638 crore, up 27 per cent YoY. The company plans to invest ₹250 crore to set up a



BOPET Thick Film Line in India, comprising a Bruckner-made production line and a Kampf primary slitter. BOPET (biaxially oriented polyethylene terephthalate) thick film is a specialized product with applications in industrial and electronic end use segments. Since it is a new substrate, it does not have the same cycle as commodity thin films, helping better manage cyclicality. Limited domestic capacity in India further reduces volatility. The company is also undertaking a series of smaller capital expenditure projects within the Specialty Chemicals business to enhance capacity and operational efficiencies through debottlenecking initiatives, particularly in the Agrochemicals portfolio. In every segment, SRF experienced a strong quarter. Despite China's industry overcapacity and persistent geopolitical uncertainty, the specialized chemicals subsegment of the chemicals industry performed steadily. According to a note from ICICI Securities, pricing pressure in this subsegment persisted. Conversely, the fluorochemicals industry

continues to grow rapidly due to the robust demand for fluoropolymers and chloromethanes. Technical Textile's record-breaking quarter was unexpectedly fueled by the highest-ever packed production in Films & Foil. Despite continuous competitive challenges from Chinese exporters, the Technical Textile business also reported consistent demand and greater margins for Tire Cord Fabrics and robust domestic and foreign demand for Belting Fabrics, according to the brokerage firm. Furthermore, the company approved a proposal to set up a BOPET Thick Film Line at a projected cost of ₹250 crore, where it will establish a capacity of 25,000 MTPA. As per management, this product is unlikely to witness cyclicality like other commodity thin films, ICICI Securities said, adding they await further management commentary for more insights. SRF is a diversified chemicals and materials company with leadership positions across specialty chemicals, fluorochemicals, packaging films and technical textiles. Analysts at Systematix In-

stitutional Research believe the company is strategically set to benefit from its robust capex pipeline, rising high-margin specialty chemicals contribution, expanding global fluorochemicals presence and favorable industry tailwinds, driven by import substitution and supply-chain diversification. Its proven execution track record, healthy balance sheet and expanding complex chemistry product portfolio point to sustainable earnings growth and healthy return ratios over the medium term, the brokerage firm said in the FY26 annual report analysis. In the meantime, SRF stated in the FY26 annual report that despite geopolitical unpredictability and fragmented trade circumstances in FY27, the global and Indian economies are anticipated to produce moderate growth. It is anticipated that the Indian air conditioning sector will grow rapidly, meeting the rising need for refrigerants. In the short term, the US market is probably going to stay steady, but if the existing interruptions stop, the Middle East market is anticipated to expand.

Pricing is anticipated to stay steady, but expanding into new markets and upholding a robust supply chain will continue to be major priorities. According to SRF, the agrochemical and pharmaceutical sectors will continue to be sluggish, and the Industrial Chemicals category is predicted to stay mild.

After Q1, IndusInd Bank drops 6%; analysts remain optimistic and predict a 13% increase

Mumbai: Following the release of the June quarter results (Q1FY27), shares of the private lender IndusInd Bank saw an intraday increase of 6%. In Q1, the lender's consolidated profit after tax increased by 72% to ₹1,037.05 crore, and it is expected to continue to exhibit higher profits in the future. The lender claimed that a 21% decrease in provisions and contingencies at ₹1,384 crore improved the bottom line.

In the same quarter last year, IndusInd Bank made a net profit of ₹604.07 crore.

On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), the shares of the private bank started the day lower at ₹1,036.60 and fell as low as ₹1,002.40. At 10:10 AM, the stock was trading 5.7% lower at ₹1,008, lagging the markets. By contrast, the Nifty 50 index was down 43 points, or 0.17 percent, at 23,956. IndusInd Bank said that its core net interest income increased by 1% to ₹4,685 crore for the April-June quarter due to a 2% decrease in loans, while its net interest margin shrank to 3.35% from 3.46%, excluding a one-time income tax return of ₹284 crore. The net interest margin (NIM) increased to 3.57 percent, up 18 basis points from the previous quarter. Nevertheless, NIM fell 4 basis points to 3.35 percent when one-offs were excluded. Regarding asset quality, the bank reported that gross slippages decreased to Rs 1,660 crore from ₹2,567 crore in the same quarter last year and that its gross nonperforming assets ratio increased to 3.25 percent in Q1. He claimed that today's response was more of a profit booking following the results announcement. Long-term investors with a high risk, high return appetite



might build up on declines, he claimed. Sunny stated that the bank is trading closer to its book value in regards to valuation. We may see a gradual re-rating over the next three to six quarters as operating indicators improve. Following the quarter's results, Motilal Oswal Financial Services increased the objective to ₹1,125 while maintaining its "Neutral" position on IndusInd Bank. The aim suggests a five percent increase from the previous close of ₹1,069. According to analysts, IndusInd Bank's June quarter performance was better than anticipated. While deposit growth continued to be robust, business momentum improved due to robust growth in the corporate loan book. The brokerage stated that although there will likely be some short-term pressure on NIM, the management anticipates future improvements in NIMs. For FY27, credit growth is anticipated to be consistent with the system.

Titan, Federal Bk: Rekha Jhunjhunwala portfolio stock trading technique



Mumbai: Thus far in the fiscal year 2026-2027 (FY27), Rekha Jhunjhunwala portfolio returns have outperformed the benchmark Sensex and Nifty returns. An examination of Jhunjhunwala's assets revealed that her portfolio worth increased by 20%, while the BSE Sensex and the NSE Nifty increased by about 7%. According to a study, about half of her portfolio's gains came from Titan stock. In addition to Titan, some of the major players included Federal Bank, Metro Brands, Fortis Healthcare, and Va Tech Wabag. In light of this, Virat Jagad, Senior Technical Research Analyst at Bonanza, provides a technical assessment on five stocks from Rekha Jhunjhunwala's portfolio. According to Virat Jagad, senior technical analysis analyst at Bonanza, Titan verified a solid bullish breakout over the ₹4,650 resistance zone with powerful price action, signal-

ing resumed buying activity. The stock is still trading above all important moving averages (20/50/100/200 Exponential Moving Averages (EMAs)), the analyst continues, confirming the current upward trend. Despite hitting the overbought zone, the Relative Strength Index (RSI) rose over 70, indicating strong momentum. There may be more upward potential given the breakout from the most recent consolidation. With a stop loss below ₹4,500, investors may choose to accumulate the stock on small declines towards ₹4,650-₹4,620. In the upcoming weeks, the stock could test between ₹4,900 and ₹5,000, according to Jagad. According to Jagad, Federal Bank demonstrated a solid breakout to a new swing high and is currently trading well above all significant EMAs, suggesting a well-established uptrend. Strong momentum is evident in the RSI's recent rise, which is bolstered by rising volumes. Further upward potential is suggested by positive price action and persistent strength above the breakout zone, he says. The expert suggests purchasing the stock between ₹352 and ₹356 levels as a trading strategy, with a stop at ₹340 and an expected target price of ₹380. With a stop loss at ₹328 and a potential goal of ₹370, Jagad advises purchasing Karur Vysya Bank between ₹342 and ₹346. According to the expert, the stock reaffirmed a bullish trend after a breakout that was backed by a notable increase in volume and trades above all important EMAs. Despite the recent rapid advance, there is a chance for more upside due to positive price action and persistent buying demand, says Jagad.

Cuts to aid will negatively impact Somalian lives and livelihoods

Mogadishu: As households across prepare for yet another climate catastrophe, Foreign Office estimates reveal that the UK will nearly cut bilateral aid to Somalia by 2029 (Report, July 16). Rainfall in Somalia in October might cause catastrophic flooding, forcing thousands of people to flee their homes, according to forecasters. Extreme rainfall is more likely to occur in areas that are still recovering from a severe drought that has left 6 million people experiencing severe food insecurity, according to the World Meteorological Organization. This means that Somali families will have to deal with yet another significant disturbance to their life and sources of subsistence, and there will be less humanitarian aid available to those impacted. Britain has long supported Somalia through some of its hardest years, and its ambition to use trade, investment and private sector partnership to support Africa's development is welcome. However, aid delivery cannot be sacrificed in order to direct available monies toward international funders such as the World Bank. When a crisis strikes, humanitarian aid keeps clinics open, stores open, and families able to purchase food. Without it, companies and investors will have less to build on after each crisis. Investment and aid must go hand in hand. One aids nations in surviving the impending crisis, while the other helps them become more resilient to the next. If Britain removes aid too quickly, it cannot expect investment to be successful.

As temperatures in southern Europe soar, thousands of people escape wildfires in France and Spain



London :As a maritime heatwave scalds the Mediterranean, over 30,000 people have fled flames in France and Spain due to the brutal heat torching southern Europe. Researchers caution that “Dantesque” scenarios cannot be ruled out as infernos escalate. While Spain has declared a national emergency in the Madrid region and the province of Avila due to multiple wildfires that are out of control, France has asked the European Union for aid in dealing with a big blaze near the country’s Atlantic coast. On Friday, President Emmanuel Macron wrote on X that the situation was still “extremely tense,” with the flames in Gironde, southwest France, being particularly dangerous. “France has requested the activation of the European Union’s civil protection mechanism. We will soon be able to count on reinforcements from two Croatian Canadair aircraft, two Portuguese Air Tractor planes, as well as two heavy Black Hawk helicopters from the Czech Republic and Slovakia,” he said. The fire on France’s Atlantic coast prompted the evacuation of more than 18,800 people, including thousands of tourists from campsites and holiday homes, as firefighters struggled to control the blaze. Spain late Thursday declared a national emergency in the Madrid region and in the province of Avila, near the capital, in the wake of several wildfires burning out of control. Around the Madrid region, the fires have forced

the evacuation of 10,000 people, placing the response to the crisis in the hands of a military emergency unit. “The government has deployed every available resource to stop the terrible fires currently affecting numerous areas: Avila, Leon, Toledo, Madrid and other parts of Spain,” prime minister Pedro Sánchez said earlier on X, urging the public to exercise “great caution” and heed instructions from authorities. Almost 125,000 hectares have already burnt in Spain this year compared with 393,000 for the whole of last year, according to the European Forest Fire Information System. Extreme highs of 44.7C were recorded on Thursday in Cieza, in the Spanish province of Murcia, according to Aemet, the Spanish meteorological agency.

The previous day, the Spanish cities of Albacete, Ávila and Teruel broke their July temperatures records with heat as high as 42C. A marine heatwave is affecting 80% of the Mediterranean Sea’s surface area, according to the Mediterranean Monitoring System. Daily temperatures on Tuesday had reached “extreme” levels in several parts, with some anomalies 5C hotter than the average from 1991 to 2020. The severity of fires in the EU has broken records for this time of year, data from the European Forest Fire Information System showed on Wednesday, and about twice as much land had burned by 22 July than the average for that date over the last two decades. France has broken

records for the area burned; it and Spain have broken records for the number of fires. The fire in France began in a dense pine forest near the village of Saumos about 40km (25 miles) west of Bordeaux and just north of the bay of Arcachon, a popular tourist destination. It had burned more than 3,700 hectares (9,140 acres) in a little over 24 hours, firefighters said on Thursday. No casualties had been reported but several houses had succumbed to the flames, they said. The Gironde prefecture said that while 800 firefighters and four water-bombing planes were battling to bring the fire under control, the situation remained “unfavourable” and the blaze was not yet stabilised. “The fire is highly erratic and gaining very significant force,” said Marc Vermeulen, the regional fire service chief, on Thursday evening. “One of the main fronts is very close to a semi-urban area.

We are defending house by house.”- France has endured three almost back-to-back heatwaves since May as climate breakdown leads to more frequent and extreme weather events causing thousands of excess deaths, evaporating soils and waterways and fuelling wildfires. Patrick Martineau, 69, who was evacuated from the village of Le Porge, told Agence France-Presse that police had “come banging on the doors ... It’s scary – hard to take in. When we bought a home here, we never thought there’d be a fire risk.” Sylvie, a holidaymaker from Paris staying in the relatively more built-up area of Lège-Cap-Ferret, said a neighbour had told her: “‘Get your bags ready, we’re going to be evacuated during the night.’ We put the bulk of our stuff in the car boot and left.” Elke Urbain, from Antwerp in Belgium, who holidays in the area every year, said she was advised while she was on the beach on Wednesday afternoon to “go back immediately to the campsite and gather your things. It’s just terribly sad.” In 2022, a wildfire burned more than 30,000 hectares in the same area, forcing about 50,000 people to be evacuated. In tinder-dry conditions and fanned by a strong wind, the latest blaze has torn through the forest, with flames reaching 10 metres high.

Two Russian men were imprisoned in Angola for spying and terrorism



Moscow: An Angolan court convicted two Russian men of terrorism and espionage after they were charged with plotting a coup and assisting in the organizing of violent protests in the southern African nation last year. Igor Ratchin received an 11-year prison sentence, while Lev Lakshatnov received an 8-year sentence. They had refuted the accusations, saying they were in Angola for commercial and cultural purposes.

According to official numbers, a minibus cab strike over gasoline price increases on July 28–30, 2025, turned into riots and looting, resulting in 22 fatalities and over 1,600 arrests. Angola’s security forces were accused of firing live ammunition at protesters; the government said its “progressive” use of force was justified. Human Rights Watch had previously said Angola employed “excessive force” when it used rubber bullets and teargas to break up a peaceful protest against rising fuel prices on 12 July 2025. Angolan prosecutors said Lakshatnov and Ratchin wanted to influence next year’s presidential elections, including by funding Angola’s largest opposition

party, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), or by forcing a leadership change within the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which has ruled the country since independence from Portugal in 1975. Prosecutors also claimed the men were linked to Africa Politology, a Russian disinformation and propaganda network that emerged from the Wagner mercenary group. Africa Politology was taken over by Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) after the death of the Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin in 2023, according to an investigation by media outlets including Forbidden Stories. Wagner was rebranded as Africa Corps and absorbed by Russia’s military. Angola, whose economy is highly dependent on oil exports, has historically been close with Russia.

During the cold war years of Angola’s 1975-2002 civil war, the Soviet Union and Cuba supported the MPLA, while the US and apartheid South Africa backed its opponents, including UNITA. However, Angola’s president, João Lourenço, has improved relations with the US and Europe since

taking power in 2017. In the last decade, Russia has increased its presence in Africa. The Wagner group and then Africa Corps have provided security for the Central African Republic’s president, Faustin-Archange Touadéra, since 2017. In 2021, Wagner forces arrived in Mali to support the military junta. Africa Corps also backs the military regimes in neighbouring Niger and Burkina Faso.

Since 2023, Russian troops have also been deployed in Equatorial Guinea, Libya and Sudan, according to a US Congress report. Madagascar’s president, Michael Randrianirina, has also boosted ties with Russia since taking power in a coup in October 2025. There are Russians in his presidential guard and a weekly programme about Madagascar-Russia relations was launched earlier this month on national television. Two Angolans were also tried alongside the Russians.

The sports journalist Carlos Tomé received a two-year suspended prison sentence. Francisco de Oliveira, the secretary-general of UNITA’s youth wing, was acquitted. Prosecutors have appealed against those sentences, according to the Portuguese news agency Lusa. Lakshatnov and Ratchin have also appealed against their sentences, but will remain in detention while the appeal is processed, according to Lusa. Russia’s embassy in Angola did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Odyssey’s Viking ship owner claims the studio has not paid the damage bill



Stockholm: The Swedish owners of a replica Viking longship used in the Hollywood movie The Odyssey claim they feel “forgotten” when the filmmakers allegedly returned the ship damaged and neglected to pay for repairs. Based on a wreck discovered in Denmark’s Roskilde fjord in 1040, the battleship Glad av Gillberga has successfully navigated the North Sea, the Baltic, and even Canada in its nearly thirty years at sea. However, it apparently suffered significant damage, especially to the stern and the mast, after six months in the hands of Universal, who, according to its owners, pledged to pay for any repairs. Vikingaleden, a nonprofit Viking centre in Värmland, western Sweden, said that when it invoiced Universal for the materials used to repair their ship (they did not charge for their volunteer labour), no payment arrived. A year later, while

the Christopher Nolan epic starring Matt Damon, Tom Holland, Anne Hathaway and Zendaya storms global box offices, taking \$264m (£196m) in its opening weekend alone, it says it is still waiting for its \$6,000 payment. Peter Olausson, chair of the Vikingaleden association, said that although he felt proud that the ship was featured in the film, that feeling had been tinged with injustice after the film giant’s alleged failure to cover the cost of damages. “We are only charging for the material cost, not the labour,” he said. “Of course Universal can afford this \$6,000. We feel forgotten.” The ship is now back in action but Olausson accused Universal of going back on their word.

“The agreement was that we would fix it and get financially reimbursed.” Olausson said that to Universal, the outstanding sum would be comparatively small, but for

the 200-member association that runs the Viking “village” and museum, it is a significant amount.

The critically acclaimed film, which reportedly cost \$250m to make, is based on Homer’s ancient Greek epic poem about the king of Ithaca, Odysseus, on a 10-year sea journey home from the Trojan war. The Glad av Gillberga was used as one of the escort vessels in the flotilla, which are thought to have been similar to Nordic Viking ships. The main ship, Odysseus’s boat, was the 35-metre-long Norwegian replica Draken Harald Hårfagre. Its Swedish captain, Björn Ahlander, said life on the ships filming for six months around Greek and Italian islands was not easy for the 30-person crew. He told the broadcaster SVT: “We rebuilt the ship into an ancient Greek ship.

We removed the tents and all the modern things and had an open deck that we lived on during this time. It was quite tough.” A Universal spokesperson said: “Our records show that all invoices relating to the Glad av Gillberga were paid in full, including repairs. The studio and the production have contacted the association to clear up any misunderstanding.”

A warning to the world that the first US city may run out of water



Washington DC:: There is a serious water crisis in a large US city that could make it the first contemporary American city to run out of water. More than 300,000 people live in Corpus Christi, a coastal city in Texas that is dealing with diminishing water supplies due to years of drought, growing demand, and delays in creating new water sources. Rapid industrial growth has exacerbated the city’s water shortage. Large petrochemical plants in the area need a lot of water, which puts additional strain on resources that are already impacted by severe weather. According to reports, a plastics chemical plant constructed in 2022 utilizes more water per day for cooling than all of Corpus Christi’s people put together. Officials had planned to reduce pressure on existing supplies by building a seawater desalination plant, which would convert ocean water into usable freshwater. However, the project has faced delays due to funding issues, regulations and opposition. The problem has gotten worse due in part to climate change. Recent years have seen multiple catastrophic droughts in Texas, which have left vital reservoirs at critically low levels. Journalist Dylan Baddour claimed that Corpus Christi is now closer to running out of water than nearly any other American city. The city still only has roughly a year’s worth of water storage, which would be regarded as an emergency, he continued, even though recent rains has offered some respite. Authorities are looking into a number of options, such as proposals to repurpose wastewater for industrial uses and deep underground wells. Hundreds of millions of liters of water might be produced daily by a proposed desalination project, but it might take years to finish and cost billions of dollars. Activities like washing cars and watering lawns have already been restricted for residents. Authorities have cautioned that if the situation becomes worse, emergency measures may eventually involve reduced supply hours or brief water shortages. As cities struggle to balance expanding demand, climate change, and diminishing water resources, experts say the situation underscores a growing worldwide challenge.

Due to its authority to prosecute British soldiers, the MoD cancels army training in Kenya

London: The Kenyan government’s refusal to approve a bilateral defense pact caused the British army to halt training for its soldiers in Kenya. Kenyan MPs had sought modifications to give local authorities more authority to hold British soldiers accountable for any crimes committed in the nation, while the UK government wanted to extend the current deal. The Daily Nation, a Kenyan news outlet, reports that the main point of contention is which cases Kenya would continue

to have primary jurisdiction over. Another point of contention is the amount of money Britain pays Kenya to host the training camp. The two countries are “actively engaging to address these outstanding issues,” according to Nelson Koech, chair of the Kenyan National Assembly’s defense, intelligence, and international affairs committee. As a result of the Kenyan government’s decision, a planned exercise involving the 1st Battalion the Duke of Lancaster’s Regiment, which was due

to begin in September, has been cancelled. A Ministry of Defence spokesperson said: “The UK highly values its relationship with Kenya, which is underpinned by mutual benefit, respect and cooperation. The UK-Kenya Defence Partnership is one of the great strengths of our relationship. Our joint training and operations with the Kenyan Defence Forces are keeping both Kenyan and British people safe.” It is with regret that the necessary licences required to allow training to take place in



Laikipia later this year have not been forthcoming. As a result, the planned training will now be conducted at an alternative location outside Kenya.” Kenya also bene-

fits from training of its own armed forces at BATUK, the British army base near Nanyuki, and the presence of British troops is valuable for the economy. The MoD

spokesperson added: “We recognise the disappointment this decision will cause for those who would have benefited from the economic activity generated by the exercise.” They said the UK government remained “committed to our defence partnership with Kenya,” adding that the UK would “continue to engage closely with the Kenyan government to support the resumption of training in-country at the earliest appropriate opportunity”. However, there has been sustained pressure from

Kenyan people opposed to the British army’s continued presence. Last year, a report to the Kenyan parliament into the base alleged human rights violations, environmental destruction and sexual abuse by British soldiers. The most high-profile case linked to the base is the death of Agnes Wanjiru, in which a British soldier has been charged with murder. Kenya has retained jurisdiction in the case and an extradition hearing is due to take place in November. Robert Purkiss denies the single charge

of murder. Legal proceedings had stalled since Wanjiru’s death in 2012, but advanced under John Healey’s tenure as defence secretary. As shadow defence secretary, he had called on the previous government to do more to progress the case. Koech said the committee had called for “stronger accountability measures, including jurisdiction over serious offences, enhanced protection for local communities, and implementation of recommendations arising from the BATUK inquiry”.

The truth about migraines: causes and remedies



We’ve been trying to cure migraines – without much success, until relatively recently – for as long as we’ve been able to identify them as a distinct ailment. The Ebers Papyrus, a scroll dating back to 1550BC that mentions a “disease of one half of the head”, suggests anointing the scalp with fried catfish; Galen, the second-century Roman physician whose term “hemicrania” evolved into the modern word, recommended blood-letting (this, to be fair, was his answer to a lot of things). By the 20th century, doctors were suggesting repressed emotions might be at fault, leading to suggestions that women – who suffer from migraines far more than men – were simply too fragile and neurotic. As recently as a couple of decades ago, “vascular theory” – the idea that blood vessels in the brain expanding and contracting were to blame – was still the standard explanation in many medical schools. Over the last decade, though, our understanding of what causes these neurological disorders, which are technically a sub-category of headache, has progressed enormously, alongside the options for treating them. One of the biggest problems, as in centuries past, is a lack of sympathy for sufferers. The biggest difference, these days, is that we actually understand what is happening, and why. Before we get into the brain science, it’s helpful to understand that headaches, more generally, fit into two broad categories: primary headaches, which don’t come from any underlying structural cause, and secondary headaches, which could be caused by anything from

stroke, meningitis or a tumour, to bleeding on the brain. A hangover, which is caused by a number of factors (some of them related to dehydration), is secondary – but a cluster headache, a very unpleasant neurological condition that can be triggered by alcohol in a matter of minutes, is primary. Migraines are primary, but are frequently mistaken for secondary: one of the many reasons that sufferers have often been poorly served. “As doctors, we’re taught to ask the right questions to determine which type of headache it is,” says Alexandra Sinclair, a professor of neurology at the University of Birmingham and chair of the British Association for the Study of Headache. “We use the International Headache Society classification, which you can see online – but actually, for the individual patient, many headaches feel quite similar, so the precise classification can be difficult to understand. Generally, though, a headache that is moderate to severe, where a patient wants to lie down, keep away from light, and noise, keep still, may feel nauseated, and feels pounding pain, often on one side – that’s most often going to be migraine.” Migraines, we now understand, come from the activation of the trigeminovascular system – a network of nerves and blood vessels that detects pain in the brain. The core of this system is the largest and most complex sensory nerve in your head: the trigeminal nerve, which deals with sensory information (including touch, pain, temperature) and motor control (chewing). When something goes wrong, the nerve fibres in this system

pump out a chemical called CGRP (calcitonin gene-related peptide), which activates the brain’s pain network and causes headaches that range from moderate to crippling. Something else that’s now better understood is that migraines typically occur over four phases, including a warning period that might include excess yawning, urination or fatigue. A common occurrence at this stage is odd food cravings – which can lead to an element of victim-blaming. “Historically, there used to be a sense of ‘Well, you may have caused your headache by eating a piece of cheese or chocolate,’” says Prof Sinclair. “But actually, the research has completely turned that upside down. Functional brain imaging shows activation of the brain areas that might make you crave food in the 24 hours or so before the actual pain. Hence, you didn’t cause the migraine – the migraine caused the craving.” After this period – technically called the “prodrome” – about 30% of sufferers experience what is known as the “aura”, which can include visual disturbances, numbness in the face or arms or legs, or speech difficulties. Then there’s the migraine itself, which typically lasts anywhere from four to 72 hours. Then finally the “postdrome”, where you may feel washed out or exhausted for



up to two days. It’s typically only after that, after several days of disruption to your body’s typical way of functioning, that things go back to normal. Like other systems in the body, this network of sensations probably evolved for good reasons. “There are schools of thought that would say that when you get meningitis or when you have a head injury or something going on in your brain like a tumor, you may be primed to get more headaches, which actually may be good – because it alerts you that something’s happened within your brain,” says Prof Sinclair. “There are also schools of thought that say that back in our caveman days, if you were primed to have migraines, you’d be quite vigilant, to noise, light, or movement – you probably wouldn’t be sleeping deeply – and so those genes might have stayed with us by giving humans a survival advantage.” This, in a nutshell, is the issue for severe migraine sufferers. Hormonal, lifestyle and even environmental changes can change your susceptibility to what is technically a neurological disease, but you can also have a brain that’s genetically primed to be more headache-prone. These days, of course, more of us are working in fluorescent-lit offices than

keeping watch around a campfire – and if a migraine hobbles our ability to get any work done for most of the week, then it’s no longer a survival advantage (the World Health Organization, for instance, lists migraine in the top 10 “most disabling” diseases globally). “It affects a huge number of people for what should be the most productive years of their lives, frequently between puberty and menopause,” says Prof Sinclair. “For some people, their ability to function properly is impaired for much of the month – and then there’s the stigma around it not being a ‘real’ issue, and being sort of pushed to the back of the queue for medical treatment.” About twice as many women seem to suffer from migraine as men, for reasons that run from hormonal differences to differences in brain susceptibility to pain chemicals. That might be another reason it traditionally hasn’t been treated seriously enough. There are things sufferers can do to mitigate the likelihood of migraine: lack of sleep, too much sleep, caffeine withdrawal, dehydration and significant stress all play a part. Screen time, according to the available evidence, presents a murkier picture: migraine sufferers are typically sensitive to light, but it’s not totally established that there’s a correlation between phone or monitor use and the onset of attacks. The good news? The identification of CGRP means that migraine treatments are now improving rapidly, consisting of inhibitors built specifically to block the pain chemical. “We have a class of drugs usually taken as a tablet called Gepants that work by blocking the CGRP receptor,” says Prof Sinclair. “We also have CGRP monoclonal antibodies, often referred to as Mabs, which are typically administered via monthly injection. Together, they have truly revolutionised headache care over the last four or five years.” The problem is, these treatments are expensive, and can be difficult to access. “We need more healthcare professionals able to provide headache management, alongside a simpler prescribing process, so patients can access treatment when they need it and recover faster,” says Prof Sinclair. “But we also need to educate patients to seek help. Effective management is essential and can sometimes be the difference between losing your job or keeping it. So I think it’s really about understanding that, if you’re a migraine sufferer, things really have changed.”

Extremely processed food consumption during childhood is linked to altered insulin reactions

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are highly industrially processed products containing ingredients and additives not commonly found in home kitchens, such as hydrolyzed proteins, high-fructose corn syrup, and cosmetic additives. Over the past decade, UPF consumption has risen dramatically worldwide, most notably in high-income countries, but also in middle- and low-income regions, driven by urbanization and shifts in food industry policies. Increasing UPF intake has been associated with heightened cardiometabolic risk through several mechanisms. UPFs are often high in carbohydrates, low in fiber, hyper-palatable, and rapidly digested. They may be associated with changes in gut microbiota, intestinal permeability, and chronic low-grade inflammation, all of which may drive metabolic stress and impair glucose regulation. Furthermore, frequent consumption of rapidly absorbable carbohydrates and the lower satiety provided by UPFs may negatively affect insulin action and the pancreatic response to food. Most studies on UPF intake focus on late-stage outcomes like obesity and diabetes, overlooking early changes in insulin sensitivity and secretion that can be detected with oral glucose tolerance tests (OGTTs). Research on the early metabolic effects of UPFs in children, especially regarding insulin sensitivity and beta-cell function, remains limited. Addressing this gap may help clarify whether UPF consumption is associated with changes in children’s metabolic health before clinical disease emerges. The current study is a secondary analysis of the San Antonio Family Assessment of Metabolic Risk Indicators in Youth (SAFARI) study. SAFARI included children and adolescents aged 6–17 whose adult family members participated in one of three genetic epidemiology studies: the San Antonio Family Heart Study (SAFHS), San Antonio Family Diabetes/Gallbladder Study (SAFDGS), or Veterans Administration Genetic Epidemiology

Study (VAGES). Most families were lower-income Mexican Americans from San Antonio, enrolled between September 2005 and May 2010. The study included 673 participants from 401 nuclear families, averaging two children per sibship. In the original SAFARI cohort, youth exhibited high rates of obesity, metabolic syndrome, and prediabetes. The current study used available data from participants with dietary and insulin secretion or sensitivity measures, with sample sizes varying by outcome. Nineteen indices of insulin sensitivity and secretion were calculated, including 10 estimated from OGTT results. Dietary intake was assessed using the Block Kids’ Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFQ) in 508 children, analyzing responses to 78 food and beverage items. UPF intake was estimated from the frequency and quantity of 61 listed items. The study participants had an average age of 11.5 years, 49% were female, and the mean body mass index (BMI) was about 22.3 kg/m². More than 30% of the cohort were classified as having general or abdominal obesity. Prediabetes, defined as impaired fasting glucose, impaired glucose tolerance, or both, was present in 13% of participants, high blood pressure in 12%, dyslipidemia in 32%, and metabolic syndrome in 19%. The family-based analysis ac-

counted for relatedness among 3,664 kinship pairs, including third cousins, second cousins, first cousins, and siblings. There were notable differences between males and females in systolic blood pressure, physical activity, fasting glucose, and measures of insulin function, including HOMA_β (homeostasis model assessment of beta-cell function) and several OGTT-based insulin indices, such as Matsuda, insulinogenic, and disposition indices. The analysis showed that several insulin-related traits had substantial genetic contributions, supporting the use of polygenic models to account for relatedness in the association analyses. Most continuous traits had heritability estimates above 0.43, while estimates were not reliable for serum C-peptide or IS10,120. UPF made up 53.3% of total energy intake among participants. After adjusting for confounders, a



high UPF score was significantly associated with seven of 19 insulin-related traits at the conventional $p < 0.05$ threshold. Higher UPF consumption correlated with lower insulin sensitivity, as measured by HOMA_s (homeostasis model assessment of insulin sensitivity) and QUICKI. It was also linked to increased fasting insulin and greater insulin resistance, as indicated by HOMA_{IR}. With regard to OGTT-based indices, increased UPF intake was associated with lower Matsuda index values and higher values for both the insulinogenic index at 30 minutes and the disposition index at 30 minutes. Nominal associations, with p-values between 0.05 and 0.10, were also reported for HOMA_β, the area under the curve for insulin (AUC_{Insulin}), and the triglyceride-glucose index (TyG). Collectively, these results suggest that higher UPF scores were associated with several measures of insulin sensitivity, insulin resistance, and early insulin secretion in nondiabetic children. However, the study did not correct for multiple compari-

sons across 19 traits, meaning that its findings are exploratory and indicative rather than confirmatory. Using the Bonferroni threshold discussed by the authors ($p < 0.0026$), only the 30-minute insulinogenic index remained statistically significant. Adjusting for total calorie intake attenuated and made nonsignificant associations between UPF intake and insulin-based fasting indexes, including fasting insulin, HOMA measures, and QUICKI. Conversely, associations with fasting glucose-based indexes became stronger and significant. Among OGTT-related indexes, only the Matsuda index lost significance, while the insulinogenic and disposition indexes at 30 minutes remained significant. This pattern suggests that total energy intake may explain part of the observed associations, but it cannot establish calorie-independent effects or underlying mechanisms. The current study indicates that higher UPF intake was associated with altered measures of insulin secretion and sensitivity, a finding observed even in young individuals after accounting for measured covariates

and pedigree structure, although gene-environment interactions could not be excluded. These observations underscore the potential role of early dietary patterns in shaping long-term metabolic health and suggest that early interventions to reduce UPF consumption could inform prevention research and future randomized intervention trials. However, this cross-sectional analysis cannot establish that UPF intake causes insulin dysregulation. Its reliance on a food-frequency questionnaire not designed to quantify UPF intake, possible misclassification of UPFs, smaller and varying sample sizes for OGTT outcomes, and dietary data collected more than 20 years ago also limit interpretation and generalizability. Future studies, particularly those involving larger, longitudinal populations and randomized trials, are warranted to confirm these associations and unravel the underlying biological mechanisms. The authors plan to recall the SAFARI study cohort to evaluate the persistence and possible progression of these metabolic effects over time.



Sunidhi Chauhan Talks About Quitting Reality Shows



Mumbai: Celebrated singer Sunidhi Chauhan revealed why she walked away from reality shows during a candid conversation with veteran actor Shekhar Suman during the chat show, ‘Shekhar Tonite’. During the episode, host Shekhar Suman pointed out that Sunidhi has made a conscious choice to stay away from controversies and was also no longer seen judging singing reality shows.Sunidhi admitted that the decision was entirely her own. “I was for a very, very long time. But then I stopped because mujhe laga ki yeh meri jagah nahin hai,” she said. When Shekhar asked what made her take this decision, Sunidhi pointed out that in today’s time, the thin

line between music production and reality television had started to blur.“It’s a very sad thing. Earlier, auto-tune or Melodyne was used in songs for a certain effect. But you can’t do that in a reality show where you’re supposed to be all real and honest. Jab woh wahan shift ho gaya, mujhe laga yeh kahin aur ja raha hai... which I can’t be on,” the singer shared. While interacting, Shekhar and Sunidhi also shed light on the challenges faced by artists during live performances. Shekhar referred to various incidents involving singers like KK and Sonu Nigam, and asked Sunidhi if she had ever had to face such situations while on stage. Sunidhi expressed gratitude that such a thing has never happened to her. The singer replied, “Main bahut lucky hoon because aaj tak mere saath is tarah ka behaviour maine nahin dekha hai. Bahut pyaar diya logon ne... sirf pyaar hi nahin, samman bhi dete hain (I am very lucky because I have never seen this kind of behavior with me before. People have given a lot of love... not just love, they also give respect).”The episode of ‘Shekhar Tonite’ featuring Sunidhi Chauhan is available on YouTube.

Tara Sutaria and Yash from ‘Toxic’ Share Behind-the-Scenes Photos



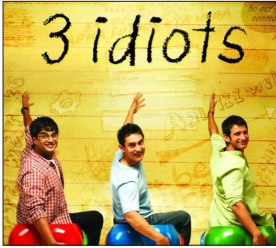
Mumbai: MUMBAI, July 22, 2026: Actress Tara Sutaria has shared a glimpse of her on-screen chemistry with actor Yash from the romantic track ‘Madhosh’ in the upcoming film Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups, giving fans a peek into the emotional moments between their characters. Taking to Instagram, Tara posted a series of romantic pictures featuring herself and Yash from the song. Sharing her thoughts about the track, she wrote, “The in between moments are my favourites in Madhosh.. The stolen glances, the sweetness in our smiles, the eyes.. What are your favourite moments?” The images showed Tara and Yash’s characters sharing intimate and romantic moments, highlighting the softer emotional layers of the relationship portrayed in the song. ‘Madhosh’ has been composed by music directors



Tanishk Bagchi, Faheem Abdullah and Arslan Nizami, who have come together for the track following the success of the Saiyaara title song. The latest release from Toxic explores the emotional connection between Yash’s character Raya and Tara’s character Rebecca. The song presents a different side of Raya, whose intense and powerful personality was introduced in the film’s earlier track ‘Tabaahi’. While the character retains his strong presence, ‘Madhosh’ highlights his vulnerable and romantic side through his bond with Rebecca. The music video features several romantic sequences between Raya and Rebecca while also hinting at complexities in his relationships. The visuals suggest that Raya’s story may involve multiple connections, adding another layer of mystery to his character. The video also fea-

tures Kiara Advani’s character, who appears to share an attraction towards Raya, while another sequence shows Nayanthara’s character alongside him. Along with the Hindi version, the song has also been released in regional languages. It is titled ‘Manamohaka’ in Kannada, ‘Manasaagadhe’ in Telugu, ‘Thadumaarudheyy’ in Tamil and ‘Madhu Mohini’ in Malayalam, allowing audiences across different regions to connect with the track. Directed by Geetu Mohandas, Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups features a star-studded cast including Yash, Kiara Advani, Nayanthara, Huma Qureshi, Tara Sutaria and Rukmini Vasanth. The film is scheduled for a theatrical release on August 26. Earlier, director Geetu Mohandas praised Kiara Advani’s performance in the film, saying the actress delivered a transformative portrayal that showcased her dedication and commitment to the role. “Some performances don’t just belong to a film, they redefine an artist,” Geetu had said while speaking about Kiara’s work. She added that she was proud of the actor’s contribution and the sincerity she brought to the filmmaking process. With its mix of romance, drama and complex character relationships, Toxic has generated significant interest among audiences ahead of its release. The makers are expected to reveal more details about the film and its characters as the release date approaches.

‘3 Idiots’ Makers Deny Reports of Theatrical Re-Release



Mumbai:The news of 3 Idiots’ re-release recently surfaced on social media, with many claiming that the Aamir Khan starrer will hit theatres on September 4. But now, Vidhu Vinod Chopra Films has issued an official clarification. While responding to recent media reports claiming that its iconic film 3 Idiots will be re-released in theatres on September 4, the production house stated that the news is factually incorrect. The official statement shared by the production house read, “With reference to recent media reports claiming that 3 Idiots will be re-released on 4th September, Vidhu Vinod Chopra Films would like to clarify that these reports are false and factually incorrect. We request members of the media and fans to rely solely on official announcements made through Vidhu Vinod Chopra Films’ verified channels. We urge media publications to refrain from

publishing or circulating unverified information.” Released in 2009, 3 Idiots is a coming-of-age comedy-drama directed by Rajkumar Hirani and produced by Vidhu Vinod Chopra. Starring Aamir Khan, R. Madhavan, Sharman Joshi, Kareena Kapoor Khan, and Boman Irani, the film follows three engineering students as they navigate college life, friendship, and the pressure of academic success. It went on to become one of the biggest blockbusters in Bollywood. Aamir Khan addressed the question himself during a Q&A at the British Film Institute (BFI) and shut the theory down. “I didn’t know about Mr Sonam at that time when we were doing the film. I saw a video of Chatur just recently, and he said that. But he is wrong,” he said, adding that neither director Rajkumar Hirani nor writer Abhijat Joshi knew of Wangchuk either while the film was being written. Aamir didn’t stop at the denial, though. He also spoke about Wangchuk’s health, now 19 days into his fast at the time, saying, “All of us are very concerned for his health and his life. We hope it ends well. All of us are hoping that he ends his fast.”

Bobby Deol claims that because of Vijay’s fame, Jana Nayagan was primarily filmed on sets

New Delhi: Bobby Deol talked candidly about collaborating on Jana Nayagan alongside superstar and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay. In an interview, the Animal star discussed the unparalleled fan culture in South Indian cinema and commended Vijay’s modesty despite his enormous popularity. Bobby Deol claimed that because of Vijay’s enormous popularity, the majority of Jana Nayagan was shot on studio settings. “It is a reality. If you take him out on the street, nothing will get done. “He’s that big,” he remarked. Although the two actors did not interact extensively on set, Bobby described Vijay as “a very simple man, very quiet, very much to himself,” despite his stardom. The actor also spoke about the language barrier during filming, saying he often relied on the director to explain conversations taking



place in Tamil.Reflecting on his experience working in South Indian films, including the Telugu film Daaku Maharaaj, Bobby Deol said actors in the South are revered by fans and praised the strong support they receive from audiences. “There they worship the actors. It’s amazing how united they stand for the film industry,” he said. Bobby

Deol recalled playing in the Celebrity Cricket League alongside actor Mohanlal, where stadiums would fill with fans arriving in buses to support their favourite stars. “That’s the difference regionally and how united they stand for their actors and the film industry. He doesn’t do too many promotions or interviews, but that’s how he likes it,” the actor

added.The star also revealed that Vijay once told him he had acted in the remake of one of his films. He was referring to Villu (2009), Vijay’s Tamil remake of Bobby Deol’s 1998 Hindi film Soldier. Hours before the film’s theatrical release, Vijay reportedly attended a special screening at the Tagore Film Centre in Adyar, Chennai, to watch the film. Originally scheduled for a Pongal release on January 9, Jana Nayagan was billed as Vijay’s last movie before he completely entered politics with the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK). However, it wasn’t released until July 23 due to certification problems.Jana Nayagan, which is directed by H Vinoth and produced by Venkat K. Narayana, has Bobby Deol and Vijay in addition to Pooja Hegde, Mamitha Baiju, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Prakash Raj, and Narain.

Rumors about Badshah and Isha Rikhi’s split intensify following the actress’s cryptic post

New Delhi: Are Badshah and his wife, Isha Rikhi, having problems in paradise? After Isha’s most recent Instagram post spawned new rumors regarding their relationship, a lot of people are wondering. The actress posted a collection of images and videos of herself with Badshah. Social media users are speculating as to whether the pair has split up because the post was accompanied by a mysterious note.

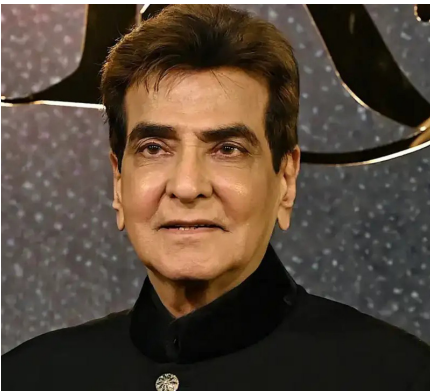
“Every storm is a lesson,” Isha wrote as the caption for the photo. “Every prayer is hope,” is followed by an emoji of folded hands and grief. The montage opens with a clip from Badshah and Isha’s wedding, where the couple can be seen exchanging varmalas. It also features several candid moments from their life together, including family photographs, a picture of Isha during what appears to be an emotional moment with Badshah taking a selfie, and a video of the rapper kissing his wife’s cheek.While Isha did not directly mention any relationship issues, both her caption and the nature of the video



have fuelled speculation online. The buzz was increased by the comments section. Actress Shruti Sodhi replied, “Lessons indeed,” while actress Jasmine Bhasin wrote, “Stay strong,” in response to the post.Additionally, fans showered the comments section with inquiries and encouraging remarks. “Kya hua hai? Aisa post hai? [What happened?],” a user inquired. [Why this post?] “I don’t get this post,” another person commented. Could you please elaborate? Many others just said, “God bless.” Badshah and Isha Rikhi’s wedding was originally made public in March when Poonam Rikhi, Isha’s mother, posted a set of photos on Instagram that seemed

to show the couple getting married. In front of their immediate family, Badshah and Isha were seen participating in customary wedding ceremonies in the pictures.Isha and Badshah reportedly met at a party hosted by a shared friend. Their friendship later developed into a romantic partnership as the two grew closer over time. Almost six years after divorcing his first wife, Badshah wed Isha Rikhi. Jasmine Masih was Badshah’s former spouse. Before finalizing their divorce in 2020, they were married in 2012 and were together for eight years. They are still co-parenting their daughter, Jessemey Grace Masih Singh.

Due to bad luck, Jeetendra left his Rs 4.25 lakh bungalow, which is currently worth Rs 450 crore



Mumbai : Jeetendra had a fantasy of purchasing a bungalow that she never thought would come true. Having grown up in a Mumbai chawl with his family, buying a home in the posh Pali Hill neighborhood of the city was a turning point in his life. However, the actor soon began to worry about what had begun as a fantasy buy since he thought the home had brought him a run of ill luck.Jeetendra recently discussed the history of the mansion that was originally owned by renowned actor Bharat Bhushan. Even though he eventually moved out because he believed the house was unlucky, it has since grown to be one of his most valued properties. Jeetendra shared that Bharat Bhushan, remembered for films like Baiju Bawra, approached him during a financially difficult phase and offered to sell his Pali Hill bungalow.Recalling that moment, Jeetendra said, “There was this huge star in those days who had done films like Baiju Bawra. He came to me with the offer to buy his Pali Hill bungalow. When I spoke to my father, he said, ‘Let’s also buy a bungalow.’ Until then, we had lived a very lower-middle-class life. I used to live in a 20×10 room; eight people stayed together in a chawl in Girgaum. So buying a bungalow was a huge thing for me.” The actor disclosed that

he paid Rs 4.25 lakh for the bungalow, which included a 3,450-square-foot plot, making it an unbelievable purchase by today’s standards. Despite the fact that purchasing the bungalow was a significant milestone, Jeetendra claimed that things quickly took a turn after he moved there, with several of his films failing at the box office, leading him to believe that the property was bringing him bad luck. He recalled, “I finally bought the bungalow for Rs 4.25 lakh. What was even more shocking was that it came with a 3,450 sq ft plot at the same price. We shifted there, but suddenly four of my films flopped. I told my father, ‘Bharat Bhushan ran away from here, now I think it’s my turn. If this continues, my career will end before it has properly begun.’ My father agreed, and we moved out.” Jeetendra made the decision to renovate the bungalow years later. The property began providing him with returns he never anticipated even before construction started.”Someone later approached me to redevelop the bungalow,” he said, revealing one of the story’s most unexpected details. I concurred. You won’t believe it, but I was paid Rs 11.5 lakh for the Burma teak used in its construction alone when it was demolished. I paid Rs 4.25 lakh for the entire bungalow, and the wood alone brought in Rs 11.5 lakh.The singer also remarked on Bharat Bhushan’s decision to sell the house in such a haste. Bharat Bhushan sold a prime property for Rs 4.25 lakh, missing a significant opportunity due to his difficult situation. Jeetendra redeveloped the site into Gautam Apartments but admitted to selling the newly built flats prematurely at Rs 85 per square foot, driven by urgency. His son, Tusshar Kapoor, highlighted the drastic increase in prices, noting current flat values of around Rs 85,000 per square foot. Jeetendra revealed the land alone is now valued at nearly Rs 450 crore.

Ranbir Kapoor requests that paparazzi cease flashing lights due to an eye infection



Mumbai: After disclosing that he had conjunctivitis, Ranbir Kapoor had a heated run-in with the paparazzi at his most recent airport appearance. He was observed asking the photographers to refrain from shining strong lights in his face. Additionally, the actor walked straight to the airport and declined to pose for them. In the video, Ranbir was seen wearing all black, including matching pants, black sunglasses, and a jacket over a T-shirt. Camera flashes occurred as the actor paused for a brief conversation with the photographers. “Kuch dik nahi raha hai” (I can’t see anything) was his response. He responded with his signature humor, “Rukke kya karu bhai?” when a paparazzo requested him to wait for a few more photos. [Brother, what should I do if I just wait?]. Before going into the airport, Ranbir was seen covering his eyes from the flashes.Days prior to the Delhi trailer presentation for his upcoming movie Ramayana, Ranbir

Kapoor contracted conjunctivitis. According to reports, he contracted the illness from his daughter Raha, who had received a diagnosis a few days before. According to a source, “Ranbir Kapoor developed conjunctivitis.” Raha, his daughter, contracted it initially, and Ranbir thereafter became afflicted as well.The Central Board of Film Certification awarded the trailer a “U” certificate, indicating that it is appropriate for viewers of all ages. Two distinct edits, a 4-minute-15-second version and a shorter 4-minute cut, were submitted, according to the CBFC certification.A few months ago, the movie’s first teaser revealed Yash as Ravana, Sai Pallavi as Sita, and Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Ram. The magnitude of the images was praised, but the CGI quality received criticism. The movie, which was directed by Nitesh Tiwari, is split into two sections. Diwali 2026 will see the global release of Part 1, while Diwali 2027 will see the release of Part 2.

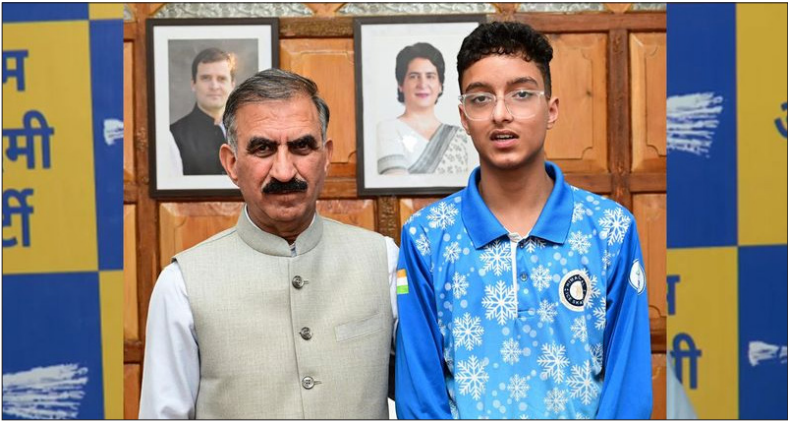
Annu Kapoor Defends His Crude Remark About Tamannaah



New Delhi: Once again, Annu Kapoor defended his offensive “dudhiya badan” remarks regarding Tamannaah by arguing that Indians are still mentally enslaved to the British. Annu Kapoor said he never treats women with “disrespect,” refusing to acknowledge the implicit misogyny and objectification in his statement.Annu Kapoor was asked to address the criticism he received for the “dudhiya badan” remark during a chat with Zoom. “People have no issues when cuss words are said in English,” he reiterated his previous defense. When uttered in Hindi, it seems to cause controversy. People are more concerned about “dudhiya badan” than “milky body.” “We had been slaves to the British for 250 years. On August 15, 1947, we gained only political freedom. We are still British slaves mentally,” said the senior actor in his defence.When asked whether his com-

ments showed disrespect, Annu Kapoor promptly replied, “I would be the last person on this earth to show any disrespect to any man or woman. If there’s a traitor, I wouldn’t disrespect him. But I would pray that I could murder him,” he said on record. He also said that he was ready to apologise to Tamannaah if she felt hurt by his comment. Last year, Annu Kapoor appeared on Shubhankar Mishra’s YouTube channel where he discussed the song “Aaj Ki Raat” and expressed admiration for actress Tamannaah. He praised her physical appearance and remarked that her music positively impacts children by helping them sleep well. Kapoor highlighted the significance of good sleep for children and extended his blessings for her future aspirations. When talking about her casting in the spooky movie Odela 2 last year, Tamannaah reacted to being called the “milky beauty.” “You mention milky beauty, but why did you think that a milky beauty couldn’t be a Shiva Shakti? The solution is contained in your query. Ashok Teja does not view milky beauty as something to feel guilty or ashamed about. Women should enjoy their glamour, and we women ought to do the same. We can then anticipate celebrations from others. No one can appreciate us if we have a particular self-perception.Thanks to the upbeat song and Tamannaah’s dancing prowess, “Aaj Ki Raat” became an overnight phenomenon.

Prior to the 2026 Asian Ice Skating Trophy, Samarth Atri meets Himachal Chief Minister Sukhu



Shimla: Samarth Atri, a promising young athlete from Bhoranj tehsil in Hamirpur district, called on Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Tuesday evening and sought his blessings ahead of the prestigious Asian Short Track Ice Skating Trophy 2026. Samarth has been selected to represent India at the international championship, scheduled to be

held in Dehradun from 17 to 20 August, 2026. Congratulating the young skater on his achievement, the Chief Minister extended his best wishes for a successful performance at the Asian event.

He said that the state government was committed to creating world-class sports infrastructure in Himachal Pradesh to enable talented athletes to hone their skills

and excel at national and international competitions. The Chief Minister lauded Samarth Atri for earning a place on the international stage through his talent, dedication and hard work, adding that his accomplishment has brought pride to Himachal Pradesh. He expressed confidence that Samarth would deliver an outstanding performance at the Asian Short Track Ice Skating Trophy and bring laurels to both India and the state. A Class X student of the prestigious Auckland House School, Shimla, Samarth Atri has been training regularly at the Shimla Ice Skating Rink for the past six to seven years. He was recently selected to participate in the 21st National Short Track Ice Skating Championship, where his impressive performance earned him a place in the National Training Camp.

Based on his outstanding performance during the camp, he has now been selected to represent India at the Asian Short Track Ice Skating Trophy 2026.

By the end of August, Prahlad Joshi believes India will have surpassed the 300 GW renewable energy objective

New Delhi, July 26: Union minister for renewable energy Prahlad Joshi stated on Wednesday that India is expected to surpass the goal of installing 300 GW of renewable energy by the end of next month, adding that significant expansion through energy storage will support the nation's quick development in the clean energy industry. Speaking at a sustainability event, the Minister stated that by 2035–36, the nation is anticipated to have 786 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity, which will make up almost 70% of India's installed power capacity. India will exceed 300 GW of non-fossil sources in about a month. When PM Modi



assumed office, this amount was 81 GW, including hydropower. In 2014, solar capacity was 2.66 GW; currently, it is 162 GW. At the event, which featured participation from industry executives and experts on the green transition, Joshi

stated, "This too is likely to touch 175 GW in another two to three months." According to forecasts for 2035–36, solar energy will surpass coal as India's primary source of installed power capacity for the first time, the minister contin-

ued. "It will surpass coal by almost 200 GW, i.e. 315 GW coal & 510 GW of solar," he continued, adding that battery storage will go hand in hand with the goal of establishing 174 GW storage capacity by 2035–2026, or 888 GW hours of energy storage capacity and 94 GW of pumped storage production. According to the most recent data provided by MNRE, India's capacity for renewable energy was 288.58 GW as of June 30, 2026, according to a response given in parliament on Tuesday. This comprised 162.15 GW of solar energy, 57.44 GW of wind power, 57.24 GW of hydro power, and 11.75 GW of biopower.

Bengaluru's Grand Egyptian Museum's architects will construct a new museum

New Delhi, July 26: India's first Museum of Innovation and Startup Technology (MIST) will be built in Karnataka as part of a 300-crore public-private partnership project that will highlight the nation's technological, entrepreneurial, and innovative journey. On some of the vacant land of the ancient NGEF site in Baiyappanahalli, Bengaluru, the museum will be built. It will be kept in a converted switchgear factory shed that will be transformed into a top-notch museum complex through adaptive reuse. The Karnataka Technology Innovation Museum Foundation has been formed as the legal entity to execute the project. It is a joint initiative between the UnboxingBLR Foundation, which holds a 51 per cent stake, and the Karnataka Department of Electronics, Information Technology, Biotechnology and Science & Technology, which holds the remaining 49 per cent. The museum will be chaired by Prashanth Prakash, while



Pravin Hungund will serve as its Chief Executive Officer. It will also be co-located with Innoverse, the state's deep-tech startup incubator and partnership hub. Heneghan Peng Architects Consortium, the internationally recognized architectural group behind the Grand Egyptian Museum, is the Design and Technical Agency, adding international prominence to the project. The firm, which has won numerous important international honors, will collaborate with DROO Da Costa Mahindroo Architects and Cadence Architects, both of whom are situated in Bengaluru. Under the direction of Batul Raaj Me-

hta, BRMA Museum Planners is in charge of the museum's master planning. The project will be constructed on the 105-acre NGEF campus, which has around 65 acres of green space. The Museum of Innovation and Startup Technology is located there. It is a PPP project of Rs 300 crore. The museum will be constructed on an underutilized portion of NGEF land. The Heneghan Peng Architects, who have won numerous important international honors, are the architects behind this initiative, according to Karnataka IT-BT Minister Priyanka Kharge. In 2028, the museum's first phase is anticipated to open to the public.

Adani Energy Solutions Wins the Andhra Power Transmission Project for Rs. 8,500 Crore

New Delhi, July 26: Adani Energy Solutions Ltd. (AESL) announced on Friday that it has been awarded a Rs 8,500 crore inter-state transmission project in Andhra Pradesh to supply electricity to the proposed Green Hydrogen and Green Ammonia projects in the Vizag area, meeting an estimated 4,500 MW of demand. Adani Energy Solutions was the most competitive bidder in the government's tariff-based competitive bidding (TBCB) system, which was used to award the project. According to a statement from the corporation, the project is contracted to be completed in thirty months. "The Vizag transmission project is a crucial step in constructing the energy infrastructure for India's upcoming industrial expansion. According to Kandarp Patel, CEO of Adani Energy Solutions Ltd., "it will strengthen the grid for emerging digital infrastructure demand in the Pendurthi-Vizag region and



support the development of green hydrogen and green ammonia capacity in Andhra Pradesh." With the help of planned subsea connectivity, extensive AI and hyperscale data center expansions, and related logistics, clean energy, and industrial infrastructure, Vizag is becoming one of India's new hubs for digital infrastructure. As India advances towards a cleaner, more technology-driven economy, "AESL remains committed to developing resilient, future-ready

transmission networks that enable sustainable growth at scale", Patel added. Additionally, the project will meet the increasing load requirements anticipated from the Pendurthi-Vizag region, where investments in digital infrastructure and data centers are taking shape. It would be kept under Vizag Power Transmission Ltd.'s Special Purpose Vehicle. AESL stated that this project will increase its total transmission network to 29,531 ckm and 1,33,675 MVA of

transformation capacity by adding 1,582 ckm of transmission lines and 10,500 MVA of transformation capacity.

The biggest private transmission firm in the nation is AESL. Reliable high-capacity transmission infrastructure will be essential to guaranteeing power availability, grid stability, and long-term industrial competitiveness as the region's data centers and green molecules generation (green hydrogen) expand.

India's Monsoon Fights Under El Nino's Control After 50 Days

New Delhi, July 26: In India, the Southwest Monsoon started more than 50 days ago. India is now enduring a challenging and unpredictable monsoon season. The season's general health is still under strain after a poor start and protracted dry spells. Weather specialists are currently evaluating where we stand, how strongly El Nino is prevailing, and what the remainder of the season might look like because agriculture depends heavily on the four months. At the national level, there is a discernible deficiency in water reserves following the first half of the season. Mayuresh Prabhune, an independent researcher on monsoon and society and secretary at the Centre for Citizen Science in Pune, says the overall figures are alarming. Prabhune cautions, "From 1st June to 21st July, there has been a -21% deficit in rainfall at the all-India level. This is an alarming situation." Even though statistics only provide a portion of the picture, a larger narrative that is developing locally still needs to be revealed. The uneven distribution of the showers must also be examined. Significantly, the distribution has been extraordinarily uneven, leaving only a few areas with excessive rainfall and broad crop belts dry.

Prabhune draws attention to this regional inequality. "56% of the country is under deficient or large deficient," he declared. Where it has rained, like in the Konkan region, it has been very heavy. Overall Maharashtra data seem average due to the strong rain in Konkan, but a district-level examination shows that 21 districts in Maharashtra are really lacking in rainfall." In short, while a state's total rainfall might look sufficient on paper, rural pockets often remain deeply stressed. El Nino is the primary reason of this year's slow monsoon, as it warms the Pacific Ocean's surface waters abnormally, suppressing the monsoonal rains in India. El Nino has become stronger much more quickly than anticipated, according to Prabhune. "El Nino's intensity is rising in the Pacific," he stated. By mid-July, the temperature in the Nino 3.4 region had increased by more than 2.1 degrees Celsius above average, while El Nino peaks of more than 2 degrees Celsius are typically seen in November or December. Important air systems have been effectively drawn away from the Indian subcontinent by the Pacific's fast warming. This time, there have been fewer rain-bearing systems, according to Prabhune.

A Mumbai model responds to PM Modi's guarantee on the NEET paper leak by standing in front of a police truck

New Delhi, July 26: Following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of severe punishment for offenders, model and actor Rhiya Ahir, who went viral as the face of student protests in Mumbai against purported paper leaks, requested action on Friday instead of just words. After being captured on camera standing in front of a Mumbai Police truck during protests at Shivaji Park, Ahir came to represent the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) in Mumbai. "Yes, those were the students' demands. It's wonderful that the demands are being taken into consideration. Saying something is one thing, but actually putting it into practice after having heard is quite another. The purported mastermind behind the 2024 leaks was freed on bond after being exonerated of all charges. Ahir told ANI on Friday, "I hope it doesn't happen this time." Additionally, PM Modi discussed the establishment of fast-track courts to handle cases involving document leaks. In response, Ahir cited a widely shared social media video and stated, "I know you're going to say that it's going to happen, but we really want to see it happening." The 27-year-old model denied accusations that her actions were politically motivated or intended to get publicity after videos of her obstructing a police car during student protests went viral online. I was wearing



a cap and a hoodie. I kept my face hidden. "Never assume that this was done for attention," she stated. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a video message on the NEET row, announced that a bill with provisions for strict action against paper leaks will be introduced in Parliament next week. "The cabinet will discuss the issue of paper leaks on Friday, and taking suggestions from the cabinet colleagues, further action will be finalized. On Monday, when the second week of the Monsoon session of Parliament will begin, a bill will be brought with provisions for strong action against paper leaks, and we will try to pass it as early as possible," PM Modi stated in a video posted to his social media accounts. He added that the bill calls for tougher penalties for those involved in paper leaks as well as fast-

track courts. Late on Thursday, activist Sonam Wangchuk ended his 26-day hunger strike in the presence of union minister JP Nadda, minister of state Jitendra Singh, and his wife, Gitanjali J Angmo, at Medanta Hospital in Gurugram. The activist said this was the "end of hunger and beginning of accountability." The government said it was prepared for "threadbare discussions to find solutions to paper leaks and educational reforms for exams in the Parliament" and was "positively considering suitable compensations for the suicide victims of recent NEET paper leaks." The Center further promised that no action would be taken against peaceful protesters and those who had taken part in the July 20 march to Parliament, according to a video message Wangchuk posted to his official X account.

Shreyas Iyer Becomes the First T20I Captain to Break MS Dhoni's Record

New Delhi, July 26: Shreyas Iyer has finally experienced victory as captain after seven games, and he did so in a dominant manner. After India easily defeated Zimbabwe by seven wickets in the first round of the three-match Twenty20 International series in Harare on Thursday, Iyer expressed his happiness. With India losing the series 2-0 to Ireland and 4-0 to England, as well as one match being canceled due to weather, the recently selected captain had a difficult beginning to his leadership role. India, chasing 126, finished the chase in just 13.2 overs thanks to an incredible 18-ball maiden half-century from 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. Tilak Varma and skipper Shreyas Iyer (28*) led India to win, while Sooryavanshi hit 50 off 18 balls before being removed. Earlier, India's bowlers restricted Zimbabwe to 125/7 after captain Shreyas Iyer opted to bowl first. Pacer Mayank Yadav starred with figures of 2/18, supported by Prince Yadav's 2/19, as India's disciplined bowling attack kept Zimbabwe's batters under pressure. Iyer is the first captain in the world to win the toss in each of his first eight matches as captain in men's T20Is. He broke the record of the Bahamas' Gregory Taylor (7). Among Indian captains, MS Dhoni previously held the record for the most consecutive toss wins in T20Is. Dhoni won seven tosses in a row as India's T20I captain between May 2010 and February 2012.



After the win, Iyer praised the team's execution, calling it a special moment to register his first victory as captain. He lauded Mayank Yadav's bowling and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's fearless batting approach, highlighting the youngster's confidence and ability to provide a strong start. India secured a decisive victory against Zimbabwe, chasing 126 runs in just 13.2 overs. Shreyas Iyer praised his team's exceptional start, highlighting Mayank Yadav's performance, which earned him the Player of the Match title with figures of 2/18. Iyer noted the strong bowling and the ability to build partnerships. Sooryavanshi made a notable contribution with a maiden half-century, supported by Ishan Kishan and Iyer. Zimbabwe was restricted to 125/7, with Marumani scoring 39 runs, while India's bowlers maintained discipline throughout the match.

Cricket Schedule for the Asian Games in 2026: India vs. Pakistan Is Only Possible Under One Condition

New Delhi: India's cricket teams, both men's and women's, will compete at the 2026 Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. Cricket will make its fourth appearance at the Games during the quadrennial tournament, which is set to take place from September 19 to October 4. The men's tournament will commence on September 24 and the women's competition on September 17, according to the cricket competition schedule. Since every game will be played in the T20 format and have full

international status, it offers many players a fantastic opportunity. It's interesting to note that both the men's and women's teams from India will be competing as defending champions after winning gold in the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, in 2023. As the top-seeded teams in the men's competition, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka have advanced straight to the quarterfinals. The remaining four quarterfinal positions will be contested by Afghanistan, Japan, and Nepal in Group A and



Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, and Oman in Group B. Each group's top two teams will move on to the Top 8 round. The much awaited match between India and Pakistan can only happen once during the Asian Games, either in the final or one of the semifinals. Japan will play the Women in Blue in the T20 tournament's round of eight. If Harmanpreet Kaur's team wins, they will play either China or Bangladesh, who have both been drawn in the same half of the bracket, in the semifinals. Sri

Lanka will play Malaysia in the remaining quarterfinal matches, while Pakistan will start their campaign against Thailand. The victors will move on to the second semifinal. In both contests, India will field seasoned leaders. Shreyas Iyer will lead the men's team alongside vice-captain Tilak Varma, while Harmanpreet Kaur will continue to captain the women's team with Smriti Mandhana as her deputy. India's 15-man men's team also includes young batting star Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

Sooryavanshi returns to his favorite hunting area, embracing the rollercoaster

New Delhi: He is only 15. He has just had a taste of international cricket. Yet, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi speaks with the self-awareness of a seasoned campaigner when reflecting on a whirlwind four months that have tested his resolve as much as they have catapulted him into the spotlight. Following a break-out Indian Premier League season with the Rajasthan Royals, the teenage sensation encountered a rare dip in form during an India A tri-series in Sri Lanka. However, he announced his return to rhythm in signature style, exploding with a blistering century against Sri Lanka A in Dambulla. That performance sealed his maiden senior India call-up for the T20I tour of the UK. Though he sat out the opening two fixtures in Belfast, Sooryavanshi made history at Manchester's Old Trafford in the second T20I against England, becoming India's youngest-ever international



cricketer at 15 years and 100 days, surpassing Sachin Tendulkar's long-standing mark. His initiation to senior international cricket, however, proved unforgiving. Faced with express pace and targeted short-ball tactics from Jofra Archer, Sooryavanshi recorded modest scores of 14, 13, and 15 across three outings. He was subsequently left out of the final T20I in

Birmingham as Sanju Samson returned to the XI, with India eventually suffering a 0-4 series defeat. The decision by the team management to bench the teenage opener after just three innings drew sharp criticism from several former cricketers, who argued for greater patience with a generational talent. Unfazed by the scrutiny, Sooryavanshi is learning to embrace the fickle nature of elite sport.

Yes, there have been several ups and downs in the last four months; it's part of cricket, it will keep happening, but I have to follow the process and give my 100 per cent for the team," Sooryavanshi said during a training session in Harare. The left-hander now returns to familiar and fond surroundings as India prepare to face Zimbabwe in a three-match T20I series at the Harare Sports Club, starting July 23. It was at this very venue in February 2026 that Sooryavanshi produced one of the most destructive innings in age-group history, hammering an unbeaten 175 off just 80 balls-laced with 15 fours and 15 sixes-against England to power India to their sixth ICC U19 World Cup title. Accompanied by his parents during the UK tour and continuously guided by a supportive coaching staff, the young opener feels well-equipped mentally and technically for his latest assignment.

Lamine Yamal's younger brother

Keyne steals the viral spotlight

Chandigarh: Barcelona and Spain sensation Lamine Yamal may have fulfilled his dream by lifting the FIFA World Cup, but another member of his family ended up becoming one of the tournament's most unexpected viral stars. While millions celebrated Spain's 2026 FIFA World Cup triumph, social media was flooded with clips of Yamal's adorable younger half-brother, Keyne who charmed fans with his carefree celebrations, hilarious dance moves and priceless interactions with football's biggest prize. The youngster became an instant internet sensation after videos showed him dancing joyfully on the pitch during Spain's post-match celebrations. Unbothered by the cameras or the historic occasion, he grooved to the music, drawing laughter from teammates and delighting supporters worldwide. His another old video of dancing with his elder brother in the background on a kid cycle also has gone viral. Fans across X, Instagram and TikTok joked that the "real MVP" of Spain's celebrations wasn't a player but Yamal's little brother, whose infectious energy quickly became one of the night's most-shared moments. Another viral clip captured the youngster proudly holding the FIFA World Cup trophy, with Lamine Yamal and family members watching nearby. Though the



trophy looked almost as big as him, he confidently posed for photographs and soaked in the celebrations like a seasoned champion. The heartwarming moment highlighted the family atmosphere that surrounded Spain's victory celebrations and gave fans a glimpse of Yamal's life away from football. Spain's historic 2026 FIFA World Cup victory against Argentina brought unforgettable sporting moments, but three-year-old Keyne Yamal, the younger brother of teenage sensation Lamine Yamal, emerged as the tournament's breakout star. Throughout Spain's championship run, Keyne captivated fans worldwide with his joyful antics in stadium stands and viral TikTok dance videos

alongside his older brother. The toddler's viral fame peaked following Spain's 1-0 victory in the final at New York New Jersey Stadium. Dressed in a mini red jersey, Keyne sprinted onto the pitch, clutched a piece of the goal netting, and leaped into Yamal's arms for a heartwarming embrace. He then posed alongside his brother while trying to hold the heavy golden World Cup trophy all by himself, pulling hilarious faces for the cameras. Keyne continued his post-match show by high-fiving players, playing in confetti, and engaging in a playful kickabout on the grass with star winger Nico Williams, who dramatically fell over as Keyne scored.

Delhi Capitals Academy expands into the Gulf with a new Saudi Arabia centre



New Delhi: Delhi Capitals Cricket Academy has strengthened its international footprint with the launch of its first academy in the Gulf through a new centre in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The expansion marks another step forward in Delhi Capitals' growing global academy network and its vision to make cricket more inclusive around the world, according to a press release from the franchise. The Delhi Capitals Cricket Academy will operate in partnership with JSC Sports, the first international cricket academy in Jeddah. The academy cur-

rently trains more than 50 boys and girls between the ages of five and 17 across four development categories with a vision of providing young cricketers with long-term development opportunities. The partnership will see the implementation of Delhi Capitals' structured coaching curriculum, technical framework and player development philosophy at the Jeddah centre. Players will have access to ICC-certified coaches, high-performance training facilities, specialised coaching tools, performance monitoring, exchange programmes,

camp and wider opportunities across the Delhi Capitals Academy ecosystem, enabling them to train within a globally connected development structure while preparing to compete at international standards. The expansion also comes at a time when cricket continues to gather momentum across Saudi Arabia. Supported by the country's Vision 2030, investment into sport has accelerated significantly in recent years, creating new opportunities for cricket to grow alongside other emerging disciplines. The partnership aims to contribute to that growth by strengthening grassroots development and creating clearer pathways for aspiring cricketers across the region. Sunil Gupta, CEO, Delhi Capitals, said, "The launch of our first academy in the Middle East is another important step in the long-term vision of the Delhi Capitals Academy.

Vinicius Jr. undergoes face surgery, looking unrecognizable after the FIFA World Cup



New Delhi: Brazil's FIFA World Cup campaign might have ended in disappointment, but Vinicius Junior is making headlines off the pitch. Images published across Brazilian media show the Real Madrid winger looking noticeably different following a reported chin harmonisation procedure in Goiania. Reports indicate the 26-year-old sought greater facial definition shortly after returning home from the tournament. As the forward prepares to rejoin his club for pre-season training in the coming days, the striking change to his profile has quickly caught the attention of fans and observers alike. Chin harmonisation (often called chin reshaping or profile harmonisation) refers to a tailored combination of surgical or

non-surgical procedures designed to alter the size, shape, position, or projection of the chin to bring it into balance with the rest of the face - particularly the nose, lips, and jawline. Rather than focusing solely on the chin in isolation, practitioners evaluate the face using vertical thirds and horizontal profile lines to determine whether the chin needs to be augmented, reduced, advanced, or smoothed. Vinicius Jr. endured a disappointing FIFA World Cup campaign, failing to make a significant impact once the knockout stages began as Brazil crashed out in the Round of 16 against Erling Haaland's Norway. The five-time champions had progressed from the group stage with wins over Haiti and Scotland. Playing against Morocco, Vinicius saved Brazil from losing the game, where he scored the 32nd-minute equaliser after Achraf Hakimi's side had put Brazil under immense pressure. Brazil then eased past Japan in the Round of 32, but their campaign came to a painful end against Norway. Haaland struck twice in the final 15 minutes to complete a dramatic win and send the tournament favourites packing much earlier than expected. Brazil's FIFA World Cup campaign

ended in disappointment after a Round of 16 loss to Norway, despite Vinicius Junior's crucial equalizer against Morocco. The Real Madrid winger, however, attracted attention off the pitch following a chin harmonisation procedure in Goiania aimed at enhancing facial balance. At 26, Vinicius opted for this aesthetic change shortly after the tournament and is set to return to club pre-season training. The surgery improves chin alignment relative to other facial features. From the moment he took charge, the Italian spoke less about flair and far more about balance. Brazil, he insisted, did not have to overwhelm opponents with beautiful football to win another World Cup. They needed to become harder to beat, more tactically disciplined and more comfortable suffering without the ball. Results would matter more than romance. Because on a humid evening against Norway, Brazil played almost exactly the way Ancelotti had imagined. They stayed compact, defended patiently and waited for moments rather than forcing them. The problem was that Norway never stopped playing, and Erling Haaland only needed two genuine chances to expose the flaw in Brazil's patience.

Ben Stokes battles cramps to score post-retirement hundred

New Delhi: Ben Stokes enjoyed a dream return to domestic cricket, scoring an unbeaten century to guide Durham to a five-wicket win over Derbyshire in their opening One-Day Cup fixture on Tuesday. Battling intense cramps for much of his innings, the all-rounder showed remarkable resilience to remain at the crease and see his side over the line. The match marked Stokes' first competitive appearance since announcing his retirement from Test cricket, as well as his first List A game for Durham in almost 12 years. Leading from the front, the former England captain finished unbeaten on 108 as Durham chased down a target of 257. Despite repeatedly being hampered by cramps—at one stage collapsing in pain soon after reaching his fifty—Stokes refused to retire hurt and completed the chase. Earlier in the day, Stokes was unable to make an impact with the ball, returning figures of 0 for 56 from his allotted nine overs as Derbyshire finished on 256 for 9. Derbyshire's innings was built around a patient century from Martin Anderson, while Ben Aitchison gave the visitors the ideal start by removing two Durham batters with the new ball. Facing early pressure in the chase, Stokes steadied the innings with a crucial partnership alongside Will Rhodes, who made 45. Colin Ackermann and Ollie Robinson then chipped in with valuable contributions, allowing the veteran all-rounder to pace the chase despite his physical struggles. He eventually reached his hundred and remained unbeaten to seal an inspiring victory for Durham. The 35-year-old returned to action only days after his shock decision to step away from international cricket during England's third Test against New Zealand. Having skipped The Hundred auction, Stokes had already committed to playing for Durham in the One-Day Cup. He had also sat out the second Test against New Zealand while authorities investigated an incident at a London nightclub. During that spell away from international cricket, he featured for Durham in a County Championship match against Northamptonshire, later revealing that the experience reignited his love for the game.

CM Pushkar Singh Dhami celebrates the boxing medals won by Nikita Chand Kajal Farswan and Aarti Dhariyal

Dehradun: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Tuesday felicitated the state's women boxers who have brought laurels to India with their outstanding performances on the international stage. During a programme held at the Chief Minister's residence, Dhami honoured Pithoragarh boxers Nikita Chand, Kajal Farswan and Aarti Dhariyal for their remarkable achievements. CM Dhami also felicitated their coaches, Brijendra Mal and Lalit Kunwar, and extended his best wishes for their future success. Recently, at the Under-23 Asian Boxing Championships held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from July 3 to 15, 2026, Nikita Chand won a silver medal in the 60 kg category, while Kajal Farswan secured a silver medal in the 65 kg category. Their performances have brought pride to both Uttarakhand and India on the international stage. Nikita Chand, a resident of

Badalu village in Pithoragarh, is a three-time Asian Championship gold medallist, having won gold in 2021, 2022 and 2023. She is currently training under coaches Brijendra Mal and Bhaskar Bhatt. Kajal Farswan, from Bhadeli village in Munsiyari, began her boxing journey at the Women's Residential Sports Hostel in Pithoragarh under the guidance of Sunita Mehta Rawat and Captain Devichand. She later trained at the Small Khelo India Centre under coach Nikhil Mahar before being selected for the National Boxing Academy (NBA), Rohtak. She is currently training at the National Women's Boxing Camp in Patiala. Kajal previously won a silver medal at the Under-19 ASBC Asian Championships, a bronze medal at the Under-23 Asian Boxing Championships, and a silver medal at the 38th National Games 2025. Another talented boxer from Pithoragarh, Aarti Dhariyal,

won the gold medal in the 54 kg category at the Gold Belt Boxing Tournament held in Romania from July 12 to 16, 2026. A resident of Gaudihat in Pithoragarh, Aarti had earlier won bronze medals at the Elite Women's National Boxing Championships in 2024 and 2025. She has also been selected for the National Women's Boxing Camp in Patiala and received her training at the Small Khelo India Centre under coach Nikhil Mahar. The achievements of these three women boxers reflect Uttarakhand's growing sporting culture and the immense potential of the state's daughters. Their success is inspiring a new generation of athletes to pursue excellence in sports. Speaking on the occasion, CM Dhami said the daughters of Uttarakhand have enhanced the pride of both the state and the nation through their hard work, talent and determination.

Sinner and Sabalenka, the Grand Slam champions, will lead the US Open charge



New York: Two-time defending champion Aryna Sabalenka and Wimbledon men's singles champion Jannik Sinner will lead a strong field at the US Open, the final Grand Slam tournament of the season, scheduled to begin next month in New York. The United States Tennis Association (USTA) announced the direct entry lists for the tournament on Tuesday, with players securing their places based on the latest ATP and WTA rankings released on July 20. The women's singles entry cutoff was No. 102, while the men's singles cutoff stood at No. 101. World No. 1 Sabalenka will return to Flushing Meadows with the opportunity to create history. The Belarusian star is aiming to become the first woman since Serena Williams, who won three consecutive US Open titles from 2012 to

2014, to claim the championship trophy in three straight years. Sabalenka's recent dominance at the New York major has made her one of the biggest favourites heading into this year's tournament. She will look to continue her impressive hard-court record and add another Grand Slam title to her growing collection. On the men's side, Jannik Sinner will attempt to reclaim the US Open crown after losing the title to Carlos Alcaraz in last year's final. The Italian enters the tournament with significant confidence after winning his fifth Grand Slam title at Wimbledon, where he defeated French Open champion Alexander Zverev in the final. Alcaraz, a former US Open champion, has also been included in the entry list despite missing the previous two Grand Slam tournaments due to a wrist injury.

The Spanish star is expected to make his return during the North American hard-court season as he prepares to challenge for another major title. The United States leads the list of direct entries, with 14 men and 14 women securing automatic places in the main draw. Anastasia Zakharova, ranked No. 102, was the final direct entry in the women's competition, while Filip Misolic entered the men's draw using a protected ranking at No. 101. A total of eight players — including five women and three men — received entry through special or protected rankings. The remaining spots in the 128-player singles draws will be decided through wild cards awarded by the USTA and qualifying tournaments scheduled before the main draw begins on August 30. Tennis legend Serena Williams could potentially receive a wild card if she remains fit and decides to compete. The 44-year-old returned to competitive tennis recently but suffered a first-round defeat at Wimbledon after dealing with a knee injury. With several Grand Slam champions and top-ranked players set to compete, the upcoming US Open promises another highly competitive battle for one of tennis' most prestigious titles.

Raza to Lead as Zimbabwe Unveil Squad for India T20Is

Harare: Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) has announced a 15-member squad for the upcoming three-match T20 International series against India, with the selectors making three changes to the team that featured in the recent T20I series against Bangladesh in Bulawayo. The three matches will be played at the Harare Sports Club on July 23, 25 and 26, with Zimbabwe aiming to build on their impressive recent performances at home and challenge the reigning ICC Men's T20 World Cup champions. All-rounder Wesley Madhevere has returned to the squad after missing the previous assignment, adding experience and balance to the team. Wicket-keeper-batter Tafadzwa Tsiga has earned his maiden T20I call-up after impressing at the domestic level, while fast bowler Newman Nyamhuri has also been recalled after recovering from a niggle that kept him out of the Bangladesh T20I series. The returning trio replaces Clive Madande, Tinotenda Maposa and Tashinga Musekiwa in the squad. Tanaka Chivanga, who was brought into the side as Nyamhuri's replacement for the Bangladesh series, has retained his place after making a strong impression. Veteran all-rounder Sikandar Raza will continue to lead the side as Zimbabwe look to carry forward the confidence gained from their recent home campaign. The hosts enjoyed a memorable run against Bangladesh, beginning with a historic innings victory in the one-off Test before securing a 2-1 win in the ODI series in Harare. Zimbabwe will now face a tougher challenge against India, who enter the series as the defending T20 World Cup champions. The series provides an opportunity for the hosts to test themselves against one of the strongest teams in international cricket and showcase the progress made in recent months. The presence of experienced players such as Raza, along with the return of Madhevere and Nyamhuri, is expected to strengthen Zimbabwe's chances in the shortest format. At the same time, the inclusion of young talent like Tsiga reflects the team's continued focus on developing the next generation of players. With home conditions expected to play a key role at the Harare Sports Club, Zimbabwe will look to make a strong start and put pressure on a young Indian squad that is also aiming to build momentum.