

Fourth Edition Of Meghalaya Pineapple Festival Kicks Off In Delhi On July 10

Shillong, July 10: The national capital will host the fourth edition of the Meghalaya Pineapple Festival from July 10 to 12 at Dilli Haat, bringing the state's celebrated fruit to the forefront of India's horticultural showcase. Organized by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of Meghalaya, the three-day event is designed to connect farmers directly with consumers, retailers, institutional buyers, food businesses, and exporters, while highlighting the premium quality of Meghalaya's pineapples. Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia will inaugurate the festival on July 10, with Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma attending as guest of honour. Officials emphasized that the festival is a tribute to thousands of pineapple farmers whose resilience and entrepreneurial spirit have positioned Meghalaya as one of the country's leading producers of high-value horticultural crops.



Known for their exceptional sweetness and low acidity, Meghalaya's pineapples boast a Brix value between 16 and 18 de-

grees, making them highly sought after in domestic and international markets. Recent exports to Lulu Hypermarkets in Dubai,

facilitated by local groups such as the Jirang Organic Agro Farmers Producer Organization, underscore the fruit's growing global demand.

Since its inception, the festival has evolved into a flagship platform for promoting value addition, branding, logistics, retail partnerships, and exports, ensuring that greater returns reach the farmers. It also forms part of the state's broader Vision@2032 strategy to expand agricultural opportunities. The initiative is supported by the Rs 295-crore Meghalaya State Organic Mission, which aims to bring one lakh hectares under certified organic cultivation by 2028, benefiting more than 90,000 farmers and over 600 cooperatives and producer groups.

History suggests their involvement in planning disruptive activities aimed at destabilizing local communities and undermining security measures. The arrests are expected to provide valuable leads for further investigations into the group's network and operational strategies. Officials emphasized that the action reflects the government's commitment to strengthening law and order and ensuring the safety of citizens. The Director General of Police commended the security forces for their precision and professionalism, noting that such operations are vital to dismantling militant infrastructure and curbing the flow of illegal arms. The state administration reiterated its appeal to the public to remain vigilant and cooperate with law enforcement agencies by sharing timely information. It assured that measures are being intensified to prevent recurrence of violence and to promote an environment conducive to peace, dialogue, and development.

Three Militant Cadres Arrested In Manipur

Imphal, July 10: Security forces in Manipur achieved a significant breakthrough in counter-insurgency operations with the arrest of three militant cadres during a coordinated action earlier this week. The arrests mark a crucial step in the ongoing efforts to restore peace and stability in the state, which has witnessed recurring incidents of violence in recent months. According to official sources, the operation was carried out following credible intelligence inputs regarding the movement of suspected insurgents in the region. Acting swiftly, security personnel launched a targeted search and successfully apprehended the individuals without any collateral damage. Arms, ammunition, and incriminating documents were reportedly recovered from their possession, underscoring the seriousness of their activities. Authorities have identified the arrested cadres as members of a banned outfit operating along sensitive border areas. Preliminary interrogation

Home Minister Mama Natung Meets Itanagar Gompa Authority, Hails New Spiritual Centre For Capital

Itanagar, July 10: Home Minister Mama Natung on Friday held a courtesy meeting with Lama Jigme Phuntsok, Chairman of the Itanagar Gompa Authority, and Lobsang Palden, Secretary In-charge. During the interaction, the delegation apprised the Home Minister of the progress & vision for the upcoming Gompa in Itanagar, briefed on the broader objectives of the project, emphasizing its focus on spiritual learning, cultural preservation and community welfare activities and shared details regarding



the ongoing efforts and support being extended by the Gaden Namgyal Lhatse Welfare & Charitable Society, Tawang Monastery,

for the establishment of the Gompa. Expressing delight over the initiative, Natung said he was happy to learn that

a one-of-its-kind Gompa is coming up in the state capital. "Once completed, it will serve as a vibrant venue for Losar celebrations while promoting spiritual, cultural, and holistic tourism in Arunachal Pradesh," he stated. The Minister noted that the Gompa will not only provide a dedicated space for the Buddhist community to observe religious traditions, but will also emerge as a significant cultural and tourist landmark for Itanagar. The Itanagar Gompa Authority functions un-

der the aegis of the Gaden Namgyal Lhatse Welfare & Charitable Society, Tawang Monastery. The project is envisioned as a one-of-its-kind institution in Itanagar, blending religious significance with cultural vibrancy. Once completed, it is expected to become a hub for spiritual discourse, cultural exchange, and social welfare activities, strengthening the bonds between communities and enhancing Arunachal Pradesh's reputation as a destination for cultural and spiritual tourism.

Two Mizoram Stars Join India Women's Hockey Squad 2026

Aizawl, July 10: Mizoram Sports Minister Lalthantluangi Hmar on Friday congratulated Lalremsiami and Lalthantluangi on their selection to the Indian women's hockey team for the Asian Games 2026, scheduled to be held in Nagoya, Japan, from September 19 to October 4. In a statement, Hmar said he was delighted and proud that the two players from Mizoram would represent India at the continental sporting event. He also conveyed his best wishes to Lalremsiami, Lalthantluangi, and the entire Indian women's hockey team for a successful campaign



at the Asian Games. In his statement, Hmar emphasized that their selection is not only a personal achievement but

also a moment of honor for Mizoram, underscoring the state's growing contribution to national sports.

Rupa Bayor clinches national gold, secures world berth

Itanagar, Jul 10: Arunachal Pradesh's rising taekwondo talent, Rupa Bayor, has brought pride to the state and the nation by winning the national gold medal in the Poomsae category. Her stellar performance not only earned her the top podium finish but also secured her a coveted spot at the upcoming World Taekwondo Poomsae Championship. Competing against some of the country's finest athletes, Bayor displayed exceptional skill, discipline, and determination, marking a significant milestone in her sporting journey. Officials from the Taekwondo Federation of India hailed her achievement as a testament to the growing strength of martial arts in the Northeast, while local sports authorities expressed confidence that Bayor's success will



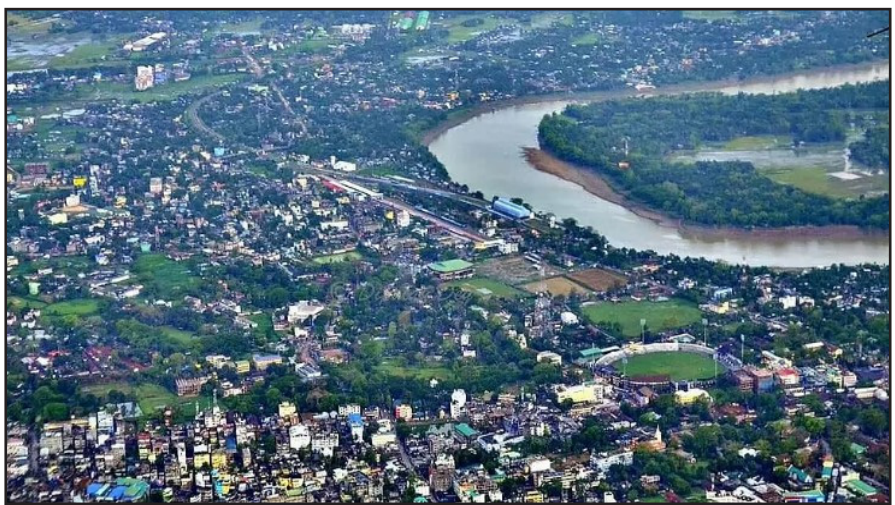
inspire more youth to take up the sport. With her eyes now set on the global stage, Rupa Bayor is poised to

represent India with distinction and continue her pursuit of excellence in taekwondo. Officials from

the Taekwondo Federation of India praised her accomplishment as a testament to the growing strength of martial arts in the Northeast, while local sports authorities expressed confidence that Bayor's success will inspire more youth to take up taekwondo and other combat sports. Her achievement also underscores the importance of grassroots sports development in the region, where young talents are increasingly making their mark at national and international levels. Beyond the medal, Bayor's triumph carries symbolic weight—it highlights the emergence of Northeast India as a powerhouse of sporting excellence and reinforces the message that perseverance and hard work can overcome barriers of geography and limited resources.

Assam Budget unveils AIIMS centre, zoo, Secretariat expansion in Barak

Guwahati, July 10: The proposed AIIMS Satellite Centre will significantly enhance medical infrastructure in the Barak Valley, providing advanced healthcare facilities and specialized services to residents. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to equitable healthcare access across Assam. The Government of Assam has announced a series of landmark initiatives in the 2026 State Budget, with a strong focus on healthcare, governance, and regional development. Key projects include the establishment of an AIIMS Satellite Centre, expansion of the State Secretariat, and the creation of a modern zoo in the Barak Valley. The Secretariat expansion project aims to strengthen administrative efficiency and improve governance delivery. By decentralizing operations, the government seeks to ensure faster decision-making and better coordination for



regional development. The planned zoo in the Barak Valley will serve as both a conservation hub and a cultural landmark. It is expected to promote eco-tourism, create local employment opportunities, and raise awareness about wildlife preservation. "The Assam Budget 2026 reflects our vision of inclusive growth and balanced regional development. These projects

will not only strengthen infrastructure but also uplift the socio-economic landscape of the Barak Valley," said, Government of Assam. The government has emphasized that detailed project reports and timelines will be shared in the coming months. Stakeholder consultations and environmental clearances will be prioritized to ensure sustainable execution of these

initiatives. The planned zoo in the Barak Valley will serve as both a conservation hub and a cultural landmark. It is envisioned to promote eco-tourism, generate local employment opportunities, and raise awareness about wildlife preservation. The project will also contribute to the region's socio-economic growth by attracting visitors and fostering community engagement.

Nagaland holds district review meets for Census 2027 accuracy

Kohima, July 10: Nagaland has initiated district-level review meetings to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the upcoming Census 2027 house listing operations. Convened under the guidance of the state administration, these meetings bring together district officials, census supervisors, and local representatives to assess preparedness, streamline coordination, and address challenges in the

enumeration process. Officials emphasized that the review sessions are crucial for maintaining transparency and accountability, ensuring that every household is properly listed and no community is left out. The meetings also focused on training enumerators, strengthening monitoring mechanisms, and enhancing public awareness about the importance of accurate census data. By prioritizing development

planning, resource allocation, and inclusive governance, the Nagaland government reaffirmed its commitment to conducting a reliable census exercise. Authorities assured that the outcomes of these review meetings will directly contribute to building a robust framework for Census 2027, laying the foundation for evidence-based policymaking and equitable growth across the state. The review meet-

ings also addressed the need for public awareness campaigns, encouraging citizens to actively participate and cooperate with census officials. Authorities stressed that accurate house listing is critical not only for demographic records but also for development planning, resource allocation, and policy formulation. By ensuring that every household is properly documented, the government aims to create

a reliable database that will guide future initiatives in healthcare, education, infrastructure, and welfare schemes. Officials reiterated that the Census is more than a statistical exercise—it is a people-centric governance tool. The Nagaland administration underscored its commitment to inclusivity, assuring that marginalized communities, remote villages, and urban settlements will all be covered comprehensively.

Mechanisms for monitoring progress, verifying data, and addressing grievances were also discussed, reinforcing the government's dedication to accountability and transparency. The meetings concluded with directives to district authorities to intensify preparations and maintain close coordination with the state headquarters. The government emphasized that the success of Census 2027 depends on collective effort,

urging officials, community leaders, and citizens to work together in building a robust framework for enumeration. By initiating these review meetings well in advance, Nagaland has demonstrated its proactive approach to governance. The state's commitment to accuracy and inclusivity in Census 2027 reflects its broader vision of equitable growth and evidence-based policymaking.

ARO Narangi Motivates 182 NCC Cadets on Career Opportunities in the Indian Army

Imphal, July 10: Army Recruiting Office (ARO) Narangi, under Zone Recruiting Office (ZRO) Shillong, conducted a motivational outreach programme on “Career Options in the Indian Army” for NCC cadets of Guwahati Group NCC and Imphal Group NCC at Brahmaputra Hall, Narangi Cantonment. A total of 182 NCC cadets attended the programme, which aimed to create awareness about the diverse career opportunities available in the Indian Army and inspire young aspirants to serve the Nation. During the session, representatives from ARO Narangi provided detailed information on various entry schemes, including Agniveer (Women Military Police), National Defence Academy (NDA), Officer Entries, and NCC Special Entry. The cadets were also briefed on eligibility criteria, selection procedures, career progression, and the numerous

benefits of a military career. Special emphasis was laid on the advantages of NCC training and the opportunities available to NCC cadets for joining the Indian Army. The interactive session enabled participants to engage directly with Army recruitment representatives, helping clarify doubts regarding the recruitment process and offering valuable insights into life in uniform. To further enhance awareness, informative posters and pamphlets were distributed among the cadets. The outreach programme witnessed enthusiastic participation and was well received by the attendees, reflecting the Indian Army’s continued commitment to guiding and motivating the youth towards a career of honour, discipline, and selfless service. The programme was conducted by the Recruiting Medical Officer (RMO) and staff of Army Recruiting Office, Narangi.

Soon Resume Border Talks, Says Himanta Biswa Sarma

Gu, July 10: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said Assam and Meghalaya will soon resume discussions to resolve their long-pending interstate boundary dispute, asserting that there is no friction between the two neighbouring states. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the concluding day of the Behdienkhlam Festival in Jowai, Sarma said both governments continue to maintain cordial relations and are committed to resolving the issue through dialogue. “There is no friction between us. We are talking amicably and we will soon again talk,” the Chief Minister said. However, he did not specify a timeline for the next round of discussions. The statement comes as both states prepare to restart the second phase of negotiations over the remaining six disputed sectors along the 884.9-km Assam-Meghalaya border. Earlier, Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister Sniawbhalang Dhar, who heads the state’s Regional Committee for West Jaintia Hills, had said that the next phase of talks would begin shortly after the Assam Assembly elections. He noted that Meghalaya is awaiting a date from the Assam government for joint inspections and meetings before regional committees resume field visits.

Chakma autonomous council successfully passes the floor test

Mizoram’s Chakma Autonomous District Council’s Chief Executive Member (CEM) Nirupam Chakma on Thursday won a floor test, securing the support of 18 members in the 20-strong council, ensuring that the BJP-ZPM alliance retained power in the body, officials said.

The confidence motion, conducted under the chairmanship of Deputy Chairman Sundor Muni Chakma, was passed with 18 votes in favour.

The lone Mizo National Front (MNF) member, Rasik Mohan Chakma, remained absent from the sitting, they said.

Chakma was sworn in as the CEM on Wednesday after being appointed by the governor of Mizoram following his election as the leader of the Chakma Democratic Alliance Legislature Party, a coalition of the BJP and the Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM).

The governor directed him to seek a vote of confidence within seven days of assuming office. The CADC currently has 20 elected members, including 10 from the BJP, nine from the ZPM and one from the MNF, giving the ruling alliance a decisive majority.

Speaking after the floor test, Nirupam Chakma thanked council members



for reposing faith in his leadership and the governor for facilitating the restoration of an elected government after nearly a year of governor’s rule.

He said the remaining members of the executive committee would soon be inducted to ensure the council functions effectively in accordance with the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The CEM said the new coalition government would prioritise improving road connectivity, upgrading school infrastructure, expanding access to safe drinking water and strengthening healthcare services across the council’s jurisdiction.

He also identified youth

employment and skill development as key focus areas, while stressing the need for close coordination with the Mizoram government and the Centre to accelerate development in the CADC.

He expressed confidence that the council would contribute to the national vision of ‘Viksit Bharat’. Chakma’s swearing on Wednesday marked the end of the governor’s rule in the council after a year. The CADC was placed under the governor’s rule for a year between July 7, 2025 and July 7, 2026 due to prolonged political instability caused by frequent change in leadership. The CADC governs parts of Lawngtlai district of southern Mizoram.

Women’s bodies condemn killing of young wom seek strict action

Itanagar, July 10: The Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women (APSCW) and the Arunachal Pradesh Women’s Welfare Society (AP-WWS) have strongly condemned the alleged murder of a 25-year-old woman in Aalo in West Siang district and called for a fair investigation and strict legal action against the accused. In a statement issued on Thursday, the APSCW described the incident as a brutal act of violence against a woman and appealed to the state government to ensure a free and impartial investigation. The commission urged the authorities to book the accused in accordance with the law. “The APSCW condemns all kinds of violence inflicted against women,” the commission said, while requesting members of the



public to cooperate with the police investigation so that justice is delivered to the victim and her family. The commission also expressed concern over what it described as a rise in crimes linked to the prolonged operation of clubs, pubs and bars. It appealed to the authorities concerned to strictly regulate and enforce appropriate opening and closing hours for such establishments across the state. The APSCW further remind-

ed media organisations and the public of the provisions of Section 74 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, which prohibits revealing the identity or publishing photographs of child victims, witnesses or children in conflict with the law. It cautioned that violations of the provision are punishable and urged media professionals not to disclose the identity or faces of the victim’s family members, particular-

ly if any of them are minors. The West Siang district unit of the Arunachal Pradesh Women’s Welfare Society also condemned the alleged murder and expressed shock over the incident. The organisation said no person has the right to take another individual’s life, regardless of the circumstances. It maintained that violence can never be justified and appealed to society to unite against all forms of violence against women. According to police, the accused, identified as 45-year-old Todak Ngomdir, allegedly killed the woman on Monday. She surrendered before the police the following day and is currently in judicial custody as the investigation continues. Police said the couple had reportedly separated about a month before the incident.

Himanta stated that there is no friction between Assam and Meghalaya regarding dispute

Itanagar, July 10: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said his state and Meghalaya continued to maintain a friendly and cooperative approach towards resolving their decades-old boundary dispute, asserting that there was “no friction” between the two neighbouring states.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the annual Behdienkhlam festival in Jowai, Sarma said both governments remain in constant communication and are committed to resolving any issues that arise along the interstate border through dialogue and mutual understanding. Sarma was in Meghalaya to attend the festival, one of the most significant religious and cultural festivals of the Pnar (Jaintia) community. Celebrated annually in Jowai town in eastern Meghalaya, the festival is observed to seek divine blessings for a bountiful harvest, good health and prosperity, while warding off diseases, calamities and evil spirits.

“I keep on meeting the CM and deputy CM. So, the channel of discussion is always open. We keep on meeting, and there is no friction. Whenever something happens, we resolve that immediately with the spirit of friendship,” Sarma said. Asked about reports of frequent friction in border



areas, the Assam CM dismissed such concerns, saying the overall situation remains peaceful. “I don’t think so... everything is smooth,” he added. His remarks come days after the Meghalaya government reconstituted its regional committees to take forward the second phase of boundary negotiations with Assam. The committees have been tasked with holding consultations with local stakeholders and examining the remaining six disputed areas between the two states. In the first phase of the talks, Assam and Meghalaya signed a landmark border settlement agreement in March 2022, resolving disputes in six of the 12 identified areas of difference. The second phase aims to resolve the remaining six areas of difference — Langpih, Borduar, Nongwah-Mawtamur, Deshdmoreah,

Himanta said both governments remain in constant communication and are committed to resolving any issues that arise along the interstate border through dialogue.

Block I and Block II, and Psir-Khanduli. Both Sarma and Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma have repeatedly reiterated their commitment to resolving the long-pending interstate boundary dispute through dialogue, consultation and mutual understanding.

Sangma has said the reconstituted regional committees will engage with stakeholders, assess ground realities and submit their recommendations to facilitate progress in the second phase of the border talks.

Tripura is becoming a key gateway to Southeast Asia, according to Scindia

Agartala, July 10: Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Jyotiraditya M. Scindia on Thursday said that, guided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s transformative Act East Policy, Tripura is fast emerging as a preferred destination for long-term investment and as India’s gateway to Southeast Asia.

Addressing the inaugural session of the two-day Destination Tripura Business Conclave-2026, the DoNER Minister said the state today stands at the intersection of connectivity, commerce and immense opportunity, making it one of the most promising investment destinations in the Northeast.

Urging investors to become partners in Tripura’s remarkable growth journey, Scindia, in his virtual address, said the conclave provides a platform to showcase a state that is poised to attract long-term investments, catalyse a new wave of enterprise, generate employment and accelerate inclusive economic growth.

“Guided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s transformative Act East Policy and the steadfast leadership of Chief Minister Manik Saha, Tripura is fast emerging as a preferred investment destination and India’s gateway to Southeast Asia,” the Union Minister said. Describing Tripura as a unique state endowed with strategic access to Southeast Asia, abundant natural resources, a skilled workforce and progressive governance, Scindia said the state offers immense opportunities for investors across multiple sectors. Highlighting Tripura’s economic progress, the Union Minister said the state’s Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has nearly doubled to around Rs 90,000 crore over the past few years, reflecting its sustained economic growth and improving the investment climate. He also pointed out that

Tripura is India’s largest producer of bamboo and the country’s second-largest producer of natural rubber, giving it significant potential to emerge as a major export hub for value-added products. Chief Minister Manik Saha said the state government aims to attract investment proposals worth nearly Rs 1 lakh crore across key sectors through the business conclave. He stressed the importance of attracting both domestic and foreign investments to create large-scale employment opportunities, enhance per capita income and further strengthen the state’s Gross State Domestic Product. The Chief Minister said that Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) worth nearly Rs 30,000 crore were signed during last year’s business conclave, of which projects valued at around Rs 8,000 crore have already entered the implementation stage. Expressing confidence over the success of this year’s conclave, Saha said the event would build upon last year’s achievements by facilitating new partnerships, encouraging greater participation by industry leaders and positioning Tripura as one of the Northeast’s most attractive investment destinations, backed by improved infrastructure, policy reforms and strategic connectivity with neighbouring countries under the Centre’s Act East Policy. Describing Tripura as one of the fastest-growing states in the country, the Chief Minister said the time is ripe for private investors to tap the state’s enormous potential and leverage its rapidly expanding infrastructure and investor-friendly ecosystem. Saha informed that while the government had initially expected around 500 business delegates, the response far exceeded expectations, with nearly 1,200 business leaders, industrialists, promoters and entrepreneurs participating in the conclave. He said Tripura’s abundant



Jyotiraditya M. Scindia

natural resources, all-weather connectivity, peaceful environment and business-friendly policies make it an attractive destination for investments across diverse sectors. The Chief Minister added that the state government’s guiding principles are “One Business, One Licence”, “Ease of Doing Business” as its commitment, and “Ease of Living” as its ultimate goal, aimed at creating a seamless and investor-friendly business environment. Industry and Commerce Department Secretary Kiran Gitte said that over the past few years, Tripura has witnessed a steady inflow of investments across various sectors of the economy. “Therefore, this year we decided to organise a multi-sectoral Business Conclave by bringing all departments and organisations under one roof so that greater synergy can be achieved. Through both administrative initiatives and business outreach, Tripura’s reputation has spread across every corner of the country,” Gitte said. He said diplomats from South Africa, Chile, Bangladesh, Timor-Leste, Laos, the Philippines, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, besides the Chairperson of the North East Chapter of the Federation

of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), industrialists, investors and business leaders from across the country, along with several hundred official delegates, participated in the conclave. Gitte said that to attract investors to the state, the government had organised four major roadshows in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, New Delhi and Guwahati ahead of the conclave. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, in a recorded message, and Tripura Industries and Commerce Minister Santana Chakma, among others, also addressed the inaugural session of the business conclave.

Several Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed on the first day of the conclave for investments in sectors including tourism, agarwood, rubber, food processing and other emerging industries. The two-day mega business conclave is being held at the Hapania International Fair Ground on the outskirts of Agartala and has brought together policymakers, diplomats, investors, industry leaders and entrepreneurs from India and abroad to explore investment opportunities in Tripura.

New counter-insurgency strategy on card: Manipur home minister

Imphal, July 10: Manipur home minister Govindas Konhoujam has said that a new security operational strategy will be put in place to counter insurgency in the state. The decision to introduce the new strategy was taken in a recent security review meeting chaired by Konhoujam in the backdrop of the deadly ambush in Ukhrul district that killed two personnel of the Assam Rifles on July 6 last, the home minister said. Talking to the reporters on the sideline of a sports event opening function in Bishnupur district, Konhoujam said that after the deadly ambush, he reviewed the security situation of the state with top officials of the state and Central security forces. Director General (DG) of the CRPF GP Singh, who is currently on an official visit in the state, was among the top officials of the security agencies who attended the meeting. After reviewing the security scenario of the state, the meeting stressed the need for strengthening the security. After a thorough deliberation on the subject, the meeting decided to introduce a new security operational strategy, the home minister said.

Assam introduces Bills to boost ease of business

Guwahati, July 10: The Assam government on Thursday introduced a series of Bills in the assembly aimed at improving the ease of doing business, including a proposal to replace the existing MSME law and strengthen the state’s single-window clearance mechanism. Industries, Commerce and Public Enterprises Minister Bimal Borah tabled The Assam Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (Facilitation of Establishment and Operation) Bill, 2026, which seeks to replace the 2020 Act governing the sector. In the Statement of Objects and Reasons, Borah said the MSME sector remains the backbone of employment generation, entrepreneurship and economic growth in the state. He said the 2020 legislation was enacted to ensure time-bound processing of approvals for MSMEs, but experience gained from its implementation, coupled with the Centre’s emphasis on ease of doing business, the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP), self-certification, single-window systems and digital clearance mechanisms, necessitated a comprehensive revision of the law. The proposed legislation repeals and replaces the existing law to create a more business-friendly framework for MSMEs, he said. Labour Welfare Minister Rameswar Teli introduced The Assam Shops and Establishment (Amendment) Bill, 2026, aimed at reducing the compliance burden on commercial estab-

lishments while promoting a business-friendly regulatory environment. The amendment seeks to align the law with emerging concepts such as digital governance, self-certification, deemed registration and round-the-clock economic activities, while retaining safeguards relating to employee welfare, working conditions, safety, overtime and weekly holidays. The government also introduced The Assam Ease of Doing Business (Amendment) Bill, 2026, proposing the creation of a Single Window Task Force to coordinate and expedite proposals relating to notified industrial areas. Borah said the Bill also provides for a dedicated module on the existing centralised web portal for industrial area proposals and empowers the task force to engage external agencies to assist in discharging its functions. Another legislation, The Assam Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, seeks to amend six existing state laws, including those governing non-government educational institutions, private universities, town and country planning, fire and emergency services, land reclassification and cinema regulation.

The proposed amendments are intended to reduce avoidable compliance requirements, facilitate faster approvals and clearances, and encourage institutional expansion and investment in the state, Borah said.

ED raids Kalanee Impex, a company owned by Dharmesh Sangani, an acquaintance of Shekhar Suman



New Delhi, July 10: According to officials familiar with the investigation, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) searched Kalanee Impex Pvt Ltd and its director, businessman Dharmesh Sangani, on Thursday under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) due to claims of undisclosed foreign assets, foreign bank accounts, and violations pertaining to export proceeds. In addition, Sangani is a co-founder of the Shekhar

Suman Film Academy and a film producer connected to actor and TV personality Shekhar Suman. The searches were conducted “in connection with an investigation relating to M/s Kalanee Impex Private Limited and its director Dharmesh Narendra Sangani,” according to officials. It was discovered throughout the search process that money that should have arrived in India had not, despite a significant amount of time

having passed. The Authorized Dealer Bank had not granted an extension of time, and export revenues from some foreign customers had not been realized. “No recovery efforts were documented,” an ED officer stated. A second official stated that the inquiry also showed that third parties other than the consignee or buyer listed in the export invoices or shipping bills had received export proceeds. Additionally, the agency stated that throughout the searches, it discovered evidence of overseas bank accounts and hidden foreign assets. For instance, it was discovered that Dharmesh Sangani had a sizable stake in an unknown Canadian business. Additionally, associated overseas bank accounts and activities were not reported to the proper authorities. The second officer stated, “An undisclosed UAE business entity has been identified in another instance.” According to officials, ED has found

undeclared overseas bank accounts in the US, Canada, and the UAE thus far. When ED officers arrived to carry out the searches, Sangani allegedly tried to destroy digital evidence, according to the agency. The first officer stated, “On Thursday, when ED went for the raid, Sangani attempted to destroy the digital evidence by throwing his mobile from the 13th floor of a building, for which ED gave a complaint to Mumbai Police.” The officer continued, “ED officers later recovered and seized the mobile.” According to officials, the US Customs authorities are allegedly looking into Sangani in relation to specific transactions. About 7.4 kg of gold jewelry that Dharmesh Sangani was bringing into the UK was seized by UK Border Force officials earlier in September 2016 because it had not been properly disclosed. The second officer stated, “More investigation is in progress.”

Despite El Nino, the monsoon picks up speed, and a week’s worth of rainfall deficit



New Delhi, July 10: Despite worries about El Nino, the Southwest Monsoon has accelerated, and in just one week, the nation’s rainfall deficit has drastically decreased from 38% to 15%. Mumbai, Pune, and numerous areas of Maharashtra have seen record monsoon rains in recent days. The Colaba region of Mumbai had 1383.8 mm of rain between June 1 and July 8, 2026, ac-

cording to the Regional Meteorological Centre. This exceeds the average by 78.4%. Santacruz recorded 1530.2 mm of rain during that time, 94.4% more than the period’s normal. In fact, over the past few days, the monsoon situation has improved not only in Maharashtra but also in Gujarat, Konkan, Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Odisha. As a result, the nation’s

rainfall deficit between June 1 and July 8 has decreased to 15%. The India Meteorological Department reports that between June 1 and July 1, 2026, rainfall nationwide was 38% below average. However, the gap has decreased by 23% as the monsoon has intensified during the past week. At a time when the nation was becoming increasingly concerned about El Nino’s effects during the

Southwest Monsoon season, the monsoon has intensified. Renowned meteorologist and former Director General of the India Meteorological Department KJ Ramesh stated: “El Nino does not always affect rainfall during the monsoon. Due to the present warming of the Equatorial Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, the effects of El Nino have not been observed during this active phase of the monsoon in recent days. Increased evaporation and moisture flow towards India are the results of this. A Western Disturbance caused a Mid-Tropospheric Cyclone, or MTC, to emerge within the past ten days. Good rainfall from Gujarat, Goa, and Maharashtra to Odisha resulted from both systems feeding off one another. According to KJ Ramesh, these two meteorological patterns counteracted the effects of El Nino, helping to close 23% of the nation’s rainfall deficit in a single week.

The Madras High Court’s Significant Jobs Row Decision Hour Before Vijay’s Visit to Karur

New Delhi, July 10: The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Friday declined to halt the Tamil Nadu government’s decision to grant government jobs to the relatives of the 41 individuals killed in the Karur TVK rally stampede, providing the governing TVK government with major temporary reprieve. But the court ordered that the appointments be only temporary and contingent upon the case’s conclusion. The bench of Justices Sakthivel and C V Karthikeyan declared that it did not want to become involved in a government policy decision at this time. It also mandated that the petitions be heard prior to the beneficiaries receiving their first month’s wage and noted that the appointments would be subject to the court’s final orders. The issue was posted on July 21. Additionally, the court ordered that notice be sent to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is looking into the Karur stampede under the Supreme Court’s supervision, and suo motu impleaded the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission

(TNPSC) as a defendant. Theer-an Thirumurugan, a leader of the Naam Tamilar Katchi, and Seeni Ahamed, a member of the Manithaneya Jananayaga Katchi, filed the petitions, requesting a stay of the government’s proposed decision to give one government job to each member of each grieving family. They contended that such appointments would contravene the norms of equity in public service, create an unhealthy precedent, and avoid recruiting through the TNPSC and other legislative procedures. The petitioners expressed concerns that granting government jobs to the families of victims, while a CBI investigation is ongoing, could influence material witnesses and compromise the investigation’s integrity. They highlighted that historical cases, such as the Kumbakonam school fire and the Dharmapuri bus burning, did not lead to automatic job provisions for victims’ families, indicating a need for a statutory framework for such schemes. During the court hearing, judges challenged the petitioners’ rationale, questioning the harm in



providing jobs to affected families, emphasizing their financial needs. The petitioners referred to political implications, to which the bench responded by urging a focus on legal arguments. The government announced that appointment orders for the victims’ families would be issued shortly, citing past instances, such as the provision of jobs after the Thoothukudi Sterlite firing, to counter the petitioners’ assertions about the lack of precedent. This order follows a public interest

litigation (PIL) challenging the job proposals, coinciding with Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay’s planned visit to Karur, where he will meet with the families of 41 victims who perished in a stampede during a rally in September last year. The incident was marked by allegations of police negligence, including inadequate crowd control, which resulted in fatalities. The CBI has since interrogated Vijay and other associated leaders regarding the events surrounding the stampede.

Bengal Minister Regarding Trinamool Leaders Being Targeted by Egg Attacks

New Delhi, July 10: The political seas of West Bengal are boiling over, and the leaders of the Trinamool Congress are feeling the heat. Since the party’s shocking loss to the BJP in the Assembly elections, a number of Trinamool officials have been the victim of public egg attacks by “angry” residents. In recent weeks, former ministers, MPs Kunal Ghosh and Mahua Moitra, and party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee have all faced eggs. In the most recent instance, eggs were hurled during a rally in Kolkata on Wednesday that was organized by TMC leader and former chief minister Mamata Banerjee. Additionally, demonstrators chanted “chor-chor” (thief) chants directed at Trinamool politicians. In a recent inter-

view, West Bengal minister Dilip Ghosh referred to the egg attacks on Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders as an “innovation” in protest methods, suggesting that using eggs instead of bricks or stones signifies a less harmful form of expressing anger against 15 years of alleged Trinamool corruption. He defended this form of protest, arguing that it is “harmless” and that no one has been injured, sarcastically noting that the demand for eggs has even increased since the elections. Ghosh contrasted the current protests with the historical violence faced by BJP leaders during TMC’s rule, recalling instances of violent attacks, which he claims included beatings and lynchings. He posited that the incidents reflect a legitimate expression of

public outrage, particularly in response to TMC’s governance. In the wake of these events, over 100 reports have surfaced regarding the egg attacks since the recent electoral defeat of the TMC. This issue has escalated to judicial scrutiny, with the Calcutta High Court requesting a report from the state government detailing the incidents and the corresponding number of First Information Reports (FIRs) filed. This judicial intervention follows a petition by advocate Danish Farooqui, representing TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee, concerning the egg-throwing incidents aimed at party leaders. The ongoing unrest has created a backdrop of contention between the ruling party and the opposition as political tensions rise in West Bengal.

Raju Mesh, a Boko-Chaygaon MLA, brings up illegal logging and border issues in the Assam Assembly

Boko, July 10: Raju Mesh, a newly elected MLA from Boko-Chaygaon, exposed the alleged negligence of Assam’s Forest Department on Wednesday during the first budget session of the 16th Assam Legislative Assembly, which began on July 6. Mesh brought up the problem of widespread illicit logging in the Lampi region near the Assam-Meghalaya border and provided proof of extensive forest degradation that is still going unchecked in the West Kamrup Forest Division area. According to the MLA, on July 2, Lampi Village Headman Krishna Chetry told him about trucks with

Meghalaya registration numbers that were illegally moving timber with the assistance of dishonest businessmen. In response to this information, Mesh visited Lampi on July 3 with a number of officials, including Co-District Commissioner Priyanshu Bharadwaj, Boko Revenue Circle Officer Krishna Arjun Barman, RHAC Executive Member Arjun Chetry, and others. They were horrified to see trees being hacked down and smuggled across the border by vehicles and unidentified persons from Meghalaya. When questioned, the head of the Lampi police outpost acknowledged that these actions had

been carried out in the name of the contested interstate border region for a considerable amount of time. He stated that the main cause of police inaction was a shortage of patrolling cars. Mesh called on the minister of forests to act quickly to stop the threat. Locals have long accused the Forest Department of being careless, pointing out that illegal logging persists on a regular basis even though the West Kamrup Forest Division has several forest offices, battalions, and protection areas. For years, valuable timber like teak and sal has been smuggled out with no effective protections in place. The

Meghalaya government has also been urged by conscious groups to preserve the forests. The locals in the Lampi area claimed that forest destroyers are criminals and cannot be affiliated with any state, and that only by taking appropriate action against these criminal groups will future generations be able to exist. Mesh also expressed concern that the lack of land records was preventing Lampi locals from participating in government programs. He urged the Assam government to offer mobile towers for improved connection, safe drinking water, land pattas, and transportation services like a bus service.

Sons of a Telangana couple are burned by cigarettes and thrashed with iron rods

New Delhi, July 10: A couple has been detained in a startling case of suspected child abuse in Suryapet, Telangana, for allegedly branding their two kids with hot items, beating them with iron rods, and burning them with cigarettes. The boys, Dhanush (5) and Revanth (2), were reportedly attacked at their Huzurnagar home by the accused, Nakirikanthi Ravi, a 43-year-old truck driver, and his wife, Indu. Officials said the younger child had a fractured left wrist, and the children had several burn and scratch scars. Authorities were notified of the event after neighbors became disturbed by the children’s cries and obvious injuries. Together

with representatives from the District Child Protection Unit, Childline, and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), locals saved the children and made sure they got emergency medical care. According to Somu Nirmala, an ICDS supervisor who filed the complaint, initial interviews with neighbors revealed that the abuse had been going on for a few days.

The officer claimed that the kids had been verbally abused, burned with cigarettes, and repeatedly branded with hot ladles. Police said that Ravi married a divorced woman named Indu four years ago after divorcing his first wife over ten years prior. “The younger

child was born to the couple, but one of the boys is Indu’s son from her prior marriage. The suspects allegedly acknowledged during questioning that they felt the kids were a hindrance to their personal freedom and used them as a way to express their annoyance, according to the police.

A case has been filed under Section 75 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and Sections 118(1) and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The couple is scheduled to appear in court for remand, and the children have been moved to a government-run children’s home in Suryapet after undergoing therapy.

Tibetan organizations in Shillong condemn Chinese policies and call for UN intervention on Tibet

Shillong, July 10: Shilong-based Tibetan organizations have demanded that the world community and the UN step in to address the human rights situation in Tibet, claiming that Chinese government continues to restrict Tibetan identity, language, religion, and culture. The Regional Tibetan Women’s Association and the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress made the call in a combined press release on July 9. The organizations also honored Pawo Lobga Rangzen, a Tibetan man who allegedly committed self-immolation on July 2 close to the UN offices in New York. The organizations claim that

the act was meant to raise awareness of the situation in Tibet on a global scale. The statement alleged that Tibetans continue to face curbs on their political freedoms and human rights, claiming that decades of Chinese policies have placed the region’s cultural heritage under growing pressure. The organizations also criticized China’s Ethnic Unity and Progress Law, alleging that its implementation could further undermine Tibetan identity, language and cultural traditions. They called on the UN, democratic countries, and international human rights organizations to keep a careful eye on Tibet’s situation and take



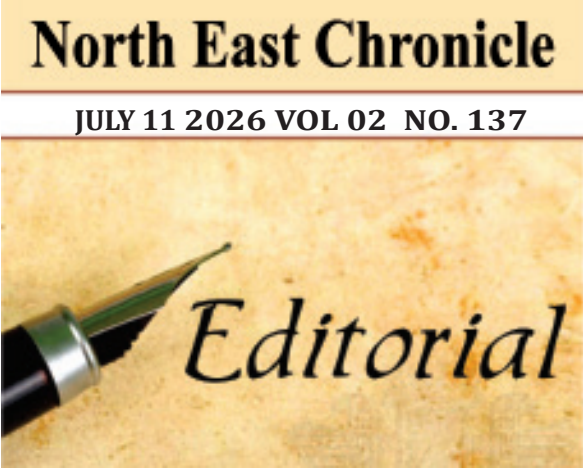
necessary action. The statement also urged the international community and the Indian government to support initiatives to protect Tibetan culture, language, and religion. The report is predicated on assertions made in the Tibetan organizations’ press release. At the time of publication, China has not yet responded to the accusations with an official statement.

K Kavitha Accuses Salkam Cheruvu Lake Encroachment Claims of Being Ignored

New Delhi, July 10: After BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha questioned the purported inaction of government authorities on Friday, the dispute surrounding the suspected constructions near Salkam Cheruvu Lake has gained political momentum. TRS head Kavitha questioned how HYDRAB (Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency) authorities handled illegal encroachments on water bodies and accused officials of being slow to act. She called for government entities to take responsibility for the issue and emphasized the need of safeguarding lakes, their Full Tank Level (FTL), and buffer zones. The issue concerns claims that buildings owned by the Barrister Fatima Owaisi Educational Institutions, which are run by the Salar-e-Millat Educational Trust, were built inside Salkam Cheruvu’s FTL and buffer zone. Following a petition filed by attorney Vijay Gopal, who claimed that authorities did nothing

to stop the construction of the Barrister Fatima Owaisi Educational KG-PG Campus, the matter has reached the Telangana High Court. In addition to requesting instructions for the removal of unapproved building and the preservation of the water body, the petitioner questioned the purported passivity of government agencies, including civic and lake protection authorities. In previous hearings, the High Court demanded full records pertaining to approvals, land status, and statutory clearances and questioned officials about the permissions issued for the educational site. The court voiced worry over departments’ reluctance to provide thorough reports in spite of prior directives. The Telangana government told the court during the most recent hearing on Thursday that no construction would be permitted inside the FTL boundaries of Salkam Cheruvu. If any infractions were discovered, officials promised to take the appropriate

punishment. The court kept investigating whether government organizations had fulfilled their obligations to safeguard the lake. Under the direction of Akbaruddin Owaisi, the Salar-e-Millat Educational Trust was founded in Hyderabad in May 2006 with the intention of giving disadvantaged groups in society access to education. In 2003, the Trust opened its first school, and over time, its network has grown. The Trust claims that it currently runs 11 self-funded schools that serve over 15,000 students and offer free education. Akbaruddin Owaisi, MLA from AIMIM Chandrayangutta, has alleged that there are attempts to target educational institutions, specifically referring to the issue surrounding Fatima College. He emphasized that such pressure tactics would not deter them, vowing to protect their institutions and suggesting that for every institution impacted, many more would be established in response.



Power Lines Through Forests: Balancing Growth and Ecology

India’s transition towards clean energy has brought new challenges in balancing development goals with ecological protection. The decision by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) to revise the Right-of-Way (RoW) requirements for constructing transmission lines in forest areas marks an important step towards reducing the environmental impact of power infrastructure, particularly in the ecologically fragile Northeast region. By reducing RoW requirements by up to 20%, the new guidelines aim to minimise tree felling and reduce disturbances to forest ecosystems. However, while narrower transmission corridors offer hope for better conservation outcomes, they also underline the need for stronger monitoring and environmental safeguards.

The Northeast is one of India’s most environmentally sensitive regions, with rich biodiversity, extensive forest cover, and fragile mountain ecosystems. At the same time, the region has emerged as a major centre for hydropower development due to its vast river systems and potential for electricity generation. The increasing demand for power in industrial centres across India has accelerated plans to transport electricity from northeastern states to other parts of the country. This has created pressure for large-scale transmission infrastructure, raising concerns about forest diversion and habitat destruction.

The scale of planned development highlights the seriousness of the challenge. The Central Electricity Authority’s Master Plan for Evacuation of Power from Hydroelectric Plants in the Brahmaputra Basin estimates that more than 31,000 circuit kilometres of transmission lines could be developed in two phases, extending up to and beyond 2035. Since many hydropower projects are located in forested regions, the construction of associated transmission networks could result in significant ecological impacts. Transmission lines require cleared corridors to prevent tree branches from coming into contact with wires, which can cause short circuits and disrupt power systems.

The revised RoW norms attempt to address this challenge by encouraging the adoption of advanced technologies and improved tower designs. Modern transmission structures require smaller foundations and narrower clearance areas, reducing the amount of forest land needed for infrastructure. The Ministry of Power has been encouraged to issue guidelines promoting better tower configurations and advanced conductor technologies to reduce the ecological footprint of future projects. If properly implemented, these measures could significantly limit tree loss and habitat disturbance.

However, reduced RoW

alone cannot eliminate the environmental consequences of transmission projects. Even narrower corridors involve clearing vegetation, breaking forest continuity, and affecting wildlife movement. Habitat fragmentation remains a serious concern because forests are not merely collections of trees but interconnected ecosystems supporting diverse species. When natural habitats are divided by infrastructure, animals may be forced to alter their movement patterns, increasing the possibility of human-wildlife conflicts as they search for alternative routes and resources.

The Forest Advisory Committee has also recognised that improved technology can reduce ecological damage by lowering the requirement for forest land. Yet, it has emphasised the importance of mitigation measures to address unavoidable impacts. Protecting biodiversity corridors, maintaining transparency in project planning, and ensuring strict compliance with environmental conditions will be essential to prevent reduced RoW from becoming an excuse for unchecked forest diversion.

The issue also reflects a broader contradiction in India’s clean energy transition. Renewable energy projects are necessary to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and address climate change, but many such projects require land, including forest areas. Hydropower dams, transmission lines, roads, and other supporting infrastructure can place additional pressure on ecosystems already weakened by climate change. Therefore, the environmental cost of clean energy development must be assessed not only project by project but also through comprehensive evaluations of cumulative impacts on entire landscapes.

Public concern over these issues has increased as extreme weather events become more frequent in the Northeast. Recent incidents of heavy rainfall, landslides, and ecological disruption have strengthened calls for more careful planning of infrastructure projects in vulnerable areas. Communities living in these regions are increasingly questioning whether large-scale resource exploitation is sustainable when environmental risks are already rising.

The revised RoW standards represent a positive move towards reducing the impact of transmission infrastructure, but their success will depend on effective implementation. State forest departments and regulatory agencies must ensure that power transmission companies follow the new norms responsibly and adopt all available technologies to minimise ecological harm. Strong monitoring, transparent decision-making, and meaningful environmental assessments will be necessary to prevent the misuse of relaxed requirements.

The Closure of High Pay Centre Raises Questions About Fairness Research

The sudden closure of the High Pay Centre (HPC), a research organisation that spent more than a decade examining executive pay, corporate inequality, and the growing gap between company leaders and ordinary workers, has sparked a wider debate about the future of social research and the changing political climate around issues of fairness. Founded in 2011 by former Guardian business editor Deborah Hargreaves, the think tank became one of Britain’s most prominent voices questioning the scale of executive rewards and the structures that allowed pay inequality to expand.

The organisation’s work focused on what it described as “predistribution” — examining how economic inequality develops before taxation and welfare policies attempt to address it. While many campaigners focus on redistribution through taxes and public spending, the High Pay Centre studied the systems that determine wages, corporate governance, and decision-making power inside companies. Its research repeatedly questioned why senior executives received extraordinary compensation while wage growth for many workers remained limited.

Over the years, the HPC became particularly known for its annual analysis of executive salaries among Britain’s largest listed companies. Its findings frequently attracted public attention because they highlighted the enormous difference between the earnings of top executives and average employees. Reports on “high pay day”, often described in the media as “fat cat day”, showed how quickly chief execu-

tives could earn the equivalent of a typical worker’s annual salary.

The figures generated debate across the political spectrum. Supporters of high executive pay argued that business leaders were responsible for major decisions affecting large companies and deserved compensation reflecting their responsibilities. Critics, however, argued that the scale of these salaries reflected deeper problems in corporate governance, where boards often lacked sufficient challenge when approving executive rewards.

The High Pay Centre’s research suggested that Britain’s corporate system contributed to widening inequality. One of its key arguments was that workers had limited influence over decisions made at the highest levels of companies. Unlike several European countries where employee representation on company boards is legally established, Britain’s largest companies have generally not adopted similar models.

The organisation argued that stronger worker representation could influence corporate culture and executive pay decisions. Having employees present in board discussions, it suggested, could create greater awareness of workplace realities and make it more difficult for companies to approve extremely large salaries and bonuses without considering wider social consequences.

The closure of the High Pay Centre represents a significant loss for researchers and campaigners focused on economic inequality. However, the organisation’s disappearance was not simply the result

of financial difficulties. It was connected to the collapse of a wider funding structure that supported research into social and economic fairness.

The HPC was among several organisations affected after the Financial Fairness Trust lost its funding direction. The trust, established with a substantial financial contribution following the demutualisation of Standard Life, had supported research organisations working on issues including inequality, poverty, taxation, financial security, and living standards.

The trust was created with the aim of funding research and policy work designed to improve financial fairness, particularly for people on low and middle incomes. Over the years, it supported a wide range of organisations, including economic research bodies, poverty charities, consumer groups, and public policy institutes.

Its funding helped organisations investigate some of Britain’s most important social challenges. Research supported by the trust examined issues such as household finances, poverty, taxation, consumer protection, and access to essential services. For many organisations, the funding represented a rare source of independent support for social research outside government and traditional academic institutions.

The decision to change the trust’s direction therefore had consequences far beyond one organisation. Researchers warned that Britain already faced a shortage of funding for social sciences compared with scientific research. While major scientific projects often receive substantial public investment,

studies examining inequality, poverty, and social change frequently depend on smaller charitable funding sources.

The closure of the High Pay Centre has also raised questions about the changing political environment surrounding issues such as equality, diversity, and corporate responsibility. Critics argue that a global backlash against concepts associated with social justice has influenced funding decisions and organisational priorities.

In the United States, several major companies reduced or changed their diversity, equity, and inclusion programmes following political pressure and criticism from conservative groups. Some observers argue that similar trends have begun influencing corporate behaviour in Britain, with companies becoming more cautious about initiatives linked to equality and social responsibility.

The debate reflects a broader conflict over the role of businesses and institutions in addressing social issues. Supporters of equality-focused policies argue that companies have responsibilities beyond generating profits and should consider their impact on workers and communities. Opponents argue that businesses should focus primarily on performance and avoid political or social agendas.

The High Pay Centre’s supporters believe its work was important precisely because it challenged powerful interests and examined uncomfortable questions about wealth distribution. They argue that research into inequality remains essential in any democratic society because economic concentration can influence

political power, social mobility, and public trust.

The organisation’s closure has also highlighted concerns about the vulnerability of independent research groups that depend on charitable funding. Unlike large institutions with multiple sources of income, smaller think tanks can disappear quickly when a major funder changes priorities. This raises questions about whether society has sufficient safeguards to maintain research into issues that may not always align with powerful economic interests.

The controversy surrounding the funding decision attracted criticism from several prominent figures who argued that the process damaged confidence in charitable research funding. Critics described the abrupt ending of support as harmful to organisations that had built long-term programmes based on the trust’s commitments.

Supporters of the funding change, however, argue that charitable organisations have the right to adjust their priorities and support different causes over time. They maintain that funding decisions are legitimate choices made by organisations seeking to respond to changing circumstances and social needs.

The debate reflects a larger question about who decides which social issues receive attention. Research into inequality, wages, poverty, and corporate power often involves challenging established systems. Without independent funding, critics argue, important questions may receive less scrutiny.

The High Pay Centre’s disappearance comes at a time when concerns about

economic inequality remain significant. Across many developed countries, debates continue over wage gaps, executive compensation, housing costs, and the rising cost of living. These issues have become central to discussions about social stability and public confidence in economic systems.

The organisation’s legacy lies in making executive pay and corporate inequality part of mainstream public debate. Even critics of its approach acknowledged that it brought attention to questions about how companies distribute rewards and how economic decisions affect society.

Its closure does not end the debate over high pay. Questions about executive compensation, worker representation, and corporate responsibility will continue to shape political and economic discussions. However, the loss of a dedicated research organisation means fewer resources will be available to investigate these issues.

The story of the High Pay Centre also reflects a broader challenge facing democracies: maintaining space for independent analysis of powerful institutions. A healthy public debate requires research, criticism, and evidence-based discussion, particularly on issues involving wealth and power.

As Britain continues to debate inequality and economic fairness, the disappearance of the HPC serves as a reminder that ideas and institutions depend not only on public interest but also on sustained support. The organisation may have closed, but the questions it raised about pay, power, and fairness remain unresolved.

Britain’s Economic Reset: Burnham’s Bold Bid to Revive Industry

Britain’s economic debate is once again turning towards a question that has shaped politics for decades: how can the country escape a cycle of weak growth, declining industrial capacity, and rising inequality? Andy Burnham’s vision of rebuilding Britain’s manufacturing base and reducing the dominance of financial interests has placed him at the centre of this discussion. His supporters argue that the country has suffered from decades of economic policies that prioritised financial markets over productive investment, while critics warn that ambitious state-led economic strategies carry significant risks. The challenge for Burnham is not only to identify what has gone wrong but also to find a practical way to deliver change without triggering the kind of market backlash that ended Liz Truss’s brief premiership.

Burnham’s economic argument begins with the belief that Britain has experienced a long period of managed decline. Over the past four decades, manufacturing has steadily lost its importance within the economy, while the financial sector, particularly the City of London, has gained greater influence. The result, according to critics of the existing model, has been an economy increasingly dependent on services, low-paid employment, and financial activity rather than industrial production. Although Britain remains a major global economy, concerns have grown over stagnant productivity, weak wage growth, and regional inequalities that have left many industrial communities behind.

The decline of manufacturing has had a particularly strong impact on areas that were once the backbone of British industry. Northern England, Scotland, and Wales have experienced significant economic changes as traditional industries such as steel, engineering, ship-

building, and manufacturing contracted over several decades. Communities that once relied on stable industrial employment have faced economic uncertainty, with many workers moving into insecure service-sector jobs. Burnham argues that addressing this geographical imbalance is essential if Britain wants to create a more balanced and resilient economy.

The comparison between Burnham and Liz Truss reflects the difficulty of pursuing major economic change. Both politicians argued that Britain needed a break from the existing economic approach and both promoted ambitious reforms. However, Truss’s attempt to rapidly reshape economic policy through large-scale tax cuts without clear funding arrangements resulted in a sharp market reaction. Her government faced pressure from financial markets, forcing a dramatic reversal of its plans and ultimately contributing to her departure from office.

Burnham’s challenge is therefore how to pursue a radical economic agenda while maintaining confidence among investors and financial institutions. Supporters argue that the answer is not to abandon ambition but to design policies that are financially credible and focused on long-term growth. Unlike Truss’s approach, which focused heavily on reducing taxation, Burnham’s proposed strategy centres on rebuilding productive capacity through investment, industrial planning, and stronger public involvement in the economy.

A key part of this argument is the idea that Britain’s economic problems are not only about how wealth is distributed but also about how wealth is created. Supporters of reindustrialisation argue that policies aimed at reducing inequality through taxation and regulation alone cannot solve deeper structural weaknesses. A

country cannot achieve sustained prosperity, they argue, without increasing productivity, developing advanced industries, and creating high-value employment opportunities.

A reindustrialisation strategy would involve rebuilding sectors considered strategically important for Britain’s future. These include steel production, advanced engineering, renewable energy, digital technology, automation, and other high-skilled industries. The goal would not be to recreate the industrial economy of the past but to develop a modern manufacturing base capable of competing globally. Supporters believe that industrial strength would improve economic security, reduce dependence on imports, and strengthen Britain’s ability to respond to future challenges.

Central to this approach would be a major increase in public investment. One proposal is the creation of a stronger national investment bank capable of providing long-term funding for infrastructure, energy projects, transport systems, and industrial supply chains. Unlike private investors who may seek quick returns, such an institution would focus on patient investment designed to generate economic benefits over decades.

The argument is that public investment should not replace private enterprise but encourage it. Government funding can create the conditions needed for businesses to expand by improving infrastructure, supporting research, and reducing investment risks. Burnham’s experience as mayor of Greater Manchester is often cited by supporters as an example of how regional leadership can bring together public investment and private-sector growth through targeted development strategies.

However, rebuilding Britain’s industrial capacity would require more than financial resources. One of the biggest challenges is the loss of technical skills caused by decades of industrial decline. Many sectors now face shortages of engineers, technicians, and skilled workers. A successful reindustrialisation programme would therefore require major investment in education, vocational training, apprenticeships, and technical institutions.

The role of trade unions would also be central to this vision. Supporters of a new industrial strategy argue that organised labour should not be viewed as an obstacle to economic progress but as a partner in building a stronger economy. They believe workers should have a greater role in decision-making and that improved wages and employment conditions can support productivity rather than weaken competitiveness.

However, Burnham’s plans would face significant political and economic obstacles. One major challenge would be managing relations with financial markets. Governments that borrow heavily for investment programmes must convince investors that spending will generate long-term economic returns. Failure to maintain confidence could increase borrowing costs and create political pressure to reduce spending.

The experience of Liz Truss’s government remains a warning about the importance of financial credibility. Any future government seeking major economic transformation would need to demonstrate that its policies are properly planned, realistically funded, and capable of delivering measurable benefits. The challenge is to avoid a situation where market concerns force governments to abandon long-term strategies.

One possible solution proposed by supporters of industrial intervention is a broader role for the Bank of England in supporting economic development. Rather than focusing primarily on controlling inflation, some argue that monetary policy should also help provide affordable long-term finance for productive investment. They point to examples from other countries where public institutions have supported industrial development through targeted lending.

Another challenge is protecting key industries from short-term financial pressures. Supporters of stronger industrial policy argue that essential sectors should not be left entirely vulnerable to global investors seeking immediate profits. They suggest that strategic industries may require greater government involvement to ensure long-term stability and national resilience.

The debate over reindustrialisation also reflects a wider global shift. Many countries are reconsidering the role of government in economic development after decades of market-focused policies. From energy security to supply chains and technological competition, governments are increasingly seeking greater control over critical industries. Britain’s economic challenges are therefore part of a broader international discussion about the balance between markets and state intervention.

For Burnham, the central question is whether Britain can move away from a low-growth economic model and build a more productive future. His supporters believe that bold action is necessary because decades of gradual reform have failed to address deep structural weaknesses. Critics, however, will question whether government-led industrial strategies can deliver better outcomes than private investment and market competition.

Sensex, Nifty rally 1% led by metals and tech; Nifty IT Index surges 2%

New Delhi: Nifty 50, Sensex today at 12 PM: In the afternoon trade, the Indian equity benchmarks remained firmly in the green. At this hour, the Sensex was trading 709.15 points, or 0.92%, higher at 77,450.97, while the Nifty gained 217 points, or 0.91%, to trade at 24,179.80.Among the top gainers on the benchmark indices were Adani Ports (+2.33%), InterGlobe Aviation (IndiGo) (+2.13%), Infosys (+1.93%), Bharat Electronics (+1.83%), and Tech Mahindra (+1.74%). Nifty 50, Sensex today at 10:50 AM: The domestic equity markets extended the opening rally. The Nifty 50 was up 243 points or 1.02% to trade at 24,206, while the Sensex advanced 796 points or 1.04% to trade at 77,538.Investors’ sentiments are strong, which can be determined by India’s volatility index, India VIX, down 7% at 12.43.The buying is broad-based as all the sectoral indices were trading in the green.

7 structural reasons why the market is rallying today: Nifty IT Index surges 2%; Nifty, Sensex rally 1% each

Nifty 50, Sensex today at open: Indian equity markets opened Friday’s trade on a higher note, following its global peers. The Nifty 50 surged 177.35 points or 0.74% to open at 24,140.15, while the BSE Sensex opened the trade 638.26 points or 0.83% higher at 77,380.08. Share market today ahead of opening, July 10: The global markets are trading on a higher note as semiconductor stocks rebound. Also, crude oil prices slipped back to the \$75 a barrel mark. The GIFT Nifty is indicating a higher start for Indian markets, up 95 points or 0.40%. Earlier on Thursday, the Nifty 50 closed the session 80.75 points or 0.34% higher at 23,962.80, while the BSE Sensex surged 238.22 points or 0.31% to close at 76,741.82. Asia-Pacific markets opened Friday’s trade on a higher note, following overnight gains on Wall Street. Japan’s benchmark Nikkei 225 jumped 1.34%, while the Topix surged 0.66%. South Korea’s Kospi rocketed 2.54%, and the small-cap Kosdaq advanced 4.10%. The Electronics sector’s stocks surged the most in Thursday’s trade, rising 5.5% in market capitalisation. Further, Glass stocks were followed by the E-Commerce sector stocks, which were further followed by the Capital Market stocks. However, the Shipping sector stocks fell the most, declining 1.74%. benchmarks are trading in the red on Friday. S&P 500 futures were down 0.16%. Futures tied to the Dow Jones Industrial Average were down marginally. Nasdaq 100 futures declined 0.35% On Thurs-



day, US stock markets closed on a higher note after being helped by semiconductor stocks and a fall in oil prices. The Nasdaq Composite gained 1.30% to 26,206.89, while the S&P 500 rose 0.81% to 7,543.64. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 139.02 points, or 0.27%, to 52,487.41.

Silver had surged to record highs in January amid geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty, with heavy speculative buying pushing prices higher, but soon faced volatility.Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers of shares worth Rs 532.86 crore. On the other hand, the Domestic institutional investors (DIIs) were the net buyers of shares worth Rs 2,057.79 crore on July 09, 2026, according to the provisional data available on the NSE.The US Dollar Index (DXY), which measures the dollar’s value against a basket of six foreign currencies, was trading 0.02% lower at 100.92. The index evaluates the strength or weakness of the US dollar in comparison to major currencies. The basket contains currencies such as the British Pound, Euro, Swedish Krona, Japanese Yen, Swiss Franc, etc. The rupee appreciated 0.20% to close at 95.38 to the dollar on July 09. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were trading 0.28% lower at \$71.89 per barrel. On the other hand, Brent crude futures with August delivery were trading 0.34% lower at \$76.04, surpassing the psychologically important level of \$75. On COMEX, crude prices dropped 0.32% to trade at \$71.85 a barrel. The rate for 24-carat gold today is Rs 1,45,610 per 10 grams. The price of gold has fallen 1.2% from yesterday. The 24 kt gold rate today in Delhi is Rs 1,45,360 per 10 grams. The 18-carat gold price today in India is Rs 1,09,207.5. The 24-carat gold rate in Dubai today is Rs 1,49,590.

TRAI vs Truecaller: Inside India’s spam-call showdown between telecom regulator

New Delhi:India’s Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and Truecaller, the Swedish caller-ID app used by more than 300 million Indians, are now locked in a public dispute over how “spam” gets defined, and who gets to define it. The disagreement is about special phone numbers that TRAI introduced to help people identify genuine business calls. But instead of making things easier, the system has created confusion. Truecaller says millions of people are now ignoring even real bank and company calls, while TRAI believes apps like Truecaller are making the problem worse by discouraging users from answering those calls.

TRAI and Truecaller face off over spam calls in IndiaJhunjunwala responded with a long post on X on July 8, sharing company data and openly challenging the regulator’s approach. The dispute goes back to changes TRAI made to its Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations (TCCCPR). Under these rules, telemarketing companies must use phone numbers beginning with 140, while banks and financial institutions must use 1600 numbers for service-related and transaction-related calls. The idea was to draw a clear line. If people saw these numbers, they would know the call was coming from a registered business instead of a scammer. Since Truecaller cannot officially mark these numbers as spam anymore, it introduced another feature called “Frequently Blocked.” Instead of calling a number spam, the app simply tells users that many people have blocked it.



Truecaller says this follows TRAI’s rules because it does not label the number as spam but only shares information based on user behaviour. The company also plans to submit its call data and user statistics directly to MeitY to show how much trust users have lost in the current system. In comments submitted to TRAI on April 17, 2026, Truecaller said it supported efforts to reduce unwanted commercial calls but opposed a proposed Regulation 34A, arguing that it would weaken consumer protection instead of improving it.What TRAI wants more power?According to the Communications Ministry, authorities disconnected more than 2.1 million fraudulent mobile numbers and took action against over 100,000 entities over the past year.To make the system work efficiently, TRAI also instructed caller ID apps not to label or block 140 and 1600 numbers as spam, even if users reported them. Truecaller says the plan has backfired

Truecaller believes the rule has created more problems than providing a solution. Instead of trusting these special numbers, users have started avoiding them altogether because

they no longer receive spam warnings from the app. Beginning his July 8 post on X, CEO Rishit Jhunjunwala wrote, “Wondering why spam calls have increased SIGNIFICANTLY in India recently? Well, it’s actually going to get worse; here’s why.”He then shared data collected by the company. According to Truecaller, more than 51 million calls from the 140 and 1600 number series go unanswered every single day. Over the last eight months, users ignored 81% of calls from the 140 series and 79% of calls from the 1600 series.During the same period, users manually blocked 74 million calls from these two number series. Daily blocking of 1600-series numbers has jumped 208% since October 2025.Truecaller also said users currently block around 400,000 calls every day from 140 numbers and another 125,000 calls every day from 1600 numbers.Jhunjunwala said the company followed TRAI’s order even though it had concerns. He wrote that Truecaller complied with the regulator’s direction to whitelist these numbers “even though [it] had concerns about whether the regulator could issue such instructions to apps.”

Motilal Oswal has placed its confidence in Vedanta Aluminium’s growth following its demerger, anticipating a 20% increase

New Delhi: Could India’s largest pure-play aluminium company be entering its next growth phase? That is the question many investors are asking. The brokerage house Motilal Oswal initiated coverage on Vedanta Aluminium with a ‘Buy’ rating and a target price of Rs 540 per share. This indicates an upside potential of around 20% from the current market price.According to Motilal Oswal report, Vedanta Aluminium is at an important stage of its growth journey following the demerger of Vedanta. One of the key reasons behind the positive outlook is the expected improvement in earningsAs per the brokerage report, “Vedanta Aluminum is approaching a significant earnings inflection point, with EBITDA anticipated to post over 18% CAGR over FY26-28.The brokerage expects earnings growth to be supported by higher production volumes, lower operating costs and a larger contribution from value-added alumin-

ium products, which generally offer better margins than standard aluminium.Lower costs could become a major advantageMotilal Oswal also highlighted the company’s increasing focus on backward integration. In simple terms, backward integration means owning more of the raw material supply chain instead of depending on outside suppliers.“Vedanta Aluminum is pursuing full self-sufficiency in bauxite and coal, the two most critical inputs for aluminum production,” added the brokerage firm.The report added that the company is developing its Sijimali bauxite mine and expanding captive coal production, which could significantly reduce production costs over time.The company, now operatingas Vedanta Aluminum Metal (VAML), has emerged as India’s largest pure-play primary aluminium producer and the third-largest aluminium producer globally, excluding China.Let’s take a look at the investment rationale driving Motilal Oswal’s



recommendation – The brokerage house Motilal Oswal in its report noted that the demerger has created a focused aluminium business that is expected to benefit from both industry trends and company-specific growth drivers.“The compa-

ny has emerged as one of the most compelling structural stories in the global aluminum space, combining industry-leading scale, extensive backward integration, and a multi-year earnings growth trajectory,” Motilal Oswal also expects

favourable industry conditions.“The global aluminum industry is entering a period of structural tightening driven by a strong demand outlook and restrained supply,” noted the brokerage house Motilal Oswal believes the stock is still reasonably valued.he report said, “At CMP, the stock trades at 5.4 times EV/EBITDA on our FY28 estimate.”The brokerage expects consolidated revenue, and FY28.China’s production restrictions, reduced output in Europe, sanctions affecting Russian aluminium exports and years of limited investment outside China are expected to keep global supplies tight.At the same time, India continues to offer strong growth opportunities.The brokerage expects domestic aluminium demand to grow steadily over the coming years, supported by infrastructure positioning gives the company a stronger platform to expand production, improve profitability and strengthen its market position over the coming years.

Brokerages cheer near-term recovery but flag long-term

New Delhi: Tata Consultancy Services has kicked off earnings season on an encouraging note and set the tone for other tech stocks. The tech giant shares surged 4% to a high of Rs 2,133.30 on the NSE after delivering a largely in-line set of numbers. While most analysts see green shoots over the short-term, they have maintained a cautious tone about the longer-term expectations. They rated the stock ‘Buy’ with a target of Rs 2,350 per share. This implies about 15% upside from current levels. The TCS management acknowledged 10-15% AI-led productivity pass-throughs as projects come up for renewal. They believe the “full impact of AI deflation is still unfolding, and productivity gains are likely to continue getting passed on to clients over the coming quarters, keeping pressure on the existing book of business.”Motilal Oswal on TCS The brokerage said that TCS appears to be well set for recovery in FY27, given its commentary and strong hiring in Q1. Deal wins have been decent, margins solid, and AI revenue is growing strongly. “We minutely tweak our FY27 and FY28 EPS estimates by -0.5% and -1.2%,” said Nuvama. Valuation of 13x FY27 PE, post-recent correction, is highly attractive. TCS posted a decline of 2.7% sequentially in consolidated net profit of Rs 13,349 crore for Q1FY27, compared with Rs 13,718 crore in the preceding quarter. Its operating margin shrank 130 basis points QoQ to 24% from 25.3%, mainly on the back of annual wage revision. The company said wage hikes brought down 170 basis points from margins, partly offset by a 40-basis-point currency benefit. Operating income came in at Rs 17,317 crore compared to Rs 17,870 crore in the previous quarter.The tech company’s CEO and MD, K. Krithivasan, said, “We don’t see a massive contraction or deflation due to AI. If any, they are compensated by additional opportunities that we generate through AI.” He also said that most enterprises will have multiple LLMs or one LLM with several SLMs.



TCS is in an area where system integrators will have a bigger role to play.Krithivasan said, “We hire whenever we feel we’ll have enough demand and for specific skills,” after TCS hired around 10,000 people this quarter despite weak growth. The CEO doesn’t believe AI will reduce overall headcount. The share price of TCS has fallen 2.23% in the last five trading days. The stock has declined 4.4% in the past one month and more than 36% in the last six months. TCS share price has drowned 39% over the previous 12 months.

Excluding the exceptional legal cost, however, net profit stood at Rs 13,849 crore. The company’s net profit was weighed down by a one-time legal provision.Its revenue surged 2.2% quarter-on-quarter to Rs 72,275 crore in Q1FY27 from Rs 70,698 crore in the first quarter of the current financial year. In constant currency terms, revenue grew 0.4%, slower than the 1.2% growth reported in the previous quarter.

TCS expects the demand to improve in Q2, supported by a pent-up technology backlog and stronger client conversations. While Motilal Oswal expects “Q2 to be better, we believe evidence around demand improvement is scant. The pent-up demand narrative has been around for some time, while geopolitics, tariff uncertainty and cautious discretionary spending continue to weigh on decision-making

FIIs are betting big on these 3 sectors while others see heavy selling Motilal Oswal decodes trend

New Delhi: Foreign investor selling in Indian equities showed signs of easing towards the end of June but the recovery in sentiment remains highly selective, according to a Motilal Oswal Financial Services report. While foreign institutional investors (FIIs) increased allocations to sectors such as financials, services and consumer durables, they continued to trim exposure to information technology, automobiles, oil & gas, metals and FMCG, suggesting that the return of foreign money is still far from broad-based.“FII flows have started to show signs of improvement, with average daily flows shifting from net selling of around \$0.4 billion during the West Asia conflict to net buying of around \$0.1 billion following the US-Iran ceasefire announcement,” Motilal Oswal said. “This turnaround has supported the rebound in Indian equities and indicates a gradual improvement in FII sentiment,” the brokerage added. Financial services witnessed the strongest foreign inflows during June, attracting nearly \$357 million, making it the most preferred sector for FIIs during the month. In calendar year 2026 so far, capital goods has attracted \$2.3 billion of net FII inflows, making it the most preferred sector among foreign investors. Metals follows with inflows of \$1.4 billion, while services has received \$600 million.Services followed with inflows of \$306 million, while

consumer durables received \$204 million. Other sectors witnessing positive foreign flows included consumer services (\$130 million), real estate (\$85 million) and textiles (\$10 million). Despite the improvement in overall sentiment, foreign investors remained aggressive sellers in several large sectors.Oil & gas witnessed the largest outflow during June at \$1.4 billion, followed by automobiles at \$1.1 billion, metals at \$961 million and technology at \$788 million.

Capital goods, which had attracted foreign buying for six consecutive months, also witnessed its first monthly outflow, with FIIs selling \$425 million worth of shares during June. The brokerage highlighted that metals has remained the only sector to record positive FII inflows in both CY25 and CY26 year-to-date, signalling continued confidence despite short-term volatility.

“Notably, FIIs turned positive on Capital Goods (+\$2.3b) and Utilities (+\$0.1b) in CY26YTD after recording net outflows in CY25. Interestingly, FIIs have remained constructive only on Metals (+\$1.4b) for the two consecutive years, signaling a continued positive outlook for the sector,” Motilal Oswal said.

Meanwhile, FMCG remained under pressure, extending its streak to 11 consecutive months of FII outflows, while technology and telecom have now recorded six straight



months of foreign selling, according to the report.While June saw some tactical profit booking, Motilal Oswal said the broader trend for the year continues to favour capital goods and metals. Foreign investors remained net sellers for the fourth consecutive month in June, withdrawing \$5.2 billion from Indian equities. However, the pace of selling moderated sharply during the second half of the month.According to Motilal Oswal, FIIs sold \$4.3 billion worth of Indian equities during the first half of June but turned net buyers to the tune of \$1.3 billion after geopolitical tensions eased following the US-Iran ceasefire and crude oil prices softened. The brokerage noted that the moderation in selling reflects improving global risk appetite, better corporate earnings expectations, lower oil prices and a significant correction in Indian equity valuations from their September 2024 highs.“India was among the

positive performers in the key global markets in Jun’26,” Motilal Oswal said. “Easing geopolitical risks, lower crude oil prices, improving corporate earnings, and sharp valuation corrections from CY24 highs, along with India’s valuation premium to other EMs at historic lows, leave fewer reasons for FIIs to remain net sellers for long,” it added.

Financials emerge as the biggest buyer’s choice in JuneFinancial services emerged as the biggest recipient of foreign inflows during June, attracting \$357 million, making it the most preferred sector for FIIs during the month.Services followed with inflows of \$306 million, while consumer durables attracted \$204 million. Consumer services also received \$130 million, followed by real estate with \$85 million and textiles with \$10 million, indicating that foreign investors selectively added exposure as geopolitical tensions eased.

Ukrainian agent accused of murdering Monaco bomb suspect changes story

Kyiv: A Ukrainian intelligence agent who confessed to killing the woman suspected of trying to assassinate a multimillionaire and his family in Monaco last week, has now claimed he did not pull the trigger.

In court in Kyiv for a custody hearing on Thursday, Vladyslav Reut – who a few days ago led investigators to Anastasiia Berezovska’s grave in the woods – said that he “categorically denied” committing her murder and blamed his alleged accomplice instead.

This murky case is capturing attention because Reut is an active and decorated officer of Ukraine’s military intelligence agency, GUR, and his co-defendant Vitalii Zhykovych worked for the SBU security service until recently. On Thursday evening President Volodymyr Zelensky said he would have “additional relevant reports” to share in the coming days. But the motive for the Monaco blast that targeted Vadym Yermolayev remains unclear. The businessman, who made his money in cognac and real estate, had renounced his Ukrainian citizenship some years ago. He has since been sanctioned by Kyiv for continuing to do business in Crimea after it was taken by Russia. Now his would-be assassin has been murdered herself. The two suspects were brought into court for separate hearings with their hands cuffed surrounded by heavily armed security officers in balaclavas. In court, the prosecutor clarified that Anastasiia Berezovska had arrived in Ukraine two days after the blast in Monaco, and before she had been identified as the prime suspect in the case.

Once alerted to the allegations against her, investigators seem to have homed in quickly on Zhykovych, 50, and Reut, 34, using Berezovska’s phone records.

They then identified cash and cryptocurrency transfers that the two had made to her accounts.

Straight away, Reut appears to have confessed to shooting Berezovska.

He then took investigators to



the spot where he had buried her body in the woods west of Kyiv, in a grave covered with branches. But in court just days later, the GUR agent announced that he wanted to “tell the truth”. He then shifted the blame squarely onto Zhykovych.

“I fought enemy combatants while defending my country,” he stressed. “I would never intentionally murder an innocent civilian woman.” In his revised version, he claimed that the two men had driven in his BMW to pick up Berezovska on the highway to Kyiv because she “needed to be hidden” in connection with “a criminal matter”.

He doesn’t clarify what that was.

On the way, Reut says Zhykovych produced a modified Makarov pistol from his rucksack and loaded it. When he protested, he says Zhykovych claimed it was just a precaution “in case she panics”.

After collecting Berezovska he says he was directed to drive towards the village of Yuriv where all three got out on a forest path. There Reut says Zhykovych

ordered him to shoot, saying: “It’s either her or us.”

In Reut’s telling, Zhykovych then killed Berezovska himself, with four shots, before the pair dug a grave and hid her body.

He says Zhykovych then threw the gun into a nearby lake along with her belongings.

But if Reut didn’t shoot her, why would he confess?

He now says he was threatened by Zhykovych. “He said, ‘If anything happens to me, your relatives are in danger’,” he claims.

Zhykovych’s lawyer rejected that new account.

Shaven-headed and fiddling incessantly with wooden rosary beads, Anatoliy Ivanov described his client as a low-level former SBU officer and dismissed the idea that a mere civilian could have ordered a serving GUR member to do anything, let alone carry out a murder.

He called Zhykovych a “patriot” who had fought in eastern Ukraine in 2014, like himself, and then “actively defended” the Kyiv region after 2022 when Russia launched its full-scale invasion.

“He does not want to be imprisoned. I understand,” Ivanov commented on Reut’s statement. For now, there are many more questions than answers in this case, which is an uncomfortable one for the authorities in Kyiv. In court, Zhykovych’s lawyer suggested there might be a “Russian trail”, as Ukrainian intelligence agents have been recruited by Moscow in the past. We’ve had a lot of such rats, unfortunately,” he said. But he has no evidence of that, and other theories from corruption to organised crime have also been mooted.

“All versions are being considered,” prosecutor Dmytro Tkachuk told the BBC.

He added that one suspect had “revealed” some information about a possible motive but said it would hinder the investigation to make that public at this time. We are checking the information,” he said. Both men were denied bail by the judge and remanded in custody while the investigation continues.

US private equity firm Apollo enters bidding war for easyJet with £5.7bn offer

America: The board of easyJet has given the green light to a possible £5.7bn offer from the US private equity firm Apollo, as the low-cost airline becomes the subject of a surprise bidding war.

The company’s board said on Friday that it was “minded to recommend” the potential all-cash offer, which values the business at £7.15p a share, to shareholders. Earlier this week, easyJet’s board agreed “in principle” to accept a £6.90 deal from Castlelake, after the US private equity firm upped its offer for the fifth time. However, analysts said that the offer, worth £5.5bn, undervalued easyJet. On Friday, the airline’s board switched direction, to recommend



Apollo’s approach. “The easyJet board has carefully considered the proposed cash offer together with its financial advisers and has unanimously concluded that the financial terms of the proposed cash offer are at a level that it would be minded to recommend to easyJet shareholders,” the company said. “Accordingly, the easyJet board is no longer minded to recommend the Castlelake proposal.”

The latest offer also allows current shareholders to remain invested under Apollo’s ownership should the deal proceed, rather than being forced to divest when it delists.

Apollo signalled that it would back easyJet’s current

strategy and management and was not looking to break up the company.

“Apollo believes in easyJet’s existing strategy of evolving and strengthening the low-cost carrier model, most notably through upgrading the fleet, enhancing the ancillary and loyalty offering, and scaling holidays into a structurally differentiated earnings stream,” the company said. “Apollo recognises the important contribution that easyJet’s management team, alongside easyJet’s employees, have made towards the company’s successes. Apollo places a high value on people and believes that identifying and retaining key staff within the easyJet group will be of paramount importance.”

Eight charged with murder conspiracy over alleged White House UFC attack plot



Washington: Eight men were indicted on murder and terrorism conspiracy charges Thursday for their alleged roles in a thwarted drone and sniper attack on the UFC cage-fighting show staged at the White House in June. The indictment, returned in Ohio, charges all eight in two separate conspiracies, one to provide material support to terrorists and a second to commit murder on federal government territory and to murder

against seven people last month from across the country, including from Ohio, Missouri, Washington, Nebraska and California. Officials said the group members harbored fringe conspiracy theories and hoped the attack would destabilize the government.

One of the defendants told investigators that they planned to fly explosive-laden drones into the event and then shoot panicked crowd members as they fled, according to a federal

affidavit. Tycen C Proper 19, of Danville, Ohio, and four others were arrested and charged in Missouri, Nebraska, and California the weekend of the UFC event, called Freedom 250. Two more defendants were charged and arrested by the FBI about a week later in Washington and Missouri. The justice department said the eighth man was charged this week. The eighth defendant is Chandler D Scaggs, 21, of Chapmanville, West Virginia, who was taken into

UK judges begin hearing appeal over Trinidad and Tobago anti-gay law



UK: Some of the UK’s top judges are hearing arguments over whether a Trinidad and Tobago court had the legal right to overturn a 2018 ruling to remove colonial-era homophobic laws that criminalise anal sex between consenting men.

The country’s “buggery law”, often referred to as its “sodomy” law, was created in 1925 and was written into Trinidad and Tobago’s 1986 Sexual Offences Act. In 2017 a Trinidadian LGBTQ+ rights activist, Jason Jones, challenged the law, and in 2018 a high court ruled that it infringed upon his constitutional right to privacy and equality.

Last year a court of appeal quashed that decision after an intervention by the country’s attorney general. Now Jones’s appeal is being heard by the London-based judicial committee of the privy council (JCPC), the highest court of appeal for the UK’s overseas territories, crown dependencies and several independent Commonwealth countries. It shares the same judges as the UK supreme court.

Activists across the Caribbean are closely watching the proceedings, in which an outcome is expected in three to six months’ time.

The Bahamas decriminalised homosexuality in 1991 and the UK government repealed such laws in 2001 in Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Recently, judges have struck down similar laws in Barbados, Dominica, St Lucia and Antigua and Barbuda. However, anal sex remains a crime in Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Trinidadian government is opposing Jones in the case. On Tuesday the prime minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, argued that the case could have a wide-ranging impact as it could affect other “savings clauses” – laws imposed on Caribbean nations when they were still British colonies to ensure they preserved British laws after independence.

“This ruling is going to be a very profound decision, not just impacting on sodomy laws but that whole issue of the saving clause. We have a lot of colonial laws that were saved, so this will give us guidance as to which ones we keep, which ones we don’t keep,” Persad-Bissessar told the Guardian in an interview at a Caribbean leaders’ summit in St Lucia. Darrell Allahar, a minister in the office of the prime minister and one of Persad-Bissessar’s lawyers, described the privy council hearing as a “very good exercise”.

“We want to get the court’s view because the issue is more than the sodomy laws, the issue has to do with what is called the savings clause, which is a feature of all of our constitutions in the English-speaking Caribbean,” he said.

He added that the clauses were created “to save existing laws at independence so we don’t have a wholesale gutting of those laws in light of the human rights provisions”. Jones, 61, said the case should never have had to reach the British court. “At any time over the last decade of my legal challenge, the state and indeed parliament could have put a stop to this and just removed these heinous laws themselves,” he said. “They have wasted millions of taxpayers’ money fighting

me.” He said the law, under which a person can be jailed for up to five years for consensual same-sex intimacy, “dehumanises LGBTQ+ people. It makes us both a criminal and a victim at the same time.”

Jones said he was confident he had a strong case. “The privy council will never uphold a 500-year-old homophobic piece of British law that goes against the rights of the individual. Not in 2026,” he said. “I know I’m on the right side of history.”

Leo Varadkar, Ireland’s former taoiseach and a global LGBTQI and human rights fellow at Harvard University, said in an interview that the only five countries in the Americas that continued to outlaw homosexuality were formerly under British rule. He pointed to the irony that “colonial-era laws that have long since been repealed in the United Kingdom itself” remained active in former colonies.

In a paper for Harvard last week, Varadkar wrote: “From Canada in the north to Chile in the south, homosexuality has been long since been decriminalised in the 35 countries that make up the Americas” apart from Jamaica, Guyana, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Grenada. “All are anglophone and formerly part of the British empire. This is not a coincidence.”

He noted that the UK judges would preside over this week’s hearing in the knowledge that “human rights and freedoms, including the right to privacy and control over what happens to one’s own body and in one’s own bedroom”, were enshrined in British law.

These seven white-cast sunscreens are suitable for summertime Indian skin



Sunscreen is definitely necessary in the summer. But it can be difficult to find the ideal sunscreen, particularly for Indian skin tones. Although sunscreen is necessary to shield the skin from damaging UV rays, many of its formulas leave a white cast that can make the skin appear dull or ashy. While zinc oxide and titanium dioxide-containing mineral sunscreens are especially prone to this problem, many contemporary formulations have created lightweight, undetectable formulas that blend in perfectly with Indian skin tones without leaving your skin looking chalky or ashy.

If you're looking for sunscreens that offer strong sun protection while remaining completely transparent on the skin, here are 7 options. Most of these sunscreens are even perfect to be worn under makeup, so you don't have to worry about your makeup looking cakey.

1. The Derma Co 1% Hyaluronic Sunscreen Aqua Gel SPF 50 PA++++ | Hydrating, Lightweight & Non-Greasy: The Derma Co 1% Hyaluronic Sunscreen Aqua Gel SPF 50 PA++++ is an in vivo-tested (ISO 24444:2019) sunscreen with 6 UV filters for ultimate sun protection. This sunscreen not only protects your skin from the harmful UV rays but also protects it against the blue light radiated from electronic devices. This lightweight, non-greasy sunscreen contains hyaluronic acid that helps keep the skin hydrated while protecting it from harmful UVA and UVB rays. Its gel-based formula spreads easily, absorbs quickly, and does not leave a noticeable

white cast on most skin tones. The best part is that this sunscreen feels non-greasy and works well for oily, combination, and normal skin types. It can also be worn comfortably under makeup.

Customer Reviews
Customers appreciate the lightweight texture and quick absorption of this sunscreen. Many users mention that it blends easily without leaving a white cast and feels comfortable throughout the day, without feeling greasy. Some users praise its affordability and hydration benefits. However, a few customers note that it can make the skin appear slightly shiny after several hours and may not suit highly sensitive skin.

2. Mamaearth Vitamin C Daily Glow Sunscreen SPF 50 provides broad-spectrum sun protection while helping improve skin radiance. Enriched with Vitamin C and turmeric, this In-Vivo tested (ISO 24444:2019) sunscreen aims to brighten dull skin and support an even complexion. This lightweight lotion spreads smoothly on the skin and absorbs without feeling heavy. It is suitable for daily wear and generally does not leave a noticeable white cast. The best part is that this sunscreen is made from natural ingredients and is free from toxins, making it safe for sensitive skin, while also adding a healthy glow.

Customer Reviews
Many customers like the glowing finish and brightening effect of this sunscreen. Users often mention that it blends easily into the skin and feels com-

fortable for everyday use. Dry and normal skin users appreciate the moisturising texture. A few users with oily skin feel that the product becomes slightly greasy during hot weather or after extended wear.

3. Bioderma Photoderm Crème Claire SPF 50+ PA++++ Tinted Sunscreen with 8H Hydration: Bioderma Photoderm Crème Claire SPF 50+ PA++++ is a premium tinted sunscreen that offers high sun protection and light coverage, along with giving 8 hours of hydration. The non-sticky, non-greasy tinted formula helps even out skin tone while protecting against UVA and UVB rays. It is designed for sensitive skin and provides a smooth finish without a strong white cast. In fact, its creamy texture offers good moisturisation and can replace light makeup on casual days. Its dermatologically tested formula makes it a trusted choice for sun protection and skin comfort.

Customer Reviews
Customers praise the effective sun protection and natural-looking tint. Many users find that it blends well and creates an even skin tone without appearing cakey. Sensitive skin users frequently mention that it does not irritate. Some reviewers appreciate that it reduces the need for foundation. However, a few customers feel the tint may not perfectly match all Indian skin tones and find the product expensive.

4. RE' EQUIL Ultra Matte Dry Touch Sunscreen | SPF 50 PA++++ | Water & Sweat Resistant: RE' EQUIL Ultra Matte Dry Touch Sunscreen SPF 50 PA++++ is specially

designed for oily and acne-prone skin. It provides broad-spectrum protection while delivering a matte finish that helps control excess shine. Its lightweight silicone-based formula spreads evenly and feels smooth on the skin. It is water-resistant and suitable for outdoor activities, and leaves little to no white cast when blended properly. Its non-greasy texture makes it a favourite among users looking for long-lasting sun protection.

Customer Reviews
Users frequently praise this sunscreen for its matte finish and oil-control performance. Many customers with oily and acne-prone skin report that it stays comfortable throughout the day without causing breakouts. Reviewers also appreciate its smooth application and strong sun protection. Some users mention that the silicone texture feels unusual at first. Dry skin users occasionally feel that it lacks sufficient moisture.

5. Beauty of Joseon Relief Sun Aqua-fresh Rice + B5, SPF 50+ PA++++ Sun Cream, Moisturizing & Calming Formula: Beauty of Joseon Relief Sun Aqua-fresh Rice + B5 SPF 50+ PA++++ is a Korean sunscreen known for its lightweight and hydrating formula. It contains rice extract and Vitamin B5 to help nourish and soothe the skin while providing broad-spectrum protection. The cream absorbs quickly and leaves a natural finish without a white cast. It is suitable for most skin types, including sensitive skin. The sunscreen feels comfortable throughout the day and layers well with skincare and makeup products.

Customer Reviews
Customers often describe this sunscreen as one of the most comfortable products for daily use. Users praise its lightweight feel, smooth application, and invisible finish. Many reviewers appreciate that it works well under makeup and does not irritate sensitive skin. Several customers mention improved skin hydration. Some users with very oily skin report that the finish can become slightly dewy in humid conditions.

6. ASAYA | Spot Light Depigmenting Sunscreen SPF 50 PA++++ | In-VIVO Tested | Niacinamide + Licorice Extract: ASAYA Spot Light Depigmenting Sunscreen SPF 50 PA++++ is

an In-Vivo tested sunscreen that combines sun protection with ingredients aimed at reducing pigmentation and uneven skin tone. Enriched with niacinamide and Licorice Extract, this lightweight sunscreen is designed to protect against sun damage while supporting a brighter complexion. It spreads easily and generally leaves little to no white cast. It is suitable for daily use and works well for individuals concerned about dark spots. Its multitasking formula makes it appealing for those seeking both protection and skincare benefits.

Customer Reviews
Customers appreciate the combination of sun protection and pigmentation-focused ingredients. Many users report that the sunscreen feels lightweight and comfortable throughout the day. Several reviewers mention a gradual improvement in overall skin appearance when used consistently. Users also like that it blends easily without leaving a noticeable white cast. Some customers note that visible results on dark spots require regular and long-term use.

7. Plum SPF 50 PA++++ Sunscreen with 2% Niacinamide & Rice Water | In-Vivo Tested | Lightweight, No White Cast: Plum SPF 50 PA++++ Sunscreen offers reliable broad-spectrum protection with a lightweight and comfortable formula. It is designed for daily wear and blends easily into the skin without leaving a strong white cast. It provides a balanced finish that works for various skin types. It helps protect against sun damage while maintaining skin comfort throughout the day. Its easy-to-use texture and affordable pricing make it a popular option among students, professionals, and everyday sunscreen users.

Customer Reviews
Customers appreciate the sunscreen's lightweight feel and everyday usability. Many users report that it absorbs well and does not leave a noticeable white residue. Reviewers also mention that it feels comfortable under makeup and works well for regular office use. Several customers find it to be a good value-for-money option. Some users with oily skin note that the finish can become slightly shiny during hot weather.

Irritated scalp accompanied by white flakes

As rainfall increases, numerous individuals observe a marked increase in dandruff, itching, and white flakes on their shoulders. If you experience heightened itchiness or flakiness of the scalp during the monsoon, it is not merely a figment of your imagination. Dermatologists clarify that this season fosters ideal conditions for exacerbating scalp flakiness, even in those who typically do not suffer from dandruff.

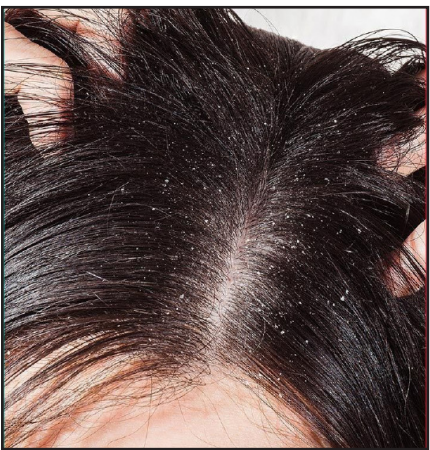
Why dandruff worsens during monsoon
"Monsoon creates the perfect environment for a fungus called Malassezia to go out of control. Malassezia lives on everyone's scalp all year round, feeding on the natural oils our scalp produces. It is not a problem until conditions shift in its favour, and the monsoon does exactly that," says Dr Kohli. "When humidity rises sharply, the scalp sweats more and the sebaceous glands ramp up oil production. This warm, moist, oily environment is where Malassezia thrives. As it overgrows, it triggers an inflammatory response from the immune system. That inflammation speeds up the natural skin cell turnover cycle on the scalp and instead of shedding invisibly the way it normally does, the skin sheds in visible clumps. That is the flaking we see," she explains. Dr Gulrez Tyebkhan, Consultant Dermatologist, Saifee Hospital, Mumbai, adds that seasonal changes can significantly impact scalp health. "With increased rainfall, there has been an increase in dandruff, itching and white flakes on your shoulders, so it is not in your imagination. Dermatologists claim that the monsoon brings the best conditions for scalp flakiness to become worse, even among those who do not suffer from dandruff normally," says Dr Tyebkhan.

What is Malassezia
The scalp, like the rest of the skin, is constantly regenerating itself. Old skin cells shed and are replaced by new ones naturally every few weeks. Normally, these tiny flakes are washed away during regular hair washes and are not noticeable. "Monsoon reverses this process, however. As skin cells naturally shed, the process slows down, leaving dead cells on the scalp. These scales appear over time in the form of flakes and can also cause itching," explains Dr Tyebkhan. Another major factor is the increased growth of Malassezia, a fungus that naturally exists on the skin. "Malassezia normally inhabits people's skin, but it grows faster during humid times. This causes inflammation, making the skin flake more and more," says Dr Tyebkhan. Dr Kohli also highlights that dandruff and seborrheic dermatitis, a condition that causes more intense flaking, redness, and itching, are linked to the same fungal activity. "Dandruff and seborrheic dermatitis are both driven by this same fungus. The monsoon simply provides the right conditions for Malassezia to multiply and dominate," she adds.

The gut-scalp connection
While scalp care plays an important role, internal factors may also influence flare-ups. "The gut microbiome and the scalp are more connected than people think. During the monsoon, dietary changes, increased consumption of street food, and gut infections are common. When the gut barrier is compromised, systemic inflammation rises, and this can worsen scalp inflammation," says Dr Kohli.

"I regularly see patients whose dandruff flares coincide with gut disturbances during this season," she adds.

How to prevent monsoon dandruff and flaky scalp
1. Wash your hair regularly
Maintaining scalp hygiene is one of the simplest ways to prevent excessive flak-



ing. "A lot of people who suffer from scalp flaking wash their hair only once a week, which leads to the accumulation of dead skin cells, sweat, oil, and dirt on the scalp," says Dr Tyebkhan. "Washing your hair at least twice or thrice a week during monsoons is a general guideline to keep the scalp clean and free from accumulated scales," he adds. 2. Use antifungal shampoos correctly
"This is the baseline. Ketoconazole, zinc pyrithione, or selenium sulphide shampoos used twice a week actively reduce the Malassezia load on the scalp," says Dr Kohli. She adds, "The key thing I tell patients is to leave the shampoo on for three to five minutes before rinsing. Most people rinse it off immediately, which means the active ingredient barely has time to work." Dr Tyebkhan explains that in some cases, dermatologists may also recommend additional treatments. "Antifungal shampoos are a common treatment, but leave-on antifungal lotions or solutions may also be recommended. These remain on the affected area for several hours, allowing the medication to work more effectively against the fungus. The shampoo removes the scales, while the leave-on antifungal agent reduces fungal growth," he says.

3. Keep your scalp dry
"A damp scalp for hours is an open invitation for fungal overgrowth. People often come home after getting wet in the rain, tie their hair, and continue with their day," says Dr Kohli. "Dry your scalp and roots thoroughly after washing or getting wet. A low-heat blow dryer is absolutely fine and far better than leaving the scalp damp," she advises.

4. Avoid heavy oiling on the scalp
While oiling is a traditional hair-care practice, heavy oils may worsen dandruff during humid weather. "Coconut oil applied to the scalp is a beloved Indian practice, but in the monsoon it can backfire. Heavy oils sit on the scalp, trap moisture, and create a favourable environment for Malassezia," says Dr Kohli. "If you want to oil your hair, apply it to the lengths and ends only and avoid applying heavy oils directly on the scalp," she suggests.

5. Do not ignore persistent symptoms
"If the flaking is accompanied by severe itching, redness, or persists despite frequent washing, it may be due to an overgrowth of Malassezia rather than just dead skin," warns Dr Tyebkhan. Dr Kohli adds, "If the itching is intense, there is redness or crusting at the hairline, or the flakes are thick and yellowish, it may be seborrheic dermatitis rather than simple dandruff."

"Persistent dandruff accompanied by symptoms like excessive itching, redness, crusting, or hair loss should not be ignored. A dermatologist can assess whether it is simple scalp flaking or a fungal condition requiring targeted treatment," concludes Dr Tyebkhan.

Maintain the freshness of your favorite sneakers this monsoon season by following straightforward care tips



I have a deep affection for my sneakers; however, the onset of the monsoon fills me with anxiety. As soon as dark clouds gather, I find myself contemplating whether my beloved pair will return home drenched in muddy water, irreparably stained, or bearing that persistent damp odor. After experiencing several unfortunate incidents on rainy days, I came to the conclusion that I required practical advice rather than random tips found online. Consequently, I chose to consult an expert.

According to Mr Aayush Jindal, CEO, Asian Footwears, "A little preventive care can go a long way in keeping your shoes looking and performing their

best." His approach is refreshingly practical, with simple habits that can help your sneakers stay cleaner, fresher and in better shape all through the rainy season. Here are the five tips he recommends before you head out in your favourite pair.

What is monsoon damage, and how can it ruin your sneakers?

Water weakens the materials: Constant exposure to rain can affect the fabric, leather and glue, making your sneakers lose their shape over time. Mud leaves stubborn stains: Wet mud can seep into the upper and sole, leaving marks that become harder to remove if left for too long.

Moisture causes unpleasant odour: Damp interiors

create the perfect conditions for bacteria, leaving your shoes smelling less than fresh. Soles can start peeling: Excess moisture may weaken the adhesive that holds different parts of the sneaker together, leading to separation. Mould can develop during storage: Putting away damp sneakers in a closed cupboard can encourage mould growth, damaging both the appearance and the material.

5 essential tips from Mr. Aayush Jindal to keep your sneakers in great condition this monsoon

1. Waterproof your sneakers before the rains arrive

Don't wait for the first shower to think about protection. Mr Jindal recommends treating every pair

with a water repellent spray that suits the shoe material before the monsoon begins. A protective coating helps reduce water absorption and makes cleaning much easier later.

2. Let wet sneakers dry naturally

If your sneakers get soaked, resist the temptation to place them under direct sunlight or near a heater. Instead, stuff them with paper to absorb excess moisture and leave them to air dry in a well-ventilated spot. This helps prevent cracked leather, warped soles and misshapen shoes.

3. Rotate your sneakers

Wearing the same pair every rainy day does them no favours. Give your sneakers a day off between wears so they can dry complete-

ly. This simple habit helps them retain their shape and reduces the chance of lingering dampness.

4. Clean off mud before it settles

Fresh mud is far easier to remove than dried dirt. Mr Jindal suggests using a soft brush and a damp cloth to clean your sneakers as soon as possible after wearing them. Quick cleaning also helps prevent stains, odour and long-term damage.

5. Store them in a dry, airy space

Never put damp sneakers straight into a closed cupboard. Store them in a dry, well-ventilated area with shoe trees or paper inserts inside. This keeps moisture at bay, helps the shoes hold their shape and reduces the chances of mould forming.

ENTERTAINMENT

Sobhan Babu's wife Shantha Kumari passes away at 85 after brief illness



Tamil cinematographer R. Chezhiyan dies

Chennai : National Award-winning filmmaker and noted cinematographer Chezhiyan passed away on Friday in Chennai. He was 57. Chezhiyan reportedly breathed his last after suffering from a prolonged illness.

Chezhiyan made his directorial debut with To Let (2017), which won the National Film Award for Best Tamil Feature Film at the 65th National Film Awards. The film also earned him the Best Cinematographer Award at the Milan International Film Festival. Born in Sivaganga, Chezhiyan earned an engineering degree before pursuing his passion for photography and filmmaking. He began his cinematic journey as an assistant to acclaimed cinematographer P. C. Sreeram and made his independent debut with Kalloori in 2007. Over the years, he established himself as one of the most respected and talented cinematographers in Tamil cinema. Chezhiyan's mortal remains are expected to be placed for public viewing, allowing colleagues, admirers, and members of the fraternity to pay their final respects. He is survived by his wife, Prema, and daughter, Ajitha.

Chennai : Shantha Kumari, wife of legendary Telugu actor Sobhan Babu, passed away at her residence in Chennai on Thursday due to age-related health issues. She was 85. According to family members, Shantha Kumari was admitted to a

private hospital in Chennai four days ago after her health deteriorated. While undergoing treatment, she suffered a sudden cardiac arrest and passed away. Her funeral rites will be held on Friday. Shantha Kumari and Sobhan Babu were married

on May 15, 1958, even before he entered the Telugu film industry. Known to be a private person, she chose to stay away from the media and film events. She dedicated herself to managing the household and family responsibilities while Sobhan

Babu pursued a busy career in Telugu cinema. The couple had four children, a son, Karuna Seshu, and three daughters, Mrudula, Prashanthi, and Nivedhitha. Born Uppu Sobhana Chalapati Rao, Sobhan Babu was one of Telugu cinema's most

beloved heroes. At the peak of his career in 1996, he bid farewell to films and chose to live a peaceful life in Chennai. He passed away due to a heart attack in 2008.

In a previous interview, their son Karuna Seshu said his father kept his children

away from the limelight. Karuna Seshu has stayed out of films and currently manages the family's businesses and properties in Chennai. Sobhan Babu has multiple grandchildren, but the most prominent in the public eye is his grandson,

Dr. Surakshith Battina, who is a renowned laparoscopic surgeon and fertility specialist. He made headlines for setting a Guinness World Record by performing minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery to remove a 4.5 kg uterus.

Ramayana locks July 18 trailer launch and san Diego comic-con panel

Mumbai : The countdown for Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana is officially getting bigger. Even before the film takes its first look to the global stage at San Diego Comic-Con 2026, the makers are reportedly preparing a grand trailer launch in India. According to reports, the first trailer of the Ranbir Kapoor and Yash-starrer is expected to be unveiled at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on July 18, giving Indian audiences the first major glimpse of one of the country's most expensive and ambitious films.

The Delhi event is expected to formally kick-start the film's promotional campaign before the team heads to the US for its Comic-Con presentation. For a film mounted on such a vast scale, the strategy appears clear: begin with a homegrown spectacle and then take the epic to an



international pop-culture platform. As per the official San Diego Comic-Con schedule, Ramayana will be showcased on July 23, 2026, at 3:15 pm PDT, which is 3:15 am IST, in Ballroom 20. The panel will feature producer Namit Malhotra, director Nitesh Tiwari, Ranbir Kapoor, who plays Lord Ram, and Yash, who essays Ravana.

The SDCC listing de-

scribes the film as a sweeping retelling of one of the world's oldest epics, centred on Rama, a prince shaped by duty and sacrifice, and Ravana, an immortal ruler driven by pride and vengeance. The panel will offer an exclusive first look at what is being positioned as one of the largest cinematic undertakings in Indian film history. This makes Ramayana only the second Indian film after

Kalki 2898 AD to receive a major showcase at San Diego Comic-Con, a space usually dominated by Hollywood tentpoles and superhero franchises. The move signals that the makers are not treating Ramayana as just another big Bollywood release, but as a global cinematic property.

Mounted on a reported budget of Rs 4,000 crore, Ramayana features Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Ram, Sai Pallavi as Sita and Yash as Ravana. The cast also includes Sunny Deol as Hanuman and Ravie Dubey as Lakshman, along with Rakul Preet Singh, Kunal Kapoor, Lara Dutta, Arun Govil, Sheeba Chaddha and Adinath Kothare. The film is planned as a two-part saga. Ramayana Part 1 is slated for Diwali 2026, while the second instalment is expected to arrive in Diwali 2027.

T-Series locks Aditya Roy Kapur for 2027 action-romance

Mumbai : Bollywood actor Aditya Roy Kapur will be seen starring in an "intense, violent musical lovestory" directed by "Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat" director Milap Milan Zaveri. Talking about the collaboration with actor Aditya, Zaveri says "Aditya has always had a rare ability to portray love with honesty and emotional depth. Ever since Aashiqui 2, audiences have connected with him in stories driven by passion and heartbreak."

"This character is layered, intense, and emotionally complex, and I couldn't think of anyone better to bring that journey to life," the director added. After Aashiqui 2, Malang, Ludo and Metro In Dino, producer Bhushan Kumar reunites with Aditya. Blending powerful romance, high-octane action, and a soul-stirring soundtrack, the yet-untitled film promises to present love in its most pas-



sionate and raw form.

On coming back together once again, producer Bhushan Kumar says, "Our association with Aditya goes back many years and has given us films that audiences continue to love. From Aashiqui 2 to Metro... In Dino, every collaboration has been special in its own way. We share a great creative comfort, and I'm happy we're coming together once again for a story that's intense, emotional and mounted on a grand scale." Principal photography is

scheduled to commence later this year, the film is set to go on floors later this year before arriving in cinemas across 2027. Zaveri shared "Get ready to see him in one of the most powerful, heroic and romantic roles he has ever done! So excited to finally be directing him after years of friendship and mutual respect! Im delighted that the film is backed and produced by Bhushan Kumar sir whom I'm reuniting with after big successes like #Satyameva-Jayate and #Marjaavaan.

Amitabh Bachchan reacts cryptically to 'power of black' tweet backlash

Mumbai : Amitabh Bachchan has seemingly reflected on the importance of acknowledging mistakes after facing backlash over a recent tweet about the France national football team during the FIFA World Cup 2026.

The tweet did not go down well with several users, who criticised the veteran actor for commenting on the racial composition of the French team. Many argued that the footballers should be identified and celebrated as French players rather than being reduced to the colour of their skin. Others called the remark unnecessary and insensitive, especially in the middle of a global sporting event where conversations around identity, nationality and representation are often closely watched. While Amitabh has not directly named the controversy in his lat-



est blog post, the actor appeared to address the larger idea of learning, reflection and owning up to one's errors.

Writing on Tumblr, he shared, "Every day is an education .. every day is a fresh and new learning .. every day is cherished for the opportunities it gives to be able to comply with the change and the new. Learning is divine .. what was unknown and left to special-

ists, is good, one must have the ability to pick up whatever the ones that have the knowledge and experience, convey.. nothing like understanding the self and the meaning of it, it shall ever reflect upon your .. YOUR understanding and reading and your own reckoning."

He further wrote about the value of admitting when one may have gone wrong. "Specialists can make a mistake , find excuses for it and

carry on in a repair mode .. but doing it on your own reasoning and personal inputs gives you the hold on what we move on with or at least know that the mistake was ours ... admitting a mistake is not wrong .. it shows character," he wrote. The actor added that accepting a mistake can end unnecessary debate and free one from prolonging arguments. He also wrote that sometimes the best way to end a disagreement is to tell the other person, "You know ! you may be right." On the professional front, Amitabh Bachchan is expected to return in the sequel to Nag Ashwin's mythological sci-fi film Kalki 2898 AD. The upcoming film also stars Prabhas and Kamal Haasan in key roles. Deepika Padukone, who appeared in the first part, will reportedly not return for the sequel.

Thalaivar Rajinikanth aims for Telugu box office gold with Jailer 2

Hyderabad : Tamil superstar Rajinikanth is gearing up to make another strong impact at the Telugu box office with his much-awaited action entertainer Jailer 2. The makers are expected to command a premium price for the film's Telugu dubbing rights, reflecting the superstar's growing market in the two Telugu states.

"They have not yet begun discussions for the Telugu dubbing rights since the film is targeting an October release, although the final release date is yet to be officially confirmed," says a leading distributor. "Rajinikanth is set to mesmerise Telugu audiences once again because he is playing an age-appropriate yet powerful role. The film also features multiple antagonists, which further elevates his larger-than-life screen image. It promises to be an entertaining blend of family drama and high-voltage action." He adds that Rajinikanth continues to enjoy immense popularity across generations. "His charisma and trademark style appeal not only to older fans but also to younger audiences and family viewers, making him one of the



few Tamil stars with a strong and loyal fan base in the Telugu states."

Directed by Nelson Dilipkumar, Jailer 2 is expected to release on October 15, 2026. The sequel follows Muthuvel as he takes on a powerful idol-smuggling syndicate, while S. J. Suryah joins the franchise as a formidable new antag-

onist seeking revenge for the death of Varma. The film also stars Ramya Krishnan, Mira and Vasanth Ravi in pivotal roles. "Rajinikanth's earlier film Jailer was a sensational success in the Telugu states, collecting over ₹35 crore net and more than ₹70 crore gross," the distributor points out.

Kalpna Iyer on Kareena Kapoor's childhood charm: 'she accompanied Karisma to sets and we knew her destiny'



Mumbai : Veteran actress Kalpna Iyer has shared a nostalgic memory of a young Kareena Kapoor from the sets of the 1996 film "Raja Hindustani."

Recalling the time when Kareena would visit the sets with her sister Karisma Kapoor, Kalpna revealed that she was instantly captivated by the young girl's charm and beauty. In her recent post, she shared that she had told her hairdresser at the time that Kareena would become a star one day — a prediction that came true much sooner than she expected. Calling it a precious memory, Kalpna looked back on Kareena's early days before she became one of Bollywood's leading actresses. Taking to Instagram, she posted her throwback photos from the song 'Pardesi Pardesi' and wrote, "I have danced in about approximately 80/100 Dance numbers in Hindi movies & many other Movies in Various Languages and it maybe more

but certainly not Less is my opinion and not every Dance resonates with me today nor did it do so when I actually Shot for some of them... but it was my Calling and it was A Job and My Choice and absolutely important for Reasons that I have been clear about... I just needed Work with dignity and respect and Thankfully I had All of that and it Brought in the Money which was so needed and so very important and I don't have any regrets... But Some Films are Special..."

"Some Dances remain in your Heart and your Life Forever and They make a Home inside your Body and Never Leave you.... I have a few of them and I cherish them for Various Reasons but I is beyond and Above Any of the Others that I Love and nothing else can compare...It was the Outcome of A director with a Vision and A Cameraman who was a Master in

his Craft and A Young Dance Director with a Passion so Raw and so Intense and A Hero who was and is a Talented Actor and a Perfectionist and The Music Director Ufffffff ... Mind blowing and Singers Epic and Superb ...I was in Heaven... it was Shot at Night and it took 2 weeks of Intense Labor and Total Submission from Every Single Person on The Sets of Raja Hindustani and Pardesi Pardesi was The Result of Sheer Hard Work and Incredible Talent All Around." Kalpna Iyer concluded by writing, "I owe a huge Thanks to Dharmesh Darshan and a huge Hug to Manish Malhotra for my Costume and For Explaining the Look he had Visualized (I drew the Tattoo type Bindi on my Forehead Every Single Day for 2 Weeks aaaahhhh it was so therapeutic to just keep drawing I love the Memory) . My Favorite Memory is of A Sweet Young Girl ... Who would come to be with her sister for a While and I would keep Staring at Her and keep Telling my Hair Dresser She is So Beautiful and She Will Become a Star Soon and She did and Sooner Than I Thought... That young girl Was Kareena Kapoor Precious Memories..Raja Hindustani."

Kareena Kapoor would often visit her sister Karisma Kapoor on the sets of the 1996 blockbuster 'Raja Hindustani.' The movie featured Aamir Khan and Karisma Kapoor in the lead roles. The film followed the story of a small-town cab driver who falls in love with a wealthy young woman.

Dhamaal 4 review: high energy, zero laughs in Ajay Devgn and Riteish Deshmukh's latest

Mumbai : A pirate ship. A treasure hunt. Endless shouting, stomping and cartoonish chaos. A barrage of fat-shaming jokes. A few meta one-liners that don't land. A bunch of skeletons. Three octopuses. One tiger. One cobra. One crocodile. Two dolphins with Ajay Devgn riding atop them. And histrionics. That's Dhamaal 4 in a nutshell.

The fourth instalment in Indra Kumar's Dhamaal franchise is rattling, loud and ludicrous. It goes above and beyond slapstick and brainrot. But full marks to the makers for their effort! They try every trick in the dusty handbook of comic capers to make you laugh. But somehow, none of the constant bickering, exaggerated movements, comical accidents and confusion land. Its idea of humour is painfully simple – slap a character, make them fall down, make them trip, hang them off a cliff and shove a knife into their buttocks. The film throws everything at the wall in the hope that something sticks. But very little does.

Excess is the film's guiding principle, which perhaps explains its relentlessly verbose storytelling. Everything is spelt out loud here.

Every gag is explained, every beat underlined and every punchline repeated until there's nothing left for the audience to discover on their own, proving Dhamaal 4 has little faith in its audience. And when nothing else works, a wrestling match is orchestrated between a plus-sized woman and a vertically challenged man belonging to a tribal community. In all honesty, Dhamaal 4 operates on a threadbare, one-line plot – a bunch of people on a hunt to unravel some Shaitan Singh's century-old gold that lies hidden in a cave deep inside a jungle. This is then stretched to form an overlong film. It starts off with an animated montage of a Bambaia taponi-speaking guru in a 'guru-cool' narrating this story of Shaitan Singh.

The montage also has a cameo by Jackie Shroff.



Cut to, we're introduced to a pirate named Adhura and his gang on a mission to steal gold. They get into a scuffle with Prithvi, the only person who has the map to the cave. Enters Guddu, who fights Adhura as he feels only he has the right to own the treasure. In his spare time, Guddu tries to impress his girlfriend's kids and win their approval. We're then introduced to Lallan, who prays for a rich girl with an 'extra large car' and 'extra large bungalow'. God hears him and brings into his life an 'extra large' woman named Paro. No, these aren't our

words. And then there's Adi and Manav. Adi is trying his best to win Rosie back, who had left him a year ago on their wedding night after Manav accidentally had set her on fire. The common link between all of them? Greed. Greed drives them to meet atop a cliff where Prithvi and Guddu are seen hanging and fighting for their lives. Thereafter, they set out to discover the cave that holds the key to their fortunes and a brighter future behind an 'M' shaped rock. On the way, they brave storms and man-eater animals.

Four Deepak Nandal Gang gunmen were killed, while three officers were injured during a nocturnal clash in Gurugram

New Delhi, July 10: Four gunmen affiliated with the Deepak Nandal gang were killed and one badly injured during a late-night encounter with Haryana Police in Gurugram on Thursday, as part of a massive anti-organized crime operation. During the gunfight, three police officers were also shot. According to police, the incident occurred in the A-Block neighborhood of Sushant Lok when Crime Branch officers encircled five armed gunmen linked with the gang. A furious gun duel ensued, with both sides firing over 20 rounds. The police retaliated by killing four gunmen and seriously injuring one. The area has now been cordoned off, and police and forensic teams are gathering evidence from the scene. Preliminary investigations suggest that the five shooters had reached the area with the intention of extorting money from a property dealer. The Crime Branch had reportedly received prior intelligence about their movement and had laid a trap in the area. As police teams moved in, the suspects allegedly opened fire in an attempt to escape which led to a prolonged exchange of gunfire. According to the Crime Branch, police control room officials

received information about armed criminals travelling in a suspicious Scorpio SUV. Acting on the tip-off, Crime Branch teams rushed to the Sushant Lok area. By the time police reached the location, the accused had allegedly begun firing with sophisticated weapons at the residence of a businessman. Investigators said the businessman had been receiving repeated extortion messages from a wanted gangster believed to be operating from abroad. Police asked accused to surrender. Officials said the Crime Branch team first warned the suspects and asked them to surrender. However, the accused allegedly responded by firing at the police and attempting to flee. In self-defence and to prevent their escape, police personnel returned fire. All five shooters sustained bullet injuries during the operation. The injured suspects were rushed to a private super-speciality hospital, where doctors declared four of them dead. The fifth accused remains under treatment and is reported to be in critical condition. Three policemen injured during operation. The encounter also left three Gurugram Police personnel injured after



they were hit by bullets during the exchange of fire. All three officers were immediately shifted to a hospital for treatment. Police said doctors are closely monitoring their condition and they are receiving necessary medical care. Deepak Nandal gang under scanner. The Deepak Nandal gang has been under the radar of law enforcement agencies for its alleged involvement in extortion, intimidation and other criminal activities. The latest encounter is being viewed as a massive blow to the gang's operations in the region. As investigations continue, authorities are likely to intensify

efforts against organised crime networks operating across Haryana and the National Capital Region. What happens next? With one accused surviving the encounter, detectives want to interview him to learn more about the gang's operations, extortion network, and suspected connections to handlers working outside of India. Forensic specialists have begun to examine the guns, ammo, cars, and other evidence collected at the scene. Police are also likely to look into whether the group was engaged in other extortion and violent crime cases in Haryana and adjacent states.

"I've Been Saying He Should Be Dropped" India's star batter is dubbed "Clueless" By the 1983 World Cup Winner

New Delhi: Team India is experiencing an unparalleled run of poor form, having lost their past four entire T20Is on a tour of Ireland and England. India's batting unit, in particular, has been under intense criticism after being bowled out for 76 in the third T20I in Nottingham. Krishnamachari Srikkanth, a former India opener and BCCI head selector, singled out Tilak Varma, India's T20I vice captain, for criticism. Srikkanth blasted Tilak's performance against short-pitched bowling as "clueless" and suggested that he be pulled from the team. "He's already the vice-captain, and it looks like he'll soon become the captain also. Tilak Varma might have himself said he doesn't want to go out, seeing the pace and bounce. Tilak Varma is clueless," Srikkanth said, speaking on his YouTube channel. "You make Tilak Varma your main batter and vice-captain. Yet, you shield him



against fast bowling? They are sending Axar Patel ahead of him. They are trying to shield Tilak Varma because they know he's vulnerable against short-pitched bowling. I've been consistently saying he should be dropped. But they don't drop him," added Srikkanth, who won the 1983 World Cup with India. In the third T20I, Tilak made just 3 runs off 11 balls, visibly struggling during his stay at the crease. His struggles summed up a disastrous batting performance from India, as they got bowled out for the lowest-ever men's T20I team total in England. Srikkanth

further said that he would prefer to play Sanju Samson over Tilak Varma in India's T20I playing XI. "I would rather play Sanju Samson himself instead of Tilak Varma," Srikkanth stated. Samson was dropped from India's roster following three straight defeats against Ireland and England, making way for 15-year-old Sooryavanshi. However, with Sooryavanshi struggling and India's whole batting order under scrutiny, Samson might make a comeback in the next two T20Is. India must win the last two games to avoid a second consecutive T20I series loss.

A government school teacher in Delhi is in serious condition following a 'suicide' attempt

New Delhi, July 10: A 45-year-old mathematics teacher at a government school who was also a booth level officer (BLO) for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise allegedly committed suicide on Wednesday. According to authorities, a note retrieved from him mentioned job strain. The teacher is undergoing treatment at a city hospital and remains critical, police said. Employed at a government senior secondary school run by the Directorate of Education in north Delhi, the teacher, who suffers from asthma, sustained serious injuries. "He is likely to survive, but the incident could leave him with long-term complications such as paralysis or permanent disability," his 55-year-old brother-in-law said. Police said they received information about the incident at around 3pm and rushed to the spot, following which he was taken to hospital. During the preliminary inquiry, investigators learnt that he had allegedly been under work-related stress. Officials familiar with the matter said he had recently been assigned duties linked to the SIR exercise. In the note, he wrote that work pressure had become overwhelming, his health was deteriorating and that he was taking the decision himself. Speaking to HT, his 40-year-old wife, a resident of Adarsh Nagar, said he supervised 10 BLOs and had to accompany one of them while simultaneously monitoring the movements and work of the other nine. "He had to keep checking whether they had reached on time. He had to accompany one BLO himself and travel throughout the day. He was already suffering from asthma, which made his condition worse," she said. According to her, he had been under immense pressure and his oxygen levels had been fluctuating over the past three to four days. She alleged that he had informed two of his seniors about his condition and submitted a medical certificate stating that his oxygen levels often dropped while travelling extensively for work. Despite this, she alleged, they reprimanded him and threatened to terminate his services. HT contacted one of the officials named by the family, but he declined to comment.

Unbeaten Spain faces star-powered Belgium in the FIFA World Cup quarterfinals



California: Spain has not lost and has not surrendered a single goal in this year's World Cup. Since March 2023, La Roja has gone 36 consecutive competitive matches without a loss. This high level of play definitely does not intimidate Belgium, which is on its own upward trend as the teams prepare for their World Cup quarter-final meeting on Friday. While Spain has been Europe's most consistent victor for the past three and a half years, Belgium has maneuvered itself into position for what may be the final chance for its golden generation to achieve something remarkable together. "Everyone is already talking about us going home, but we believe we can do it," Belgium coach Rudi Garcia told reporters through an interpreter Thursday. "We believe we can pull off an upset, and we will do everything we can to get to the semis." The fascinating encounter at SoFi Stadium pits a pre-tournament favorite and defending European champions against Belgium, which has never quite realized its full potential despite having big-money talents on its squad. The winner faces France in the Dallas area on Tuesday in the semifinals, and Spain is enough of a perceived favorite that coach Luis De La Fuente had to parry several questions from his national media Thursday about that potentially titanic clash with Les Bleus. But Belgium realizes the opportunity it has after blowing out the co-host United States 4-1 on Monday in its best performance of the tournament and extending the Red Devils' own unbeaten streak to 18 matches across all competitions. Garcia and Romelu

Lukaku said they weren't worried about their gleeful celebrations of their last victory turning the Los Angeles-area crowd against them. "I think (before) the past several days, we had 12 million Belgium fans, and now I think we've got millions and millions that have joined our ranks across the globe," Garcia said. "I don't know what it will be like tomorrow, but it's not the crowd that scores the goals. It's not the fans that score the goals. We're going to focus on what we can do." Spain's defense has been impenetrable, with Rodri orchestrating the effort superbly from midfield. Goalkeeper Unai Simón has only had to make six saves in five World Cup matches, yet Belgium has enough offensive talent to make any goalkeeper work — including Kevin De Bruyne, Youri Tielemans, veteran striker Lukaku, playmaker Leandro Trossard and Charles De Ketelaere, who had two goals against the Americans. Lukaku likened the feeling of this match to the Red Devils' meeting with Brazil in the World Cup quarterfinals eight years ago in Russia — a game his team won 2-1 in stunning fashion. "Tomorrow we need to play the perfect game if we want to proceed," said Lukaku, Belgium's career goals leader. "Spain is an excellent team. They've been playing the same type of football since 2008. They're well prepared, but we have certain assets that can make life difficult for them. We love the challenge." Despite a wealth of good players around teenage sensation Lamine Yamal, Spain could be vulnerable simply because it hasn't scored consistently, getting seven of its nine goals at the World Cup during

routes of overmatched Saudi Arabia and Austria. La Roja managed only Mikel Merino's clutch injury-time goal while beating Portugal 1-0 in the round of 16. "Ultimately we have been very focused on the defensive aspect, but we've also historically scored a lot," De La Fuente said. "I think we have the most attempts on goal (in this World Cup). Perhaps a little bit more efficacy, and we might also be the squad that scores the most. But we're so good on the attack that it gives the opponent little opportunity to come the other way." Striker Mikel Oyarzabal scored two goals in Spain's first appearance at SoFi last week, leading Spain to a 3-0 rout of Austria. "I think we've managed to build a really solid core group," Oyarzabal said. "Regardless of whether things go well or badly, or who's playing, the team responds, and I think that's crucial. We've achieved something very difficult: creating that kind of unity within the national team." Yamal still hasn't broken out in his first World Cup, scoring only one goal for Spain. His teammates and coaches say they're quite satisfied with his overall tournament performance, which began with limited playing time in the group matches while he returned from a hamstring injury incurred in April with Barcelona. "Maybe he hasn't contributed goals, but he brings all the attack," midfielder Gavi said. "He's incredible. I hope that now if we win, hopefully in the semifinals or the final, too, if we win, then he scores goals so people understand what he does for us." De La Fuente praised Yamal for an excellent two-way performance against Portugal. The coach even credited Yamal for the fact that Nuno Mendes, who was attempting to mark Yamal, had to leave early in the second half with an injury. "He's very motivated," De La Fuente said. "(Yamal) wants to do so much, and we know the best version of him, the attacking Lamine, is something we haven't seen yet in this World Cup. He had to work on the defensive side quite a bit because we were facing a powerhouse of a rival. I think this was an exercise in maturity for Lamine. He's going to perform on the attacking front, that's clear. He's got incredible potential, and it's going to come." Belgium lost midfielder Amadou Onana to a knee injury this week, necessitating a tactical shift to maintain its defensive framework. That change might just be the return of De Bruyne, who most likely did not play against the United States to stay in peak form for Friday's meeting.

'Good' against 'Bad' Trinamool BJP's 'Strategy' To Break Mamata Banerjee's Party



New Delhi, July 10: Three former Trinamool Congress MPs are ready to return to the Rajya Sabha, although in different colors, weeks after resigning. Sushmita Dev, Sukhendu Sekhar Roy, and Prakash Chik Baraik, who had just resigned Mamata Banerjee's party and their Rajya Sabha seats, formally joined the BJP on Thursday. Within hours, the BJP nominated them as candidates for the byelections to the three seats left vacant by the same leaders. The elections for these seats will take place on July 24. The BJP's quest to dismantle the Trinamool Congress is far from complete. Rukmini Mallick, another MP, has also sent the Rajya Sabha Chairman her resignation and will meet with him in person shortly to give it over. According to reports, two of the remaining nine TMC Rajya Sabha MPs may join the BJP soon. Bhalo Trinamool Leaders The inclusion of former Trinamool officials in the BJP contradicts the party's public statements that it will not induct

TMC politicians due to charges of corruption and goondaism. However, on Tuesday, state BJP president Samik Bhattacharya called it an "exception" while inducting Sukhendu Sekhar Roy, Sushmita Dev and Prakash Chik Baraik into the BJP. He had earlier also propounded the theory of "good TMC and bad TMC", under which there would be no hesitation in taking along "bhalo" (good) TMC leaders. Before the split, TMC had 13 MPs in the Rajya Sabha. A split and merge with the BJP or any other party, requires 9 MPs. Since that number could not be managed, the BJP has adopted a strategy of getting MPs to resign and then fielding them on its symbol to send them back to the House. The strategy weakens the Trinamool while shoring up BJP's numbers in the Rajya Sabha. After July 24, the BJP's strength in the Rajya Sabha will rise to 117, its highest ever. The BJP will now be six votes shy of a simple majority of 123 on its own.

A man has been arrested for viciously hitting his 4-year-old daughter on the road

Rohtak, July 10: A disturbing story of child abuse has emerged from Haryana's Rohtak district, where a dad was captured on CCTV reportedly hitting his four-year-old daughter in the middle of the road. The distressing episode, which sparked considerable indignation, was captured on a neighboring CCTV camera and then went viral on social media. According to the authorities, the accused tried to leave following the event. On Friday morning, he was apprehended at a train station after an overnight search operation. Police identified the culprit as Jitendra, a native of Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, who lived

with his family in Rohtak's Indira Colony. He worked as a daily wage laborer. After the video aired, police conducted a search operation and apprehended him at a train station as he was reportedly attempting to flee. After being arrested, Jitendra apologized for his acts and stated that he had made the worst mistake of his life. Mother asks for leniency The child's mother has urged the authorities not to take harsh measures against her husband. She said that he is the family's primary source of income, and that his imprisonment would leave the family without financial assistance. How-

ever, the police have made it plain that the seriousness of the offense does not allow for mercy. Officials stated the event is a severe and horrible crime, and judicial processes would continue in line with the law. Why did the father assault the child? According to the police investigation, the four-year-old girl, identified as Surabhi, had gone to attend a birthday party without informing her family. Enraged over this, the accused allegedly assaulted her while under the influence of alcohol. The CCTV footage reportedly shows the accused first slapping the child before forcefully throwing her onto the road.

Australia Will Host an IPL Game? The report makes an explosive 'private talks' claim

New Delhi: An Indian Premier League (IPL) match might soon be played in Australia if the BCCI accepts the offer, while Cricket Australia want to make the scheduled Big Bash League start in Chennai an annual event, according to The Sydney Morning Herald. On Friday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese confirmed that the Melbourne Renegades will play the Perth Scorchers at Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium on December 12. According to the article, CA is hoping for a reciprocal IPL game in Australia, with a "open invitation" made to the BCCI. The paper also cited people who indicated that secret negotiations were taking place. India and Australia on Friday unveiled a Sports Collaboration Roadmap to expand cooperation in training, sports science, technology and the sports industry, with the inaugural match of the upcoming Big Bash League season in Chennai being the highlight of this collaboration. The opening Australian Men's Big Bash League fixture will see Melbourne Renegades face defending champions Perth Scorchers at the MA Chidambaram Stadium (Chepauk) in December, marking the first time a foreign cricket league match will be staged in India. The eight-team BBL is one of the most followed domestic cricket leagues in the world after IPL and is usually held in the December to

February window. The announcement forms the centrepiece of a week-long "G'Day Namaste" festival across India, featuring Australian cultural, business and sporting events, according to a statement issued by the Australian government. The India-Australia Sports Collaboration Roadmap, released jointly by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese at the MCG, seeks to promote partnerships in sports training and capacity building, sports science and technology, and sports industry and investment, according to the Ministry of External Affairs. The event here was attended by Victoria Premier Jacinta Allan, former Australian men's captain and ODI World Cup winner Steve Waugh, and former Australian women's captain Lisa Sthalekar. The MEA said the visit highlighted the growing significance of sports, cultural exchanges and people-to-people connections as key elements of the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. As part of the roadmap, the two countries will also organise an India-Australia Youth Sports Festival to encourage greater interaction among young athletes and strengthen sporting links. Welcoming the initiative, Modi said sports had a unique ability to unite people and that the roadmap would help diversify the sporting partnership between India and Australia.

Shreyas Iyer receives backing despite criticism following England T20I series disappointment



New Delhi: India assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate has thrown his weight behind Shreyas Iyer following the team’s disappointing T20I series defeat in England, urging critics to be patient with the new captain as the side navigates a difficult period. India slumped to a 3-0 deficit in the five-match series after England sealed their maiden bilateral T20I series win over the visitors with a crushing nine-wicket victory in Bristol on Thursday. Harry

Brook and Phil Salt stitched together an unbeaten 146-run stand to chase down the 159-run target with 37 balls to spare. The defeat also marked India’s fifth loss in six T20Is under Shreyas Iyer’s captaincy. The series loss came on the back of a shock 2-0 defeat in Ireland, piling pressure on Iyer, who replaced Suryakumar Yadav as India’s T20I captain despite not being part of the side’s triumphant World Cup campaign. However, Ten

Doeschate insisted that the management had taken a long-term view while making the leadership change. “When you’re managing or coaching a team like India, you have to plan ahead. Surya was a fantastic leader, but when you weigh up where he is age-wise and look two years ahead, you have to make some really tough calls,” Ten Doeschate said after the fourth T20I. “There are going to be a million opinions about it and, after losing two games

against Ireland and falling 3-0 behind in England, I understand that the optics don’t look great. But it’s important to look at things holistically.” The former Netherlands all-rounder pointed to the absence of key players and the changes within the squad as factors behind India’s struggles overseas. “We’ve made a few changes to the squad. Hardik (Pandya) and Jasprit (Bumrah) make a big difference to the team, so we’ve got a different squad here with slightly different weapons. We also need to give Shreyas a bit of time to grow into the role and allow the players to adapt to his captaincy style,” Ten Doeschate said. India’s batting frailties were exposed throughout the tour. After being whitewashed in Ireland, the problems persisted in England as the visitors struggled against pace and movement. The slump came in Nottingham, where India were bowled out for 76 in just 11.5 overs, suffering their heaviest defeat in T20Is.

At 75, Baldev Singh keeps alive the fire to guide future hockey talent tirelessly



Ludhiana: At the age of 75, renowned hockey coach Baldev Singh, who recently received Padma Shri — the nation’s fourth-highest civilian honour — has kept alive the fire in him to guide young talent towards glory. He received the Padma Shri on June 25. Baldev Singh also got the Dronacharya Award in 2009 in recognition of his outstanding contribution to sports coaching. Though he is no longer associated with any academy or institution in an official capacity, Baldev Singh, keen to play an active

role in state’s hockey resurgence, says remains committed to mentoring promising youngsters and strengthening the sport at the grassroots. His vast experience and proven ability to nurture talent can prove invaluable in grooming the next generation of hockey players, provided his services are effectively utilised to strengthen the sport. Widely regarded as one of the most respected hockey mentors, Baldev Singh believes the revival of the nation’s hockey lies in identifying and grooming players from an

early age. Despite his advancing age, Baldev Singh is involved in coaching and mentoring aspiring players. For him, hockey is more than a game — it is a lifelong mission. Having spent decades serving the sport, he continues to inspire youngsters through his dedication, discipline and vision. His relentless efforts have earned him admiration across the sporting fraternity, with many viewing him as a torchbearer of hockey’s rich legacy in the state. Talking to The Tribune, Baldev Singh, who has mentored over 50 international players, said a structured policy covering schools was needed if the state wanted to regain its lost glory in hockey and other sports disciplines. He suggests the state government should formulate a sports policy similar to that of Haryana to revive the sporting ecosystem and encourage youngsters to take up sports. “Haryana plans well. It scouts talent early, gives secure jobs, substantial cash awards and protects an athlete’s career. That is why their medal count has risen in national games every time,” Baldev Singh said. “Punjab has no dearth of talent. What we need is a policy that handholds a player from under-14 level to the Olympics,” he added. The veteran coach advocates for more lucrative prize money for outstanding sportspersons to motivate youngsters.

Spain vs Belgium quarterfinal: Can Red Devils shock La Roja and advance?

New Delhi: Spain have looked every bit the title favourites at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, but Belgium arrive in Los Angeles believing they have the firepower to end La Roja’s unbeaten run and book a place in the semi-finals. Luis de la Fuente’s side have not conceded a goal in the tournament, producing a series of disciplined performances capped by a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Portugal in the Round of 16. Belgium, meanwhile, have gathered momentum after an inconsistent group stage, following up their dramatic comeback win over Senegal with a commanding 4-1 victory over co-hosts the United States. With Spain’s rock-solid defence set to collide with Belgium’s free-scoring attack, Friday’s quarter-final at SoFi Stadium promises



to be one of the biggest tests yet for both sides. “Whoever controls the midfield might win the game.” That is Zee 5 expert Robin Singh’s biggest takeaway heading into

the contest, with the former India international believing the battle between Spain’s possession game and Belgium’s rapid transitions will shape the outcome.

Mental resilience drives medal-winning Gurdaspur fencer Varinder Singh Johal to sustained success

Gurdaspur: International fencer Varinder Singh Johal has exemplified a rare blend of self-reliance, unwavering integrity and, above all, certain grace throughout his career. He competes in fencing, a sport where there are no teammates to fall back on or to share either the glory or the disappointment. Every bout is fought alone, demanding not only technical excellence but also immense mental resilience. Over the years, Johal has relied entirely on his character to navigate the highs and lows of competition. His list of achievements is impressive. Johal has represented India in five Senior World Cups and won medals of every colour at prestigious events, including the Junior Commonwealth Championships, Junior Asian Championships and the South Asian



Games. He has also captured gold medals at three national championships. Johal draws inspiration from legendary Hungarian sabre fencer Aron Szilagyi, the first male fencer in Olympic history to win

three consecutive Olympic gold medals. “Aron dominated the sport like no one else. His lightning-fast footwork, consistency and composure have cemented his place among the greatest fencers

the sport has ever seen,” says Johal. Away from the piste, Johal serves as a Master Chief Petty Officer in the Indian Navy and is currently posted in New Delhi. He credits his coaches, Krish-

an Rayamajhi and Rajinder Singh Chahal, for playing a pivotal role in his journey. “They have stood like a rock behind me throughout my career,” he says. Hailing from an agricultural family in Deriwal Daroga village of Gurdaspur district, Johal completed his schooling at Banda Bahadur Singh Senior Secondary School in Dhariawal before moving to Patiala in pursuit of better training opportunities. He recognised early that Patiala offered superior facilities and a thriving sporting ecosystem, making it the ideal place to nurture his talent. His father is a retired Army serviceman, while his mother is a homemaker. Johal’s exceptional performances in fencing earned him a place in the Navy soon after he completed his Class XII examinations.

Mbappe downplays injury, urges France’s focus after World Cup semifinals berth



Boston: Kylian Mbappe urged France to stay focused after reaching the World Cup semi-finals, insisting there is no room for complacency as the challenges ahead will be even tougher. The France captain also allayed concerns over his fitness, describing the ankle issue that forced him off as minor and saying he was fine, adding that the substitution was a tactical decision to allow Jean-Philippe Mateta to see out the closing stages. France booked their place in the FIFA World Cup 2026 semi-finals with a 2-0 victory over Morocco in a gripping quarter-final encounter at Boston Stadium. Mbappe and Ousmane Dembele scored in the second half to send France into the final four of the ongoing World Cup. With this, France reaches its 3rd consecutive World Cup semifinal. Mbappe also won the player of the match award, winning it for the third time in this World Cup edition. “There can be no let-up. There is still a

long way to go, and what lies ahead will be even tougher,” Mbappe said after the match, as per Reuters. “It’s a minor ankle injury, but I’m fine. In that moment, I think Mateta was better suited to continue for the remaining minutes of the match. But I’m fine, don’t worry,” he added. Mbappe continued his sensational runs in the ongoing FIFA World Cup, as he scored the opening goal for his side against Morocco in their FIFA World Cup 2026 quarter-final in Boston. The goal helped Mbappe reach a remarkable milestone in his World Cup career. The France captain took his tally to 20 FIFA World Cup goals across the 2018, 2022 and 2026 editions, moving within one goal of Lionel Messi’s all-time tournament record of 21. This was Mbappe’s eighth goal of the ongoing edition. Mbappe’s eighth goal of the 2026 World Cup also saw him join Argentina’s Messi at the top of the Golden Boot race.

Harmanpreet Kaur eyes Lord’s Test to heal Women’s T20 World Cup wounds

New Delhi: India captain Harmanpreet Kaur believes the one-off Test against England at Lord’s offers her side the perfect opportunity to put behind the disappointment of the Women’s T20 World Cup and rediscover its rhythm in the longest format. India endured a difficult campaign at the T20 World Cup in England, falling short of expectations despite arriving at the tournament as one of the favourites. The setback has left Harmanpreet’s side searching for answers, but the prospect of featuring in the first-ever women’s Test at Lord’s has injected fresh enthusiasm into the squad. “It was a very hard moment for all of us because we really prepared hard for the World Cup, but unfortunately we didn’t give our best. This Test match was something which kept us very excited. We all came together as a group and wanted to give our best for this match,” Harmanpreet said in the pre-match press conference. “Right now everyone looks in a good space and hopefully we’ll enjoy our cricket.” The occasion carries immense significance for India as well. Lord’s, which has hosted 150 men’s Tests since 1884, is staging a women’s Test for



the first time, 50 years after it welcomed its first women’s international match. India will also draw confidence from their recent exploits in red-ball cricket. Under Harmanpreet Kaur, India scripted a historic victory over Australia in Mumbai in 2023 before crushing South Africa by 10 wickets in Chennai in 2024 after posting 603 for six declared, the highest total in the history of women’s Test cricket. While the Lord’s clash has generated excitement among players, Harmanpreet reiterated that women cricketers want more opportunities in the traditional format. “As a cricketer, we definitely want to be part of many Test matches. But I think that’s totally the higher authorities’ call. Till now, I have seen all the highs and lows, and I have seen women’s cricket growing all these years.

I think we are in the right hands, and they’re the right ones to take the call,” she said. The India captain added that the game was moving in the right direction, with women’s cricket gradually embracing longer formats. Harmanpreet described playing a Test at Lord’s as a dream come true and admitted that she was surprised to learn that the venue had never hosted a women’s Test before. “But if you ask me as a player, I definitely want to play lots of cricket and don’t want to sit at home doing nothing. We are enjoying our time, we are quite busy, and in between we are getting opportunities.” “Last March also we played one Test and now tomorrow we’re going to get one more Test. I think things are going the right way and hopefully, in future, we’ll see many more Test matches coming up,” Harmanpreet added.

France reach third straight World Cup semifinal behind unstoppable Mbappe brilliance



Boston: For more than an hour in Boston, France looked almost unbeatable. Almost. Yassine Bounou had locked the door. Every French attack seemed to end with the Moroccan goalkeeper standing in the way, while Kylian Mbappe, of all people, had even left a penalty behind him. Then, just as they have done so often over the last three World Cups, France found another gear. Mbappe’s stunning strike on the hour finally pierced the Moroccan resistance before Ousmane Dembele doubled the advantage six minutes later, sending Didier Deschamps’ men into a third consecutive FIFA World Cup semi-final with a commanding 2-0 victory. The final score almost did Morocco a favour. France finished with 20 attempts on goal, struck the crossbar through Lucas Digne, saw Mbappe denied from the spot and forced Bounou into save after save. Morocco, meanwhile, did not seriously test Mike Maignan until the 83rd minute, when Azzedine Ounahi finally drew a comfortable stop from the French goalkeeper. There was a brief hush around the French supporters when Mbappe went to ground before being substituted in the 77th minute. But the captain walked off without

any visible discomfort, raising both arms to acknowledge the crowd as he headed towards the bench, suggesting there was little to worry about ahead of Tuesday’s semi-final in Arlington against either Spain or Belgium. This France side has evolved beyond being “Mbappe and ten others”. The superstar remains the headline, but around him sits arguably the deepest and most complete squad left in this World Cup. They can dominate possession, suffocate teams without the ball, change their attacking shape midway through a game and, when all else fails, hand the ball to the world’s most devastating forward. Winners in 2018, runners-up in 2022 and now back in the final four once again, Les Bleus are beginning to look less like contenders and more like the team everyone else is trying to catch. Morocco arrived carrying the hopes of a continent once again. Four years after becoming the first African nation to reach a World Cup semi-final, they had pieced together another memorable campaign, knocking out the Netherlands on penalties before brushing aside Canada to book a reunion with France. For long spells, they were far from outplayed.