

IIT Guwahati Marks First Anniversary of Operation SINDOOR with Commemorative Event

Guwahati, May 29: Marking the first anniversary of Operation SINDOOR, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati in association with the 21 Mountain Artillery Brigade, conducted a commemorative event today, 29th May 2026, at its campus. Organised by the Institute's Diversity and Equality Cell, the event featured a special lecture delivered by Brigadier G.S. Grewal, Sena Medal (SC), Commander of the 21 Mountain Artillery Brigade.

The lecture highlighted critical themes such as decision-making under challenging circumstances, adapting to adversity, and the importance of strategic leadership in shaping future-ready institutions and societies.

Speaking during the event, Brig. Grewal said, "In the rapidly changing

global landscape, every Indian citizen is an integral part of national security. In modern times, fields such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, satellites, maritime domains, and critical infrastructure are the new-age warfare battlefields that need to be protected. Therefore, it is essential for citizens, especially the youth, entrepreneurs, technologists, and cyber professionals, to remain informed, resilient, and prepared to contribute in their respective capacities."

Brig. Grewal emphasised the significance of teamwork, and innovation in overcoming complex challenges and underscored the vital contribution of educational institutions in strengthening the nation's development journey. He said, "India's greatest strength lies in its young and intelligent human re-



source, which will continue to play a defining role in safeguarding the nation in the years ahead. With the help

of new-age technologies, India is now more secure than it has been in over three decades, and we need to keep

our guards up for the safety and security of our country."

Another key highlight of the event

was a video tribute honouring the sacrifice and dedication of every individual involved in Operation SINDOOR.

Mr. Dilip Boro, Head of Section, Diversity and Equality Cell of IIT Guwahati, concluded the event with a vote of thanks in the presence of Prof. Anil Saikia, Associate Dean (Administration), and other members of the IIT Guwahati community.

The event created a platform for the students, researchers, and faculty members of the IIT Guwahati community for intellectual exchange with a distinguished military leader. It also provided an opportunity to gain broader perspectives on leadership values and the shared responsibility of institutions in driving national progress.

Truck Driver Killed in Militant Attack on NH-202 Convoy in Manipur

Imphal, May 29: A truck driver transporting goods for the Food Corporation of India (FCI) was reportedly killed, while another truck driver and a police personnel sustained bullet injuries in a fresh firing incident along National Highway-202 in Manipur's Ukhrul district on Friday afternoon.

The attack occurred near TM Kasom village when armed miscreants allegedly opened fire on a convoy of commercial trucks travelling under security escort along the Imphal-Ukhrul highway.

The identity of the deceased driver was yet to be confirmed at the time of filing this report. The injured police personnel, attached to Litan Police Station, has been identified as Leishiangam, while

the identity of the injured truck driver remains unknown.

According to sources, the firing was first reported near the cemetery at TM Kasom village, where villagers were preparing a grave for the burial of a community member.

Videos circulated on social media appeared to show villagers taking shelter behind graves amid the gunfire, while two individuals were seen lying inside a freshly dug grave in an apparent attempt to protect themselves. Sources alleged that the firing originated from the area between Mongkot Chepu and Yaolen villages.

Meanwhile, police sources stated that a joint

team comprising personnel from the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Rapid Action Force (RAF), and Manipur Police escorted around 15 to 20 commercial trucks that had been stranded at Yaingangpokpi Police Station due to a blockade at Shangkai village near Litan.

The CRPF reportedly fired several tear gas shells to disperse protesters blocking the road at Shangkai. Security sources said the operation was carried out amid concerns that civil vehicle convoys travelling along NH-202 could come under attack in the Litan area, potentially disrupting traffic and the transportation of essential commodities.

Security forces fire tear gas to disperse protestors in Ukhrul

Ukhrul, May 29: Security forces fired several rounds of tear gas shells to disperse protestors who had blocked National Highway 202 in Manipur's Ukhrul district today.

People from Shangkai village, who were enforcing a shutdown in their area to protest the alleged holding of 14 community members hostage by Naga groups, had blocked part of the vital highway from Imphal to Ukhrul district headquarters.

At least five women sustained minor injuries during the incident and were given first aid treatment by security forces.

Kuki Inpi Manipur, the apex body of

Kuki tribes in the state, had announced an indefinite total shutdown in all areas inhabited by the tribal community to protest the abduction of 14 individuals allegedly by Naga groups.

More than 38 people were abducted and held hostage by armed groups in Kangpokpi and Senapati districts on May 13, hours after three church leaders were killed in an ambush in Kangpokpi district.

Of them, 31 people have been released, including 12 Naga women and 16 Kukis. Six Naga men, however, continued to be held hostage, and their whereabouts are not yet known.

Central Welfare Programmes Reviewed in Tripura by Union Minister



Agartala, May 29: Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Durgadas Uikey on Thursday attended a review meeting on the implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes at the Circuit House in Kailashahar, Unakoti district of Tripura.

During his visit, the Minister interacted with tribal leaders and reviewed the progress of various flagship schemes including Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, PM Vishwakarma, PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, PM Gram Sadak Yojana and PM Fasal Bima Yojana.

Earlier, he visited the historic Unakoti archaeological site and inspected several

development projects in Kumarghat subdivision, including a TRLM agarbatti manufacturing unit, rainwater harvesting centre, Panchayat Resource Centre and marketing outlets run by Self Help Groups.

The Minister also visited the Eklavya Model Residential School at Kumarghat and interacted with students, teachers and guardians regarding academic and residential facilities.

Speaking to the media, the Minister said the Centre under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to the development of the North Eastern region and the welfare of tribal communities.

ANSAM Warns of Action if Manipur Govt Fails to Rescue Abducted Naga Hostages Within 4 Days

Imphal, May 29: The All Naga Students' Association, Manipur (ANSAM), along with its former leaders, convened an Emergency Presidential Council Meeting on May 24 to discuss the prevailing crisis in Manipur and the alleged abduction of 18 Liangmai Naga individuals by Kuki militants operating under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with the Government of India.

According to a press communique issued by ANSAM on Thursday, the hostages were allegedly abducted on May 13 from Leilon Vaiphei village near the Leimakhong-based 57 Mountain Division of the Indian Army. The association claimed that six Liangmai Naga hostages, including two pastors, remain untraced.

After detailed deliberations, the association expressed serious concern over what it termed the failure of the Manipur government to take decisive action regarding the missing hostages and the armed groups allegedly involved in the abduction. ANSAM

stated that despite repeated press statements, demonstrations, and media briefings by Naga civil society organisations, the authorities have failed to address the issue, creating fear and insecurity among Naga communities.

The organisation announced a four-day ultimatum to the Government of Manipur to establish the whereabouts and condition of the six hostages and hand them over safely to the Naga community within four days from May 29.

ANSAM warned that if the government fails to act within the stipulated period, the Naga community may collectively boycott the present Manipur government and appeal to all Naga legislators supporting the government to withdraw their support in the interest of Naga security and unity.

The association also questioned the appointment of Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen, alleging links to militant groups through her spouse, and criticised both the state and central governments for



allegedly failing to take action against certain leaders of the KNF(P).

The organisation further accused Manipur Home Minister Govindas Konhoujam of denying allegations related to attacks on Naga villages along the Indo-Myanmar border in Kamjong district earlier this month. ANSAM also demanded immediate action against those involved in the killing of Wilson Thanga, two Naga civilians at

TM Kasom, and three Thadou church leaders in separate ambush incidents. It further called for the immediate abrogation of the Suspension of Operations agreement with Kuki militant groups and demanded the removal of Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen from office.

The association appealed to all concerned authorities to act with urgency to prevent further escalation of the situation.

Abhishek Debroy Named Tripura BJP Chief

Agartala, May 29: The BJP on Thursday appointed MLA Abhishek Debroy as the president of its Tripura unit, replacing Rajib Bhattacharjee as the party prepares for upcoming political and organisational activities in the state. The appointment was announced through a notification issued by BJP National General Secretary and Headquarters In-charge Arun Singh with BJP national president Nitin Nabin approving Debroy's appointment.

Debroy, who represents the Matubari constituency in the Tripura Legislative Assembly, was elected as an MLA in the 2023 Assembly polls on a BJP ticket.

He is expected to play a key role in strengthening the party's organisational network in the state ahead of future electoral preparations. The BJP said the appointment was made under the direction of the party's national leadership as it seeks to further strengthen its organisational

structure across states, including the Northeast. Congratulating Debroy on his appointment as the president of BJP Tripura Pradesh at the State Headquarters in Agartala, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha wished him a highly successful and fruitful tenure ahead. "May he continue to strengthen the party organisation with renewed energy and work tirelessly for the progress and welfare of the people of Tripura," Saha stated on social media.

Mizoram Congress urges state government to suspend fuel cess amid rising prices

Aizawl, May 29: The Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) has urged the state government to suspend the cess imposed on petrol and diesel, alleging that rising fuel prices are putting heavy pressure on the public.

Addressing a press conference in Aizawl, MPCC treasurer Dr Lalmalsawma Nghaka said increasing global fuel prices triggered by tensions in West Asia have severely affected consumers across the country, including Mizoram.

He stated that rising fuel prices have increased transportation costs and contributed to inflation in food items, essential commodities, delivery services and public transport.

The Congress leader criticised both the BJP-led central government and the Zoram People's Movement government headed by Lalduhoma, accusing them of failing to protect citizens from the economic impact of rising fuel prices.

Nghaka claimed that the Centre increased petrol and diesel prices four times within two weeks and also criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the country's economic policies.

He further alleged that despite initiatives such as "Make in India" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat", India con-

tinues to depend heavily on imports from China in sectors including electronics, machinery, EV batteries, solar modules and pharmaceutical raw materials.

Referring to Mizoram, Nghaka alleged that the state government collected more than Rs 143 crore through cess on petroleum products till April this year.

He said previous governments did not impose such high cess collections and described the present taxation level on fuel as unprecedented in the state's history.

"At a time when fuel prices are rising globally, the government should show concern for the people of Mizoram by temporarily suspending the cess on petrol and diesel," Nghaka said.

The Mizoram government introduced a new fuel levy in September 2024 along with a hike in VAT on petrol and diesel.

The government imposed a levy of Rs 2 per litre each for social infrastructure and services cess and road maintenance cess on both petrol and diesel.

Earlier in March, Chief Minister Lalduhoma informed the Assembly that the government had collected more than Rs 93.37 crore after imposing the Rs 4 per litre levy.

Meghalaya May Get Elite Sports Training Hub

Shillong, May 29: Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Raksha Khadse on Thursday announced a plan set up a high-altitude training centre in Meghalaya under the Khelo India Mission.

The Union Minister made the announcement during a visit to the Sports Authority of India (SAI), NEHU centre in Shillong and interacted with athletes, coaches, and officials on Thursday. "From reviewing the Field of Play facilities to trying Indian Round Archery and joining athletes on the football field, it was inspiring to witness the passion and sporting culture

of the Northeast firsthand," the Union Minister stated on social media. "With its pleasant weather, natural beauty, and serene environment, SAI NEHU Shillong holds immense potential to emerge as a premier high-altitude training centre for elite athletes preparing for national and international competitions," Khadse said.

SAI Assistant Director, Rajnish Mishra, Meghalaya Olympic Association working president, John Kharshing, along with coaches, officials and support staff accompanied the Union Minister during the review. The Minister reiterated



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the Centre's commitment to strengthening sports infrastructure and athlete development pathways across the Northeast. Notably, the visit comes ahead of Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya's three-day visit to Meghalaya, which will be hosting the National Games in early 2027.

NE/EAST

Delhi court issues notice to Himanta Biswa Sarma over remarks on Miya Muslims

Guwahati, May 29: A Delhi court has issued a notice to Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on a plea seeking registration of an FIR over his alleged remarks concerning “Miya Muslims”, bringing the matter back under judicial scrutiny. Additional Sessions Judge Sonu Agnihotri issued the notice while hearing a revision petition filed by activist Harsh Mander. The petition challenges an earlier order passed by a magistrate court on April 20, which had declined to direct the police to register an FIR against the Assam Chief Minister. The case relates to remarks allegedly made by Sarma during a public event held in Digboi in Assam’s Tinsukia district on January 27. According to the petition, the Chief Minister had spoken about the removal of “four to five lakh Miya voters” during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state. Mander’s plea further alleged that Sarma made statements suggesting that “only if they face troubles will they leave Assam” and that “we are ensuring that they cannot vote in Assam”. The petitioner described the remarks as provocative and sought legal action through the registration of an FIR. During the hearing, counsel appearing for Mander argued that the magistrate court had incorrectly dismissed the complaint on the ground of territorial jurisdiction. The counsel submitted that the principle of a “Zero FIR” allows information relating to a cognisable offence to be lodged at any police station, irrespective of the location where the alleged offence took place. The revision petition contends that the lower court should have considered this legal position while examining the complaint and deciding whether police action was warranted. After hearing the submissions, the sessions court issued notices to the respondents and sought their response in the matter. The court did not make any observations on the merits of the allegations at this stage. The development marks the latest legal proceeding arising from the controversy surrounding the alleged remarks and raises questions regarding the scope of territorial jurisdiction and the applicability of Zero FIR provisions in such cases.

Tripura MLA seeks NRC and Inner Line Permit, urges Centre to act against illegal migration

Agartala, May 29: Raising concerns over illegal migration and its impact on Tripura, Tipra Motha MLA Ranjit Debbarma has submitted a detailed memorandum to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking immediate measures to identify, detain and deport illegal migrants allegedly residing in the state.

In the six-page memorandum, Debbarma highlighted issues related to border security, demographic changes, citizenship laws and internal security, while urging the Centre to take what he described as strong and co-ordinated action to address the matter. The legislator stated that Tripura shares an 856-kilometre international border with Bangladesh and has been facing challenges linked to illegal infiltration for decades.

He alleged that many illegal migrants had managed to obtain Indian identity documents, including Aadhaar cards, voter identity cards, ration cards, PAN cards, driving licences and passports through fraudulent means, making detection and verification more difficult. According

to Debbarma, illegal migration has contributed to demographic changes in the state and created pressure on land, employment opportunities, education and healthcare services.

He also expressed concern over alleged trans-border crimes and claimed that some infiltrators could be using Tripura as a transit route to reach other parts of the country. The MLA informed the Union Home Minister that he has been actively campaigning on the issue through public meetings, awareness programmes, processions and representations to various authorities.

He stated that he had earlier written to the Governor of Tripura, the Chief Minister, the Home Secretary, the Director General of Police, the Border Security Force (BSF), Assam Rifles, district magistrates and superintendents of police across the state, seeking intervention. Debbarma expressed dissatisfaction over what he described as inadequate action despite repeated appeals and representations. He maintained that the



issue requires urgent attention from both the state and central governments. One of the key demands raised in the memorandum is the implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system in Tripura. Debbarma argued that ILP would help regulate the entry of outsiders into the state and strengthen monitoring mechanisms to check il-

legal infiltration.

He also called for the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, and effective enforcement of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019. The MLA referred to communications received from the Ministry of Home Affairs, including

acknowledgements from the office of the Union Home Minister and officials of the Foreigners Division. According to him, these communications indicated that the matter had been forwarded to the concerned authorities for examination and necessary action.

Debbarma also cited media reports and previous allegations

regarding the presence of illegal voters in Tripura. He informed that he had approached the Election Commission of India and the Chief Electoral Officer of Tripura, requesting verification and appropriate action. Welcoming reports about the formation of a high-powered committee to examine issues related to illegal migration, the MLA expressed hope that the Centre would take decisive measures to strengthen border management and safeguard the demographic and cultural interests of the state. In his memorandum, Debbarma further requested an opportunity to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the latter’s proposed visit to Tripura on June 5.

He said he wished to present supporting documents and discuss the implementation of NRC, ILP, SIR and CAA-related measures in the state. The legislator maintained that such steps would help strengthen national security, protect India’s sovereignty and address long-standing concerns relating to illegal migration in Tripura.

The election for the Meghalaya Rajya Sabha is scheduled for June 18

Shillong, May 29: Meghalaya will elect its Rajya Sabha representative on June 18, with polling and counting scheduled to be completed on the same day, according to the Election Commission of India’s biennial election programme. Chief Electoral Officer B.D.R. Tiwari announced that the election notification will be issued on June 1, while nominations can be filed until June 8. Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on June 9, and candidates will have until June 11 to withdraw their candidature. Polling is scheduled from 9 am to 4 pm on June 18, followed by counting at 5 pm. The entire election process is expected to conclude by June 20.

Ahead of the election, Tiwari chaired a meeting with representatives of political parties in Shillong to brief them on the poll schedule, nomination requirements and voting procedures. Officials also explained the system of proportional representation through a single transferable vote, which is used for Rajya Sabha elections. Political parties were reminded of the mandatory disclosure of candidates’ criminal antecedents in line with directions issued by the Supreme Court and the Elec-

tion Commission.

Election authorities also clarified voting rules for MLAs. Legislators belonging to political parties may show their marked ballot papers only to their party’s authorised agent, while independent MLAs are prohibited from displaying their ballots to any agent. During the meeting, election officials outlined procedures related to recording voter preferences, ballot validity, counting of votes and calculation of the winning quota. Political parties were also briefed on documents required for nomination, including affidavits, party authorisation forms and security deposits. According to the Chief Electoral Officer, preparations for the Rajya Sabha election have been completed, including venue inspections and coordination with stakeholders, to ensure a smooth and transparent polling process. The ECI said Rajya Sabha elections will also be held for one seat each in the northeastern states of Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. Elections are scheduled for four seats each in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka, three seats each in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, and two seats in Jharkhand.

India, China hold border talks, stress need for peace along LAC

Agency: India and China have held fresh talks on the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, with both sides emphasising the importance of maintaining peace and stability in border areas to support the gradual normalisation of bilateral relations. The discussions took place during a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China border affairs held in Beijing on Wednesday.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the talks were “constructive” and “forward-looking”. In a statement issued after the meeting, the MEA said both countries reviewed the situation in the border areas and expressed satisfaction over the progress made in maintaining peace and tranquillity along the frontier.

The ministry noted that the improvement in the border situation had helped create conditions for gradual normalisation of overall ties between the two



neighbours. India and China have been working to rebuild relations over the past year after ties came under severe strain following the deadly Galwan Valley clashes in 2020.

The incident led to a prolonged military standoff in eastern Ladakh that lasted for more than four years and significantly affected diplomatic and economic engagement between the two countries. During the latest WMCC meeting, officials discussed a range of issues related to the border situation, including border management, mechanism

building, delimitation matters and cross-border co-operation. Both sides also agreed to work together on substantive preparations for the next round of talks between the Special Representatives (SRs) of the two countries, which is scheduled to be held in China.

The Special Representatives mechanism remains one of the key channels for addressing boundary-related issues between India and China. In August last year, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held the latest

round of SR-level dialogue in New Delhi, where both sides agreed on several measures aimed at maintaining peace and stability along the border. The MEA said the Indian side also highlighted the need for an early meeting of the expert-level mechanism dealing with trans-border rivers, an area of cooperation that remains important for both countries.

The ministry added that India and China agreed to maintain regular exchanges and contacts at diplomatic and military levels through existing mechanisms, in-

cluding those established as part of the outcomes of the 24th Special Representatives talks. The Indian delegation at the WMCC meeting was led by Sujit Ghosh, Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the Ministry of External Affairs.

The Chinese side was headed by Hou Yanqi, Director General of the Boundary and Oceanic Affairs Department of China’s Foreign Ministry. During his visit to Beijing, Ghosh also met Liu Jinsong, Director of the Department of Asian Affairs in the Chinese Foreign Ministry, and paid a courtesy call on Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Hong Lei.

The latest round of talks comes as both countries continue efforts to stabilise and improve relations after years of tension along the border. Officials on both sides have increasingly stressed the importance of sustained dialogue and confidence-building measures to ensure peace in border regions while advancing broader bilateral engagement.

Chang organisations demand justice in alleged abuse case involving minor girl

Dimapur, May 29: Several Dimapur-based Chang civil society organisations and student bodies have strongly condemned the alleged sexual assault and physical abuse of a minor girl and demanded immediate justice, asserting that the case should not be compromised under any circumstances. Addressing a press conference at the residence of Chang Union Dimapur (CUD) treasurer on Thursday, leaders of Chang Union Dimapur (CUD), Changsao Thangjam Dimapur (CTD) and Chang Students’ Union Dimapur (CSUD) said they would continue to pursue justice for the victim and ensure that the matter was taken to its legal conclusion. CUD president Lanuchuba Chang said the organisations came to know about the incident on May 24 through reliable sources. Following the information, representatives rushed to the Women Police Station in Dimapur but found that the victim had already been taken under the care of the Child Helpline and the Child Welfare Committee (CWC).

He said that since it was a Sunday, officials could not be located at their offices. An emergency meeting was later held with CWC officials on May 25, during which the organisations were informed that the victim was physically stable but undergoing severe psychological trauma and counselling. Lanuchuba said the organisations had requested permission to meet the victim but were advised not to do so considering her emotional and mental condition.

He added that an FIR had subse-



quently been lodged at the Women Police Station and appealed to all sections of society to support the pursuit of justice. He maintained that the matter involved the alleged sexual abuse of a minor and should not be resolved through any form of compromise, regardless of family or external pressure. He stressed that the arrest of the accused was necessary to ensure justice and strengthen public confidence in the legal process. Speaking on behalf of mothers in the community, CTD vice president Bendangmenla Chang said the incident had deeply hurt and disturbed many families. She said parents often place immense trust in guardians when sending children away from home for education and better opportunities.

Describing the alleged incident as a betrayal of that trust, she said such crimes should not happen to any woman or child and called for stronger awareness on women’s safety, child protection and community responsibility. CSUD vice presi-

dent I. Chejing Chang also strongly condemned the alleged incident, describing it as a serious case of sexual exploitation and physical assault involving a minor girl. He appealed to all sections of Naga society to stand together against such crimes and ensure that justice was not influenced by tribal, social or organisational affiliations. Chejing said the accused, identified as Wati Imchen and reportedly a resident of Lengrijan, had previously been associated with the legal fraternity and student organisations.

However, he expressed confidence in the judiciary and the investigating agencies to handle the case fairly and independently. He also acknowledged the support extended by the Dimapur Eastern Naga Students’ Union, Dimapur Naga Students’ Union, Eastern Naga Students’ Federation and Chang Wedoshi Setshang. Appealing to media organisations, he urged journalists and the public to protect the identity of the victim and avoid speculation

or victim-blaming. He said CSUD stood firmly with the victim and her family and would continue monitoring the case. He added that the union was prepared to take further democratic steps if justice was delayed. Responding to questions from reporters, CUD joint secretary Stephen Chang said the accused had been granted anticipatory bail.

He informed that the organisations had already submitted a representation to the competent authority seeking cancellation of the bail. Stephen urged media houses and citizens to handle the matter sensitively and avoid revealing any information that could expose the victim’s identity or affect her future. Calling for unity across communities, he said the issue transcended tribal boundaries and concerned the safety and dignity of every child.

“This is not just about one community. Such incidents can happen to anyone. Justice for this minor will be a collective victory,” he said. CSUD executive secretary Yempokumba Chang informed that the victim had reportedly been staying with the guardian since around 2015 for educational purposes while also assisting with household work. Meanwhile, more organisations have come forward to condemn the alleged incident and demand strict legal action against the accused. In a statement, Naga Women Hoho Dimapur (NWHHD) expressed deep concern and anguish over the reported case. The organisation said violence, abuse and exploitation of

children were unacceptable and must be dealt with utmost seriousness. The women’s body called for a fair, prompt and thorough investigation and demanded that the accused be booked under relevant provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and other applicable laws. It also sought strict punishment if the allegations are established through due legal process.

NWHHD expressed solidarity with the victim and her family and prayed for her physical, emotional and psychological recovery.

The organisation also urged communities, institutions and leaders to strengthen awareness and protective measures to safeguard children from abuse and exploitation. The Dimapur Naga Students’ Union (DNSU) also condemned the alleged assault and described it as a serious violation of human dignity and children’s rights.

The union expressed solidarity with the victim and her family and demanded immediate justice. DNSU further criticised the grant of anticipatory bail to the accused and called for its cancellation, arguing that allowing the accused to remain free during such a serious investigation could affect public confidence in the legal process and hinder efforts to ensure accountability.

The organisations collectively appealed to law enforcement agencies, community leaders and citizens to stand united in support of the victim and ensure that justice is delivered through a fair and transparent legal process.

VPP defers secretariat march until student examinations conclude

Shillong, May 29: The Voice of the People Party (VPP) has decided to postpone its proposed agitation programme involving a march and gherao of the Meghalaya Secretariat until the ongoing student examinations conclude, stating that political movements must not disrupt academic activities and the interests of students.

The party’s State Executive Committee took the decision during a recent meeting amid growing concerns expressed by students and well-wishers over the possible inconvenience that such a large-scale protest could cause during a crucial examination period across the State.

In a statement, the party said, “The State Executive Committee of the Voice of the People Party (VPP), in its meeting held recently, has decided to organise a movement involving a march and gherao of the Meghalaya Secretariat, Shillong, after the ongoing student examinations are completed, ensuring that academic activities remain uninterrupted.”

The party said the decision to defer the agitation reflected its concern for the future and welfare of students appearing for examinations at different levels across Meghalaya. “The party took the decision after receiving requests from students and well-wishers expressing concern over the inconvenience that such a movement may cause at a time when various examinations are being conducted across the State. After careful consideration, the party felt that the interests and future of the students must be given priority,” the statement said.

Reaffirming its political stand and commitment to public issues, the VPP maintained that the postponement of the agitation should not be viewed as a dilution of its position on matters concerning the people of the State. “The VPP reiterates its unwavering commitment to safeguarding the interests, rights, and aspirations of the people of Meghalaya,” the party stated.

Kuki Inpi Manipur calls nationwide rally on May 30

Imphal, May 29: Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), the apex body representing Kuki tribes in Manipur, has announced a nationwide rally on May 30 in protest against the killing of three Kuki-Zo church leaders and the continued detention of 14 Kuki-Zo civilians in Senapati district.

The decision was taken during a joint meeting of KIM and various civil society organisations.

In a statement, KIM said the rally is being organised to express concern over the deaths of Rev. V. Sitlhou, Rev. Kaigoulun and Pastor Paogoulen, whose killings have triggered widespread reactions within the Kuki-Zo community.

The organisation also raised concerns regarding the continued detention of 14 Kuki-Zo civil-

ians allegedly being held in Senapati district, and called for their immediate release.

KIM stated that the demonstrations would be conducted peacefully across different parts of the country under a common banner and theme to be circulated among participating organisations.

The organisation appealed to Kuki-Zo civil society groups, student bodies, women's organisations, youth groups, churches and community leaders to participate in the rally in their respective districts and cities.

The announcement comes amid ongoing tensions in Manipur and increasing demands from community organisations for intervention by the state and central authorities regarding the recent incidents.

Union Minister of State Tokhan Sahu visits Mizoram's Champhai district

Aizawl, May 29: Union Minister of State for Housing & Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu visited Champhai district on Thursday.

He was welcomed by heads of offices and leaders of various NGOs with a programme hosted by DC Office, Champhai at the Circuit House.

Sahu expressed gratitude for having the pleasure of visiting a beautiful district like Champhai, and thanked the organizers for putting together such a wonderful programme with entertaining performers. He reiterated the concept of unity and fraternity amidst our diverse cultural palette, and urged the attendees to embrace their cultural identity while forging friendships and brotherhoods with people from all over India to foster unity. He assured the attendees of the Prime Minister's



commitment to development of the North East, as there are multiple projects and policies that are

ongoing as well as upcoming that are currently benefiting people of the region.

Talking about the vision of One India, he urged the people of Champhai as well as the gov-

ernment servants to share in the beauty of the idea of One India - unified and strengthened under the roof of sustainable development, and commit to making the North East a better place for all.

The programme was hosted by Mr. Lalsiakfela, Additional DC, Champhai. There were two dance performances from Champhai Vengthlang YMA Cultural Troupe and a vocal performance from Sylvia Malsawmpuii.

The programme ended with Ngulzathuama, District Urban Development Officer, Champhai offering the vote of thanks.

After the programme, the Minister interacted with beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihood Mission (DAY-NULM).

ARC Shillong holds passing out parade, 726 Agniveers pass out

Shillong, May 29: The Assam Regimental Centre held attestation & Passing out Parade of 726 Agniveers. The Parade was reviewed by Governor of Uttarakhand Lt Gen Gurmit Singh, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) in the presence of General Officer Commanding, 101 Area, Lieutenant General Mohit Wadhwa, Sena Medal.

The scintillating ceremony marked the completion of training of Agniveers who will thereafter be serving as part of Assam Regiment and Arunachal Scouts at various locations of the Country.

Army Jawan Among Three Dead After Inhaling Toxic Gas in Assam's Goalpara

Goalpara, May 29: An Indian Army jawan was among three persons who died after inhaling toxic gas inside a septic tank in Assam's Goalpara district on Friday, officials and local sources said.

The deceased were identified as Jochok Rabha, an Indian Army jawan and owner of the house, mason Krishna Rai, and another mason, Dilip Das.

According to reports, Rabha had returned home on a week-long leave and had started construction-related work at his residence. He had engaged masons to clean a toilet septic tank that had been constructed earlier.

During the cleaning operation, one of the masons reportedly entered the tank first and fell unconscious after inhaling poisonous gas accumulated inside. Another mason then entered the tank in an attempt to rescue him but also collapsed due to suffocation.

Witnessing the situation, Rabha himself entered the tank to save the two workers. However, he too became unconscious and collapsed inside the septic tank.

Later, another individual identified as Bajpayee Rabha entered the tank in a rescue attempt. After experiencing breathing difficulties, he reportedly shouted for help from inside.

Hearing his cries, local residents rushed to the spot and managed to rescue him alive before shifting him to Shaheed Nidhuran Rajbongshi Hospital in Goalpara.

Officials stated that the three persons trapped inside the tank died on the spot due to suspected toxic gas inhalation.

Bajpayee Rabha is currently undergoing treatment at the hospital, and his condition is said to be critical.

The tragic incident has triggered shock and grief across the locality.

Meghalaya Rajya Sabha election to be held on June 18, nomination process begins June 1

Shillong, May 29: Meghalaya will elect its Rajya Sabha representative on June 18, with polling and counting scheduled to be completed on the same day, according to the Election Commission of India's biennial election programme.

Chief Electoral Officer B.D.R. Tiwari announced that the election notification will be issued on June 1, while nominations can be filed until June 8. Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on June 9, and candidates will have until June 11 to withdraw their candidature.

Polling is scheduled from 9 am to 4 pm on June 18, followed by counting at 5 pm. The entire election process is

expected to conclude by June 20.

Ahead of the election, Tiwari chaired a meeting with representatives of political parties in Shillong to brief them on the poll schedule, nomination requirements and voting procedures. Officials also explained the system of proportional representation through a single transferable vote, which is used for Rajya Sabha elections.

Political parties were reminded of the mandatory disclosure of candidates' criminal antecedents in line with directions issued by the Supreme Court and the Election Commission.

Election authorities also clarified voting rules for MLAs. Legislators



belonging to political parties may show their marked ballot papers only to their party's authorised agent, while independent MLAs are prohibited from displaying their ballots to any agent.

ZMC becomes Mizoram's largest hospital as expansion plans gather pace

Aizawl, May 29: The Governing Body of Zoram Medical College and Hospital (ZMC & H) on Thursday reviewed a series of measures aimed at strengthening healthcare services, medical education and infrastructure development at the state's premier medical institution during a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Lalduhoma. The meeting was held at the Chief Minister's Conference Hall and was attended by School Education Minister Dr. Vanlalhlana, Health and Family Welfare Minister Lalrinpuii, MLA Baryl Vannehsang and other members of the Governing Body. A key focus of the meeting was the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, where members discussed the need for immediate improvement. The department currently has only one doctor, who is responsible for both clinical duties and teaching responsibilities. Members of the Governing Body stressed the importance of strengthening the department to ensure better patient care and academic support. The meeting also reviewed progress on the construction of the Critical Care Block being developed through Corporate Social Responsibility



(CSR) funding. Members discussed the procurement of essential equipment for the facility and deliberated on measures to ensure its effective utilization once it becomes operational. Several proposals already submitted under MPLAN for the strengthening and upgradation of ZMC & H were also taken up for review. Since all projects cannot be implemented simultaneously, the Governing Body prepared a priority list to facilitate phased execution of the proposed works. Officials highlighted the significant progress achieved by the institution over the past two years. During this period, 30 new cabins and 13 new Intensive Care Unit (ICU) units have been added. In addition, a large number of hospital beds that had previ-

ously become non-functional were repaired and brought back into use. With a total capacity of 517 beds, Zoram Medical College and Hospital has now emerged as the largest hospital in Mizoram, marking a major milestone in the state's healthcare sector. The meeting also reviewed developments in medical education. Ten new postgraduate seats were introduced at the institution in October 2024, and nine students are currently pursuing their postgraduate studies. The Governing Body further noted that the third batch of MBBS students recently completed their course successfully, reflecting the steady growth of the medical college as an important centre for healthcare training and education in Mizoram.

Gauhati High Court Rejects Bail Plea in Zubeen Garg Death Case

Guwahati, May 29: The Gauhati High Court has rejected the bail plea of Shyamkanu Mahanta in connection with the death case of renowned Assamese singer Zubeen Garg, who died in Singapore on September 19, 2025.

Meanwhile, the Fast Track Court completed the hearing on the bail applications filed by four other accused in the case. After hearing arguments from both the prosecution and defence, the court reserved its order on the pleas.

The accused who sought bail are Amritaprabha Mahanta, Sandipan Garg, Paresh Baishya, and Nandeshwar Bora.

The court is scheduled to pronounce its order on the four bail petitions on June 8.

Earlier, the Fast Track Court framed charges against all seven accused in the case, including murder charges against four individuals. The trial in the sensational case is also set to commence on June 8.

Nagaland Dy CM Says Decentralised Energy Key to Inclusive Growth



Kohima, May 29: In a significant initiative celebrating the solarisation of 325 public health facilities across 12 districts in Nagaland, SELCO Foundation, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Nagaland, organised an event, "Climate Smart Nagaland: Health and Livelihoods" in Kohima on Thursday.

Addressing the gathering, Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister T. R. Zeliang said the importance of sustainable energy has become more relevant than ever, with decentralised renewable energy emerging as a key driver of inclusive development. He stated that such initiatives help bridge socio-economic disparities, strengthen climate resilience, and reduce poverty among vulnerable and marginalized communities.

He further said that the partnership with SELCO Foundation is focused on building an end-user-centric ecosystem that integrates clean energy solutions to uplift underserved populations.

The initiative, he noted, demonstrates practical and actionable ways in which renewable energy can improve healthcare infrastructure, ensure uninterrupted services in remote locations, and create long-term social and economic impact across the state. Dr Harish Hande, CEO, SELCO Foundation, highlighted how decentralised renewable energy is transforming healthcare delivery in remote areas while promoting climate-resilient development and sustainable livelihoods.

Earlier, the Nagaland Government and SELCO Foundation launched the E4H (Energy For Health) Nagaland Programme.

Meghalaya close to completing India-Bangladesh border fencing: Conrad Sangma

Shillong, May 29: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma has said that the border fencing work along the India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya is nearing completion, with only around 40 to 45 kilometres of work remaining. Speaking on the progress of border infrastructure projects, the Chief Minister said that nearly 400 kilometres of fencing has already been completed along the international border. "About 10 per cent of the work is still pending due to certain local issues," Sangma said. He added that the state government is holding discussions with local residents to resolve gen-



uine concerns related to the remaining stretches. "We are talking to the locals and trying to solve the genuine issues," he said. The Chief Minister further stated that Meghalaya has made comparatively faster progress in border fencing work than several other states sharing

borders with Bangladesh. "In comparison to other states, Meghalaya is ahead," he added. The fencing project along the India-Bangladesh border is aimed at strengthening border security, improving surveillance and addressing cross-border challenges in the region.

Mizoram launches upgraded online portal for land tax payments

Aizawl, May 29: Mizoram took another step towards expanding digital public services on Thursday with the launch of Online Tax Portal Version 2.0, a new platform designed to make land tax payments easier and more accessible for citizens across the state. The upgraded portal, accessible through landtax.mizoram.gov.in, was launched by Land Revenue and Settlement Minister B. Lalchhanzova at the Directorate of Land Revenue and Settlement Conference Room. The platform has been developed jointly by the Land Revenue and Settlement (LR&S) Department and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Department. Speaking at the launch, Lalchhanzova said the new system would allow people to pay taxes con-

veniently without having to visit collection centres physically. He noted that as technology continues to advance, Mizoram must also move forward by adopting modern systems that improve public services and administrative efficiency. The minister stressed the importance of tax compliance, stating that responsible tax payment by citizens is essential for the development of a strong and self-reliant state. He said the department has started taking concrete steps towards making Mizoram more self-sufficient and expressed satisfaction that technological innovations such as the new portal are helping the state strengthen its position in national development rankings. Presenting the technical report, ICT Department Informatics Officer C. Lalrinfela said the most significant

improvement in Version 2.0 is the introduction of an Annual Proforma-based system. The new mechanism automatically calculates the exact amount of tax payable by citizens each year, making assessments more transparent and systematic. He said the portal has also been equipped with SMS notification features that will send reminders to taxpayers before payment deadlines and alert defaulters about penalties. Citizens can now pay Land Tax and Zoramchhiah through the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) using popular digital payment platforms such as Google Pay, PhonePe, BHIM and Amazon Pay. Payments can be made by entering either a Family ID or Ration Card Number. The portal also allows residents to update and link important de-

tails such as ration card numbers and mobile phone numbers online, eliminating the need for office visits. A Family ID has been made mandatory for land tax payments, while a search facility has been introduced to help users locate their Family ID if required. Officials said all districts except Lawngtlai and Siaha have been onboarded to the system, enabling residents in the remaining districts to make online payments for Land Tax and Zoramchhiah. Several new administrative features have also been incorporated to improve departmental efficiency. These include enhanced reporting and revenue estimation tools, tax compliance tracking systems, daily collection reports, revenue statistics dashboards and automated record management.

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The Decline of Attention to Public Hygiene

Public hygiene continues to remain a challenge despite growing awareness about health and sanitation. Spitting in public places, improper waste disposal, and unhygienic surroundings are still common in many areas. Poor hygiene habits affect not only cleanliness but also public health,

increasing the spread of diseases and creating unhealthy environments. Infrastructure gaps contribute to the issue, but behavioural change is equally necessary. Maintaining hygiene is a shared civic responsibility. Cleaner public spaces reflect both efficient administration and responsible citizenship.

The MMR’s watershed change in Assam

The fact that Assam’s Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) is now below the national average represents a significant change in the state’s maternal health metrics. The state’s MMR has decreased to 84 maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births, compared to the national average of 87, according to the most recent Sample Registration System bulletin. The state’s MMR dramatically decreased from a startling 480 in 2006 to the current number, which is a testament to the deliberate and goal-oriented health sector efforts. The state will only be able to maintain the momentum and accomplish the World Health Organization’s (WHO) set goal of bringing MMR below 70 by 2030 with persistent efforts and long-term commitments. According to WHO, MMR is the annual number of female deaths during pregnancy and childbirth, or within 42 days of pregnancy, from any cause associated with or made worse by pregnancy or its management (apart from accidental or incidental causes), regardless of the duration or location of the pregnancy.

Among the “Empowered Action Group” (EAG) states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Assam, which has the second-lowest MMR after Jharkhand (82), Assam has established itself as an emerging leader in maternal healthcare among the states that have historically been known to have very high MMR and are struggling to lower it below the national average. According to the SRS bulletin, the EAG sub-total is 116, and the average of this group of states has been pulled by Uttar Pradesh with MMR 154, Madhya Pradesh with 135, and Chhattisgarh and Odisha with 124 apiece. However, Assam still has a long way to go before it can equal the maternal health results of the “Southern States”—Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. These five Southern states’ estimated sub-total MMR of 41 shows better-designed health-sector interventions and is significantly lower than the national average. To accelerate the decreasing trajectory, health measures must prioritize closing the gap with the southern states. Himanta Biswa Sarma, the chief minister of Assam, credits “thousands of doctors, nurses, ASHA workers, health officials, and frontline workers” for the state’s remarkable accomplishment, stating that they continued to work relentlessly, compassionately, and in silence throughout the state year after year. For Assam to stay on course and fulfill the WHO mandate, it will be essential to maintain the current momentum. This means that the state must keep concentrating on the goals established by the state government, which include enhancing health infrastructure, bolstering human resources in the health sector, rewarding ASHA employees, and improving health service delivery and social sector initiatives.

To take the successes of lowering MMR to the next level toward creating a healthy society, adequate budgetary allocations, seamless cash flow for these interventions, and prudent, timely utilization would be crucial. Reducing avoidable maternal mortality and ensuring continuity of treatment during yearly floods requires improving the delivery of health services, particularly for pregnant women displaced by erosion and flooding. Women who achieve financial autonomy through flagship government programs and livelihood interventions must be given high priority since economic empowerment of women is essential to increasing nutritional assistance for pregnant mothers. To empower women economically, a whole-of-government strategy is required so that MMR interventions become more than just health interventions. Instead, all line departments must work together to make women key players in household, community, and state-wide economic activities.

In order to ensure prompt check-ups and select institutional deliveries, empowered women frequently encourage peers to act early on the advice of ASHA personnel. One of the main causes of Assam’s declining MMR has been the increase in institutional deliveries, and ASHA employees are still driven to make sure that every pregnant woman in their jurisdiction gets to a medical facility for a safe delivery if the MMR figures are to be consistently raised and maintained. In order for healthcare facilities to address complications with immediate attention and reduce the risk of maternal death, ASHA workers must identify risk conditions like anemia, hypertension, gestational diabetes, and other risk conditions, as well as track and prioritize the high-risk women among them.

Because differential capacity at the district and sub-division levels has the potential to produce pockets of avoidable maternal health hazards, Assam can only enhance its MMR targets when district healthcare systems are equally strong, guaranteeing last-mile delivery for every pregnant woman. Critical social measures for the state that must continue to be given administrative priority include improving girls’ education continuously and reducing child marriage to prevent underage pregnancy. The state cannot afford to overlook the fact that the true task is to ensure that plans and programs aimed at improving its health indicators are implemented without laxity, even as it celebrates the historic change in MMR reduction.

The necessity of organic spice certification in the Northeast

Opportunities to boost spice processing entrepreneurship in the northeast have been made possible by the growing demand for organically cultivated spices in India and around the world. The demand for spices grown in Northeastern states is growing both domestically and internationally since the Ministry of Commerce and Industries’ Spice Board recognizes the area as “by default organic.” In order to maintain the current momentum in demand development, which in turn promotes production, processing expansion, and revenue augmentation, spice producers, suppliers, and exporters from the region must become familiar with the regulatory requirements. Due to serious concerns about food safety caused by petroleum-derived pollutants in spices, the European Union implemented a new regulatory regime that sets a maximum limit of 10 mg/kg for such contaminants in spices starting in January 2027.

The Spice Board warns that mineral oil hydrocarbons (MOH), which include mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) and mineral oil saturated hydrocarbons (MOSH), are petroleum-derived contaminants that have raised serious concerns about food safety. Of these, MOAH compounds are especially concerning because of their potential to cause cancer and mutagenesis. The Spice Board’s “Guide-



lines for the Spice Industry on Prevention and Mitigation of MOSH/MOAH Contamination in Spices” emphasize that such contamination can happen at various stages of agricultural practices because of the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and adjuvants based on mineral oil; contaminated irrigation water or soil (from industrial discharge or runoff); exhaust gases; smoke; and lubricant spills from vehicles and adjacent industries. Additionally, post-harvest handling and processing—such as drying on contaminated surfaces—can result in contamination. e.g., roadsides, bitumen-coated areas); handling personnel’s use of cosmetics or skin care products containing mineral oils; lubricant spills or leaks from processing equipment during maintenance

and operations; and the use of non-food-grade lubricants, unapproved additives, and processing aids. The use of jute bags treated with mineral oils, recycled packaging materials (cardboard, paper) containing mineral oil residues, printing inks, adhesives, and markers containing mineral oils, and storing spices in areas contaminated with mineral oils can all result in contamination, so the guidelines also advise extra caution during storage and transportation.

Producers, processors, and exporters will be better able to meet the safety requirements outlined in the Guidelines if traditional storage methods are encouraged, such as the use of biopesticides like neem leaves for organic pest control and elevating equipment during maintenance

sufficient ventilation for moisture control. The traditional production clusters, post-harvest handling and processing, transportation, and storage are no longer shielded from industrial growth, increasing vehicle movement, and the flood of recycled packaging materials, even though the region’s agricultural practices have mostly remained organic, particularly in the traditional production of spices. In order to preserve the organic character in the production and supply chain, it will be advantageous to make the guidelines more widely known to traditional spice growers and business owners in the area. This will allow them to take the necessary precautions to avoid contamination from industrial or vehicular pollution. Building entrepreneurial capacity

requires ongoing skill development as well as the usage of contemporary equipment and packaging innovations. Despite the organic nature of production and conventional storage methods, the region’s spice processing and packaging facilities run the risk of increased exposure to petroleum-derived contaminants along the value chain because they have been updated to meet the new and expanding market demand. In order to fully realize its export and domestic market potential, the establishment of additional crop-specific spice parks in the area can significantly increase production while adhering to regulatory standards.

Expanding the area and increasing the production of the region’s hallmark spice crops—such as ginger, turmeric, chilli, big

cardamom, etc.—requires passing on the portion of profits earned by premium pricing in the export market to growers. These spices are among the most sought-after ingredients in the Indian and international culinary sectors due to their exceptional quality, which has been acknowledged on a global scale. The region’s competitive advantage is limited and access to high-value export markets has been severely hampered by the consistently low organic certification of spices and other food goods. Although the region’s traditional farming techniques are being recognized as organic by default, the implementation of the new regulatory frameworks and food safety standards must be backed with a strong resolve to overcome the paradox of the region missing the ecosystem required for organic certification. A strong certification ecosystem with growers and processors at its core, government and private investment prioritized for the establishment of additional certification institutions, easily accessible and reasonably priced testing infrastructure, and hands-on assistance for farmers are all necessary to resolve this paradox. By establishing the northeast as a major center for the production of certified organic spices, traditional growers will be empowered and elevated to the status that their outstanding spice quality demands.

Blair wants to let the markets decide our fate, Democracy still has the power to improve our lives, in my opinion

One thing Tony Blair is correct about is that we are experiencing a historic upheaval. The pressure of technological progress, geopolitical uncertainty, and economic insecurity is shattering the traditional certainties of the 20th century. AI will have the same dramatic impact on how we work, learn, and govern that electricity or steam power did on the world before it. Labour needs the self-assurance to direct the future instead of retreating into debates about the past, and Britain needs a seriousness commensurate with the magnitude of that challenge. A yearning for the Britain of the 1970s or even the Britain of the 1990s cannot be the solution to global disruption. The goal of progressive politics is to guarantee that common working people have opportunities, power, and protection in the modern world, not to reproduce the past. However, this is the glaring flaw in Tony Blair’s intervention: the essential problem of our time is hardly addressed at all in thousands of words on technology, geopolitics, and political strategy. The economic, social, and democratic divide that permeates contemporary Britain—inequality—is viewed as incidental rather than essential. However, inequality is the root of the difficulties altering western democracies, not a side effect. People are informed that Britain is prospering although they are unable to afford a place to live, despite the fact that their children’s living conditions are inferior to those of their parents. While wealth accumulates ever more narrowly at the top, they are instructed to put forth more effort. And they see the injustice.



More of a nurse’s salary is taxed when they repay education loans than when landlords receive profits from increasing property values. The poorest areas in Britain experience health problems almost 20 years before the wealthiest. Nowadays, the majority of private wealth is inherited rather than acquired. Resentment increases when people feel that work is no longer fairly rewarded by the rules. Furthermore, resentment is never politically homeless for very long.

This rage is increasingly fueling nationalism, protectionism, and grievance politics throughout North America and Europe. The populist right is thriving because too

many people feel abandoned by economic institutions that seem to benefit everyone but them, not because people are illogical. Closing borders, blaming outsiders, retreating from change, and somehow regaining a lost past are all alluring false promises. However, nostalgia cannot overcome decline, and the center left cannot simply respond to populism with technical optimism or managerial skill. Whether we like it or not, Blair is correct that the AI revolution is taking place. It will change everything; we’ve already witnessed incredible discoveries that have the potential to increase economic growth and prolong healthy lives. However,

there are significant risks associated with that promise, such as disruptions to the labor market, technological unemployment, or previously unheard-of concentrations of wealth, information, and power. Policies are not created in a vacuum. Therefore, the true question is whether the favored few will control this new economic revolution or if it will be regulated in the interests of the people. This entails creating a system of education and skills that can prepare people for a labor market that is drastically changing, shifting taxes from labor to wealth, guaranteeing democratic sovereignty over data and AI infrastructure, and preventing monopoly

power concentrations by multinational tech companies. Above all, it entails realizing that economic expansion is ultimately unsustainable in the absence of social fairness. When labor blends dynamism with equity, income creation and distribution, enterprise and solidarity, aspiration and security, it succeeds. It is not enough for the center-left to just speak the language of markets better than the Conservatives. The goal is to make sure markets support society rather than rule it.

This is not only a domestic problem. Even the international order is disintegrating. The institutions established after 1945 are finding it more

and more difficult to govern a world characterized by global technology companies, environmental concerns, and a resurgence of authoritarianism. It’s still unclear if the 21st century will be characterized by tyranny or democracy. Britain must firmly support democratic allies who uphold our ideals. Our partnership with the United States is still vital and has strong historical roots. However, Atlanticism cannot equate to automatic servitude. Britain must have the self-assurance to take independent action when US presidents flirt with authoritarian leaders, violate international law, or engage in reckless military adventure. Iraq taught us, at great cost, what happens when allegiance takes the place of discernment. Europe holds the key to Britain’s long-term future. This does not imply that the politics of re-entering the EU are straightforward or quick. However, integrity is important. We require a new, unique relationship with Europe built on common principles, security cooperation, and economic collaboration.

The Labour Party will not protect the future of our nation by reiterating antiquated ideologies or engaging in old-fashioned factional conflicts. Additionally, it won’t accomplish this through a technocratic disengagement from people’s real lives. Those who are willing to use change to advance justice will own the future. The true divide in contemporary politics is between those who think democracy can still create the future for the benefit of all and those who are happy to let markets, monopolies, and fate handle it. The solutions must be both novel and labor-intensive.

Larsen & Toubro adds 2%, stocks rise for sixth consecutive day

Mumbai: Larsen & Toubro (L&T) shares rose 2% to ₹4,128 on the BSE during Friday’s intra-day activity, despite the market being range-bound. The stock price of the civil construction giant rose for the sixth consecutive trading day, gaining 6%.L&T has outperformed the market thus far in calendar year 2026, losing less than 1% compared to the BSE Sensex’s steep 11% decrease. The stock reached its 52-week high of ₹4,440 on February 24, 2026. India’s defence manufacturing sector received a major boost as the Defence Ministry invited bids from Tata Advanced Systems, L&T and Bharat Forge for the ₹15,000-crore Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme, marking the first time a major fighter jet project was opened exclusively to private players while keeping Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) out.The AMCA will be a 25-tonne twin-engine fifth-generation stealth fighter with a 6.5-tonne internal fuel capacity and internal weapons bay.

The selected company will partner with DRDO’s Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) to develop five prototypes. AMCA Mk1 will use the existing 90 kN-class engine, while the more advanced Mk2 will be powered by a stronger indigenous engine. The first prototype is expected by late 2026 or early 2027, with full certification targeted by 2032, underscoring India’s push for self-reli-

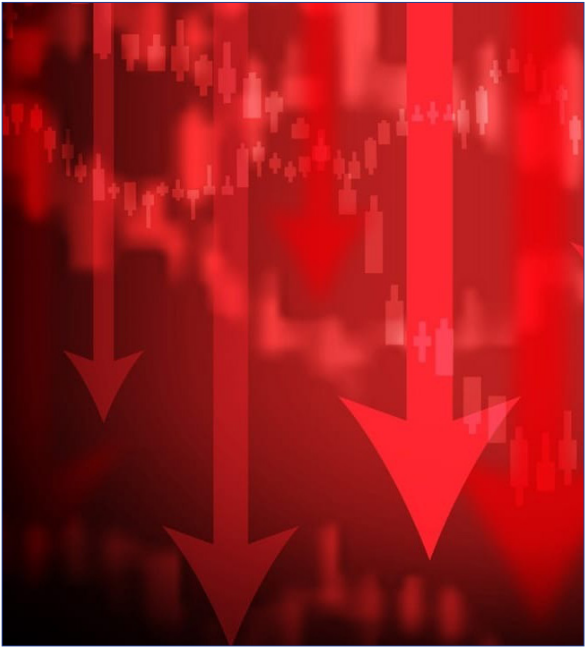


ance and deeper private sector participation in defence aerospace. According to ICICI Securities, the AMCA opportunity is strategically significant for L&T, as it strengthens the company’s position in India’s rapidly expanding defence and aerospace manufacturing ecosystem.L&T already has deep capabilities in precision engineering, aerospace structures, missile systems, naval platforms and defence electronics, making it a strong contender for such a complex programme. If selected, the project could provide long-term revenue visibility over the next decade, enhance technology capabilities, and improve L&T’s share of high-value defence manufacturing, the brokerage firm said in a note.L&T is among top fundamental picks of the month of the brokerage firm. Analysts have a ‘BUY’ rating

on L&T with a target price of ₹4,955 per share. L&T is India’s largest engineering and construction company with a diversified presence across EPC projects, hitech manufacturing and services, spanning infrastructure, heavy engineering, defence engineering, power, hydrocarbons and services. Overall, company expects to achieve 10-12 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth in gross revenue for FY26 with target of 16-17 per cent ROE in the medium term, the brokerage firm said. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), accounting for nearly one-third of L&T’s annual revenue of \$32 billion, is a vital market for the company. The conflict in the region has barely impacted L&T. It is business as usual at the 100 odd project sites there, with no material disruption to invoicing or collections.The domestic

market, which accounts for approximately half of the order book, offers resilience against global uncertainties. While Government of India is committed to continue its focus on infrastructure investments, its industrial focus is strategically shifting towards new-age technologies and sustainability, aiming to transform the country into a global manufacturing and innovation hub by 2047. These are expanding the horizon of opportunities for the company, said S. N. Subrahmanyam, Chairman and Managing Director of L&T in the FY26 annual report. Looking ahead, management anticipates continued demand for infrastructure, hydrocarbons, renewables, electricity transmission and distribution, power capabilities, and water treatment in both local and foreign markets. The passage of the SHANTI (Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India) Act is also expected to increase interest in small modular reactors, an area relevant to the Company given its decade-long experience engineering and manufacturing critical reactors and pressure vessels, including for the nuclear sector. Early signals of increased private investment in India’s energy transition, real estate, data centers, electronics, semiconductors, and select conventional industries are projected to generate new prospects for the company, according to management.

BDL shares fall 8% following poor Q4 results analysts reduce profit projections



New Delhi: A sharp miss on revenue and profitability in the March quarter (Q4) of the 2025-26 fiscal year (FY26) has cast a pall over state-run defence manufacturer Bharat Dynamics’ near-term growth outlook, prompting brokerages to lower their FY27 and FY28 earnings estimates due to delays in key missile programmes and lingering supply chain bottlenecks.Bharat Dynamics’ share price fell 8.4% to ₹1,175 per share on the BSE due to high trading volumes.At 9:50 a.m., the stock was down 7.28 percent, while the benchmark BSE Sensex index up 0.11 percent. Around 2,27,000 shares have already changed hands on the stock exchange, which is more than the two-week average volume of 96,000 shares. In Q4FY26, BDL’s revenue from operations fell 72.9 percent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) and 10.9 percent sequentially to ₹488.6 crore, falling well short of Street forecasts of ₹2,033.6 crore.Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortization (Ebitda) decreased by 81.5 percent year on year to ₹55.3 crore, but increased by 112.8 percent quarter on quarter. Ebitda margin fell 529 basis points year on year to 11.3 percent, substantially below than analysts’ forecasts of 22.9 percent. Profit after tax (PAT) declined 58.5 percent year on year to ₹113.2 crore, but increased 55.3 percent sequentially. However, the PAT margin increased by 802 basis points year on year to 23.2 percent.Revenue, Ebitda, and PAT dropped by 27%, 53%, and 24%, respectively, year on year for FY26.Brokerages cited execution delays and supply-chain constraints as the main reasons for the poor performance, rather than decreased demand.Analysts at Choice Institutional Equities say BDL posted disappointing figures in Q4FY26, with a steep fall in sales and profitability, contributing to a ~27% degrowth in the top line for the year. The miss, the brokerage added, appeared “largely due to execution delays rather than demand weakness”, with project timelines getting pushed, affecting revenue recognition during the year. Those at Motilal Oswal Financial Services said BDL’s FY26 revenue performance was hit by ₹2,000 crore

due to delays in deliveries of Akash and Astra Mk1 missiles.“The delay in the Akash missile programme stemmed mainly from delayed supplies of radars and communication systems from another vendor. While testing has been completed, final government clearance is still awaited,” MOFSL explained.It, however, expects BDL to book nearly ₹1,300 crore of revenue from this project in the first quarter of FY27 (Q1FY27).Moreover, as delays in receipt of seekers from an external vendor affected execution of the Astra Mk1 programme, BDL has decided to import these components to avoid further slippages. It expects to recognise nearly ₹1,000 crore of related revenue by the second quarter of FY27 (Q2FY27). Earnings forecasts were substantially reduced.Given the weak base and ongoing supply-side issues, brokerages have sharply reduced earnings forecasts.Motilal Oswal, for example, reduced its FY27 and FY28 profit expectations by 25% and 28%, respectively, citing slower-than-expected performance and margin pressure due to a greater percentage of bought-out components.The brokerage now anticipates sales and PAT to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 58% and 53%, respectively, in FY26-28, although from a low base.The stock was lowered from “Buy” to “Neutral” with a reduced target price of ₹1,150 from ₹1,500. Choice Institutional Equities, too, reduced FY27 sales, EBITDA, and PAT expectations by 51%, 54%, and 49.2%, respectively. It reduced the respective FY28 predictions by 32.6%, 39.3%, and 33.2%.The firm maintained its “Buy” recommendation with a revised target price of ₹1,500, stating that the long-term prospect remained appealing notwithstanding recent volatility.Long-term growth is intact.Analysts believe BDL’s long-term structural narrative remains intact, bolstered by a robust order flow across numerous missile systems.According to Choice Institutional Equities, the firm continues to benefit from opportunities in major initiatives such as MRSAM, QRSAM, Astra, Akash, Akash-NG, VLSRSAM, Nag, HELINA, and MPATGM, as well as increased export and indigenisation potential. “Execution is expected to be driven by ramp-up across MRSAM/LRSAM orders, initial production of QRSAM and continued deliveries in Astra and Akash-NG programmes,” the brokerage said, adding that the weak FY26 base could support a sharp earnings recovery over FY27 and FY28 as execution normalises.Likewise, MOFSL added that FY27 revenue may scale up to approximately ₹4,500 crore, with margins of around 14-15 per cent, though a higher share of bought-out components could continue to weigh on profitability.“FY28 is expected to mark the peak execution phase for Akash, with potential revenues of ₹6,500 crore and improved margins as the share of missiles increases,” it added. BDL’s current growth ambitions, including a ₹500-crore investment in a naval systems production plant in Andhra Pradesh, focusing on undersea weapon systems, torpedoes, and mines for the Indian Navy, are also promising.Analysts encouraged investors to monitor any drop or reprioritization of the Indian military budget, termination of current contracts or failure to succeed in bidding projects, changes in procurement rules and regulations of the MoD and the government, and supply chain concerns.

World Salt Awareness Week puts spotlight on health, nutrition and informed consumption



Darbhanga: World Salt Awareness Week 2026 has brought renewed attention to the health and nutritional implications of salt consumption, highlighting the need for consumers to balance lower sodium intake with adequate iodine consumption. Global estimates indicate that average salt intake stands

at around 10.8 grams per day, more than double the World Health Organization’s recommended limit of less than 5 grams daily.Health experts note that a significant portion of sodium intake comes from processed and packaged foods such as bread, cereals, sauces and snacks, where salt content often goes

unnoticed. Excessive salt consumption has been linked to high blood pressure and may increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and other health complications.In India, however, the conversation extends beyond sodium reduction. Iodine deficiency remains a public health concern, making iodised salt an important source of the essential micronutrient. Iodine supports thyroid function, metabolism and brain development, particularly among children and pregnant women.Against this backdrop, Tata Salt has reinforced its position as a trusted household brand. Introduced as India’s first branded iodised salt more than four decades ago, Tata Salt, popularly known as “Desh ka Namak,” is manufactured using vacuum evaporation technology to remove impurities and ensure consistent iodine content.In Darbhanga, growing consumer awareness around nutrition, food safety and preventive healthcare is driving demand for trusted packaged food products. Retailers in the city report continued preference for branded iodised salt as households increasingly prioritize quality, hygiene and nutritional value in everyday cooking ingredients.Tata Consumer Products Limited, which markets Tata Salt, has a diversified portfolio spanning tea, coffee, water, salt, pulses, spices, cereals, snacks and ready-to-eat products. The company reaches nearly 290 million households across India and reported a consolidated annual turnover of about Rs 20,290 crore, reflecting its strong presence in both domestic and international markets.

US-Iran deal reports lift investor sentiment S&P 500 and Nasdaq hit fresh records

Mumbai: US stock market leading indices, the S&P 500 and Nasdaq Composite, are at record highs. US stocks closed at record highs on Thursday, with the S&P 500 rising 0.6% and the Nasdaq Composite gaining 0.9%, while the Dow Jones edged up 0.1%.Tech stocks lifted indexes, highlighted by Snowflake (SNOW)’s 36% gain following impressive earnings and a \$6 billion AI deal with Amazon (AMZN). All Magnificent Seven stocks increased, led by Microsoft (MSFT) at 3.5%. ServiceNow rose 6.5%, Palantir over 8%, and Oracle over 6%, while Salesforce dipped 0.8% due to weak guidance. Financial stocks, however, struggled, with BlackRock and Visa falling 2.2% and 0.8%, respectively. Besides the tech-stocks rally, the market sentiments were boosted on reports that the US and Iran had reached a tentative peace agreement, easing concerns over inflation and future interest rate hikes.Washington and Tehran are reportedly set to extend their ceasefire by 60 days and begin negotiations on Iran’s nuclear program, while also considering unrestricted shipments through the Strait of Hormuz. However, the report noted that President Donald Trump has not yet approved the proposed terms. The US-Iran deal had an immediate impact on other asset classes and financial



markets. Bond yields eased as energy prices pared their rebound, despite data that favors a hawkish Federal Reserve.Brent crude futures declined to around \$92 per barrel on Friday, reflecting a significant monthly loss of nearly 15% for the international oil benchmark this month. The yield on the 10-year US Treasury note fell to 4.46%, extending the drop from the 16-month high of 4.7% touched on May 20th. The dollar index hovered around 99 on Friday after weakening in the previous session. Also, gold steadied near \$4,500 an ounce on Friday after recovering in the previous session, as reports of a preliminary agreement between the US and Iran eased concerns over inflation and interest rates. Global market investors now have a fresh set of economic data to base their investing decisions on. The Q2 GDP – Second

Estimate, Initial Jobless Claims, PCE Index, Personal Income, and Personal Spending data were released on May 28. Most of this provides cues to investors as to how the Middle East conflict is affecting price pressures and impacting growth in the economy. The latest US PCE price index data showed softer-than-expected inflation readings, helping calm fears that the recent energy shock would significantly worsen the inflation outlook. Even so, markets continue to expect the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates unchanged well into next year, although policymakers continue to warn about persistent inflation risks.“Although inflation figures remain elevated, markets reacted relatively positively because the data came in line with analysts’ expectations. This eased fears of an even stronger inflation surprise and al-

lowed investors to maintain their appetite for risk assets, particularly within the technology sector, which continues to lead the 2026 equity rally,” says Antonio Di Giacomo, Senior Market Analyst at XS.com.The US economy expanded an annualized1.6% in Q1 2026, up from 0.5% in Q4 but below 2% in the advance estimate, primarily reflecting downward revisions to investment and consumer spending.The core PCE price index in the US, which is the Federal Reserve’s preferred gauge of underlying inflation in the US economy, rose by 0.2% from the previous month in April 2026, following a 0.3% increase in March, below market forecasts of 0.3%. From the previous year, the core PCE price index rose by an expected 3.3%, up from 3.2% in the prior month, remaining well above the Federal Reserve’s 2% target.

Adani Total Gas surges 41% in 6 days, up 90% from its March low here’s why

Mumbai: Shares of Adani Total Gas (ATGL) reached a new 52-week high of ₹859.70 on Friday, rising 7% on the BSE amid high trading activity. The Adani Group Company’s stock price increased for the sixth consecutive trading day, rising 41% throughout the time. It has increased by 90% since its three-month low of ₹453.50 on March 2, 2026. What’s driving the Adani Total Gas stock price?ATGL is licensed in 34 geographical regions for gas distribution and plays an important role in the country’s attempts to increase the percentage of natural gas in its energy mix. Of the 53 GAs, 34 are held by ATGL, with the remaining 19 controlled by Indian Oil-Adani Gas Private Limited (IOAGPL), a 50:50 joint venture between Adani Total Gas and Indian Oil Corporation.Furthermore, ATGL has established two fully owned subsidiaries, Adani TotalEnergies E-Mobility Ltd (ATEL) and Adani TotalEnergies Biomass Ltd (ATBL), for its E-Mobility and Biomass businesses. ATGL also created a 50:50 joint venture, Smart

Meter Technologies Private Limited, for its gas meter manufacturing operations. With resilient execution, underpinned by operational excellence and digital enablement, ATGL delivered strong double-digit growth in volumes and revenues, supported by steady EBITDA expansion.For the January to March 2026 quarter (Q4FY26), ATGL’s revenue rose 16 per cent year-on-year (YoY) at ₹1,696 crore, driven by overall volume growth. Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) increased by 13 per cent YoY to ₹310 crore. The profit after tax for the quarter increased 4 per cent YoY to ₹156 crore. Q4FY26 posted 13 per cent YoY growth in volumes to 297 MMSCM.Escalation of geopolitical tensions in West Asia since late February 2026 disrupted energy supply chains across the globe and led to market volatility. This resulted in higher natural gas prices; supply chain challenges compounded with currency volatility which led to increase in overall gas procurement cost during the quarter.

After the Streeting challenge fails, Starmer is offered a lifeline



London: After a challenge from Wes Streeting failed to materialize on Tuesday, despite the resignation of some of the health secretary’s allies, Keir Starmer was growing more certain that he had defeated the immediate threat to his position.After Starmer gave his cabinet a “put up or shut up” ultimatum, Downing Street officials speculated that the health minister did not yet have the necessary backing from the 81 MPs to formally launch a leadership campaign. On Wednesday, Streeting was scheduled to meet with Starmer, where he was anticipated to be open about his worries. According to No. 10 insiders, he was coming down from heated rumors that he was set to run.One staunch cabinet official told the Guardian, “After all that, it looks like Wes may not have the numbers after all.” “I feel both happy and angry at the same moment. Now is the greatest time for him to finish the drama and emerge with some dignity. According to one of Starmer’s fans, “Andy’s supporters keep saying he’s got a seat,” suggesting that he has temporarily defeated a threat from Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham. But it’s where? Unless he has one, it isn’t real.However, the resignation of four ministers—three of whom were strong allies of Streeting—in what seemed to be a planned move has further undermined the prime minister’s already precarious position. Over 90 Labour MPs have demanded his dismissal. Labour-supporting unions disagreed at a secret meeting on Tuesday on whether to demand that Starmer provide a timeline for his retirement; one source claimed there had been a “big fight” among union officials.Despite

GMB and Community’s contention that it was not in the unions’ best interests to become embroiled in any leadership crisis, they are reportedly in agreement to release a statement stating that Starmer will not lead the party into the upcoming election. “Labour’s affiliated unions have been clear that Labour cannot continue on its current path. Whilst we recognise progress has been made ... the results at the election last week were devastating,” a leaked copy of the statement said.“Labour is not doing enough to deliver the change that working people voted for at the general election ... It’s clear that the prime minister will not lead Labour into the next election, and at some stage a plan will have to be put in place for the election of a new leader.”Sources also told the Guardian that Ed Miliband, who has privately suggested to Starmer that he should consider setting out a timeline for his departure, had been prepared to run for leader himself if Streeting had gone over the top. Senior Labour figures said Miliband, the energy secretary, who allies say saw himself as kingmaker rather than leadership contender, would have struck a deal with Angela Rayner and Louise Haigh, chair of the Tribune group, for one of them to run as the soft-left candidate, in the event Burnham did not. Sources close to Miliband on Tuesday night, however, denied he is preparing to run for leadership if Starmer steps down, calling it “mischief making”.Earlier on Tuesday, a defiant Starmer told his cabinet he would fight on as prime minister after a turbulent few days in the wake of crushing election results across Britain last week, saying the threshold

er Manchester could run. However, Burnham’s hopes of returning to Westminster were dealt a blow as the Merseyside MP Marie Rimmer, whose seat had been named by key allies for a potential byelection, said she would not stand down and backed Starmer to stay. Starmer was hoping that his second king’s speech, which will be delivered by King Charles on Wednesday, will be a further reset moment for the government that will help unite his deeply divided party.While he appears to have survived for now, even his most loyal ministers acknowledge that he is unlikely to take Labour into the next election, unless he can dramatically turn round his and the government’s fortunes.Downing Street last night announced four new ministers to replace those who had resigned, including Natalie Fleet to the Home Office, Nesil Caliskan to housing, Catherine Atkinson to justice and Preet Kaur Gill to health. Three more whips were also appointed.In a sign of how close to the brink Starmer may have come, his home secretary, Shabana Mahmood, spent much of the day on resignation watch. Eventually, her spokesperson told reporters: “No [she will not resign]. She is getting on with the job.”Lammy urged MPs trying to get rid of Starmer to back off. “Let’s just step back, take a breath, let’s remember that we have the king’s speech, we are in government to do a job of work,” he said.“It’s been 24 hours now and nobody has come forward to put themselves forward in the processes that exist in the party. No one seems to have the names to stand up against Keir Starmer.”And for those who are suggesting that he should stand down, they should say which candidate would be better. Let’s get on with the business of running this country and government.”The Guardian understands that Lammy was among four senior cabinet ministers – with Mahmood, defence secretary John Healey and Yvette Cooper, the foreign secretary – who spoke to Starmer on Monday about his future.A Labour leadership election is triggered only if 20% of MPs – in this case 81 – nominate a specific candidate to stand against the leader. The party’s ruling NEC would then make arrangements for a full vote of party members.

It’s possible that a Russian ship carrying nuclear reactors to North Korea sank close to Spain

Russia: According to rumors, a Russian cargo ship carrying nuclear submarine reactors headed for North Korea may have been involved in a string of unexplained explosions before sinking off the southeast coast of Spain 17 months ago.On December 23, 2024, just before midnight, the Ursa Major, a 142-meter-long ship flying the Russian flag and controlled by the state-affiliated Oboronlogistics firm, sank 62 nautical miles off the coast of Murcia. The ship was allegedly heading from St. Petersburg to Vladivostok in the far east of Russia.Sasemar, Spain’s marine rescue and security agency, sent a helicopter, a quick rescue boat, and a tugboat to the Ursa Major eleven hours prior after it sent out a distress signal at 12:53 p.m. At 8:07 p.m. that evening, a Russian warship arrived, took over operations, and ordered the two Sasemar boats to withdraw to a distance of two nautical miles. The Russian warship then launched flares over the Ursa Major, according to a Spanish government document that was released three months ago in response to parliamentary questions about the incident. Other vessels in the area noticed that the Russian vessel, which had slowed dramatically over the previous 24 hours, was listing badly and saw its crew abandon ship. Rescuers were



informed by the crew that the ship’s engine room had experienced three explosions.At 8:07 p.m. that evening, a Russian battleship arrived, took over operations, and ordered the two Sasemar boats to retreat to a distance of two nautical miles, ending Spanish attempts to save the Ursa Major.The Russian vessel then fired lights above the Ursa Major, according to a document given by the Spanish government three months ago in response to legislative questioning about the incident. According to a report in the Murcian newspaper La Verdad,

the flares may have been used to obstruct the intelligence satellites’ infrared channels while they were keeping an eye on the situation.“Four similar seismic signatures... the pattern of which resembled underwater mines or overground quarry blasts” were heard shortly after the flares were shot, according to a CNN investigation into the ship’s demise. The Ursa Major sank about 11:20 p.m. and is currently 2,500 meters below the surface. Fourteen crew members were rescued, but two are believed to have perished in the initial explosions.

Trump is scheduled to meet with Xi Jinping in China for a crucial summit



China: The first US president to visit China in over ten years, Donald Trump is scheduled to arrive in Beijing on Wednesday night in an attempt to restore his authority and reputation, which have been damaged by the war in Iran.Elon Musk of Tesla and Tim Cook of Apple are among the tech executives Trump will summon, and he intends to make deals that will make headlines. He has stated that he hopes Xi Jinping, the leader of China, would “give me a big, fat hug when I get there.” As the third month of the conflict approaches, Washington is finding it difficult to transform a precarious truce into a long-term agreement as Tehran is strengthening its hold over the Hormuz Strait.Behind closed doors, US officials have been pressuring China, Iran’s largest oil consumer and one of the few nations with influence in Tehran, for weeks to put pressure on the Islamic Republic to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which typically transports about a fifth of the world’s oil supply, while agreeing to US demands for peace. The US recently sanctioned several Chinese firms accused of assisting Iranian oil shipments and supplying satellite imagery allegedly used in Iranian military operations. China condemned the measures as “illegal unilateral sanctions” and invoked a rarely used blocking statute prohibiting Chinese entities from complying with them.Chinese

officials have publicly called for stability while carefully avoiding overt alignment with Washington. Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi last week hosted his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi, in Beijing, and defended Iran’s right to develop civilian nuclear energy. Xi has also offered implicit criticism of the US over the war. He has said safeguarding international rule of law is paramount, adding it “must not be selectively applied or disregarded,” nor should the world be allowed to revert “to the law of the jungle”. However, in the first of four possible encounters between Trump and Xi over the course of the next year, neither side seems keen to let the Iran situation impede more extensive diplomatic and economic interaction. After tensions threatened to escalate into a full-scale trade war last fall, the two nations are still bound by a precarious tariff truce. China’s trade surplus with the US has long been a source of Trump’s complaints, while Beijing has resented US export restrictions and sanctions.In an indication that both countries continue to pursue economic collaboration amid strategic antagonism, White House officials said that Trump would travel with a delegation of over a dozen US corporate executives, including Musk and Cook. A sale of 500 Boeing 737 Max jets, one of the biggest orders in its history, will be

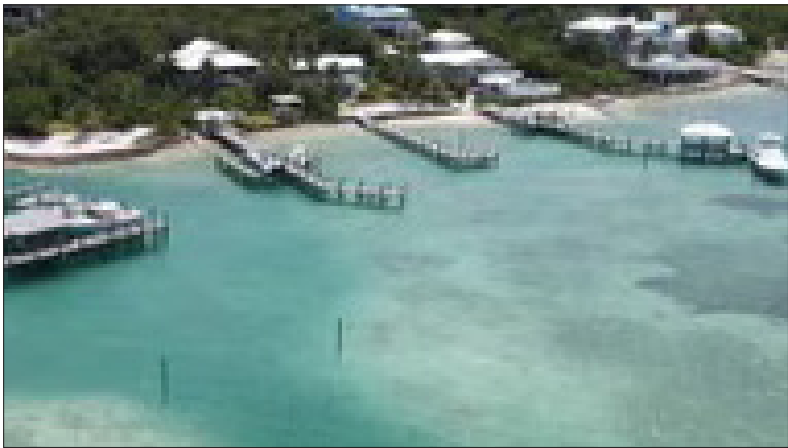
announced during the trip, the Bloomberg news agency reported. Trump and Xi will also discuss creating a new board of trade to manage what China should buy from the US and vice versa. Beijing, too, has reasons to avoid escalation. China’s economy remains burdened by sluggish domestic demand and a prolonged property crisis, while the closure of the strait of Hormuz has exposed its heavy dependence on Middle Eastern energy supplies.Trump’s trip will be closely scrutinised in Taiwan for any sign of weakening US support. On Monday, he said he would speak to Xi about US arms sales to Taiwan, a departure from historic US insistence that it will not consult Beijing on its support to the island. Additionally, he maintained that a Chinese invasion of the island would be thwarted by his personal friendship with Xi. He remarked, “I think we’ll be fine.” “I get along really well with President Xi. He is aware that I do not want it to occur. AI is another possible area of focus, and both nations are being urged to work together on international norms and protections. The independent US senator Bernie Sanders encouraged Trump and Xi to reach a consensus on permitting top scientists to exchange technological data and create “AI redlines” regarding risky behavior.Sanders stated: “Reagan and Gorbachev

managed to negotiate nuclear armaments control at the height of the Cold War. AI is an existential threat, and Trump and Xi must do nothing less. Ahead of the visit, Beijing’s security was noticeably strengthened, with police stationed at key junctions and more metro system checks.A ceremonial welcome ceremony, private discussions between the two leaders, and a tour of the Temple of Heaven—a 15th-century ecclesiastical edifice that symbolizes the bond between Earth and heaven—are all part of the summit schedule. On Thursday night, Trump will attend a state banquet. On Friday, he will meet with Xi for tea and a business lunch before departing. The US president, who has been criticised for emphasising foreign policy at the expense of domestic concerns in his second term, will be eager to project strength and present the trip as a victory.Anna Kelly, the White House principal deputy press secretary, told reporters on a call on Sunday: “President Trump cares about results, not symbols. But even still, the president has a great relationship with President Xi, and the upcoming summit in Beijing will be both symbolically and substantively significant.”But the US approach is likely to be pragmatic and transactional with little focus on structural reform. Scott Kennedy, senior adviser in Chinese business and economics at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think-tank in Washington, said: “China and Xi Jinping come into this meeting in a much stronger place than the United States.”China has goals that they would like: to extend the ceasefire, to reduce tech restrictions on the imports of semiconductors and lower tariffs. But even if they don’t get much on any of those things, as long as there’s not a blow up in the meeting and president Trump doesn’t go away and look to re-escalate, China basically comes out stronger.”

Immigration is a major issue in the Bahamas’ three-way election

Americas: On Tuesday, voters in the Bahamas will cast ballots in a fiercely competitive general election that includes well-known contenders including former basketball champion Rick Fox.Concerns about immigration, particularly from neighboring Haiti, and the growing cost of living—including sharp increases in petroleum costs brought on by the Middle East conflict—have split voters across the Caribbean archipelago.As the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP), the opposition Free National Movement (FNM), and the Coalition of Independents (COI) compete for control of parliament, a record 200,000 individuals have registered to vote in 41 constituencies. Political experts are closely monitoring whether the COI, which has a strong social media presence, can grow on the approximately 8,000 votes it received in the 2021 election, given that third parties have historically had difficulty gaining parliamentary seats in the Bahamas.For the PLP, Philip “Brave” Davis is running for prime minister a second time.

The 74-year-old Davis has presented the election as a choice between stability and uncertainty, claiming that his administration has led the nation through record tourism growth and post-pandemic recovery. Davis had concentrated on the claim that switching parties while plans from 2021 were still being developed would destabilize the nation, according to Christopher Curry, an associate professor of history at the University of the Bahamas.Curry stated that the FNM has had some success over the



last two weeks by concentrating on immigration, but he still believes the PLP will remain in power. “We work for you not for the few,” he continued, “was replaced with ‘Save our Sovereignty (SOS)’ as their campaign motto. I believe it gained more momentum among Bahamians.“I hate to say it, but I believe the opposition is kind of taking advantage of the underlying xenophobia that many Bahamians tend to have.” He said: “The FNM has made it clear that anybody that enters the country illegally ... will never have a pathway to citizenship. If you want to become a citizen there is a way to apply. The idea that you can break the law, that you can sneak in, and then demand citizenship down the line, we are saying is not right and will not be tolerated.”Bethel said the FNM would also take action to address the rising cost of living. He added: “In the Bahamas ... at least in New Providence, a gallon of gas is up to about \$7. Our currency is pegged one to one to the US dol-

lar. So, when you consider Americans are upset about a gallon of gas being three or four dollars, just times that by two.”Bethel also defended Fox, a three-time NBA champion and FNM candidate, who lunged at a critic during an argument on the campaign trail. “I make no apology for [Fox’s] level of passion and enthusiasm ... [and] level of commitment,” Bethel said. “He’s always been committed to this country. He’s always been giving back, whether it’s in basketball, whether it’s in community, whether it’s rebuilding after [Hurricane] Dorian.”Davin BENEBY, 33, who works in energy and transport, said sticking with the PLP was the best option: “I’ve seen where the economy has grown since the pandemic. I’ve seen the unemployment rate actually go down.”But T Johnson, a 46-year-old FNM supporter, said she felt her party had a better record of moving the country forward and had made university education “almost free of charge” when in power.

The stunning penthouse of Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal located in Bandra



The first home of actor couple Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal embodies a blend of comfort and contrast, showcasing a harmonious fusion of modern luxury and their distinct personal style. Located in Bandra, Mumbai, their residence is crafted to serve as a sanctuary for relaxation after a busy day, while also providing an inviting space for entertaining friends during lively evenings. Where comfort meets modern interiors

As you enter their stunning abode, you step

into a large, open living space where light pours in through tall glass windows. The penthouse is warm, open, and unmistakably theirs, with personal touches added by both Sonakshi and Zaheer. The skyline views, a wraparound balcony, light-filled rooms, and

corners that hold memories of their life add character to the space. The house is a mix of New York meets Maldives mood, beautified with bright blue and earthy accents. There are two living rooms: the first is all about a Bohemian beach aesthetic, while the second

is more refined, with wooden elements and cream walls, accentuated by deep indigo blue decor.

The main living area has cream couches, dark wood furniture, accent walls with wooden elements, plants adding a pop of green, stone walls, beige concrete flooring, large windows opening onto the balcony, wooden beams for a rustic touch, a low-seated dark wood dining table, and a wall-length countertop to chill with friends. Meanwhile, the second living room features denim-blue couches, a bar counter, and modern light fixtures.

The travel wall

One of the highlights of the penthouse is the Twilight Zone, which the couple also calls their travel wall. Sharing details about the space, Asian Paints wrote, “The blue wall in the apartment’s den, painted in Asian Paints’ ‘Twilight Zone’, is what the couple calls their travel wall. It’s a separate area featuring a blue wall decorated with a wall hanging where the couple can pin memories from their trips. Plush chocolate brown couches, an abstract art model, a vintage box table, cute ornaments, a large glass wall, and wooden tiles add elements of comfort to the space.

Amruta Fadnavis exchanges her car with cycle to adopt a healthier lifestyle



In a development that has garnered significant attention on social media, Amruta Fadnavis, the spouse of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, has made the switch to cycling for all her transportation needs within a 5-7 km distance.

She shared a video of herself cycling through the streets of Mumbai on Instagram, stating that her decision was inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent appeal to the nation regarding fuel conservation and austerity.

‘Small personal step towards saving petrol and diesel’

She said, “Inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji’s call for fuel conservation, I have started using a bicycle for all work within a 5-7 km radius from my home. It is a small personal step towards saving petrol and diesel, while also embracing a healthier lifestyle.”

She further added that ‘meaningful change often begins with simple, small choices’, encouraging others to consider eco-friendly alternatives for short-distance travel.

The Prime Minister had recently ramped up calls for fuel-saving measures amid fluctuating global energy

prices. Amruta’s public endorsement of this mission is an attempt to lead by example, particularly for urban commuters in congested cities like Mumbai. This isn’t the first time she has aligned her personal choices with the Prime Minister’s directives. Earlier in May, she made headlines after sharing that she had decided to skip Cannes Film Festival 2026 in France — where she was invited to represent Maharashtra’s handloom heritage — citing the Prime Minister’s call for austerity and the avoidance of unnecessary international travel. The rise of urban cycling culture

Amruta joins a growing movement across the country. Every major Indian city now hosts active cycling

communities. From Mumbai and Pune to Bengaluru, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata, weekly group rides have become a staple of urban life. These excursions range from casual 30 km morning spins to competitive ‘hammerfests’ exceeding 100km.

For those inspired by Amruta to take up the sport, experts suggest that finding a local group is the fastest way to improve. However, group riding comes with its own set of unwritten rules to ensure safety.

Pro tips for new commuters and club riders

According to cycling resource Cobbleclimbs.com, beginners should keep the following etiquette in mind to stay safe in city traffic or group settings:

From elegant party dresses to rugged muddy boots



There are various models, there are supermodels, and then there is Kate Moss. Discovered at the age of 14 while waiting for a flight at New York’s JFK airport, this London native swiftly came to embody the fashion aesthetic of the 1990s. She has graced numerous magazine covers, including 43 editions of British Vogue, participated in a multitude of advertising campaigns ranging from Calvin Klein to Chanel and Tom Ford, and has had hundreds of memorable catwalk moments, including her recent thong-revealing appearance at Demna’s debut for Gucci. She’s been sung about by Pete Doherty and Playboi Carti, sculpted by Marc Quinn and painted by Chuck Close, Banksy and Lucian Freud. The latter is now the subject of a new film, Moss & Freud. Directed by James Lucas and executive produced by Moss, it explores the model’s friendship with the then – 80-year-old painter during 2002 when she sat, pregnant, for him. That lifesize naked portrait later sold for £3.5m. Ahead of the film’s release on Friday, our writers reflect on their Mossy memories from the nineties to now. I have such a vivid memory of seeing this Corinne Day shoot in the 1993 June issue of British Vogue for the first time, in my student bedroom. Even a 19-year-old who knew zero about fashion could see that this was an earthquake. Kate, skinny and in her knickers in her shabby flat, stuck a nee-

dle in the vein of the new era of grunge and launched a new school of photography. The tabloids hated these photos, and there is an undeniable darkness to them – Moss had had an argument with her boyfriend that morning, and has recently spoken out about being bullied on set by Day – but such sweetness, too. With her poundshop fairy light halo she looks like a renaissance cherub. This photograph is in the V&A now. “Glastonbury Kate” is my favourite of all the Kates, especially Kate in 2005. A barely there minidress, a low-slung hipster belt, a boyish leather jacket with a battered leather pouch bag and her mud-splattered Hunter boots: this look has become part of fashion my-

thology and one that every gen Zer is trying to recreate 20 years later. It was nonchalant, it was carefree, it was so rock’n’roll. Everyone else at the festival was wearing skinny jeans, a sequin bolero and cross-body bag with a too-long strap – so she stood out. A canny reminder of how Kate manages to transcend what is “cool”, and just gets it so right. Every. Time. When Kate Moss appeared at the 2014 Brits in the Kansai Yamamoto bodysuit David Bowie had worn as Ziggy Stardust at London’s Rainbow theatre in 1972, it felt less like a proxy appearance than a consecration – Moss not so much standing in for her idol as inheriting his mantle. Bowie had just resurfaced after a decade in the wilderness with his best album in years. Why wasn’t he there? Why wasn’t he performing live full stop? All we had was an enigmatic album cover and a regal-looking Moss, delivering an understated tribute that, in hindsight, with Bowie dying in 2016, reads like the most fitting of goodbyes.

Long before there were influencers, magazine shoots starring Moss were torn out and paparazzi shots were pored over as fashion fans sought to imitate her style. I’ve definitely at some stage printed out this shot of her and Naomi Campbell attending a party in London in 1999 and pasted it into a scrapbook. Now it’s become a digital mood board staple and almost 30 years later appears on gen Z’s Y2K-inspired Pinterest boards. It’s easy to see why. Glamorous, fun and flirty – these chainmail dresses with their butterfly detailing are everything you want in a party dress. And of course with Moss it’s never just about the clothes – the vibe she evokes is just as key. Captured leaving the party, both with smudged eyeliner, Moss with her signature smize and Campbell grinning, their sense of fun is palpable. And in today’s world of sleep scores, who doesn’t want that?

I love slip dresses. They’re a satisfyingly low-effort way to introduce a bit of glamour, and Kate Moss is one of their most famous fans. A true 90s fashion moment was made with this iridescent dress by Liza Bruce that Moss wore to a party in 1993, paired with a low-key combination of flip-flops and, well, black underwear. It still looks so fresh today – the many naked dress-clad celebrities on this year’s red carpets walk a Moss-lined path – and, as I write this in the midst of a heat-wave, incredibly appealing. In 2022, Kate looked back on the dress in a video for Vogue, and expressed amazement to “still be talking about it 30 years later” before concluding: “Good dress, good night!”

It goes without saying that no one embodied 1990s minimalism quite like Kate Moss, yet some of her most unforgettable catwalk moments were minimalist in spirit, if not in fabric. My favourite remains a Vivienne Westwood autumn/winter ‘94 collection: Moss topless, eating a Magnum, in a micro-mini, towering pink platforms, a jaunty lilac pirate hat and the powdered face of an Elizabethan lady and somehow still as effortlessly cool as she looks in Glastonbury pap shots.

Moss’s 30th birthday party was pure main character energy – and rightly so. Firstly, the dress: a vintage sequin floor-length gown with a cape, originally worn by Britt Ekland to the premier of The Man With the Golden Gun. But what I love about this look most is the entire package: the jazz-age curls, the smoky eye that matched the deep-water blue of the dress, the vintage purse, diamonds, more diamonds and the lick of dark nail polish. How could you not have fun in this outfit?

By 2003, Kate Moss’s fame and the fever pitch around her style meant that any image of her would be fodder for tabloids and fashion magazines in equal measure. This primrose-yellow vintage 50s dress – worn to a party for Another magazine in New York – was a bit of an anomaly in a wardrobe that pivoted around rock’n’roll staples such as LBDs and leather, and showed the model was anything but predictable. While it was years before “going viral” became a thing, the dress became so popular that Moss made a version in her first collection for Topshop in 2007. Luckily, it turns out – Moss told British Vogue in 2022 she didn’t know where the original was. Perhaps someone even luckier might find it in a vintage store one day.



ENTERTAINMENT

Hina Khan shines in Eid celebration



Hyderabad: Television superstar Hina Khan celebrated Eid on the 28th of May with family and shared beautiful pictures reflecting on the warmth, laughter, togetherness and food on the occasion.

Taking to her social media account, Hina dropped a carousel of pictures and videos from her Eid celebrations at home. In one of the pictures, the actress was seen dressed in an elegant white handcrafted 'kamdani (mukaish)' outfit while serving tea in beautiful blue and golden cups. In another picture, Hina was seen sitting on the floor alongside her mother, husband Rocky and other family members, sharing a candid moment. The actress also shared glimpses of the festive spread and decorated salad platters arranged on the dining table.

Hina also shared close-up shots of her embroidered outfit and colourful bangles further. Sharing the photos, Hina wrote, "Eid reminds us that family is not just where we belong; it's every heart we choose to love. May our table grow bigger, our bonds grow deeper, and our laughter echo louder with every new soul welcomed home. Eid Mubarak." Hina Khan is known for being deeply spiritual and often shares motivational thoughts, prayers, and verses from the Quran on her social media. The actress had recently posted a picture from her prayer time and asked her fans to keep her in their prayers. For the uninitiated, Hina, who married her longtime partner Rocky Jaiswal in June last year, belongs to a different faith than him.

Vashu Bhagnani slaps ₹400 crore lawsuit on David Dhawan & tips over 'Chunari Chunari' remake

Mumbai: It looks like the fight between producer Vashu Bhagnani and Tips Music, David Dhawan, over the 'Chunari Chunari' remake is not ending anytime soon. Bhagnani's Puja Entertainment has now moved the Bombay High Court against Tips Industries Limited, Ramesh Taurani, Kumar S Taurani and filmmaker David Dhawan. He has accused the parties of using the 'Chunari Chunari' song from his 1999 movie Biwi No.1 in Varun Dhawan's upcoming movie Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai without permission.

In his plea, Bhagnani has sought the immediate cancellation of Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai's release and Rs 400 crore as compensation. "We have filed a suit with a claim of Rs. 400 crores to the Tips Music Company. The legal battle has been increasing for many days, and the rights of the musicians were not rea-



dy to be settled. Earlier, the rights of movies were based on agreements. Today, music companies buy songs from big producers or lyricists who write or create them. During that time, the agreements with Tips covered only audio rights. In 2018, Tips emailed us requesting visual rights. Vashu Bhagnani had replied to them, but their conversation did not settle," Bhagnani's lawyer told news agency ANI. The lawyer also claimed that Puja Entertainment had sent a notice to Tips cancelling

the audio rights previously granted to them. "If they are the lawful owners of the music rights, they must show their documents. This is why we have filed a claim against Tips. Justice will prevail, and the truth will come out," he added.

Previously, Vashu Bhagnani accused the makers of Varun Dhawan's film of making misleading public statements while the case remains in court. "This morning I saw its theatrical trailer launch. The common press, public,

everyone is sitting and they are saying that we have settled, we have talked, we have everything. Who did you talk to? I am the owner, no one has called me yet. No whatsapp, no one. Emotionally, legally, no one has called me. I don't understand what has happened in the country. The matter is going on in the court, even after that they are lying openly, releasing openly," he said in a video statement. Taurani of Tips Music addressed the controversy during the trailer launch event of Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai. When asked about the legal notice and dispute, Taurani insisted there was no issue affecting the film. "There is no problem in this. Whatever we had, has been sorted," Taurani said. He added, "And whatever comes next will also be sorted. So, there is no problem. And it's a sub judice matter. So, we are handling it," he said.

Shiva Rajkumar endorses Upendra for Karnataka CM role

Hyderabad: Kannada superstar Shiva Rajkumar shared interesting thoughts during a promotional interview for his film Peddi. He spoke about his family serving the public without seeking media attention. He also made it clear that he has no personal interest in joining politics.

The discussion then turned to fellow actor Upendra. Shiva Rajkumar supported the idea of Upendra entering politics actively. He pointed out the recent political success of actor Vijay in Tamil Nadu. Vijay received immense support from the public to achieve a massive victory. Shiva Rajkumar questioned why Upendra cannot receive similar support from the people of Karnataka. He stated that actors only wear makeup for films. In real life, they do not chan-



ge colors or hide their true intentions. Shiva Rajkumar emphasized that while they wear makeup on screen, their public service remains pure and honest.

He noted that true good work does not always need newspaper coverage. The public can recognize honesty, and their hearts will

speak for it. Shiva Rajkumar expressed great happiness over Vijay's political journey and inspiring speeches. He believes that honest people are ultimately recognized by God. He also noted that he continues to help many people and hopes his fans feel inspired to do the same.

Maatrubhumi first review: Salman Khan's film declared 'must-watch' by Subhash Ghai

Mumbai: Salman Khan's Maatrubhumi has been grabbing attention ever since it was announced. The film is currently in shoot stage. However, Subhash Ghai has shared his first reaction after watching the rough cut of the upcoming film, directed by Apoorva Lakhia. The filmmaker praised the emotional war drama and called it a "must-watch film."

After watching the rough cut, Subhash Ghai took to his X handle and wrote, "so beautiful to see my favourite directors together@ food square today to watch a rough cut of a Apoorva lakhia film MATRI BHUMI@



starring #salman khan based on a warm story of indo china soldiers with their respective emotions for their nations n

families. A must watch film". He also shared photo with the cast which immediately went viral. Sharing exciting details

from the shoot, Mudassar praised Salman Khan's unmatched energy, dedication, and larger-than-life perfor-

mance in the track. Speaking about the experience, Mudassar said, "Abhi maine ek gaana kiya hai Salman Khan sir ke saath in Maatrubhumi, it's a very big song. 200 dancer hai, edit ho raha hai, aur Bhai ne usme kya baap level perform kiya hai. Humney 5 din shooting kiya tha."

"Salman Khan has undergone a remarkable physical transformation for the film. He has been training at extreme high altitudes in Ladakh, combining intense endurance drills with heavy weight sessions. It is easily one of the most grueling fitness regimens he has taken on in recent years, reflecting

a completely new level of commitment to the role. During a 45-day schedule in Ladakh, the superstar adopted a calisthenics-based fitness routine to maintain his physique, as it was difficult to carry a full gym setup at such high-altitude shooting locations," the source told Hindustan Times. May War Rest in Peace, which was earlier titled Battle of Galwan, has reportedly been delayed due to a mix of production and creative reasons. The Salman Khan-starrer was initially expected to release on April 17, 2026, but reports later claimed the makers needed more time for post-produc-

tion work and patch shoots. Salman reportedly did not want to rush the film and preferred delaying it to ensure better quality.

The film also went through a major title change earlier this year. Director Apoorva Lakhia said the team had registered both Battle of Galwan and Maatrubhumi from the beginning, but eventually felt the new title better captured the emotional side of the story rather than just the war angle. Reports also suggested the makers wanted to avoid political sensitivity around the Galwan Valley clash, which involved Indian and Chinese troops in 2020.

Ram Charan's 'Peddi' gets green light for ticket hike & premiere shows



Hyderabad: Ram Charan's upcoming movie Peddi has become the talk of the town on social media. The film is set for a grand

theatrical release on June 4.

The Andhra Pradesh government has officially granted permission for premiere shows, which

will commence on June 3 at 8 PM. The premiere show ticket prices have been hiked to Rs 600, including GST. The government has also permitted a ticket price hike of Rs 100 for single screens and Rs 125 for multiplexes for one week from its release. The movie will have five shows per day across the state. The film is directed by Buchi Babu Sana, produced by Vridhhi Cinemas, and the music has been composed by AR Rahman. Peddi boasts a stellar cast including Jagapathi Babu, Shiva Rajkumar, Divyendu Sharma, Boman Irani, Tinnu Anand, and others.

Peddi's Chikri Chikri and Rai Rai songs have become a rage among music lovers, quickly topping the charts.

Ranbir Kapoor reveals how Ramayana and fatherhood shaped him

Mumbai: Ranbir Kapoor and director Nitesh Tiwari have shared insights into the emotional and creative journey behind their upcoming movie Ramayana. In a recent conversation with Top Film Magazine, the duo discussed the weight of bringing such an epic to the big screen and how the experience has personally impacted them.

For Ranbir, stepping into the role of Lord Rama was initially a daunting prospect. He admitted that he faced some apprehension at the start of the project. He recalled thinking, "Would I be able to do justice? Am I worthy enough?" However, these feelings of self-doubt ultimately gave way to a deeper sense of gratitude. He shared, "I understood not that it will be something like a career-defining move for me, but it was definitely life-defining. It changed



my life." Ranbir explained that immersing himself in the journey of Lord Rama greatly influenced his perspective on life and morality. He mentioned, "It changed my value system, the way I look at life, the way I look at loss, the way I look at

sacrifice, the way I look at dharma." He further talked about the humanity of the character, explaining that he was particularly moved by Rama's restraint. He said, "He responds out of compassion and not out of ego. In today's world, where we

are always on edge and wanting to react instantly, Rama responding with humility, forgiveness and restraint feels beyond human."

Ranbir also drew a parallel between his professional commitment to the film and his personal life as a father

to his daughter, Raha. He said, "It was such a sweet coincidence in my life that Raha made me a better person and Ramayana wanted me to be a better person for Raha." Director Nitesh Tiwari added that the film aims to balance large-scale spectacle with deep emotional resonance. "When it comes to something as epic as Ramayana, emotions are the core," Tiwari said, mentioning that while they have spent nearly five years preparing the film's world, the technology is only there to serve the story. He shared that the goal is to introduce global audiences to the content, the emotions, the values and the essence of the epic.

The project stars an ensemble cast including Sai Pallavi, Yash, Sunny Deol, and Ravie Dubey, with veteran actor Arun Govil appearing as King Dasharath.

Karan Johar reveals social media detox behind unfollowing Alia, Shah Rukh

Mumbai: Karan Johar has revealed why he has unfollowed Alia Bhatt, Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol and others on Instagram. On Thursday night, the filmmaker took to his Instagram stories section and called his step a 'digital detox'. He revealed that he unfollowed so many people to save the energy and time spent on the platform.

"It's a DIGITAL DETOX!!!! Am unfollowing everyone to reduce my time and energy spent on the gram!!! This can't be national news for gods sake... please clickbait something else! This is irrelevant! (sic)," KJo wrote. On Thursday, netizens noticed that Karan Johar's Instagram fol-



lowing count stood at just 78 accounts despite having over 17 million followers on the platform. Fans were quick to notice that the filmmaker unfollowed several Bollywood celebrities, including close friends Shah Rukh Khan, Alia Bhatt, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Manish Malhot-

ra. Fans also noticed that actors like Varun Dhawan, Sidharth Malhotra, Malaika Arora and Ananya Panday no longer appear on the filmmaker's following list. KJo also unfollowed Kartik Aaryan, even though the actor is set to headline Karan Johar's upcoming produc-

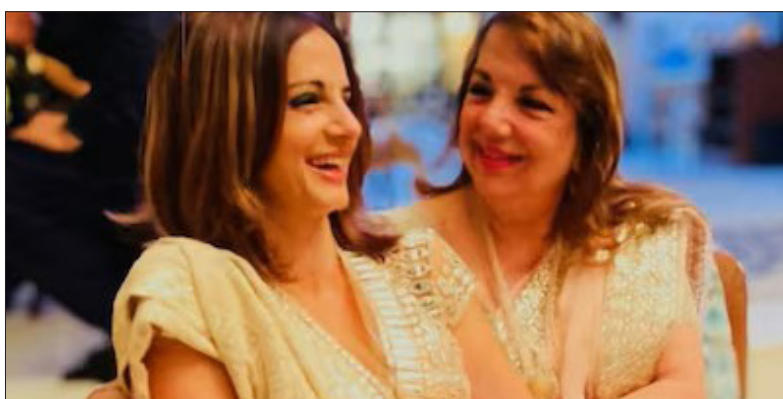
tion Naagzilla. Users later noticed that Karan is not following any Bollywood actor on Instagram. The only major names on his following list now are Dharma CEO Apoorva Mehta and business partner Adar Poonawalla, both closely connected to his work circle. Besides this, he is also following Priyanka Chopra.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Karan Johar's latest production, Chand Mera Dil, recently released in theatres. The Lakshya and Ananya Panday starrer opened to mixed reviews and reportedly had a lukewarm run at the box office. The film has hardly earned Rs 20 crores in India as of now.

Sussanne Khan's heartfelt Eid tribute to late mom Zarine: 'Forever My Super Trooper'

Mumbai: Sussanne Khan marked Eid al-Adha by remembering her late mother, Zarine Khan, in an emotional social media post. The interior and fashion designer, who was previously married to Hrithik Roshan, shared old pictures with her mother and penned a heartfelt note saying that the family continues to miss her every moment.

Taking to social media, Sussanne shared a series of throwback photos with Zarine Khan and called her "Super Trooper." In her note, she imagined her mother in heaven and said she continues to feel her warmth and presence. Her post drew emotional reactions from friends and well-wishers. Neelam Kothari Soni and Deanne Panday reacted with heart emojis, while Ekta Kapoor wrote, "Aunty is an angel in Jannat blessing all of us." This is not the first time Sussanne has shared an emotional note for her mother after her demise. On the first Mother's



Day following Zarine Khan's passing, Sussanne had posted another deeply personal tribute.

he had written, "I miss you more each day... you were and still are the Best mother.. thanks to technology i can convert some of our old pics into videos.. looking for a tech miracle to be able to see you again someday.. in real.. i am

sure i will. Hrithik Roshan had also reacted to that post and commented, "How we miss her." Zarine Khan passed away on November 7, 2025, at the age of 81 due to age-related health complications. She was married to veteran actor and filmmaker Sanjay Khan. She is survived by her children Sussanne Khan, Zayed Khan, Simone Arora and Farah Khan Ali.

Lamine Yamal enters debut FIFA World Cup with the sport at his feet; glory beckons for football’s most must-watch star

Agency: Replacing Lionel Messi on FC Barcelona’s right-wing and in its attack is a feat that should feel almost impossible. It is a credit to the immense talent, mentality, and quality of Spain’s Lamine Yamal that he has stepped into the role of being that player – all as a teenager, and now, one of the most recognisable faces in world football. Already having been the heart and soul of Spain’s run to the Euro Championships in 2024, Lamine is set to play a star role at the 2026 FIFA World Cup in North America, where he leads the line for a resurgent Roja squad seeking to find their second trophy after their 2010 success. Lamine will celebrate his 19th birthday the week before the Final at MetLife Stadium – as a player born for the big moment, he will want to give himself the greatest birthday gift imaginable.

Lamine’s quality and talent is almost supernatural in its own right, but what really sets him apart is the fact that he has come into the senior leagues with a superstar mentality built into him from scratch. Being the standard-bearer for a team of that size is not something that comes easily to even the best players in the world, but to be the best in the world, there is a certain level of bullish cockiness that is almost a prerequisite. The love for the crowd’s adulation and the joy found in being able to show off is not often de-



picted as a good thing. But when it allows you to play football the way Lamine does – all we can do is sit and applaud. When you have the flair and creativity that Lamine Yamal is capable of bringing to the football field, it is simply about having that relentless desire to drive at goal and to try make something happen. Already ranking amongst some of Europe’s most lethal creators, Lamine is a player who will receive the ball to feet, make a pocket of space, and almost unerringly pick a pass that leaves the opposition’s goalkeeper and defence

sweating. Failing that, he will cut in, find the angle for a shot, and bend in a delicious curler – look no further than his wonder-strike against France in the Euros semifinal. With 22 goals and 15 assists for Barcelona this year, Lamine is a player who can do it all, and always dazzles when he does so – a superstar in the making no more, but a superstar of the present. A player making the case to be the best in the world at 18 years old. There are some question marks of Lamine’s fitness following a couple of seasons where Barcelona’s high-octane style under Hansi Flick

have forced several players to the rehab room to try and make it to the World Cup. Having missed the last month of Barcelona’s campaign to a hamstring injury, fans will have fingers crossed that the teenager is deemed fit for the big games in the WC. The good news is that as a rule, international footballer is typically played at a slower pace, with more space between the lines and to play into. This is an environment that suits someone like Lamine to a T, his ability to create space for himself and unlock defences with a wave of his magical left foot.

But the true driving force for the teenager will be the chemistry he shares with teammates – Barca midfielder Pedri prime amongst them. Spain’s squad at the World Cup is littered with truly elite defensive-minded and midfield prospects, but their attacking line is a little threadbare. Lamine’s great responsibility, at all of 18 years old, will be to unlock the true potential of his teammates who will be responsible for finding the goals.

Cocksure, controversial, and totally precocious, Lamine Yamal goes into the World Cup with the weight of expectations. But he loves when the spotlight is on him, where he can pull out all he has to put on a show. There lies Spain’s hope, and there lies the one player that the World Cup in North America must be watched for this year.

Chinnappa, 3 other Indians in top 10 at AM Green IGPL Morocco Rising Stars

El Jadida: Indian golfer Trishul Chinnappa staged a great recovery on his second nine with five birdies in last six holes, to move into the top 10 after the first round of the USD 160,000 AM Green IGPL Morocco Rising Stars 2026. He was tied eighth with three other Indians, Sudhir Sharma, Raghav Chugh and Syed Saqib Ahmed. They were three shots behind the leader Hoho Yue of Hong Kong, who shot 6-under 66.

Like Chinnappa, Saqib also had a fine second nine with three birdies, while Sharma, who started the round in the very last group of the day, had an eagle on his first nine.

Chugh, who teed off in the second group in the morning, had five birdies against two bogeys.

The event, being played at the stunning Mazagan Beach & Golf Resort, is co-sanctioned with the AM Green Indian Golf Premier League.

The four Indians, all prominent players on the AM Green IGPL Tour, are still searching for their maiden success on the AM Green IGPL and the ADT Tours. Giving Chugh, Sharma, Saqib and Chinnappa company at T-8 were five others, including former Indian Open champion Siddikur Rehman of Bangladesh, Henry Chung of the US, Xu Andi of China and the Thai duo of Nopparat Panichpol and Thanapol Charoensuk. They shot 69 each.

Chinnappa had a patchy start with three bogeys against two birdies on the front nine. An early bogey on the 10th saw him fall to two-over. Then he flourished as he birdied five times in last six holes. It included four in a row from the 13th. He putted very well, needing just 25 for his entire round.

Sharma had a fine start from the 10th as he eagled Par-5 14th and birdied the 17th to turn in 3-under and it became 4-under with a birdie on the



first. Then he followed it up with a roller-coaster with two birdies against three bogeys for a 69. Saqib had a great back nine with three birdies and no bogeys, after one birdie and one bogey on the front side of the Mazagan Beach Resort course. Chugh had five birdies against two bogeys.

Two other Indians, Samarth Dwivedi and Shaurya Bhattacharya were also inside Top-20 at Tied-17th with cards of 2-under 70 each. Also tied with them was Indian American Varun Chopra, who also plays on the AM Green IGPL Tour.

It was not the best of days for Pukhraj Gill, recent winner of the ADT winner in Malaysia and Karandeep Kochhar, who won the ADT title in Egypt last November.

Gill, who is third on the ADT Order of Merit, started on the 10th and had three birdies on the 12th, 14th and the 18th in his first nine holes. He followed that up with yet another one on he first, at which point he was 4-under and contending for the lead..

Then came a crippling triple bogey on the third, a Par-5, which he would have normally tried to birdie. A double bogey followed on the Par-4 sixth and his challenge took a big hit. He had a birdie-bogey finish but pulled back by the loss of five shots on just two holes, he carded 73 and was seven behind the leader, Hoho Yue.

Karandeep Kochhar had a frustrating round with 17 pars and just one bogey and was also T-56th alongside Gill.

CBSE relaxed norms for OSM in third tender after no luck in previous rounds

Bhopal: The Central Board of Secondary Education floated three successive tenders for its on-screen marking system before finding a qualified vendor. It received no bids in the first round, failed to find a technically eligible bidder in the second, and relaxed several key requirements in the third, which was issued in August 2025, at which point a mere six months remained before the system was deployed at national scale for Class 12 board examinations. A senior board official confirmed the sequence. “We wanted to roll out the OSM system in 2026. However, after failing to secure a bidder in the first two rounds of the tender process, we identified several shortcomings and operational issues in the initial Request for Proposal (RFP) documents.

These gaps were addressed in the third RFP, where certain conditions were modified to make the process more practical and ensure successful participation. This should not be seen as a rushed exercise, but as a process of correcting shortcomings from earlier rounds to achieve better results.” Teachers who participated in a two-day dry run conducted in January — the only field exercise before the roll-

out — had separately warned CBSE that the system needed at least a year or two of further preparation before nationwide implementation. CBSE officials did not respond to requests for a comment on why the board insisted on the OSM approach for the 2026 examination. The official cited above added that the first tender was scrapped as per the General Financial Rules of the Government of India. show that both TCS and Coempt cleared the technical round in the third tender, with Coempt emerging as the successful bidder after financial evaluation as the lowest financial bidder under the quality-cum-cost based selection framework.

Before that, however, several technical requirements were substantially diluted between the failed tenders and the August RFP that eventually produced a winner — some of which pertained to scan quality and related penalties, which is now one of the chief complaints. The minimum scanning resolution was reduced from “300 DPI and above” to “minimum 200 DPI with clearly readable content.” TCS had, during pre-bid consultations in May, urged CBSE to lower the DPI threshold, arguing that 150 DPI would provide “adequately



clear visibility” while reducing file size and retrieval time. “Scanning quality of 200 DPI is sufficient to ensure clear and legible copies,” a CBSE official said. The February and May tenders had also mandated scanning “without cutting the spine” using “automated or robotic high-speed scanning infrastructure.” Separately, the mandatory Capability Maturity Model Integration certification — an internationally recognised measure of software process maturity — was lowered from Level 5, the highest

tier, to Level 3, widening the pool of eligible bidders in the final RFP. A second CBSE official rejected the suggestion that requirements were relaxed to favour any particular company. “We followed government guidelines and norms in selecting the company through a tender. It was not blacklisted by any government agency and nobody had raised any concern regarding it. It was selected after due process.” The chief executive of Coempt Edu Teck did not respond to multiple calls and text messages seeking comment. While scanning-quality requirements were relaxed, the August tender simultaneously imposed significantly harsher penalties for operational delays. The February tender had been the strictest on per-copy errors, prescribing ₹20,000 per wrongly or partially scanned copy and ₹50,000 for unscanned books, with delays attracting 6% per day capped at 30%. The May tender substantially reduced these — ₹4,000 per mismatched copy, ₹8,000 for partial scans, ₹15,000 for unscanned books, with delays at 1% per day capped at 10%. The August tender shifted the penalty architecture away from per-copy errors toward operational deadlines: failure to scan the previous day’s

answer books by the following day attracted ₹50,000 per working day; delays in going live attracted ₹10 lakh per week.

No payment has been released to Coempt so far. “The matter related to penalties will be reviewed after completion of the re-evaluation process and supplementary examinations. Any action will be taken strictly as per rules if violations are established,” a CBSE official said. The scale of what the system was required to process makes the tension between speed and quality concrete. If roughly 550,000 Physics answer books were scanned within a day, the system would have needed to process around 380 copies every minute continuously for 24 hours.

For English, with nearly 1.7 million answer books, the rate would have been close to 1,200 copies per minute. To be sure, the process was decentralised and the scanning took place at several centres across the country in tandem. Of the 9,866,622 answer books evaluated this year, 68,018 had to be rescanned due to poor image quality and 13,583 were checked manually after repeated scanning failed to produce legible copies.

‘It has been 15 days’: Family of Indian student killed in Canada seeks body for last rites

Bhopa: The family of a 22-year-old Indian student, who was stabbed to death in Canada, has appealed to the government to bring her body back home at the earliest so they can perform her last rites. Vidhi Megha, a resident of Borsad in Gujarat’s Anand district, was killed in St. Catharines near Niagara on May 15 after she was allegedly attacked by an unidentified person in broad daylight.

Her father Kalpeshbhai Megha said his daughter was stabbed with a knife and succumbed to her injuries despite attempts by bystanders to save her. “My only request to the government is that I want my daughter’s last rites to be performed in India, so her body should be brought here as soon as possible,” he said.

He added that the family has not yet received any response from authorities. Kalpeshbhai Megha said he was informed about his daughter’s death by local police officials in Cana-



da, after which relatives there initiated the formal procedures. “I received information from the police station. I contacted my relatives there by mail, and they started all the necessary procedures,” he said. The family has also alleged delays and lack of cooperation from authorities in Canada. Vidhi’s aunt Snehal said the family had still not been able to see her body nearly two weeks after the incident. “It has been almost 15 days now, we have not been able to have a look at her body. I

request the Government to complete the procedure as soon as possible and hand over her body to us.

The Government and Police there are not answering us properly,” “My brother is there and is in touch with everyone but he is getting to know of things only through email. No body is cooperating here. I also urge the external affairs minister to take quick action and hand over our Vidhi to us,” she added. Vidhi Megha moved to Canada nearly three years ago for higher education

and was also working part-time to manage her expenses. According to her father, she completed a three-year course in Business Management and had later enrolled in a Personal Support Worker (PSW) honours course. “My daughter had gone there to study Business Management. Her three-year course was completed, and then she pursued a PSW honours course. My brother-in-law and her grandparents also live there,” he said.

The grieving father also said that local MLA Ramanbhai Solanki visited the family following the incident. Solanki later said he had conveyed the family’s demand for the speedy return of Vidhi’s mortal remains to both the chief minister’s office and the Prime Minister’s office. Canadian police have reportedly launched an investigation into the murder, though officials have not yet disclosed details about the suspect or the motive behind the attack.

Aadhav Arjuna faces “political consequences” if he steals AIADMK cadre, according to R B Udhayakumar

Madurai: AIADMK leader R B Udhayakumar on Friday dismissed claims by TVK leader Aadhav Arjuna that 90 per cent of the dravidian party cadres were ready to jump ship to the Vijay-led party and warned of severe “political consequences” if attempts to poach AIADMK workers continued. “I give you this final warning: if you continue this body-snatching work and this drama of claiming to offer power, you will have to face severe political consequences and a massive political backlash. You will be forced to face it,” said Udhayakumar.

Calling Arjuna a “recent political entrant” with no stable ideological grounding, the former minister alleged that TVK is aggressively trying to buy out loyal opposition cadres using absolute money power and administrative lures.

“The collective heartbreak of millions of unyielding grassroots workers of the AIADMK remains an inexhaustible vessel. A power centre who has hopped across multiple political parties over the last 10 years just to invest and accumulate power is now making hollow remarks about our cadres,” Udhayakumar told reporters here. Highlighting the electoral math, Udhayakumar pointed out that 68.5 per cent of the total voting population in Tamil Nadu cast their ballots against the DMK.



He slammed TVK for creating a “mirage of despair” around the AIADMK when, in reality, TVK had only captured a 34.5 per cent slice of that anti-incumbency sentiment, which is nowhere near a mandate to claim absolute authority or state governance. “A party that hasn’t fully secured public confidence to assume state power is actively executing a horse-trading theater on weekends and holidays, boasting that ‘merger ceremonies’ will continue on Saturdays and Sundays,” he added.

Issuing an ultimatum, the former minister stated that the two-crore-strong cadre base of the AIADMK,

down to the most ordinary grassroots worker, will retaliate legally and politically if this illicit poaching operation continues under the guise of providing political asylum.

He reiterated that victories and defeats have never deterred the AIADMK, and that their commitment to public service remains unshakeable under the leadership of Edappadi K Palaniswami.

“If you persist in acting as an ideological enemy and tracking our loyalists, you will have to face severe and violent political backlash from millions of heartbroken yet resilient party workers,” Udhayakumar said.

Cerundolo stuns ailing world number one Jannik Sinner in five-set French Open upset

Paris: Argentina's Juan Manuel Cerundolo cause a huge sensation in the French Open on Thursday, by stunning World No.1 Jannik Sinner in the second round, ending the Italian star's attempt to complete the Career Grand Slam in a physically-draining 3-6, 2-6, 7-5, 6-1, 6-1 defeat at Stade Roland Garros in Paris. Sinner appeared on course for victory when he led 5-1 in the third set of his second-round match, but he soon began to appear to struggle with cramp in a dramatic turn of events. The 24-year-old Italian twice failed to serve out the match and also required an off-court medical time-out at 5-4, 0/40. From that moment, Sinner was unable to recover his physical condition, and Cerundolo took full advantage, claiming 18 of the final 20 games to seal the biggest upset of the 2026 season so far. The Argentine, who is competing as the World No. 56, is the first man to oust the top seed at the clay-court major before the third round since Karol Kucera in 2000. "It's tough for him," Cerundolo said of Sinner. "I couldn't win more than three games



in a set, so I was a little bit lucky. He deserved to win this match, and then I don't know what happened. But I feel sorry for him and hope he recovers." With Roland Garros the only Grand Slam title missing from his collection, Sinner was aiming to become just the seventh man to complete the Career Grand Slam in the Open Era. The Italian was also riding a career-best 30-match winning streak, having swept all five ATP Masters 1000 titles in 2026. Despite

struggling physically, Sinner was able to show his shotmaking and hit a series of stunning forehands with his feet planted on the court. Yet due to his hindered movement, Cerundolo could pull the Italian from side to side and throw in drop shots to take advantage of his opponent's physical limitations. The defeat adds another painful chapter to the Court Philippe-Chatrier for Sinner, who last year let slip three championship points against

Carlos Alcaraz in the final. The World No. 1 departs Paris with a 37-3 record in 2026, according to the Infosys ATP Win/Loss Index. Veteran tennis player Rohan Bopanna and N Sriram Balaji will be the preferred pairing for team India in the men's doubles event in the upcoming Paris Olympic Games 2024. This was announced by the All India Tennis Association on Thursday, 13 June. After being allowed to chose his partner, World No. 4 and veteran Grand Slam champion Rohan Bopanna picked Sriram Balaji, whose current world ranking is 67. The decision was announced by AITA on Thursday via an official release. Coach Balachandran Manikkath and physio Rebecca V. Orshaegen will accompany the duo in Paris. "We are proud to announce that Rohan Bopanna and N. Sriram Balaji have qualified for the Paris Olympics 2024! With Coach Mr. Balachandran Manikkath and Physio Ms. Rebecca V. Orshaegen by their side, we're ready to make a mark on the world stage," AITA wrote on X (formerly known as Twitter).

London to host historic 70th anniversary edition of the prestigious Ballon d'Or

New Delhi: The Ballon d'Or ceremony, football's most prestigious individual awards event honouring the best men's and women's players in the world, will move from its traditional home in Paris to London this year. Organisers France Football magazine and UEFA confirmed on Thursday that the ceremony will take place in the English capital on October 26. The decision marks a significant shift for the event, which has long been associated with Paris, and comes in the year of the award's 70th anniversary. The very first Ballon d'Or was won in 1956 by England great Stanley Matthews, making London a symbolic venue for the milestone edition. The move also comes at a time when English football has enjoyed a strong presence on the European stage. London is home to England captain and record goalscorer Harry Kane, while Arsenal's wom-



en's team recently secured its first Premier League title in 22 years and is preparing for Saturday's Champions League final against Paris Saint-Germain. Kane is expected to be among the major contenders for this year's men's Ballon d'Or after an exceptional season with Bayern Munich. The England striker scored 61 goals in 51 matches across all competitions, the best scoring return of his career. His tally included 14 goals in the Champions League, where

Bayern Munich narrowly lost to PSG in the semi-finals, as well as five goals for England during World Cup qualifying matches. The current holder of the men's Ballon d'Or is Ousmane Dembele, who claimed the prize in Paris last year after helping PSG secure their first-ever Champions League title. Dembl scored 19 goals in 39 matches for PSG this season, although he started only 11 games during their Ligue 1-winning campaign.

Four Indian officials picked for Women's T20-WC panel



New Delhi: India made a strong statement in the opening T20I of their England tour, defeating the hosts by 38 runs in a performance that highlighted their depth, intent, and form ahead of the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup. Jemimah Rodrigues, Yastika Bhatia, and debutant Nandini Sharma all delivered standout performances as India went 1-0 up in the three-match series at the County Ground in Chelmsford. Batting first, India posted 188 for 7, anchored by a match-defining 126-run stand for the second wicket between Jemimah Rodrigues and Yastika Bhatia. The visitors had a shaky start, losing Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana in the first over to Lauren Bell. However, Yastika quickly shifted momentum, taking Issy Wong apart for 27 runs in the second over to put India back on track. Rodrigues was the standout performer, scoring a fluent 69 off 40 balls, laced with 10 crisp boundaries and a six. Yastika, returning to the T20I setup after two years, played a composed knock of 54 off 40 balls, ensuring India maintained control after the early setbacks. Deepti Sharma added a quick 22 off 13 deliveries at the death to push India close to the 190 mark.

Can Xabi Alonso spark a successful football renaissance at Chelsea FC?

New Delhi: The Premier League season has come to an end, and the players will now jet off for the World Cup in the USA, Canada and Mexico. But the news around the Premier League won't die down that easily. With teams now focusing on summer transfers, new managers coming in, the news from the biggest league in the world won't stop easily. Chelsea have already made the move to make Xabi Alonso their new coach, while Anthony Gordon is saying goodbye to the league and heading off to Barcelona. There has been chaos at West Ham United following their relegation from the Premier League and Bruno Fernandes continued to show his loyalty towards Manchester United. Xabi Alonso's football strategies at Bayer Leverkusen were nothing out of the ordinary, and he used methods that many coaches bring to their squads — aggressive pressing and creating chances through dominant possession.

Where he differs from many coaches, and the quality he brings to every game, is his training methods and organisation. He is very good at instructing his team so they know exactly where to be and where to go when attacking or defending. Team-mates could almost pass to each other blindfolded. It is the same with or without the ball. Like Enzo Maresca before him, Alonso



has been heavily influenced by Pep Guardiola's position-based football. He is bringing four coaches with him from his days at Real Madrid. He will be joined by his long-time assistant Sebastian Parrilla, Alberto Encinas and Beat Labaien, along with his fitness coach. Calum MacFarlane, who has been acting as interim coach until Alonso's arrival, will also remain with the club. Alonso regularly uses a three-man defence, featuring two good ball-playing centre-backs on either side of a more physical defender. However, when you look at the team formation as a whole, it is not a regular pattern. One side of the field does not mirror the other. In other words, his teams are asymmetrical, which often confuses opponents. During his playing days, WE used to enjoy watching Alonso's ability to make long diagonal passes with superb accuracy, but he does not encourage that style in his coaching. Two players

who made their names under Alonso at Leverkusen were Alejandro Grimaldo and Jeremie Frimpong, who operated as attacking wing-backs. After Granit Khaka secured possession in midfield, the trio would often pass forward to Florian Wirtz in space to create chances. The play is very similar to Chelsea's period under Antonio Conte, when Ben Chilwell and Reece James thrived as attacking wing-backs. Marc Cucurella is more than capable of taking on that role. Among the players already at the club, Alonso should work well with Jorrel Hato and Josh Acheampong, who are still raw youngsters and can be moulded into his methods. Levi Colwill is excellent at breaking down opposition attacks, while Romeo Lavia can perform a similar role in midfield. Moises Caicedo, Andrey Santos and Enzo Fernandez are all capable of playing vertical forward passes to Cole Palmer and

Joao Pedro. There is plenty for Alonso to feel confident about and, with a few changes and fresh talent — he has already identified the need for another No. 9 striker — next season could be very exciting for Chelsea supporters. Earlier this year, Newcastle's chief executive admitted the club would have to sell players in order to buy big stars and strengthen the squad for next season. Manager Eddie Howe made it clear that Anthony Gordon was one player he did not want to lose, but the winger has been linked with a move away from St James' Park throughout the year. Now, it appears that the move is becoming reality. Gordon flew to Barcelona on Thursday for a medical and is expected to sign for one of Europe's biggest clubs despite having signed a contract extension with Newcastle in October 2024 that still had four years remaining. Howe, aware that he was close to losing his talented winger, did not select Gordon for the final four matches in order to protect him, which further fuelled speculation over his exit. Earlier reports linked Gordon with Bayern Munich, where he could have joined Harry Kane, Michael Olise and Luis Diaz, but Barcelona appear to have beaten them to his signature. His best form came in the Champions League, where only Kylian Mbappe and Harry Kane scored more goals than him.

Juan Cerundolo dumps Jannik Sinner out of French Open, stunning elder brother



New Delhi: Francisco Cerundolo was left stunned in Paris as news filtered through mid-match that his younger brother, Juan, had produced one of the biggest shocks of French Open 2026, knocking out world No.1 Jannik Sinner in a dramatic five-set thriller at Roland Garros. Sinner, entering the tournament in dominant form after winning six ATP Masters 1000 titles in a row, started strongly and looked firmly in control, leading 6-3, 6-2, 5-1 and seemingly on course for a routine win. But Juan launched a remarkable comeback that shifted the momentum completely. After three hours and 36 minutes, Juan completed the turnaround, winning 3-6, 2-6, 7-5, 6-1, 6-1. While this drama played out, Francisco was competing on another court against Hugo Gaston. During his match, he began receiving constant updates from spectators and even his own team about his brother's extraordinary comeback. Confused at first, Francisco tried to block out the noise and stay focused, assuming the crowd's reactions were premature or mistaken. However, as the result became clear, the disbelief grew harder to ignore. People in the stands repeatedly shouted that his brother had already won, leaving Francisco trying to maintain concentration amid the unfolding chaos. He later admitted his shock, saying he struggled to process what he was hearing while still playing. "After I won my match, I looked at my family and they were saying 'two out of

two.' So I thought he had also won. During the match, people in the crowd kept telling me, 'your brother won, your brother won,' but I was just trying to stay focused on my own game," Francisco said after the match. Juan's victory unfolded in extraordinary circumstances on Court Philippe-Chatrier Sinner's physical condition deteriorated sharply in the Paris heat. Sinner struggled with dizziness, cramps, and low energy, requiring a medical timeout. Juan capitalised brilliantly on the situation. Staying composed under pressure, he extended rallies and forced errors from the struggling top seed. Once Sinner's level dropped, Juan surged ahead. Francisco said he was very happy for his brother, praising his hard work, daily effort, and strong season. He said beating Sinner, especially from two sets down, showed resilience and made the victory even more impressive. "I'm really happy for him because I know how hard he works and how much he loves tennis. He puts in the effort every single day, and it's great to see it paying off. He's had a strong year, building on a good season last year as well, so he really deserved to reach the third round of a Grand Slam," Francisco said. Juan will next face Spain's Martin Landa-luce, who defeated the Czech Republic's Vt Koprivka 1-6, 2-6, 6-4, 7-5, 6-0. This marks Juan's first career Grand Slam third-round appearance, making his French Open 2026 run his best showing to date.

Four national teams stay on track for Botswana's World Athletics Relays

Chandigarh: The members of the national men's longer relay and mixed 4x100m relay squad were excited to have improved their global rankings on Road to Gaborone26 here at Chandigarh's Sector 7 Sports Complex. The World Athletics Relays will be held on May 2 and 3 in Gaborone, Botswana. But it was heartbreak for the men's 4x100m relay team as they were disqualified in the heats at the first, according to a press release. International Invitational Relay Competition and the third National Open Relay Competition were held here in Chandigarh on Saturday. Manu TS, Amoj Jacob, D Chaudhary and Rajesh Ramesh were members of the 4x400m relay team that won gold with a time of 3:01.43 seconds to better their global ranking. The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) fielded two teams in the mixed 4x100m relay, and members of both



teams did exceedingly well, chief athletics coach Radhakrishnan Nair said. The National B mixed 4x100m relay team won gold with a time of 42.30 seconds to better the national record of 43.44 seconds set by Tamil Nadu in 2025. India A finished second with a time of 42.34 seconds. Maldives finished third with a time of 44.53 seconds. However, India's international sprinter and national record holder, Animesh Kujur, was disappointed for missing a golden chance to board the flight to Botswana. "The competition

in Chandigarh was the last chance for the 4x100m relay squad to improve their world ranking before the deadline of April 5, but we missed," Kujur, a member of the national 4x100m relay team, added. The national mixed 4x400m relay and women's 4x100m relay teams are also strong contenders to win tickets to the World Athletics Relays to be held on May 2 and 3 in Gaborone, Botswana. The national women's 4x100m relay clocked 43.86 seconds at the 2025 Gumi Asian Athletics Championships. The current world ranking is 23. The national 4x400m mixed relay current World Ranking of 22 is based on the 3:14.81 performance at the World Relays in China. "The World Athletics will declare the final rankings of the nations eligible to compete in Botswana after April 5, 2026," the chief athletics coach added.

Ketan Kushwaha's spectacular hat-trick leads India's dominating thirteen-zero Men's U-18 Asia Cup win

Kakamigahara: The Indian U-18 Men's Hockey Team opened its campaign at the U-18 Asia Cup 2026 with a dominant 13-0 victory over Kazakhstan in Kakamigahara, Japan, on Friday in Pool A. Captain Ketan Kushwaha led from the front with three goals, while Prahalad Rajbhar, Ashish Tani Purti, Ansh Bahutra and Shahrulkh Ali registered a brace each, according to a release. India controlled proceedings from the outset and was rewarded for their persistence after Kazakhstan weathered the early pressure. Shahrulkh Ali (12') broke the deadlock with a thunderous strike from inside the circle before Prahalad Rajbhar (14') doubled the advantage just two min-



utes later, giving India a firm grip on the contest by the end of the first quarter. Goals continued to flow in the second quarter. Captain Kushwaha (18') was well placed to finish from close range after India won possession high up the pitch, while Gazeer Khan (20') added a fourth shortly after to extend the lead. India showed no signs of easing off before the break.

Shahrulkh (29') completed his brace with a clinical finish, and Purti (30') converted a penalty corner a minute later, as India surged to a commanding 6-0 lead at half-time. The third quarter proved to be the most productive, with four of India's five goals coming through penalty corners. Bahutra (31', 44') converted twice while Purti also went on to complete a brace. In the

final minute of the quarter, Kushwaha scored twice in quick succession, including a penalty corner, to complete his hat-trick. India finished the third quarter with an 11-0 lead. The men in blue kept the pressure on in the final quarter to round off a resounding victory. Akash Deep (47') tapped the ball into an open goal to put his name on the scoresheet before Rajbhar scored his second goal of the day in the 51st minute. India will next face hosts Japan on May 31 at 1:30 PM IST as they look to continue their winning start to the tournament. The squad features a blend of seasoned veterans and young talent - strategically chosen to solidify the core team heading into the upcoming World Cup.