

Environment Ministry Approves 3.93 Ha Forest Land Use for Nagaland Power Project

Kohima, May 30: The Union Ministry of Environment has approved diversion of 3.93 ha of forest land for construction of 220KV transmission line from Dimapur to Kohima (Zhadima) at Nagaland Zoological Park (NZP) Division of Rangapahar Reserve Forest.

The Regional Office of the Ministry in Shillong has communicated the in-principle/stage-I grant of approval through a letter subject to the fulfilment of stipulated conditions.

The Divisional Forest Officer, Nagaland Zoological Park, NZP Division Rangapahar RF Chumoukedima is directed to monitor compliance of the conditions stipulated for such diversion in the respective forest / wildlife clearance order and to report violations, if any, to the Nodal Officer (FC Act), the PCCF & HoFF, Nagaland and to the Environment, Forest & Climate Change Department.

Execution of project activities will be subject to having availability of all other clearances required under relevant Act/Rules for this project, deposit of requisite fees and compliance with Court order if any. The User Agency shall comply with the stipulated conditions for the purpose of instant diversion of forest land.



The conditions state that the legal status of the diverted forest land shall remain unchanged, and the compensatory afforestation shall be raised and maintained over double the degraded forest land of 7.98 ha in three plots i.e. 2 ha, 3.98 ha and 2 ha in Rangapahar Reserve Forest, Rangapahar range under Nagaland Zoological Park, NZP

Division as per the funds deposited by the User Agency. As far as possible, a mixture of local indigenous species shall be planted and monoculture of any species may be avoided.

The State Govt shall ensure that the revised rates of Net Present Value amount of the forest land being diverted under this proposal is trans-

ferred through online portal by the user agency into CAMPA account of the State concerned as per the Ministry letter File No.5-3/2011-FC(Vol-I) dated 21.03.2022 before issuing of the Final Approval.

The boundary of the diverted forest land shall be suitably demarcated on ground at the project cost, as per

the directions of the concerned Divisional Forest Officer, and all other clearance/NOCs under different rules/regulations/local laws and under Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 as required vide MoEF, New Delhi guideline No. 1 l-9/98-FC(Pt) dated 05.02.2013 shall be complied with.

In Brief

Meghalaya govt to set up police station

Shillong: The state government is planning to set up a new police station and a fire station near the Umshyrpi four-lane bridge, Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong informed on Friday after a joint inspection of the proposed sites. He also disclosed plans for setting up a Tourist Information Centre and a community office for Upper Shillong headmen. "The inspection today was only to identify the location," Tynsong said after inspecting a vacant space near the Umshyrpi bridge. Informing that senior police officers, who accompanied him, backed the site, he said, "They said this place is very feasible and convenient for setting up these two stations."

Rio chairs high-level meet on monsoon preparedness

Kohima: Nagaland Chief Minister Dr. Neiphiu Rio has stressed the need for a coordinated and proactive approach among all departments to effectively address monsoon-related challenges while reviewing the state's preparedness for the ensuing monsoon season at a high-level meeting held at the chief minister's residential complex (CMRC), Kohima on Friday. "Chaired a monsoon preparedness meeting with line departments and NHIDCL to review infrastructure readiness, emergency response measures, healthcare support, and the availability of essential commodities and services. Ensuring coordination and timely action remains a priority," Rio wrote on X.

Bike taxis operating in Shillong approach DTO

Shillong: The Meghalaya Two-Wheelers Commercial Permit Holders (MTCPH) on Friday petitioned the Regional Transport Authority (RTA), demanding strict action against individuals operating bike-taxi services without valid commercial permits. In a complaint submitted to RTA Chairman RM Kurbah, the association alleged that these unauthorised operations violate the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and the Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines, 2020. The permit holders stressed that such activities result in revenue loss for the state and pose significant safety risks to passengers, as these operators lack mandatory police verification and commercial insurance coverage.

Northeast's first "New Age Tech Skills Centre" inaugurated in Aizawl

Aizawl: Mizoram's School Education Minister Dr. Vanlalhlana on Friday inaugurated the Northeast region's first-ever "New Age Tech Skills Centre" at Government Comprehensive Model School, Model Veng, Aizawl. The centre has been established under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of Bharat Forge Ltd., a globally renowned company in the field of forging and defence manufacturing. The project's technical partner is SimuSoft Technologies, which has taken the lead in setting up the centre, providing training, and developing the curriculum. The initiative is being implemented in collaboration with the School Education Department, Government of Mizoram. The project originated from the CSR workshop organised in Aizawl in June 2025 by the Confederation of Indian Industry and the CSR Cell, Government of Mizoram.

Maharashtra-MP Highway Link Almost Ready

New Delhi: Construction of the 47-kilometre-long NH-753L, being developed at an estimated cost of approximately Rs.944 crore to connect Boregaon in Maharashtra with Shahpur in Madhya Pradesh, is nearing completion.

Asaduddin Owaisi Opposes Uniform Civil Code Rollout in Assam

Guwahati, May 30: AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Friday slammed the adoption of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) legislation in Assam, alleging that the state government was imposing Hindu marriage laws on Muslims.

Addressing an Eid Milap event in Hyderabad, Owaisi questioned the exemption given to tribal communities under the UCC, saying they account for around 12 per cent of Assam's population.

Taking a dig at the provisions related to marriage, Owaisi said that while Hindu and Muslim personal laws differ, the UCC s to impose one set of rules.

"The Assam Uniform Civil Code is not uniform at all. It

completely exempts tribal communities from UCC's coverage. Every community has the right to protect its culture under Article 29, but why is only the tribals' autonomy being protected? This is the imposition of a law that no one wants. The constituent assembly did not envision a mandatory UCC," he said.

"In Islam, no one can exclude an heir from inheritance. No one can write a will to give their whole property to one son or deny their daughter inheritance.

This UCC allows anyone to write a will and deny their daughters their fair share. This is far from a gender just law," he added.

Meghalaya govt to set up police station, fire station near Umshyrpi bridge

Shillong, May 30: The state government is planning to set up a new police station and a fire station near the Umshyrpi four-lane bridge, Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong informed on Friday after a joint inspection of the proposed sites. He also disclosed plans for setting up a Tourist Information Centre and a community office for Upper Shillong headmen. "The inspection today was only to identify the location," Tynsong said after inspecting a vacant space near the Umshyrpi bridge. Informing that senior police officers, who accompanied him, backed the site, he said, "They said this place is very feasible and convenient for setting up these two stations."

Informing about the second plot, Tynsong said, "We thought of having a Tourist Information Centre there. Also, time and again the Synjuk Ki Rangbah Shmong of Upper Shillong area have requested the government to provide at least 2000-3000 square feet of land for their office as well as a community hall."

Meanwhile, Tynsong pointed out that the four-lane section between Umshyrpi bridge and 7th Mile to Umshyrpi bridge has been reduced from 45-60 minutes to "maybe 6-7 minutes".

Rio chairs high-level meet on monsoon preparedness

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"Chaired a monsoon preparedness meeting with line departments and NHIDCL to review infrastructure readiness, emergency response measures, healthcare support, and the availability of essential commodities and services. Ensuring coordination and timely action remains a priority," Rio wrote on X.

According to a press release, the Chief minister also emphasised on timely intervention, seamless communication and collective responsibility. He directed all responsible departments to ensure that machinery, equipment and emergency response systems were strategically positioned and maintained in full operational readiness to respond to any exigency during the monsoon season.

Rio also reaffirmed the government's commitment to safeguarding public safety and minimising disruptions during the monsoon season.

The meeting reviewed the State's readiness based on meteorological inputs presented by the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA), which highlighted likely rainfall patterns and potential risk areas across Nagaland.

Departments including PWD (R&B) and NHIDCL briefed the meeting on preparedness of road infrastructure, ongoing maintenance works, identification of vulnerable stretches and measures being undertaken to address possible landslides and disruptions.

Home guards, civil defence and SDRF outlined emergency operation plans, deployment of resources and response mechanisms to ensure prompt action during emergencies.



The health & family welfare department apprised the meeting on healthcare preparedness, including readiness of medical personnel, availability of essential medicines and contingency measures for emergency situations.

The Food & Civil Supplies Department, along with Agriculture and allied departments, informed the house on the availability, stocking and distribution of essential commodities to ensure uninterrupted supply during the monsoon period.

In view of the vulnerability of National Highways, particularly NH-29 (Dimapur-Kohima) and NH-02 (Kohima-Mao), the meeting deliberated on measures to tackle landslides and road disruptions during the monsoon season. It also discussed regulating the movement of heavy vehicles, especially those with more than 10-wheel configurations, to ensure road safety and smooth traffic flow.

State Deputy Chief Minister TR Zeliang, Road and Bridges Minister G. Kaito Aye, Advisor for Urban Development and Municipal Affairs Zhaleo Rio and Advisor for New and Renewable Energy and NSDMA Z. Nyusietho Nyuthe also reviewed key concerns and shared inputs on the state's preparedness.

Demoted Circle Officer Interrogated by CM Vigilance for Election Fund Embezzlement

Guwahati, May 30 (Agency): A demoted Revenue Circle Officer has come under the scanner of the Chief Minister's Special Vigilance Cell over allegations of misappropriating government funds allocated for election-related activities during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

According to sources, Sangeeta Borthakur is accused of embezzling government money while serving as the Circle Officer of Kamrup. The alleged irregularities relate to funds released for conducting the parliamentary elections in 2024.

The matter first came to light after a complainant lodged an FIR at Kamrup Police Station in 2025. Based on the complaint, Kamrup Police Station Case No. 46/25 was registered. Borthakur later secured bail in the case.

The Chief Minister's Special Vigilance Cell has now reopened the case and launched a fresh investigation into the alleged financial irregularities. As part of the probe, the officer was directed to appear before the Vigilance office in Rupnagar on Saturday.



Following several hours of interrogations, Borthakur was allowed to leave, though officials indicated that the investigation remains underway.

The Assam Government had earlier demoted the officer to a lower post in connection with the alleged election fund scam. The renewed vigilance inquiry is expected to determine the extent of the alleged misappropriation and fix responsibility.

Bike taxis operating in Shillong approach DTO over illegal ride services in city

Shillong, May 30: The Meghalaya Two-Wheelers Commercial Permit Holders (MTCPH) on Friday petitioned the Regional Transport Authority (RTA), demanding strict action against individuals operating bike-taxi services without valid commercial permits.

In a complaint submitted to RTA Chairman RM Kurbah, the association alleged that these unauthorised operations violate the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and the Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines, 2020.

The permit holders stressed that such activities result in revenue loss for the state and pose significant safety risks to passengers, as these operators lack mandatory police verification and commercial insurance coverage. The MTCPH stated that the continued presence of unlicensed bike-taxi directly threatens the livelihoods of legitimate operators who have complied with all



statutory requirements. "Continued operation of these individuals without valid permits is a direct threat to our livelihood as legitimate operators who have fulfilled all statutory obligations," the complaint stated. The association urged the RTA to initiate immediate enforcement measures and called for the de-

ployment of additional personnel to curb illegal activities.

Furthermore, the MTCPH requested the authorities to identify and allocate dedicated parking spaces for authorised commercial two-wheelers at key locations, including Khyndailad and other busy market areas in the city.

NE/EAST

Centre releases first instalment of Rs 75.6 crore for Tripura flood recovery

Agartala, May 30: The Central government has allocated Rs 75.60 crore as the initial instalment of a total recovery and reconstruction package amounting to Rs 252 crore for Tripura, following severe floods in August 2024. Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha announced this aid, emphasizing that it will facilitate rehabilitation efforts in impacted regions.

The floods inflicted substantial damage to infrastructure, including roads, embankments, government facilities, and numerous houses, posing significant challenges to local communities.

A comprehensive Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) was conducted by the state government to evaluate the damage, leading to the submission of a memorandum to the Government of India for financial assistance. Consequently, the Centre approved the recovery package, and the first instalment was released from the Nation-



al Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) on May 26, 2026. Saha expressed appreciation towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for their support. The funds are earmarked for rebuilding damaged infrastructure and restoring essential services, aiming to expedite rehabilitation in one of Tripura's most devastating flood events in recent years. The floods affected several districts, disrupting transportation networks and the lives of thousands of residents.

Former insurgents announce indefinite road and rail blockade in Tripura from June 5

Agartala, May 30: An organisation representing former insurgents who have returned to mainstream life has announced an indefinite blockade of national highways and railway routes across Tripura from June 5, alleging prolonged delays in the implementation of their rehabilitation package.

The announcement was made during a press conference held in Agartala on Saturday, where leaders of the organisation accused both the state and central governments of failing to fulfil commitments made to surrendered militants regarding their rehabilitation and resettlement. According to the organisation, the Government of India had sanctioned approximately Rs 45 crore before 2017 for the rehabilitation of for-

mer insurgents. However, its leaders alleged that the programme stalled after the BJP came to power in Tripura in 2018 and that many beneficiaries are still awaiting promised support.

The organisation claimed that despite repeated assurances from successive governments over the years, several key components of the rehabilitation package, including housing assistance, livelihood support and other welfare measures, have not been implemented. The former insurgents further alleged that Tribal Welfare Minister Bikash Debbarma had assured them in February this year that efforts would be made to revive the rehabilitation programme. According to the organisation, the assurance was given after they threatened to launch



a road and rail blockade. However, they claimed that no significant progress has been made since then.

Expressing frustration over the delay, the organisation announced that it would begin an indefinite blockade of National High-

ways and railway tracks across the state from June 5 unless immediate action is taken to address its demands. The group warned that the proposed agitation could severely disrupt transportation services and public movement across

Tripura.

It urged both the state government and the Centre to intervene urgently and initiate concrete measures to complete the rehabilitation process. Among its key demands are the immediate implementation of the

rehabilitation package allegedly sanctioned by the Centre, fulfilment of previous assurances regarding resettlement, provision of livelihood opportunities and other promised benefits, and the announcement of a clear timeline for completing the rehabilitation programme.

The organisation maintained that the blockade could be avoided if meaningful dialogue is initiated and concrete steps are taken before the deadline. Government officials had not issued any immediate response to the announcement at the time of filing this report. Attention is now focused on whether discussions between the authorities and the former insurgents will take place before the proposed blockade begins on June 5.

Thousands join Jalukie rally demanding release of six abducted Naga civilians

Kohima, May 30: More than 2,000 people gathered at Jalukie Town Square in Nagaland's Peren district on Friday to demand the safe and unconditional release of six Naga civilians who were allegedly abducted by Kuki militants in Manipur earlier this month. The public rally was organised by the Zeliangrong Baudi Nagaland (ZBN) and witnessed participation from members of various Naga tribes, community organisations, student bodies and civil society groups. Participants carried placards bearing messages such as "Law and justice must prevail", "Release our brothers now" and "Government must act now", calling for urgent intervention by the authorities. A memorandum addressed to the Governor of Nagaland was submitted through the Deputy Commissioner of Peren, urging immediate action to secure the release of the six civilians. Addressing the gathering, ZBN president K. Francis Zeliang said the community remained united in its demand for justice and the safe return of the abducted individuals. He said innocent civilians should not be used as "bargaining chips" in any conflict and described their continued captivity as a violation of human rights and basic humanity. Zeliang also criticised what he termed the inaction of both the Manipur government and the Centre. He said that despite President's Rule in Manipur and assurances from the Ministry of Home Affairs, armed groups continued to operate without fear. Nagaland Zeliang People's Organisation (NZPO) president Zandi Domta, while delivering a solidarity message, said 18 Naga villagers from Konsakhul were allegedly abducted at Leilon Vaiphei village on May 13. He noted that 12 of them had subse-

quently been released, while six remained in captivity. Demanding their immediate and unconditional release, Domta called for legal action against those responsible. He warned that prolonged inaction could undermine public confidence in the rule of law and further escalate tensions in the region. Several other community leaders also addressed the rally. Zeliangrong Baudi (Assam, Manipur and Nagaland) general secretary Tadambo emphasised the need for unity among the Zeliangrong people, while Zeliang Youth Organisation Nagaland president Ngautube urged the community to respond with patience, wisdom and solidarity. Zeme Council Nagaland president Asiakpe Ernest Sephe condemned the alleged abduction, stating that the victims were ordinary civilians returning from a wedding. He said the incident had caused immense pain and trauma to their families and described it as unjustifiable and inhumane. A family member of one of the abducted persons, Pastor Kenpibou, thanked the gathering for its support and solidarity during the difficult period. Solidarity messages were also delivered by representatives of the Liangmai Council Nagaland, Rongmei Council Nagaland, Zeliangrong Mipui Organisation Nagaland, Zeliang Women Organisation, Zeliangrong Students' Union Nagaland and Zeliang Students' Union Nagaland. The programme was chaired by ZBN vice president Adaube Hiekha Hau. Rev. Dr. Mongzeung Mpom, pastor of Jalukie Town Local Baptist Church, offered the invocation, while the vote of thanks was delivered by ZBN speaker Nikodim. The programme concluded with a benediction by Pastor James Gonmei of SDAC.

ANSAM gives Manipur government four-day deadline over release of six abducted Naga hostages

Imphal, May 30: The All Naga Students' Association, Manipur (ANSAM) has issued a four-day ultimatum to the Manipur government, demanding immediate action to trace and secure the release of six Liangmai Naga hostages who were allegedly abducted by Kuki militant groups operating under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement.

The decision was taken during an Emergency Presidential Council Meeting of ANSAM held on May 24, which was attended by current and former leaders of the organisation.

The meeting reviewed the security situation in the state and discussed the abduction of 18 Liangmai Naga individuals and residents of Leilon Vaiphei village on May 13. According to ANSAM, the abduction took place in broad daylight near the Leimakhong-based 57 Mountain Division area.

While some of the abducted persons were later released, six hostages, including two pastors, are yet to be traced. The association expressed concern over what it described as the failure of the state



government to take effective steps to establish the whereabouts of the remaining hostages despite repeated appeals, public demonstrations and statements by Naga civil society organisations.

ANSAM said the government has been given four days from May 29 to determine the condition and location of the six hostages and ensure their safe return. The organisation warned that if no action is taken within the stipulated period, the Naga community would be compelled to collectively boycott the present government. Addressing the media, ANSAM president Th.

Angteshang Maring said the association would an-

nounce further steps if the government failed to respond within the deadline. "After the four-day ultimatum, we will declare a boycott against the government and we will come up with a line of action, where we will appeal to the Naga people to continue supporting the decision of the association," Maring said.

The organisation also stated that it may urge Naga legislators supporting the current government to withdraw their support in the interest of the security and welfare of the Naga people. ANSAM further raised concerns regarding Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen and questioned both the state and central governments over

what it termed inadequate action against individuals allegedly linked to the abduction case.

The association also criticised recent remarks made by Manipur Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam on incidents along the Indo-Myanmar border, alleging that authorities had failed to adequately address attacks on Naga villages in Kamjong district earlier this month. As part of its resolutions, ANSAM demanded the immediate arrest and prosecution of those responsible for a series of killings involving Naga civilians and church leaders in different parts of the state.

It also called for the immediate abrogation of the Suspension of Operations agreement between the Government of India and Kuki militant groups, alleging that the arrangement had failed to prevent violence against civilians. The association appealed to both the Centre and the Manipur government to take urgent measures to secure the release of the six hostages and prevent any further deterioration of the law and order situation in the state.

Assam man beaten to death in Tamil Nadu village

Guwahati, May 30: A 35-year-old man from Assam allegedly died after being assaulted by relatives of two women and local residents in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvallur district, police said on May 30. The deceased was identified as Prasenjit Das, who had reportedly arrived in the district a day earlier along with five other youths from Assam in search of employment. According to police, the incident occurred in Ramarajakandigai village near Vengal when Das allegedly approached a house where two women were alone and asked for drinking water. Police said he was allegedly under the influence of alcohol and became involved in a verbal altercation with the women. The women later informed their relatives about the incident. Subsequently, the relatives, along with some local residents, allegedly confronted and assaulted Das. During the investigation, Vengal police found that six youths from Assam had arrived in Tiruvallur district a day before the incident in search of work, and Das had gone to Ramarajakandigai village where the assault took place.

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Ensuring coordination and timely action remains a priority," Rio wrote on X. According to a press release, the Chief minister also emphasised on timely intervention, seamless communication and collective responsibility. He directed all responsible departments to ensure that machinery, equipment and emergency response sys-



tems were strategically positioned and maintained in full operational readiness to respond to any exigency during the monsoon season. Rio also reaffirmed the government's commitment to safeguarding public safety and minimising disruptions during the monsoon season. The meeting reviewed the State's readiness based on meteorological inputs presented by the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA), which highlighted likely rainfall patterns and potential risk areas across Nagaland. Departments including PWD (R&B) and NHIDCL briefed the meeting on

preparedness of road infrastructure, ongoing maintenance works, identification of vulnerable stretches and measures being undertaken to address possible landslides and disruptions. Home guards, civil defence and SDRF outlined emergency operation plans, deployment of resources and response mechanisms to ensure prompt action during emergencies.

The health & family welfare department apprised the meeting on healthcare preparedness, including readiness of medical personnel, availability of essential medicines and contingency measures for emergency situations.

The Food & Civil Supplies Department, along with Agriculture and allied departments, informed the house on the availability, stocking and distribution of essential commodities to ensure uninterrupted supply during the monsoon period. In view of the vulnerability of National Highways, particularly NH-29 (Dimaapur-Kohima) and NH-02 (Kohima-Mao), the meeting deliberated on measures to tackle landslides and road disruptions during the monsoon season.

It also discussed regulating the movement of heavy vehicles, especially those with more than 10-wheel configurations, to ensure road safety and smooth traffic flow. State Deputy Chief Minister TR Zeliang, Road and Bridges Minister G. Kaito Aye, Advisor for Urban Development and Municipal Affairs Zhaleo Rio and Advisor for New and Renewable Energy and NSDMA Z. Nyusietho Nyuthe also reviewed key concerns and shared inputs on the state's preparedness. (EOM)

Kaziranga sees record tourist footfall as visitor numbers cross 4.68 lakh

Guwahati, May 30: Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve recorded its highest-ever tourist footfall in 2025-26, welcoming 4.68 lakh visitors during the financial year, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Thursday. The UNESCO World Heritage Site registered an increase of more than 15 per cent compared to the previous year, when 4.06 lakh tourists visited the park. The chief minister described 2025-26 as the "best year on record" for Kaziranga and said the growth reflected Assam's continued focus on wildlife conservation and tourism development.

"Tourist footfall rose to 4.68 lakh, up from 4.06 lakh the previous year. A decade ago, the figure stood at just 1.55 lakh. The transformation has been steady, deliberate and sustained," Sarma said in a series of posts on X. The chief minister also highlighted a significant rise in international arrivals.

According to him, the number of foreign tourists increased from 17,693 to 30,474 during the last fiscal year, indicating growing global interest in Assam's premier wildlife destination. Sarma further stated that Kaziranga has attracted 5.48 lakh visitors since April 2025, making it one of India's most successful tourism destinations.

He said visits by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the King of Bhutan and more than 60 Heads of Mission had helped enhance the park's interna-



tional profile. "When travellers from across the world choose Assam, it validates our efforts to build globally competitive tourism infrastructure," he said.

The chief minister credited the state's conservation efforts for strengthening Kaziranga's appeal. He said Assam had achieved several years of zero rhino poaching in the park and pointed to recent sightings of the rare Golden Tiger, growth in the one-horned rhinoceros population, increasing Gangetic dolphin tourism and the return of migratory birds such as the Smew as indicators of a healthier ecosystem.

Sarma also highlighted the expansion of tourism activities across

the region, including boat safaris in Panpur and Laokhowa-Burachapori, cycling trails, birdwatching circuits, trekking routes and community-based tourism initiatives aimed at generating livelihood opportunities for local residents. Referring to the proposed Kaziranga Elevated Corridor project, the chief minister said the initiative would ensure safer wildlife movement while improving connectivity for people and visitors. "Development and conservation must move together," he said. He added that Assam's tourism strategy remains focused on three key goals — protecting nature, creating livelihoods and developing destinations capable of attracting visitors from across the world.

Northeast’s first “New Age Tech Skills Centre” inaugurated in Aizawl

Aizawl, May 30: Mizoram’s School Education Minister Dr. Vanlalthlana on Friday inaugurated the Northeast region’s first-ever “New Age Tech Skills Centre” at Government Comprehensive Model School, Model Veng, Aizawl. The centre has been established under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of Bharat Forge Ltd., a globally renowned company in the field of forging and defence manufacturing. The project’s technical partner is SimuSoft Technologies, which has taken the lead in setting up the centre, providing training, and developing the curriculum. The initiative is being implemented in collaboration with the School Education Department, Government of Mizoram. The project originated from the CSR workshop organised in Aizawl in June 2025 by the Confederation of Indian Industry and the CSR Cell, Government of Mizoram.

The New Age Tech Skills Centre is the first school-level technology skills lab of its kind in Mizoram and across the Northeast region. With support from Bharat Forge CSR and the technical expertise of SimuSoft Technologies, students will receive training in advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), 3D Printing, CAD, CNC Simulation, and Drone Technology.

This initiative is an important step towards achieving the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 by bridging classroom learning with practical and industry-relevant technical education. SimuSoft Technologies has also developed specialised AI curriculum materials and textbooks for school students, which were officially launched during the programme.

The programme featured the formal inauguration of the centre along with live demonstrations of AI, robotics, IoT, and simulation technologies.

Several dignitaries attended the programme. Dr. Vanlalthlana attended as Chief Guest, while Dr. Leena Deshpande attended as Guest of Honour. School Education Secretary David Lalthantluanga attended as Special Guest. The programme was chaired by Angela Zothanpuui, Director, School Education. Representatives from various technical institutions were also present at the event.

Mizoram to launch MizoTaxi app for transparent and government-approved transport fares

Aizawl, May 30: The Mizoram government has announced the launch of “MizoTaxi”, a mobile application aimed at ensuring transparency in public transport fares and preventing overcharging by transport operators. According to an official release, the application will be introduced in Aizawl city and is scheduled to become operational from July 1. The initiative is part of the government’s efforts to improve commuter services through the use of digital technology and strengthen accountability in the transport sector.

The MizoTaxi app has been designed for passengers using taxis, two-wheeler taxis and auto-rickshaws. Through the platform, commuters will be able to check government-approved fare rates before undertaking their journeys and ensure that they are charged according to officially prescribed rates. Officials said the application will provide passengers with a simple and reliable way to verify transport fares, helping reduce confusion and disputes between commuters and drivers. The move is also expected to discourage instances of over-

charging and promote fair pricing practices across the public transport network. The government believes that greater transparency in fare collection will improve public confidence in urban transport services and make daily travel more convenient for residents and visitors alike. The launch of the app forms part of Mizoram’s broader push towards technology-driven governance and improved public service delivery. By integrating digital solutions into everyday services, the state aims to make government-regulated systems more accessible and user-friendly.

Mizoram launches Northeast’s first New Age Tech Skills Centre in Aizawl

Aizawl, May 30: Mizoram took a significant step towards strengthening technology-based education with the launch of the Northeast region’s first New Age Tech Skills Centre at the Government Comprehensive Model School in Aizawl. The centre was inaugurated by Mizoram School Education Minister Vanlalthlana and is aimed at providing students with hands-on training in emerging technologies and industry-relevant technical skills. Officials said the facility has been established under the

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of Bharat Forge Limited with technical support from SimuSoft Technologies in collaboration with the School Education Department. The centre is equipped to offer training in a range of advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), 3D printing, computer-aided design (CAD), CNC simulation and drone technology. The initiative is expected to give students early exposure to rapidly evolving technological fields

and prepare them for future academic and career opportunities. According to officials, the project has been designed to bridge the gap between traditional classroom learning and practical technological applications. Through hands-on training and project-based learning, students will gain a better understanding of modern technologies that are increasingly shaping industries across the world. The New Age Tech Skills Centre is also expected to help build innovation, creativity and problem-solving abilities among stu-

dents while encouraging interest in science, engineering and technology-related disciplines. Officials said the initiative is aligned with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasises skill development, experiential learning and the integration of technology into education. The launch of the centre marks an important milestone for Mizoram’s education sector and reflects the state’s efforts to equip young learners with future-ready skills in an increasingly technology-driven world.

Meerut Cantonment Board Member Caught Red-Handed Accepting Rs.300,000 Bribe

New Delhi, May 30 (Agency): The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)has arrested Satish Kumar Sharma, a nominated member of the Meerut Cantonment Board, while allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs.300,000.In a statement issued on Saturday, the CBI said it had registered a case against the accused on Friday following allegations that he had demanded a bribe of Rs.300,000. According to the complaint, Sharma allegedly sought the payment from the complainant in exchange for ensuring the smooth continuation of a tender related to parking, canteen operations, and entry fee collection in the Gandhi Bagh area of Meerut Cantonment.The tender had been awarded to a private firm operated in the name of the complainant’s mother.

Acting on the complaint, the CBI laid a trap on the same day and apprehended Sharma red-handed while he was allegedly accepting the Rs.300,000 bribe from the complainant. The arrested accused will be produced before the competent court in Ghaziabad, the agency said.

Maharashtra-MP Highway Link Almost Ready

New Delhi, May 30 (Agency): Construction of the 47-kilometre-long NH-753L, being developed at an estimated cost of approximately Rs.944 crore to connect Boregaon in Maharashtrawith Shahpur in Madhya Pradesh, is nearing completion. The highway is expected to be inaugurated and opened to traffic shortly. The new four-lane corridor will provide modern connectivity to one of Central India’s key agricultural regions and serve as a fast, safe, and seamless route between Indore and Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar.

GMC Reintroduces Monthly Garbage Collection Fee for Guwahati Households

Guwahati, May 30 (Agency): In a move aimed at strengthening urban sanitation and enhancing the city’s aesthetic appeal, the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) has decided to reintroduce a user fee for household garbage collection services. The announcement was made by GMC Mayor Mrigen Sarania during a press conference held on Saturday.

Addressing the media, the Mayor said that every household in Guwahati will now have to pay a monthly garbage collection fee of ₹30. The press conference was also attended by GMC Commissioner Chinmoy Prakash Phukan and senior official Smita Roy. The civic body had been providing the service free of cost until recently.

According to the Mayor, the decision has been taken to improve waste management practices and ensure a cleaner and more efficient sanitation system

across the city. He urged residents to cooperate with the municipal authorities in maintaining cleanliness and preserving the beauty of Guwahati.

As part of a broader beautification initiative, the Mayor also appealed to citizens to use pigeon-flower themed colours around their homes and premises. He further announced the launch of a new theme song for garbage collection vehicles operating in the city.

While the decision has drawn mixed reactions from sections of residents, GMC officials maintained that the fee is necessary to sustain better waste management services and improve overall urban cleanliness. However, the Mayor did not clarify what action would be taken against private garbage collectors who, in some localities, are reportedly charging households up to ₹200 per month for waste collection services.

Jairam Ramesh Raises Questions Over CBSE’s On-Screen Marking System

New Delhi, May 30 (Agency): Congress General Secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh has raised concerns over the On-Screen Marking (OSM) system introduced for the Central Board of Secondary Education Class 12 Board Examinations, alleging that the system was implemented in haste and has created confusion among students and parents.In a post on social media, Ramesh claimed that several shortcomings had come to light through an assessment conducted by Class 12 student Sarthak Siddhant and another independent review. He questioned why the CBSE decided to implement the OSM system only 74 days before the examinations, despite pilot testing reportedly identifying 36 technical and evaluation-related concerns. He further alleged that changes were made to the tender process that effectively granted exemptions to blacklisted companies. Ramesh questioned whether these modifications were designed to benefit a particular company. According to him, the tender conditions stipulated a minimum annual turnover of Rs.50 crore, a requirement that allegedly limited eligibility to a specific firm.

Meghalaya signs host state agreement for 39th National Games; Indoor hall inaugurated

Shillong, May 30: Meghalaya achieved a major milestone in its sporting journey as the Host State Agreement for the 39th National Games 2027 was officially signed on Saturday at the J.N. Sports Complex, Shillong, alongside the inauguration of the new Integrated Multipurpose Indoor Hall. The programme was attended by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Chief Minister Shri Conrad K. Sangma, Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse, Meghalaya Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Shri Wailadmiki Shylla, and Indian Olympic Association President Dr. P. T. Usha.



Dr. P. T. Usha described the development as a significant step forward for sports in Meghalaya and expressed confidence that the state would successfully host the National Games in 2027. The newly inaugurated Integrated Multipurpose Indoor Hall is expected to serve as one of the key venues for the National Games and provide modern facilities for athletes across the region.

LG Manoj Sinha Inaugurates Third Edition Of Kashmir Literature Festival

Srinagar, May 30 (Agency): Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today inaugurated the third edition of Kashmir Literature Festival in Srinagar. On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor urged writers on shaping positive discourse through fiction, non-fiction and other creative forms and inspire people because writer’s craft lives not only in words, but in the pulse of people.

Addressing a gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said that we must erase every trace of the colonial mindset and ensure that people abroad do not distort our history and present to serve their own narratives. He said it is the responsibility of writers to correct such errors and take the truth to global readers.“We must repeatedly remind the world that when the Vedas were composed some 6,000 years ago, India was

the center of the world’s economy, education, culture, and philosophy. For centuries, India was the engine of global civilization and culture. It laid the foundations for socio economic advancement across the world through its gift in science, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine,” the Lieutenant Governor said.He stated that there is an urgent need to restore history and convey its true form to every section of society so that India’s narrative is properly shaped. The Lieutenant Governor observed that our ancestors, since the Vedic age, recorded facts and transmitted knowledge with great accuracy, but for various reasons modern times saw India lose the habit of writing its own history.“We failed to communicate our priceless traditions, culture, knowledge, and sciences and that’s why many people to claim that cer-

tain things came from other places or introduced by the invaders. These assertions are baseless,” he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that foreign historians have, sometimes deliberately, omitted India’s ancient discoveries and achievements in science, literature, art, and architecture.

“When India stood at the peak of scientific achievement, many countries showed almost no mention of science. The earliest references to science, mathematics, and astronomy in Persia and other places appear only in the eighth century, and even those owe much to India. Europe’s first Renaissance in the 12th century drew on India’s treasury of knowledge, science, culture, and art. Centuries before any other countries discovered invention and innovations, India had already established itself as a scientific civilization,” the Lieu-

tenant Governor said.The Lieutenant Governor said that India’s modernity has often led the world, with scientific contributions unmatched in history. He also said that writers should present creation of our nation’s great talents in simple, accessible language.“India’s story is not only of the past but of the present. Despite centuries of subjugation and plunder, we have risen to become the world’s fourth largest economy, the fastest growing major economy for years, and by 2047 we aim for a fully developed nation. Today, pride and ownership of this heritage are awakening across society. The task is not self praise, but for respected writers and thinkers to build India’s new narrative on this strong foundation. They must remember that writers have the power to change civilizations,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

Wild Elephant Attacks Claim Two Lives in Assam’s Nagaon; Pregnant Elephant Electrocuted in Goalpara

Goalpara, May 30: A tragic series of human-elephant conflict incidents unfolded in Assam on May 30, resulting in the deaths of two villagers in Nagaon district and a pregnant wild elephant in Goalpara district.

In Nagaon, two people, identified as Chahah Ud-din and Hanufa Khatun, lost their lives after a herd of wild elephants entered Kandapara and Ranglubasti villages under the Kampur Range Forest Office during the early hours of the morning. The elephants reportedly trampled the victims to death while moving through human settlements.

According to family members, Hanufa Khatun was dragged out of her house by an elephant before being fatally attacked. Residents said the herd created panic across several villages, damaging property and injuring a number of people throughout the night.

Several villagers sustained serious injuries in the attacks and were provided medical treatment. Forest Department officials and local authorities have been monitoring the situation and assessing the extent of the damage caused by the elephant movement.

The incident has once again highlighted the growing concern over recurring human-elephant conflict in the region, leaving affected communi-



ties in shock and mourning.

Meanwhile, in a separate incident in Goalpara district, a pregnant wild elephant died after being electrocuted in the Mornoi area. Officials said the elephant had entered a village from a nearby forest in search of food when it came into contact with a live electric wire on Wednesday night.

Forest Department personnel recovered the car-

cass and conducted a preliminary investigation. A post-mortem examination later confirmed that the elephant was pregnant. The animal and its unborn calf were subsequently buried in accordance with wildlife conservation protocols.

Authorities are continuing their investigation and are expected to examine the source and condition of the electric line involved in the elephant’s death.

AAP Targets Delhi Government Over Monsoon Preparedness, Alleges Delay in Drain Desilting Work

New Delhi, May 30 (Agency): The Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday criticized the Delhi Government over its preparedness for the upcoming monsoon season, alleging that the cleaning and desilting of drains across the city remain incomplete despite the onset of the rainy season drawing near.Ankush Narang, Leader of the Opposition in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and a senior AAP leader, said in a video statement that drains under the jurisdiction of both the Public Works Department

(PWD) and the MCD in East, West, and Central Delhi have yet to be properly cleaned. He claimed that even major drains such as those in Shahdara and Najafgarh have not been fully cleared.

Narang urged the government to move beyond what he described as a narrow focus on the city’s flood-prone Minto Bridge area and assess conditions across the entire national capital to prevent widespread waterlogging during the monsoon.

He pointed out that the month of

May is ending and June has begun, with the monsoon expected to arrive in Delhi during the same month. However, according to him, the cleaning of drains managed by the PWD and the MCD remains incomplete. He alleged that in several parts of East Delhi, West Delhi, and Central Delhi, drain-cleaning operations have not even commenced. In many locations, only the first phase of cleaning has been completed, while the second phase is still expected to take another 17 days.Questioning the

government’s preparedness, Narang asked whether Delhi residents would once again have to face severe waterlogging and overflowing sewage and drain water during the rainy season. The opposition leader further stated that citizens across the capital are concerned because both major and minor drains have yet to be fully cleaned. He warned that, as a result, streets and roads under the jurisdiction of both the MCD and the PWD could once again witness extensive waterlogging during heavy rainfall.

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The Pressure to Stay Constantly Updated

Modern society places increasing pressure on individuals to remain constantly informed and updated. News cycles, social media trends, and digital conversations move rapidly, creating fear of falling behind. While awareness is important, the constant flow of information can become mentally ex-

hausting. Many people consume more information than they can meaningfully process. This culture of nonstop updates often reduces attention span and increases anxiety rather than improving understanding. Staying informed should not come at the cost of peace of mind. Quality of information matters more than quantity.

Insufficient index



Economic orthodoxy has dominated policymaking since World War II, as seen by the UN’s latest proposal to expand beyond gross domestic product. The UN contends that the world has grown dangerously reliant on an index that was never intended to gauge human progress in its study, Counting What Counts: A Compass of Progress for People and Planet. In addition to economic success, the suggested framework of 31 indicators aims to evaluate nations using metrics like well-being, equality, sustainability, institutional quality, and environmental health. The intervention comes at a time when economies are expanding and social inequality, ecological deterioration, and public discontent are intensifying. The main argument is hard to refute: GDP has historically promoted a limited understanding of communal prosperity, and what governments measure determines what they value.

The 1930s saw the emergence of GDP’s dominance, which was cemented in the post-war international order. Since GDP provided a straightforward indicator of economic output, it became the standard for measuring national success. However, the father of the GDP conception, Simon Kuznets, had cautioned against confusing national welfare with national income.

The value of goods and services produced inside an economy is recorded by GDP. It doesn’t show how wealth is allocated, if growth enhances people’s lives, or whether economic activity is undermining the pillars of future prosperity. India is one example of a nation that can see remarkable prosperity while experiencing significant environmental degradation, growing inequality, and declining public services. In GDP calculations, unpaid caregiving, dwindling social trust, deteriorating communal life, and economic losses are usually

concealed. The impoverished are reduced to their share of economic production; their opportunities, security, health, and education are all lost. Instead of being ecosystems essential to human and global well-being, forests seem like resources to be plundered. A framework that consistently prioritizes productivity while marginalizing circumstances that support human welfare is the end consequence. The UN proposal’s attempt to rectify these inaccuracies is what makes it significant. Health, education, subjective well-being, social cohesion, institutional quality, inequality, poverty, biodiversity, and greenhouse gas emissions are all included in the 31 indicators. They provide a more comprehensive evaluation of whether societies are making significant advancements. The ramifications are significant for India. GDP statistics are used to support claims that it is the fastest-growing major economy in the world. A more comprehensive evaluation is not as flattering. Air pollution, public health outcomes, educational quality, gender inequality, income concentration, and environmental stress are issues that India still faces. China performs far better on a number of indicators pertaining to poverty reduction, health, education, infrastructure, and state capacity, despite grave concerns about political freedoms and human rights. This comparison shows why GDP is not a sufficient indicator of wealth on its own.

For developing countries, economic growth is still crucial, but it cannot be viewed as a goal in itself. Despite its detractors, the UN’s dashboard does not lessen the significance of economic growth. It situates such growth within a framework that considers whether affluence is sustainable, equitable, and able to enhance the quality of life for both current and future generations.

Sugarcane farmers in Uttar Pradesh are finally grinning once more

The prosperity that can be seen on the faces of farmers is the true measure of success in any state, and this is only achievable when villages, farms, and farmers are positioned at the center of the development framework. The nation’s core is strengthened when state policies are focused on farmers. This is due to the fact that farming is the basis for the continuation of life, culture, and civilization rather than just a means of production. From this angle, the actions performed for farmers in Uttar Pradesh over the past nine years represent not just a government’s determination but also the fundamental idea for the state’s overall growth. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath demonstrated his objectives shortly after taking office by eliminating farmers’ loans. Since then, the state has been at the top of the nation thanks to initiatives made especially for sugarcane growers. Because the government’s goals and policies have remained clear, farmers in Uttar Pradesh are now not just a component of the economy but also emblems of independence and dignity. Consequently, Uttar Pradesh has paid sugarcane growers almost Rs 3.22 lakh crore. The highest level of commitment from the government is shown in this statistic. No other state in the nation has given sugarcane growers such a substantial payout. This accomplishment demonstrates the state’s confidence. The state’s sugarcane farmers were in a terrible situation about ten years ago. Farmers were drowning in debt, mills were closed, cane dues were unpaid, and governments only made promises. The plight



of sugarcane growers had spread from Purvanchal to western Uttar Pradesh. The state’s future had started to look like rotting cane, discouraged farmers, and carts loaded with sugarcane lying outside sugar factories for months.

But the Yogi Government shown that change requires willpower. For thousands of families who have spent countless sleepless nights waiting for these dues, the payment of almost Rs 3.22 lakh crore to sugarcane farmers is their financial lifeline. Farmers in western Uttar Pradesh now proudly and enthusiastically arrive at sugar mills. They freely admit that in the past, sugar mills would postpone payments and showed no concern for the survival of farmers’ families.

They are no longer concerned about their children’s schooling or marriages because payments

are now sent on schedule. These days, farming seems like a question of honor. Their lives are no longer stigmatized by helplessness. This is only one step in an ongoing process, not a single decision that benefits farmers. The price of sugarcane was raised by Rs 30 per quintal during the 2025–2026 crushing season. Uttar Pradesh has shown that raising farmers’ incomes is a government priority rather than just an election pledge at a time when some governments in the nation are reluctant to offer fair support prices for sugarcane. As a result, this rise is remarkable. The whole economic impact of the crushing of crores of quintals of sugarcane in a state like Uttar Pradesh is in the billions of dollars. Every rupee increase directly benefits the farmer who toils in the scorching afternoon heat and har-

vests crops in freezing cold weather. One should interpret this price hike as a statement of ideology. It shows that the government values farmers’ labor and appreciates their diligence. For this reason, investments in agriculture are now made without reluctance. Additionally, farmers are gaining technical power. Today, Uttar Pradesh is the highest sugarcane-producing state in the country. This is not merely the result of an expansion in agricultural land, but the outcome of policies that restored farmers’ confidence in farming. When farmers are assured that they will receive fair prices for their crops and timely payments, they cultivate more land with greater dedication. The results are visible. Uttar Pradesh has now surpassed both Maharashtra and Karnataka in average sugar recovery rate. This

is a major achievement, resulting from improvements across the entire system, from fields to mills. Better seeds, scientific farming, timely irrigation and improved efficiency of sugar mills have together made this possible. Padma Shri farmer Ram Saran Verma from Barabanki says that the combination of government policies and farmers’ dedication forms the foundation of this success.

The government’s additional initiatives for farmers’ prosperity have improved agriculture and increased farmers’ self-assurance. Farmers no longer had to go to moneylenders for irrigation and fertilizer because to decisions like offering agricultural loans and Kisan Credit Cards. The state issued 2.03 crore Farmer IDs between 2024–2025 and March 2026. For farmers, this ID acts as a digital passport

that guarantees the benefits of government programs go straight into their bank accounts without intervention from middlemen. The crucial element is that the government treated farmers as people deserving of respect and dignity rather than just as recipients of aid. A sugarcane plant is more than just a crop when it sways in the field; it is a family’s hope. That hope is more powerful than ever in Uttar Pradesh today. Farmers in the state are now pursuing prosperity rather than just a means of subsistence. But there are still a lot of difficulties. Emerging diseases and unpredictable weather brought on by climate change are causing new catastrophes. Farmers’ prosperity is a question of social justice, cultural preservation, and national self-reliance in addition to being an economic accomplishment.

Although Tony Blair claims to be all about the future, his vision is sadly mired in the past

Give the man credit. Tony Blair has succeeded in bringing the Labour party together in a lovely, harmonic unity, something that even a week ago seemed unattainable and that he barely managed while in government.

Because of him, T Blair is being denounced by Andy Burnham, Wes Streeting, and Keir Starmer, the man they intend to succeed.

Give more credit to the triple election victor. This expert in politics is still able to control the news cycle. By deftly scheduling the publication of his approximately 6,000-word piece on the future of Britain and Labour’s shortcomings to coincide with the parliamentary break, he was able to gain extensive coverage over the course of many days on all platforms.

Additionally, the material is understandable, approachable, and helpful for analysis. The portrayal of leaders of state as bus drivers is one of the iconic pictures. Conventional leaders pause and discuss ways to get past a brick wall for several hours. People like Donald Trump speed through it. Blair argues, “Yes, there are bits flying off the bus... the passengers feel mildly nauseous,” but the US president has demonstrated “efficacy,” and voters appreciate that. When Blair makes an

intervention like this, many are tempted to play the man rather than the ball, believing that Blair is ineligible to speak on any topic at any moment because of the term “Iraq.” In actuality, Iraq is pertinent, but not as a justification for ignoring Blair’s arguments, but rather as part of a sincere response to them.

The former prime minister claims that Britain is not ready for either of the “two epochal changes” that are currently taking place. The first is geopolitical; the US and China are the two superpowers that are progressively ruling the world, with India following closely after. What’s strange, though, is that Blair’s opinion has not changed from the one he held with such disastrous results 25 years ago: that Britain must remain with the US, regardless of who is in charge in Washington or where that leads, despite all the changes evident in this Trump era, including the breakdown, if not deliberate wrecking, of the post-1945 order. Blair criticizes Starmer for not supporting Trump in his battle against Iran. Blair claims that Starmer’s refusal was “not the best way to treat our ally” and that the White House only desired the use of British military bases for the refueling of US aircraft. However, Blair’s description ignores the fact that the war has been a complete

catastrophe rather than just “controversial.” You just need to look at the draft ceasefire extension deal that Trump distributed to US allies this week if you’re not affected by the devastation and fatalities. If both Washington and Tehran sign, it will be proof that none of the war’s primary, if shifting, objectives have been met. It would not have put an end to Iran’s nuclear aspirations; rather, it would have simply reopened talks on the subject, which were already in progress when the US-Israeli attack started on February 28.

If anything, this conflict will have only increased Iran’s desire for nuclear weapons by strengthening the regime’s hardliners and proving the worth of a weapon that would be so terrible that it would prevent a future US attack. While diminishing the US’s own arsenal, it has disrupted rather than destroyed Iran’s ballistic missiles capabilities, which is currently being quickly replenished. Above all, it has given the regime what one analyst refers to as a “weapon of mass disruption”—Iran’s grip on the global economy through the Strait of Hormuz—while failing to stop Tehran from obtaining a weapon of mass destruction. The proposed agreement will allow commercial shipping to resume via the strait, which is plainly not an ac-

complishment at all because it was the situation on February 27. Furthermore, by imposing charges on future Hormuz cargo or obtaining access to up to \$12 billion in frozen assets, the Iranian dictatorship will become significantly wealthier. Simply said, nothing has been accomplished by this disastrous conflict, not even for the courageous Iranian rebels fighting the regime; according to Amnesty International, over 6,000 of them have been detained since it started. Blair believes that Britain ought to have supported this war. It serves as a reminder that Blair still has the blind spot that caused such disastrous outcomes over 20 years ago. His worst mistake in 2003 was to believe that support for the United States had to be universal, without differentiating between different administrations or military expeditions. “We learned at terrible cost in Iraq what happens when loyalty replaces judgment,” as Streeting stated this week. Yes, we did learn that lesson. However, it appears that Blair never did. Rather, he maintains that not much has changed in the western alliance, implying that Mark Carney, the prime minister of Canada, was incorrect to refer to a “rupture,” despite Blair’s admission in the same line that Trump had jeopardized Canada’s “very independence as a nation.”

In a similar vein, he claims that the US views the Arctic “no differently” than Europe, seemingly oblivious to the fact that Trump has not renounced his threats to forcibly take Greenland from Denmark, an ally of Europe and NATO.

Blair’s views on Europe are even more insightful. He agrees with Burnham that the moment is not right to consider re-entering the EU, but his justification is insightful. His gripe with Brussels is that it is overly focused on “addressing the dangers rather than seizing the opportunities” of technology. Blair used to have a renowned sense of what the British public thought, but he is glaringly out of sync in this regard. One of the strongest reasons in favor of the EU is that it has the strength and determination to confront the internet firms that are currently causing such damage to our collective well-being, from the condition of our democracies to the mental health of young people. However, Blair views that restraining hand as a problem that should be avoided, in fact as a justification for keeping our distance from our closest neighbors. This takes us to Blair’s second epochal shift: technology, particularly artificial intelligence. One former close colleague bemoans Blair’s propensity to warn of unchangeable forces that, like the weath-

er, must just be accepted. “Twenty years ago it was globalization, now it’s AI.” However, in this instance, it is difficult to interpret Blair’s predictions as the sole result of objective analysis. He is not impartial on this issue.

Larry Ellison, whose Oracle firm is heavily invested in AI infrastructure, donated \$130 million to the Tony Blair Institute, or TBI, between 2021 and 2023, with promises of an additional \$218 million. The TBI and Oracle have become “inseparable,” with the former serving as a “sales engine” for the latter, according to one thorough assessment based on copious testimony from current and former TBI employees. Blair’s “trademark evangelism is now focused on AI, its power to transform government... and why everyone should listen to Larry Ellison,” according to this account. Blair’s Labour detractors have mostly concentrated on the essay’s omission of any reference to inequality or poverty. He would argue that you can only deal with those problems when the economy is doing well. Perhaps. However, those are hardly his motivating issues. He now sees the world from either Trump’s Oval Office or Ellison’s boardroom. Although Tony Blair’s voice is becoming farther away, he is always worth listening to.

Analysts advocate purchasing Bajaj Auto and Chambal Fertilizers



New Delhi: Markets were quiet on Wednesday, finishing practically flat amid conflicting indications. After a flat start, the Nifty traded in a tight range for the majority of the day before settling essentially flat at the 23,907 level. Sectoral participation remained uneven, with energy, metals, and auto sectors outperforming, while financials and private banking companies were under pressure. Broader markets also showed a mixed trend, with the midcap index up approximately 0.4% while the smallcap index remained nearly unchanged, indicating ongoing selective involvement outside frontline stocks. Investor mood remained cautious amid ongoing concerns about the weak US-Iran agreement and rising crude oil prices. The rupee's continued depreciation, combined with sustained foreign institutional withdrawals, impacted on market confidence. Despite the lack of significant directional signs, rotating purchasing in particu-

lar sectors, resilience in broader markets, and stock-specific earnings responses all contributed to the indexes' stability. Interestingly, the India VIX — a major indication of market concern that often moves inversely to the larger market trend — has corrected roughly 15% this week and is now sitting around the 15 mark. However, the increased comfort level has yet to be reflected in benchmark index movement. While the index's consolidation phase may persist, we restate our stock-specific strategy based on current sectoral trends, while keeping a careful eye on overnight risk exposure. Bajaj Auto Ltd continues to exhibit relative strength compared to its peers, as the stock has been maintaining a steady higher top-higher bottom structure while sustaining above its key rising moving averages. The price action reflects sustained buying interest, with the stock consistently forming base-on-base patterns and gradually trending higher. In contin-

uation of this constructive setup, the stock has recently witnessed a breakout from an elevated base formed in the shape of a cup-and-handle pattern, which signals potential continuation of the prevailing uptrend. Considering this, one may consider initiating long positions in the stock within the mentioned accumulation range to participate in the anticipated upside move. Chambal Fertilisers is showing signs of emerging from a steady base formation near its long-term support zone, represented by the 200-week EMA. The six-month consolidation phase at the lower end of the corrective structure suggests sustained absorption of supply, thereby limiting further downside pressure. The recent upside breakout indicates a potential resumption of the broader uptrend after nearly a year of corrective decline. Supported by renewed momentum in the fertilizer sector and an improving technical setup, the stock appears well-positioned for a potential near-term upward move. We are witnessing renewed interest in the energy and energy-related stocks after a brief consolidation phase, and Premier Energies Ltd is moving in line with the trend. The stock witnessed a strong rally following a breakout from a double-bottom pattern formed at the end of a downtrend. Post that, it took a breather, and after a minor dip, it has rebounded strongly by giving a breakout from a flag formation. This indicates structural strength in the price action, and investors may consider accumulating the stock within the mentioned levels to participate in the potential upward move.

Oil prices tumble by more than 1% on speculation of a potential US-Iran ceasefire accord

New Delhi: Oil prices fell over 1% on Friday, on course for their worst weekly fall since early April, following news that the US and Iran had agreed to prolong a truce, but the agreement was not yet finalized. Brent oil futures for July declined 1.1%, or \$1.04, to \$92.67 a barrel at 0330 GMT. US oil futures slid \$1.26, or 1.4%, to \$87.64 a barrel. Brent plummeted 10.5% this week, the steepest drop since the week ending April 6, while WTI sank 9.2%, the worst weekly loss since the week ending April 13. On Thursday, the US and Iran agreed to prolong a truce and eliminate shipping restrictions across the Strait of Hormuz, according to Reuters. However, US President Donald Trump has yet to accept the agreement, and Iranian state media stated that it is not finalized.

The consensus remains that the fight is finished and a settlement is on the way. "As long as this narrative holds, crude oil has



room to fall further toward trendline support in the low \$80s," IG analyst Tony Sycamore said. Prices have been volatile in recent sessions, swinging by up to \$6 for both benchmarks due to conflicting signals over a possible end to the three-month US-Israeli war on Iran and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, a key conduit for roughly a fifth

of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas supplies. Traffic via the maritime chokepoint remains a fraction of what it was before the war. Analysts at ING believe that while reopening the strait would provide immediate respite to the oil market, a recovery remains unclear. "Upstream oil production has fallen significantly since the war,

with producers shutting in production in order to manage storage constraints," ING wrote in a note. "The recovery in upstream production will be gradual rather than immediate." Refineries in the region need to increase production. This will take time, as part of the infrastructure was already hit in strikes during the conflict.

Social stock markets poised to increase as the Centre adjusts CSR investing criteria

New Delhi: In a significant boost to India's social stock exchange (SSE) ecosystem, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has permitted firms to direct a percentage of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) expenditure to not-for-profit organisations (NPOs) listed on SSEs. In a statement released on Friday, the MCA recognized investments in 'zero coupon, zero principal' (ZCZP) instruments listed on SSEs as an acceptable CSR activity. The change allows enterprises to use the SSE framework to distribute CSR funding to qualifying non-profit organizations. The move is designed to improve funding opportunities for social entrepreneurs by promoting corporate engagement in a regulated, disclosure-driven platform that emphasizes openness, accountability, and impact assessment. "This is a big step forward for India's social sector, allowing corporations to channel CSR spending through a transparent, regulated, and impact-driven platform. "It will improve trust, accountability, and access to capital for social enterprises," said Sriram Krish-



nan, the National Stock Exchange's top business development officer. Market participants stated that the revision closes a long-standing loophole in the SSE framework. While the platform was designed to promote fundraising for social entrepreneurs, CSR allocations were excluded, reducing the pool of potential financing accessible to non-profit organizations. Stakeholders have been looking for regulatory clarification on permitting CSR contributions to be channeled through

SSE instruments. The SSE framework was first proposed by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Union Budget for financial year 2019-20 as an electronic fundraising platform for social enterprises under the regulatory oversight of markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). The first listing on an SSE took place in December 2023. Currently, 90 social enterprises are registered on the NSE's social stock exchange platform. To qualify, organisations must meet eligibility criteria prescribed by Sebi and comply with detailed standards relating to social impact disclosures and financial reporting. According to MCA data, total CSR spending by companies rose to ₹34,909 crore in FY24 from ₹30,932 crore in FY23. Last year, Sebi cut the minimum investment amount in ZCZP instruments issued by NPOs on SSEs from ₹10,000 to ₹1,000, with the goal of increasing participation. These mechanisms enable social companies to raise funding for specific objectives without providing financial returns to investors.

Gold prices increased by Rs.10 to Rs.1,57,650, while silver rose by Rs.100 to Rs.2,80,100



New Delhi: The price of 24-carat gold jumped by ₹10 in early trade on Saturday, with ten kilos trading for ₹1,57,650, according to the GoodReturns website. The price of silver increased by ₹100, with one kilogram retailing for ₹2,80,100. The price of 22-carat gold climbed by ₹10, with ten grams selling

for ₹1,44,510. In Mumbai, Kolkata, and Hyderabad, ten grams of 24-carat gold cost ₹1,57,650, while in Chennai, it was ₹1,59,290. In Delhi, ten grams of 24-carat gold cost ₹1,57,800. In Mumbai, ten grams of 22-carat gold cost ₹1,44,510, the same as in Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and ₹1,46,010

in Chennai. In Delhi, ten grams of 22-carat gold cost ₹1,44,660. The price of one kilogram of silver in Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai was ₹2,80,100. The price of a kilogram of silver in Chennai was ₹2,90,100. US gold prices jumped for the second time in a row amid reports of a possible truce extension between the US and

Iran. However, prices are still expected to fall monthly due to inflation fears and increasing interest rates. Spot gold was up 0.6 per cent to \$4,519.64 per ounce at 8:52 a.m. EDT (1252 GMT). Prices fell to a two-month low of \$4,365.76 on Thursday, but closed higher. US gold futures for August delivery rose 0.4 per cent to \$4,550.00. Spot silver rose 0.7 per cent to \$76.17 per ounce, platinum gained 0.2 per cent to \$1,926.18, and palladium rose 0.9 per cent to \$1,380.94. Elsewhere, gold demand in India remained subdued due to higher prices and import duties, while premiums in top consumer China narrowed amid cautious sentiment. [GOL/AS] Spot silver fell 0.2 per cent to \$75.51 per ounce and was headed for monthly gain, while platinum steadied at \$1,923.55. Palladium gained 0.6 per cent to \$1,375.57, but was down more than 9 per cent for the month.

How can I exchange Ola, GMR Airports, and Wockhardt Analyst decodes

Mumbai: GMR Airports, Ola Electric, and Wockhardt Pharma were among the major breakout stocks in Friday's trading session, rising up to 17% on the NSE. Wockhardt Pharma was the largest mover, with the stock soaring 17% to an intra-day high of ₹2,072. Ola Electric had a 9.8% increase to ₹42.88, while GMR Airports increased by 6.4% to ₹104. In comparison, the NSE Nifty remained steady at 23,900 levels. Mayank Jain is a market analyst at ShareMarket by PhonePe decodes the expected trading future for these three breakthrough equities. Mayank Jain believes that Wockhardt Pharma has entered a high-speed growth phase on the daily charts. He highlights the stock's 7.5 per cent surge in early morning trade on the back of huge volumes. "The stock jumped over 7.5 per cent at the start of the day, breaking past its historical hurdle levels. This strong move is backed by a major multi-month breakout above the ₹1,800-₹1,850 zone, along with huge trading volume in the morning session," explains Jain. The analyst says that the old resistance zone of ₹1,750-₹1,850 has now turned into a rock-solid support floor, and with the stock now trading in uncharted territory, it has a high chance of continuing its uptrend. However, Jain of ShareMarket by PhonePe also cautions that there could be a temporary pullback to retest its support zone before moving higher. Ola Electric Mobility (OLAELEC) has finally broken out of its long multi-month downward trend. More important-



ly, the stock has crossed its 200-day Simple Moving Average (SMA), which sits around the ₹40 level says Jain. The analyst reckons that if the stock manages to stay above ₹40, the long-term trend will officially change from bearish to bullish. However, he cautions that since the stock has been falling for a very long time, it may still face immediate selling pressure from investors looking to exit as the price moves up. Jain believes this conflict between buyers and sellers creates a wait-and-hold scenario to see if the price stabilizes, with immediate support placed near the ₹38-₹40 range. GMR Airports seems to have successfully broken above the tough ₹98-₹100 resistance zone that had

capped its recent gains, notes the analyst from ShareMarket. "This breakout is well-validated by healthy trading volumes, showing a renewed interest in the counter. The old resistance zone of ₹96-₹98 is now expected to act as a primary support floor in case of temporary pullbacks," says Jain. While the stock exhibits a stable chart pattern, the analyst reckons that market participants looking to trade this momentum may consider stepping in with a strict stop-loss (SL). "This caution (SL) is necessary as the stock approaches its 52-week high around the ₹110 level, where it is highly likely to encounter strong supply and profit-booking pressure," Jain adds.

Zydus Lifesciences up 2% to a 52-week high on USFDA review approval and repurchase adjustment



New Delhi: shares of Zydus Lifesciences' stock rose on Friday, May 29, after the pharmaceutical firm revealed that the US Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) had awarded Priority Review to its New Drug Application (NDA) for saroglitazar. Sentiment was further boosted when the corporation raised the buyback price for its equity shares. Zydus Lifesciences shares gained 2.37% to a 52-week high of ₹1,115.5 per share on the NSE on Friday. Although the stock lost some of its gains, it remained popular among investors. At 12:16 PM on Friday, Zydus Lifescienc-

es shares were trading at ₹1,103.95, up 1.67 percent from the previous closing of ₹1,085.80 a share on the NSE. At the same time, the benchmark NSE Nifty50 index was trading at 23,818, down 88 points or 0.37 per cent. Zydus Therapeutics, a wholly owned subsidiary of Zydus Lifesciences Limited, on Friday said the US FDA granted Priority Review to the NDA for saroglitazar. According to the company's exchange filing, the proposed indication is for the treatment of Primary Biliary Cholangitis (PBC) in combination with ursodeoxycholic acid (UDCA) in adults

who have had an inadequate response to UDCA, or as monotherapy in patients unable to tolerate UDCA. The US FDA has assigned a Prescription Drug User Fee Act (PDUFA) target action date of November 27, 2026. "Priority Review directs US FDA attention and resources to applications for drugs that, if approved, may provide significant improvements in the safety or effectiveness of the treatment, diagnosis, or prevention of serious conditions," said Zydus Lifesciences in a release. The pharmaceutical company said the buyback price has been increased from ₹1,150 per equity share to ₹1,260 per equity share. Further, the maximum number of equity shares proposed to be bought back has been reduced from 95,65,217 equity shares to 87,30,158 equity shares, representing up to 0.87 per cent of the total number of equity shares in the paid-up share capital of the company.

CMR Green public offer will commence on June 3

New Delhi: CMR Green Technologies' ₹630 crore IPO opens on June 3 and closes on June 5. The offer for sale has been set at ₹182-192 per share. The company is estimated to be worth around ₹4,206 crore at its highest pricing point. The promoters have decreased the offering size to 32.86 million shares, down from the original proposal of 42.9 million shares. Following high institutional investor demand, the retail book of Coal India's offer for sale (OFS) was over 1.5 times subscribed on Friday. The OFS received offers for 18.4 million shares, versus 12.32 million on offer. The floor price for the share sale was established at ₹412 compared to the previous closing price of ₹457.6. The OFS allows the Centre to raise more than ₹5,000 crore.

“We could hear the roof collapsing” how Russian rockets destroyed Kyiv’s cultural sites



Ukraine: Vitalina Martynovska and her colleagues worked for four years to completely remodel Kyiv’s National Chernobyl Museum. The new streamlined displays were created to convey a new tale of the reactor explosion on April 26, 1986, which was the most devastating nuclear catastrophe in history, led to the Soviet Union’s demise, and continues to determine Ukraine’s identity today. The museum was to be dedicated not just to the outstanding effort of the “liquidators” who completed the initial cleanup following the explosion. Martynovska, the museum’s director, said it as the narrative of “all the people whose lives changed after the disaster.” It reopened to tourists on April 26, 40 years to the day after the nuclear tragedy. Then, less than a month later, on the night of May 23, a Russian missile sent a shock wave through the museum’s beautiful old structure, a former fire station. Five days later, a still stunned Martynovska stood among the museum’s burnt remnants. Firefighters struggled among the complete wreckage of all she and her crew had worked so hard to build. “There is practically no room in the museum that has not suffered damage,” she stated. “The building itself sustained significant damage, the roof was destroyed, the floor between the second and third storeys was destroyed, and collapsed; the exhibition rooms and the museum laboratory were affected.” Early evaluations indicate that around 40% of the precious

artifacts on exhibit were destroyed. Martynovska initially learned that her building was on fire about 5 a.m. on May 24. Throughout the night, Russia dispatched 60 missiles and 600 drones to Ukraine, with the majority aimed at the capital. The attack killed two people, wounded 90 others, and severely destroyed several of Kyiv’s museums and culturally valuable structures. “Twenty minutes later, I was already there,” she said. “The first thing I saw was dense smoke and flames on the roof. The windows, doors, and gates from this structure were already on the ground nearby.” “Given that I had been working on the restoration project with the team and on the project to build a new exhibition over the last four years, you can imagine what a heavy blow this was for me.” As soon as the emergency workers allowed, she and the chief curator plunged into the building to try to save what they could. “We began evacuating the artefacts while the roof was still ablaze and the fire-fighting operation was still under way,” she said. “We could hear the roof collapsing. We were constantly wading through water.” As she spoke, emergency workers were making safe a space that had housed a display about the Chernobyl area before the building of the power plant. The artefacts included old Bibles, books, icons and ceramics, most of which were destroyed. A text on the wall describing the room’s theme remained intact – translated, it read,

“Lost worlds”. The museum stores – housing the bulk of the collection of 22,000 artefacts – were safe, she said. And she had some hope that the 40% loss of artefacts on display may be revised down a little. She was clutching a pretty earthenware jug that the emergency workers had found in the blackened wreckage. They had also found, she said, the tail of a missile. Across town, wind and rain were blowing into the elegant Doric-pedimented building housing the National Art Museum of Ukraine (Namu). Shock waves had blown out nearly all its windows, ceilings were partly down and panels from its huge wooden front doors had been flung across the foyer. The sculpture of Apollo that sits atop its pediment had cracked. Its collection – ranging from ancient icons to old masters and Ukrainian modernists – is in storage or out on tour abroad. During the full-scale invasion, it has been hosting temporary exhibitions: the current show, titled Sunrise, of works by the 20th-century painter Anatoly Limarev, was protected from the onslaught of glass and debris by the temporary walls erected in the exhibition space, which acted as baffle walls. Since the attack, the exhibition has been hastily uninstalled and taken to safety. In one of its elegant galleries, the head of exhibitions, a senior conservator and two students from Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, attached to the institution for part of their art history degree, were shovelling rubble into carts. “It’s definitely an

internship they won’t forget,” said the museum spokesperson Veronika Bublei. In the early morning of 24 May, she said, it was “stress, horrible – we were running about trying to do what we could and there was no time for emotion – or we turned the stress into trying to do something practical. ‘It felt like the epicentre of a tempest, with all the doors and windows blown out – as if a tornado had blown through the building.’” “My initial feeling was one of shock,” said Namu’s director, Yulia Lytvynets, who, like the rest of her team, was dressed in workwear as the staff continued with the back-breaking cleanup operation on Thursday. “We understand that there is a war going on. Our halls are empty and our art is safe. But you’ll never be 100% ready for something like this. Even if you hide your collection, you can’t hide the building.” The museum had been preparing its next exhibition devoted to the modernist theatre designer Anatol Petrytskyi. That will now go ahead online, she said. The building is now closed to the public indefinitely. Numerous cultural buildings and institutions were reported damaged in the city after the night’s attacks, including the Zhytnyi market, a masterpiece of 1980s modernism. It was the latest attack to damage cultural buildings and cultural heritage in the country. According to Ukraine’s culture ministry, the Russian army has “destroyed or damaged 1,723 cultural heritage sites and 2,524 cultural infrastructure sites in Ukraine” since 2022. A fire burned through a mall and market in the city’s Lukianivka area. Oleksandr Buryma, the head technician at Mala Opera, a performance venue across the street from the burned-out retail mall, was temporarily covering blown-out windows with plastic sheeting. He said that the roof was damaged and that a portion of the rear wall had been blasted away. However, the early twentieth-century theater, formerly a cultural center for tram workers and now a beloved small-scale stage for theatre and music, was still planned to hold its production on the evening of May 29: Railroad, a play by US playwright Bryan Reynolds set during the development of nazism, he stated.

Eighteen individuals were killed in Afghanistan truck tragedy, including ten children



Afghanistan: Eighteen individuals were killed in Afghanistan truck tragedy, including ten children. The truck was transporting Afghan family returning to Pakistan when it toppled, according to an official. A vehicle toppled in eastern Afghanistan on Saturday, killing 18 people, 10 of whom were children, according to a provincial official. Deadly traffic accidents are widespread in Afghanistan, thanks in part to inadequate roads from decades of fighting, reckless driving, and a lack of control. According to Abdul

Malik Niazey, spokesman for Laghman province’s governor, the van was carrying Afghan family returning from Pakistan, where they had been staying. “Eighteen people (have died), including 10 children, five women and three men. In addition, 29 people have been injured,” the spokesperson said. The accident happened on the road between Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan and the capital Kabul. Authorities in Pakistan have toughened their stance on Afghan migrants

and refugees in their country – causing an outflow that often includes families travelling with their belongings in trucks. Since the start of the year, 447,400 Afghans have returned from Pakistan, according to figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. Last August, a collision between a bus carrying Afghan migrants returning from Iran and two other vehicles in western Afghanistan killed 78 people, including 19 children.

Alarm over Mexico measure allowing elections to be canceled for ‘foreign influence’

Americas: Mexico’s senate has ratified a constitutional amendment that includes “foreign interference” as grounds for annulling election results, despite opposition protest. Claudia Sheinbaum, the country’s president, introduced a law that defines foreign influence as “illicit financing, propaganda, systematic dissemination of misinformation, digital manipulation, and intervention by foreign governments or agencies.” However, detractors argue that the bill’s wide phrasing implies that almost anything may be used to overturn election results: a story in a British newspaper, a remark from a US official, or a report from an international non-governmental organization. “This is one of the most flagrant, worrisome, and archaic pieces of legislation in Mexico’s short democratic history,” Arturo Sarukhan, a former Mexican ambassador to the US, told X. “This law does not preclude foreign involvement. It gives the administration a veto over election results that it does not like.” The amendment has already been approved by the lower chamber of Congress and must now be confirmed by a majority of Mexico’s 32 states. Sheinbaum’s Morena controls 24 statehouses. The bill comes as Mexico has faced increased pressure from the US on security, with Donald Trump repeatedly threatening to invade the country and tackle cartels. Last month,



the US justice department indicted 10 current and former officials from the state of Sinaloa, including the governor, for ties to a powerful drug-trafficking group. The indictment of Rubén Rocha Moya, the governor of Sinaloa and a close ally of former president Andrés Manuel López Obrador (known as Amlo), sent shock waves across Mexico’s political establishment. Sheinbaum has called for more evidence from the US before considering extradition. The Mexican president also doubled down on the importance of sovereignty and non-intervention since the indictment was made public. “All Mexicans should agree that there should be no foreign interference in elections in Mexico,” Sheinbaum said at a news conference on Thursday. “We must all agree that in Mexico, we Mexicans decide who governs us.” The bill comes as Mexico faces midterm elections next year, which could see the govern-

ing Morena party lose its stranglehold on power: it currently controls the presidency and both the upper and lower chambers of congress. The bill would allow Mexico’s electoral court to toss out election results if it determines there was interference from an overseas organization, a foreign government or citizen. But the court was stripped of its independence under Amlo and is now largely aligned with Morena. “If [Morena] wanted, they could allege foreign intervention and the court would rule in their favor,” said Carlos Bravo Regidor, a political analyst. “The truth is, I don’t see any point in [the bill], any merit, any validity. This is an abuse.” The Mexican opposition has been equally critical of the proposed change. “It’s a trap so that Morena can literally annul any election they want,” Ricardo Anaya, a senator from the opposition Pan party, told reporters. “What they want to ensure is total control.”

“Essentially diving in coffee” Australian diver among team trying to rescue those trapped in flooded Laos tunnel

Australian: An Australian cave diver is part of an international team that has rescued one guy from a remote flooded cave in Laos, with another six men remaining stranded beneath. One individual was rescued from the labyrinthine cave complex late Friday. Four people are stuck on a rocky ledge around 300 metres from the cave entrance, while two men are still missing. The guys found in the cave are weak from hunger, and several are injured. More than a week ago, a party of eight prospectors entered a cave in Xaysomboun province, central Laos, to seek for gold, but the entrance was closed by heavy rain. One guy escaped and informed police about the seven men who remained captive. Five of them were discovered alive this week, but had lost communication with two others in the cave system. Rescuers, some of whom were engaged in the 2018 rescue of a young Thai football team, are still working to retrieve people from the waterlogged passages. “The first one is out. Safe and sound!!!” Manat Artmongkron, a rescue technician for Saithan Saphanboon Foundation, a Thai rescue group, wrote in a Facebook post, when the first man was brought from the cave on Friday. Video posted on social media showed a man covered in mud clambering out of the cave to safety. He was met with some cheers and wrapped in an emergency blanket. The rescue effort is continuing. Kengkard Bongkawong, the head of operations for Metta Tham Rescue, a Thai group, said on social media that searching for the two missing men would be even more challenging, requiring teams to dive through a 30m narrow tunnel, checking along the way for any intersections. “The next mission will be harder,” he wrote. Extracting the survivors will also be challenging, due to low oxygen supplies, more rain and a lack of dive experience among the people who are trapped. Divers with a specialised skill set to handle the extremely narrow conditions in the cave were flown in from around the world on Friday. They will be taken by a military helicopter to the remote and hostile jungle terrain where the men are stuck. Australian cave diver Josh Richards, who leads a cave exploration team in Australia called the Soggy Wombats, named after a marsupial known for its burrowing, flew in on Friday to help with the rescue operation. “It’s pretty awful, by the looks of things,” Richards said. “We’re predominantly dealing with clay and mud walls, which are particularly unstable and unpleasant.



That mud and clay also [affects] the water; you’re essentially diving in coffee. You’re not going to be seeing anything through it.” “It’s all being done by touch and feel, following the lines that have been laid through the mine.” Richards said he was not a “physically large guy”. He said his fellow international divers, who had been asked to support the rescue team, were “all fairly small, we’re all fairly light, and we’ve all spent a fair bit of time underground, squeezing into small places”. “I’m very comfortable underwater with a regulator in my mouth, twisting and turning and doing all those bits and pieces, contorting myself around in order to get into particularly nasty places,” he said. “And unfortunately, this mine sounds like it’s one of them.” Other diving specialists are reportedly arriving from Japan, Indonesia, Thailand and France. A diver from Malaysia joined the mission on Thursday. Richards said the rescue plan was now being developed among the divers, “that will be as safe as possible for everyone involved. There’s a lot of different ideas being thrown

around.” As sections of the tunnel between the miners and the surface are completely flooded, the team on the ground was also trying to pump out as much water as possible in a two-pronged approach, Richards said. “If they’re not able to pump all that water out, and there are sections that are completely flooded, that’s ... why we need to be there to potentially get these folks through short sections, where they’ll be using scuba equipment,” he said, “and they almost certainly have never used scuba equipment before in their lives.” For people who are familiar with the 2018 Tham Luang cave rescue in Thailand, Richards said there were similarities but also “glaring differences”. The Laos cave is a “considerably” smaller site in terms of length and the physical size of the tunnel itself. The Tham Luang cave is kilometres long, with numerous air chambers where rescuers could set up base stations. That rescuers could pump out huge amounts of water, but were also dealing with much more water.

US War Secretary Hegseth emphasizes that Delhi must behave in self-interest

Washington: On Saturday, US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth stated that India is modernizing its military to fulfill common objectives, describing it as a fundamental pillar of regional security and a “critical anchor”. These include “maintaining a balance of power” in the Indo-Pacific area and working with the US on it. Hegseth was speaking on the second day of the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. “In South Asia, India is a critical anchor to hold the line,” he stated. He also explained why the United States would want India to prioritize its own interests above everything else. “A powerful India acting in its own self-interest advances our shared goal of maintaining a balance of power across the region,” he said. “[India is] building out the heavy industrial and logistics capacity to sustain high-end military operations, including the ability to repair and maintain our

shared platforms and support US Navy vessels operating forward in the theatre,” he said. This claim of future planning comes at a time when the US is in the middle of a precarious ceasefire with Iran in a war it co-launched with Israel in February. India has called for dialogue as the way out. Hegseth also said in his address that there is “rightful alarm” regarding China’s “historic military buildup and the expansion of its military activities in the region and beyond”. He outlined the Trump administration’s plans for a major expansion of US defence spending and manufacturing capacity. “America is undergoing a historic national manufacturing mobilisation of our defence industrial base. We will produce the best weaponry in the world at scale, at speed, and at a reasonable price,” he said, adding, “This is my personal commitment to all of you, and it is our President’s demand.”

Fashion with a marine life theme are becoming popular



Its most recent collection of clothing and home goods features a variety of fish

prints and shapes, ranging from sardines and sprats to crustaceans like crabs. While there is a waiting list for a silky blue skirt covered in shoals of fish due to high demand, sales of earrings shaped like starfish have increased 300% month over month. A “gluggle jug,” a ceramic pitcher shaped like a fish that makes a gurgling sound when water is poured, is becoming a must-have for outdoor dining, and sales of a set of glass tumblers that stack together to form the shape of a fish have increased by 400%. Wade Pottery’s versions have seen a 129% monthly increase in sales.

The trend is an extension of the UK’s increasing tinned fish obsession. Recently, preserved seafood has pivoted from a cheap cupboard staple to a bougie star ingredient, with jazzy

packaging and “tin to table” brands. This month Tesco said an 18% increase in sales of tinned tuna was due to TikTok influencers who it said had helped it to rise to “the height of culinary fashion”. While supermarkets sell tins of fish for as little as 65p, some gourmet versions start from £12. Bettina Makalintal, a senior reporter at the food website Eater, says people are embracing the trend as a way of signalling how they align themselves politically and socially.

“Choosing to buy fancy tinned fish and to reflect these dietary choices in our clothing and decor says something about who we are, what we aspire to, and our social milieu, especially when we consider how much of our lives we also share online for other people to see and judge.”Now

you can have your pre-served fish and wear it, too. At Asos, a shopping go-to for gen Z, oversized graphic T-shirts featuring prints of sardines and carp are topping its bestseller list. Over at Anthropologie you will find everything from fish-shaped hair clips to a beaded shoulder bag covered in tiny sprats, while Accessorize is selling raffia bags shaped like actual fish. The Brazilian brand Farm Rio’s popular bright botanical prints are being trumped by marine references, including koi-inspired prints and illustrations of molluscs. Food has long been used as a narrative device in fashion. Melissa Marra-Alvarez, the curator of education and research at the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology in the US, and co-curator Food & Fashion exhibition, describes the

pairing as having a “reciprocal relationship”, saying both are necessities and part of daily life. Throughout the middle ages, textiles featured pomegranate and grapes “to represent the Earth’s bounty”, says Marra-Alvarez, while during the 17th century pineapples were used to signify wealth. Today’s pervasive portrayal of fish has emerged against the backdrop of the UK cost of living crisis and the rise of Maha (make America healthy again) in the US. Overfishing is also making some fish types a luxury. Marra-Alvarez says food is becoming increasingly polarised. “Food has been used to represent a variety of viewpoints. It’s emotionally charged. Many designers are now looking to food patterns and motifs as a way to make a cultural statement.”Vintage sundresses

and basket bags were all part of the vibe. This year’s fish take is a similar spin on la dolce vita but instead of Mediterranean fruits and vegetables, it is seafood prints, breezy linen trousers, silk scarves, jelly shoes and fisher knits.Miranda Shanahan, a brand consultant who specialises in internet culture, says it taps into a wider “euro summer” aesthetic that has been gaining momentum over the past five years. “People crave a life that feels embodied and unoptimised and this desire for a different way of living gets redirected into consumer objects that capture the spirit of that lifestyle,” Shanahan says. In this case “it’s less about the cost of living and more about sideways aspiration – not wanting more luxury but wanting a simpler, slower, more European life”.

An industry expert identifies three key shifts that are causing the change



Baggy Sweat Pants: This pair leans fully into the oversized, Gen Z-inspired silhouette. The wide-leg cut adds movement and drama, instantly making your outfit look more styled, even if you’ve just thrown on a basic tee. The high-waisted fit helps define your shape, preventing the look from feeling too baggy overall.

3. Symbol Men’s Athleisure Jogger Cargo Trousers: These joggers bring in utility-inspired styling, which is a major trend right now. The cargo pockets add both function and structure, making them look more like styled trousers than basic sweats. The elasticated waistband ensures comfort, while the tapered leg keeps the silhouette clean.

4. Jockey Men’s Regular Fit Trackpants: This is your everyday essential done right. The regular fit ensures it’s neither too tight nor too loose, making it suitable for a wide range of body types. The cotton-rich fabric keeps things breathable, which is especially important for long wear. These are the kind of trackpants you can wear at home, to the gym, or even for quick outings without thinking twice.

5. OOMPH! Women’s Flowy Palazzo Pants: If you want athleisure with a fashion-forward twist, these palazzo pants are a great pick. The wide-leg, flowy design adds elegance while still being incredibly comfortable. The high waist enhances the silhouette, making them flattering across body types. They’re breathable and perfect for warmer days, travel, or relaxed social outings. Style them with a tank top, bralette, or even a fitted shirt for a chic, easy look.

6. CAVA Seamless Cinched Leggings: These leggings are designed for performance and aesthetics. The seamless construction reduces irritation, while the ribbed waistband offers a secure, flattering fit. The compression helps support movement, making them ideal for workouts, yoga, or active days.

7. Jockey Men’s Cotton T-Shirt: A good athleisure outfit starts with a solid base, and this t-shirt delivers exactly that. Made from super combed cotton, it’s breathable, soft, and designed for all-day wear. The regular fit makes it easy to layer or wear on its own.

Tejasswi Prakash and Karan Kundrra displayed their Mumbai residence



With their appearance on Netflix’s Desi Bling, the IT couple from Indian television, Karan Kundra and Tejasswi Prakash, have recently taken over people’s feeds. In a Curly Tales episode that was uploaded to YouTube, the couple now revealed their opulent Mumbai home. Situated in Bandra, the couple’s home features unique elements, including a keycard-access shoe wardrobe, a spacious balcony, six wardrobes, and an indoor pool. The pair also discussed their shared life in the video after moving in together. Let’s take a look inside their home:

Inside Karan Kundrra and Tejasswi Prakash’s Bandra home

One gets a sense of what’s in store as they enter Karan and Tejasswi’s home, where they are welcomed through a lavish door featuring statement-making elements. As one enters the residence, they are greeted by a grand foyer and a spacious living room, which

serves as the centre of the house and leads to the other areas. Textured walls, ambient lighting, high ceilings, modern chandeliers, plush couches, a chic dining area, lots of plants, and French windows that let in ample natural light define the living room. Meanwhile, the foyer is decorated with a glass wardrobe and glass doors that lead into the living room. A stunning chandelier, woven rattan almirahs, and marble flooring add to its charm.

Bling is the name of the game

The foyer area is also dedicated to their extensive shoe collection. These cabinets are unique because they require card access to open. The collection is described as “blingy,” with Karan’s expensive, chunky shoes taking up significant space. Tejasswi’s luxury collection also steals the show, featuring shoes from Versace, Fendi, Louis Vuitton, among others. The house features four bed-

rooms, in which, according to the actor, Karan’s clothing is spread across all the bedrooms, while Tejasswi’s clothes are primarily kept in one room. Tejasswi also revealed that although Karan initially promised a 50-50 split of the wardrobe space in their main bedroom, he has taken over most of it.The house also features some key unique details, apart from the shoe collection, which are accessed only with a key card: a hidden washroom that is accessed by pushing a bookshelf. Inside this washroom, there is a bathtub designed with two seats and a window offering a view. The couple’s Bandra home also features a large, windy balcony that Tejasswi considers her personal spot. This area features a paddle pool with removable panels and a dedicated barbecue section. Meanwhile, the couple also has three puppies, including ones named Daku and Mjnu.

Samantha, Kajal’s friendship endures over time



Mumbai: Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu is leaving no stone unturned to promote her upcoming film Maa Inti Bangaram, along with her organic food and wellness ventures. Recently, she invited actress Kajal Aggarwal to an event in Hyderabad, once again highlighting their long-standing bond.

“Samantha and Kajal have been friends for many years,” says a source close to the actresses. “They worked toget-

her in Brindavanam opposite Jr NTR and developed a good rapport during the film. Despite being viewed as rivals later because they worked with the same top Telugu stars, their friendship remained intact.” According to the source, professional competition never affected their personal relationship. “Their friendship has survived the pressures of stardom and rivalry. They have always stayed in touch and supported each other. Ka-

jal is just a phone call away whenever Samantha needs her,” the source adds.

Another source close to Kajal reveals that Samantha is also part of a close-knit circle that includes Tamannaah Bhatia. “Samantha, Kajal, and Tamannaah have shared a warm friendship for years and meet whenever their schedules permit. Since Kajal and Tamannaah are based in Mumbai and Samantha has also been spending more time there recently, they have had more opportunities to catch up.” The circle reportedly also includes actress Rakul Preet Singh. “They attend select gatherings, spend quality time together, and have built a strong bond over the years,” the source says.

At a time when professional rivalry often overshadows personal relationships in the film industry, Samantha, Kajal, Tamannaah, and Rakul have demonstrated that careers and friendships can coexist. Their enduring camaraderie serves as a reminder that genuine friendships can thrive despite competition and changing circumstances.

Janhvi Kapoor explains why she won’t try Malayalam again after Param Sundari

Mumbai: After making her Telugu debut with Devara: Part 1 in 2024 and trying her hand at Malayalam for the 2025 film Param Sundari, actress Janhvi Kapoor, who is predominantly a Bollywood star, has confessed that Malayalam was no easy feat.

Speaking about how she can now call herself a multilingual actress, considering she knows many languages, and if there are any other languages she wants to learn, Janhvi told IANS: “All of it, really.” The actress, who is gearing up for the release of her Telugu film “Peddi,” revealed that Malayalam was difficult for her, so she does not see herself attempting it again anytime soon. “But I don’t think I should attempt Malayalam again because it’s too difficult for me. It’s such a beautiful, sweet language. But I think I’ve been phonetically quite familiar with Tamil and Telugu,” Janhvi said. She’s enjoying her tryst with



Telugu films and wants to explore Tamil movies too.

“So, I’m really enjoying working in Telugu films. I’d love to explore Tamil films as well,” Janhvi concluded. Peddi is directed by Buchi Babu Sana. The film also stars Boman Irani, Shiva Rajkumar, Janhvi

Kapoor, Jagapathi Babu, and Divyendhu. The film is finally releasing on June 4.

On the Bollywood front, Janhvi was last seen in Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari by Shashank Khaitan. It also stars Varun Dhawan, Sanya Malhotra, Rohit Saraf, Maniesh Paul

and Akshay Oberoi. The film followed Sunny and Tulsi, who are heartbroken after their partners, Ananya and Vikram, abandon them to marry each other. Sunny and Tulsi then team up to crash the wedding of their former lovers. Janhvi made her acting debut

in 2018 with the romantic drama Dhadak. She was then seen in films such as Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl, Mili and Devara: Part 1. She has since earned praise for her role as a woman of a lower caste navigating social discrimination in Homebound.

Bollywood 2026: Ranveer leads, Ramayana eyes top spot

Mumbai: From Dhurandhar 2 to Border 2 and Chand Mera Dil, in the first five months of 2026, we saw several Bollywood films. While some ruled the box office, others didn’t. While some shattered records and crossed historic milestones, others struggled to make an impact despite strong promotions and star power. It would not be wrong to say that Bollywood’s 2026 box office race has turned into one of the most closely watched battles in recent years. As the year progresses, the competition among Bollywood’s biggest stars is only getting more intense. Let’s take a look at the Bollywood box office report of 2026 so far.

If there is one clear winner so far, it is Ranveer Singh. His action spectacle Dhurandhar 2: The Revenge has emerged as the biggest Bollywood blockbuster of 2026 and one of the highest-grossing Indian films ever made. The film crossed Rs 1,800 crore worldwide and became the highest-grossing Hindi-language film domestically. Dhurandhar: The Revenge is currently at the top of the 2026 Hindi box office charts, far ahead of any other movie. After Dhurandhar 2, the second-biggest Bollywood success of the year has been Border 2. Riding on nostalgia and patriotic appeal, the film managed a strong theatrical run and became one of the few Hindi films of the year to



cross the Rs 400 crore mark worldwide. Although it is nowhere near Dhurandhar’s numbers, the film was widely loved by the audience. It also stars Varun Dhawan and Ahan Shetty in the lead.

Several medium-budget films also performed reasonably well without becoming massive blockbusters. Ayushmann Khurrana’s Pati Patni Aur Woh Do steadily moved toward the Rs 60 crore worldwide mark, while maintaining a stable run despite competition from bigger releases. Similarly, Akshay Kumar’s Bhoot Bangla, which was made on a budget of Rs 120 crore, also earned Rs 250 crore worldwide. Riteish Deshmukh’s Raja Shivaji has also earned a little over Rs 100 crore and is still running. Chand Mera Dil, starring Ananya Panday and Lakshya, crossed Rs 27 crore worldwide during its second week and has managed to stay afloat despite mixed reviews.

Interestingly, this year, the gap between Bollywood’s

highest and lowest performers has been very wide. Several Bollywood releases disappeared quickly from theatres due to poor occupancy and weak word-of-mouth. As reported by IMDb, Shahid Kapoor’s O’Romeo was made on a budget of Rs 100 crore but managed to earn only Rs 75 crore in India. Similarly, Rani Mukerji’s Mardaani 3 grossed Rs 74 crore worldwide despite positive reviews. Adivi Sesh and Mrunal Thakur’s Dacoit: A Love Story also disappeared quickly from theatres and earned only Rs 42 crore.

However, the box office race is far from over. Several major releases are still waiting to hit theatres. Among the most anticipated films are King, starring Shah Rukh Khan and the ambitious mythological epic Ramayana, featuring Ranbir Kapoor. While these films have the potential to challenge existing records, it would be interesting to see if these movies will also break records at the box office.

Trisha’s Karuppu beats Vijay’s Varisu; Suriya film nets ₹300 cr

Chennai: Suriya and Trisha Krishnan starrer Karuppu, which hit theatres on May 15, has been getting an overwhelming response from the audience. It has now been reported that the film has crossed the Rs 300 crore mark at the worldwide box office. This means Trisha-starrer has beaten the lifetime collection of Vijay and Rashmika Mandanna’s 2023 movie Varisu, which earned Rs 297.55 crore.

Recently, Karuppu director Balaji took to his social media handles and revealed his film’s latest box office figures. “#Karuppu 300* not out (fire emojis) @Suriya ofll (heart emojis),” he wrote. While Karuppu has surpassed Va-

risu’s collections, it is yet to beat the collections of Sivakarthikeyan and Sai Pallavi’s 2024 movie Amaran, which had a lifetime collection of Rs 333.67 crore. Interestingly, this comes days after director RJ Balaji also revealed that he had approached Vijay for his movie before contacting Suriya. However, the actor-turned-politician rejected the film for certain reasons.

“I narrated this film first to Vijay sir. This was supposed to be his last film (before his full-fledged political entry). We had two or three meetings, and he heard the script. Since it was supposed to be his last film, there were a lot of things that he had to consider. He had another option



with H Vinoth (director of Jana Nayagan). He then asked me if he could inform me in a week. He then called me and mentioned certain reasons (to turn down the project), which I felt were justified,” Balaji told The Hollywood Reporter India. “I replied, ‘Sir, I absolutely respect your decision.’

By then, I had narrated two scripts to him. I had previously narrated another film. Both times, I narrated the subjects to him because he asked me if I had something for him. I felt that showed his great respect for my work and, probably, my creativity,” the director added.

Obsession on OTT: when, where to watch Johnston & Navarrette’s horror thriller

Agency: Obsession, starring Michael Johnston and Inde Navarrette in the lead roles, released in India on May 29, 2026. The film had earlier premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 5, 2025, before arriving in the United States on May 15, 2026. Now, the psychological horror thriller may reportedly be heading to digital platforms soon, possibly in an uncensored version.

According to Lets Cinema, Obsession is expected to release digitally on June 2, 2026. Since the film recently arrived in Indian theatres, it appears that audiences may soon be able to watch it online as well. Reports suggest that the film will first be available on Peacock before later streaming on Netflix. However, an official announcement from the makers is still awaited. Obsession follows Baron “Bear” Bailey, who secretly has feelings for his co-worker and friend Nikki Freeman. After the death of his cat, Bear purchases a mystical object called the “One Wish Willow,”

which is believed to grant one wish when broken.

In a vulnerable moment, Bear wishes that Nikki would love him more than anyone else in the world. Soon after, Nikki becomes obsessively attached to him, and the two begin a relationship. However, her affection quickly turns unsettling, violent and dangerous. Bear eventually discovers that Nikki’s emotions and memories have been distorted by the wish. As her obsession grows more terrifying, he learns that the curse can only end if either he or Nikki dies. His attempts to undo the wish only lead to more tragic and gruesome consequences. In the climax, Bear tries to end the nightmare and free Nikki from the curse. But before he can do so, Nikki uses another wish to make him love her back. Though Bear finally reciprocates, he collapses moments later due to the pills he had consumed. Nikki then returns to her true self and breaks down after seeing the destruction around her.

Annu Kapoor’s Uttar Da Puttar set for July 2026 release

Mumbai: The makers of the upcoming film ‘Uttar Da Puttar’, which stars Annu Kapoor, have locked its release date. The film is set to debut in cinemas on July 24, 2026.

The film also stars Rukhsar Rehman, Brijendra Kala, Pavan Malhotra, Ishiyak Khan, Jeeveshu Ahluwalia, Rajendra Sethi, Sumit Gulati and Nitin Arora. The film is set against the backdrop of Vastu and destiny, and brings a fresh and novel theme to Hindi cinema. ‘Uttar Da Puttar’ is written and directed by Ravinder Siwach, with the story by Sandeep Kapur. The film is produced by Sandeep Kapur and Priya Kapur under



the banner of Promodome Motion Pictures. ‘Uttar Da Puttar’ now officially joins the theatrical release calendar for July 2026. Producer Sandeep Kapur’s latest film will arrive in cinemas worldwide on 24th July 2026. Meanwhile, Annu Kapoor

was last seen in ‘Luv Ki Arrange Marriage’.

The film showcased that love is ageless and that the boundaries between romance and family can blur in the most delightful yet chaotic ways. Annu Kapoor is one of Hindi cinema’s most ver-

satile character actors, and is known for balancing comedy, drama, satire and hosting with equal ease. With a career spanning over four decades, he has delivered memorable performances in films like ‘Vicky Donor’, ‘Mr. India’, ‘Dream Girl 2’ and ‘7 Khoon Maaf’. Apart from films, he is also widely loved for his radio storytelling and television presence. His recent screen appearance came in the comedy film Non Stop Dhamaal, where he shared screen space with Rajpal Yadav and Manoj Joshi in a chaotic industry-themed entertainer. Kapoor continues to stay active across films, television and live performances.

SRK did most photoshoots at Mannat, says Daboo Ratnani

Mumbai: Renowned celebrity photographer Daboo Ratnani has shared some behind-the-scenes anecdotes from his long association with superstar Shah Rukh Khan, revealing that nearly 90 per cent of their photoshoots were conducted at his home, Mannat.

Ratnani shared the details on filmmaker-actress Pooja Bhatt’s podcast. During the conversation, the celebrated photographer recalled how SRK’s candid moments often resulted in his most memorable photographs. Pooja told Ratnani: “You’ve really made Shah Rukh look very sexy. There’s something that he sheds with you.” To which the photographer revealed: “With Shah Rukh,

I’ve done 90% of my shoots in his house.”

He recalled how Shah Rukh once visited his studio. The actor was busy playing with his pet dog, Flash. Instead of asking him to pose, the photographer captured those natural moments, letting the superstar enjoy himself rather than consciously posing for the camera. “When he came to my studio in Oshiwara, he was playing with Flash, with my doggy. And I took pictures of that. So he started enjoying that moment rather than posing for a picture. During his phases of whatever look he was in, I used to pull out a concept as per that,” said Ratnani. He recalled how he was by a chance encounter at a

tyre shop that led to a unique set built with 200 used tyres.

“For instance, I was literally getting my tyre change done at the tyre shop. And there was a guy who was chucking these used tyres into a tempo. I said, wow, man, what a backdrop. And I contacted the tyre shop and got those 200 tyres to Mehboob studio, created that whole set with those ripped tyres and everything and did that shot.” Ratnani is popular for his annual calendar, which has 24 celebrities each year. He has closely worked with names such as Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Bipasha Basu, Arjun Rampal, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Abhishek Bachchan for his calendar.

Gurmeet Choudhary condemns racist attack

Mumbai: Actor Gurmeet Choudhary has spoken out strongly after a video showing an Indian couple facing racist abuse in the United States began circulating widely online. The clip, which has triggered sharp reactions across social media platforms, has once again brought conversations around racism against Indians abroad into the spotlight.

Without directly targeting any country or community, Gurmeet said incidents like these should no longer be dismissed casually or brushed under the carpet. His reaction came as several users online expressed anger over the language used against the couple in the viral video. Taking to Instagram, the actor shared a strongly-worded note condemning racism and calling for dignity and equal treatment for Indians worldwide. “Racism against Indians anywhere in the world cannot be normalized anymore. For years, many stayed silent, ignored the insults, and kept moving forward. But respect is not optional,” Gurmeet wrote. He further added, “Indians contribute globally with hard work, talent, intelligence, and humanity. We deserve the same dignity and respect as anyone else. This is not against any country or people this is against racism. Enough silence. Stand for respect. Stand for humanity please (folded hand emoji)”. Soon after Gurmeet’s statement, social media users flooded the comments section with mixed reactions and opinions on the issue. While many supported the actor’s stand and demanded stricter action against racist behaviour, others pointed out the importance of addressing discrimination within India too. During his India visit, Rubio had also been asked about growing concerns around racism faced by Indians in the US. Responding to the issue, he reportedly said that “every country has its stupid people.”



Akshay Bhatia shoots 65, moves into Top 10 at Charles Schwab Challenge

Fort Worth: Indian origin golfer Akshay Bhatia charged up the field with a 5-under 65 to gain 26 positions and occupy Tied-6th spot at the Charles Schwab Challenge on the PGA Tour here. Bhatia, who was 3-under in the first round, now has a total of 8-under par after two rounds and is two strokes behind the leader Jordan Smith , who shot a second straight 65.

Another Indian origin player, Sahith Theegala, did not have as promising a second day as Bhatia. Theegala, who carded 3-under 67 like Bhatia on the first day, struggled by comparison. He carded even par 70 to drop down to T-47.

Sudarshan Yellamaraju missed the cut.Bhatia began his second round on the back nine and made an early birdie on the 11th hole before gaining strokes on the 13th and 16th holes as well to be 3-under par at the turn.

On the front nine, he was able to gain another three strokes with birdies on the first, fourth and fifth holes. A late bogey on the ninth hole limited the score to 5-under 65 for the day. "I played nice. I think I did a great job with how I didn't let anything bother me. I missed a good amount of fairways, but just took it as it was. Yeah, all in all it was a really nice day, I just need to drive it a little better, that's the biggest thing for me, or at least what it



feels like internally," Bhatia said.

"But again, the more and more I can just see the ball in the fairway, the more chances I'll have, I feel like, with my iron play and how I feel like I am with the putter right now."

On his liking for this course, he said, "You have to be creative a little bit. You can hit some good tee balls that you're behind trees, or the pins can get very tight in corners. I think just, it's short, it's simple, and yet it always plays hard. It's never 18-, 19-under winning, it's 10-, 11-, 12-under. And that's what makes great golf courses."

Theegala's second round included three birdies and three bogeys, but he did ensure weekend action as he

He missed the cut for only the second time this season. The only other time he has missed the cut in 2026 was at The American Express back in January.

Jordan Smith, the leader at the halfway mark carded a second consecutive round of 5-under 65 to become the sole leader.

Smith, 33, qualified for PGA Tour through the DP World Tour and had his best finish at third in the Valspar Championship.He was in tied second place after the first round and one shot behind the leaders.

Smith began his second round with an eagle on the first hole and a birdie on the second to set himself up for a strong day two. He went on the birdie the seventh, 12th and 16th hole as well. His only bogey of the round was on the 14th hole. Hideki Matsuyama, the 2021 Masters champion with 10 other TOUR victories, and Michael Thorbjornsen had matching 65s. They were at 9 under with Ryan Gerard and 2023 The Open champion Brian Harman .

Spaun was joined by Bhatia , Russell Henley , Brice Garnett and Alex Smalley .AJ Ewart had the second hole in two days at the 195-yard, par-3 16th Brandt Snedeker aced it in the opening round and followed an opening 70 with a career-best 63, the low round of the day. He was at 7 under with Michael Brennan and Mackenzie Hughes .

Gukesh embraces the pressure and possibilities of being world champion

At 20, D Gukesh is carrying a burden few in chess ever faced the weight of being a world champion. Yet with a title defence looming, the Indian Grandmaster sees those expectations not merely as pressure but as an opportunity to test his limits, build character and emerge stronger.As he bid farewell to his teenage years on Friday, Gukesh remained one of the main attractions at Norway Chess, where organisers marked the rest day with a sailing trip on the calm waters of the Oslofjord.

Bringing together all 12 players from the Open and Women's tournaments, the outing offered a rare chance to unwind, recharge and gather fresh energy before the demanding rounds ahead.But even amid the scenic backdrop, Gukesh appeared deep in thought perhaps unsurprising given his difficult start to the tournament, where he currently sits at the bottom of the six-player standings. It was a reminder of the "struggles" he had spoken about before the event, as he continues to navigate the unique pressures that come with wearing the world champion's crown at such a young age. "It's something that obviously I've had to deal with and sometimes struggled with. But pressure is also a privilege, so it's a chance for me to grow through the challenge. Maybe, it will help me. The last one-and-a-half years, have been challenging... have also helped me build character and become a better person in general," Gukesh had said days before turning 20.

He added that while he relishes the challenge of preparing to defend his world title later this year against Javokhir Sindarov, the expectations that come with being champion can at times feel overwhelming."And, I think, just the process itself preparing for a world championship, and preparing against this one specific oppo-



nent for months... this whole process, for me, I just love the process. it's hard for me to deal with the expectations, which I hope to handle better in the next months as well," he said.

For world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen, a five-time Classical world champion and multiple-time Rapid and Blitz champion, the burden of expectations was one of the less enjoyable aspects of being world champion, admitting that towards the end he often felt he was winning titles to satisfy others' expectations rather than for his own fulfilment."Personally, for me, the hardest thing was that there were a lot of expectations for me to find the World Championship as important as others did. I never really felt that way," said Carlsen."I felt like I was doing it a lot for others rather than for myself. The motivation didn't come from within a lot of the times, so I think that was definitely hard. I mean, there were a lot of things that I didn't like about it but generally having so much of my identity in other people's

eyes, and to some extent, myself as well, being connected with that one thing that I didn't even particularly like. I understand it's a first-world problem, but it still wasn't great, and it's one of the reasons why I'm not part of that anymore," added the Norwegian great."Not about me anymore; it's about Gukesh and Sindarov" Carlsen said he would follow the upcoming World Championship match between Gukesh and Sindarov purely as a fan, expressing hope that it would be a fantastic contest.He added that, having stepped away from the championship cycle, he now views it from the outside with the interest of a spectator and nothing more. "Yeah, I mean, it's not really about me. It's about them , and I think it's going to be...I think it's going to be a fantastic match."Whatever happens, it's just going to happen. I'll just follow it as a chess fan, and it's going to be awesome to see, because they're, yeah, they're so young and pretty exciting players as well," said Carlsen.

28 killed amid severe weather conditions across UP, Bihar, Bengal and Madhya Pradesh

Patna: Twenty eight people have died over the 48 hours as heavy rain, thunderstorms and lightning strikes caused widespread damage across Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, with the weather department warning of more adverse conditions in several northern states. Uttar Pradesh remained the most severely affected state, recording 11 deaths across three districts due to sudden rain and severe thunderstorms.In Hamirpur district, four labourers and two security guards were killed after a section of an under-construction bridge over the Betwa River near Morakandar Parsari village collapsed during a storm in the early hours of Friday, officials said. Out of the seven workers carrying out wiring work on the bridge, a State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) team rescued three people.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief over the incident and announced an ex gratia grant of ₹5 lakh each for the families of the deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured.In Kaushambi district, three members of a family, including two children, were killed and another child was injured after a tree fell on a mud house following



heavy rain and a severe storm on Friday, police said. The incident occurred around 4 am in Purab Sharira village when Maya Devi (28), her sons Ankush (5) and Anubhav (4), and her daughter Shweta (3) were sleeping inside the house.

In Jalaun, a severe storm accompanied by heavy rain and lightning killed two people and injured at least seven others, officials said. The storm also led to the death of 23 animals and partially damaged 45 houses, according to the District Disaster Management

Authority's damage report. According to the district administration, Sukhdevi (55), a resident of the Umrar Kheda locality in Orai, and Moolchand (60), a resident of Bajida village under the Kotwali area, died in storm-related incidents on Thursday night. The administration has initiated financial assistance of ₹4 lakh each for the families of the deceased. Rains also lashed several districts of West Bengal, where at least seven people were killed and many others were injured on Friday, minutes before the IMD issued a

red warning. Chief minister Suwendu Adhikari announced a compensation of ₹4 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased. He also said the government would bear the treatment costs for those injured. "Seven people were killed and some have been injured as lightning and thunderstorms hit multiple districts, including Kolkata, South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly, West Midnapore, and Purulia. The deaths and injuries were primarily caused by lightning, wall collapses, and electrocution," he said.

In Bihar, seven people lost their lives due to lightning strikes in the past 24 hours, officials said. The deaths were reported from Aurangabad (2), Gaya (3), and one each from Saran and Khagaria, they added.Chief minister Samrat Choudhary expressed his condolences and directed the Disaster Management Department to immediately provide an ex gratia grant of ₹4 lakh to families of the deceased.

Torrential rain wreaked havoc across more than 12 districts of Madhya Pradesh, leaving three dead and two injured in Bhind district. According to officials, Sumitra died instantly after being struck by lightning, while Jitendra Singh Tomar was killed when a roof slab collapsed on him in Gohad. In another incident, the roof of Jagmohan Singh Gurjar's house gave way under the downpour, killing Shiv Kumar Gurjar on the spot. His brothers, Ramveer Singh Gurjar (45) and Amar Singh Gurjar (65), sustained injuries.

Meanwhile, parts of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Jharkhand also accompanied heavy rainfall received by lightning and thunderstorms, bringing relief from the scorching heat but also disrupting daily life.

Scanned CBSE answer sheets to be available on DigiLocker from next year

Hyderabad: Scanned copies of CBSE answer scripts will be made available to students through DigiLocker from next year, officials said on Friday, while defending the board's rollout of on-screen marking (OSM) and its decision to award the contract to Telangana-based Coempt Edu Teck.

Officials also defended the selection of Coempt amid allegations raised by opposition leaders, including Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, regarding the company's previous work in Telangana Legal challenges relating to the company's post-examination management work in the state had been examined by courts and that "nothing unusual" had been found, the report quoted an official as saying.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) awarded its OSM contract to Coempt on December 5, 2025 - just 66 days before announcing the full-scale rollout of the system on February 9 - after the company emerged as the lowest financial bidder in a quality-and-cost based tender process, officials said. CBSE was unable to secure a qualified vendor in two earlier rounds of tendering before modifying severing technical requirements in an August 2025 request for proposal (RFP). Under



the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) framework, which assigned 70% weightage to technical parameters and 30% to financial bids, Coempt quoted approximately ₹25.75 per answer script, inclusive of taxes. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), the only other bidder to qualify technically, submitted a bid of around ₹65 per copy after taxes for certain categories.

"TCS' rates were significantly higher at around ₹65 per copy after taxes for certain categories," an official said, requesting anonymity. Officials said both companies possessed Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) Level 5 certification - the highest maturity level - when the contract was awarded. Officials also acknowledged that around 20 cases of answer-sheet mismatches had been reported but argued that such errors could occur even under manual evaluation

systems, particularly given the scale of the exercise involving nearly 9.8 million answer books.

"For a child whose answer sheet was mixed up, no explanation is enough. But if speed alone determined mistakes, more of such issues could have happened," an official said. The official added that the board was investigating the causes of the mismatches and exploring measures to make the system "absolutely glitch-free."

On the question of penalties for reported mismatches and technical glitches, officials said contractual provisions would be invoked once the verification process was completed.According to officials, penalties under the contract include ₹4,000 for every wrongly scanned or mismatched answer book, ₹8,000 for partially scanned copies and ₹15,000 for completely unscanned answer books.

8 lion cubs die in Gujarat's Gir in a week; Govt steps up preventive measures

Gujrat, May 30: Eight Asiatic lion cubs have died in the Gir landscape over the past week, prompting the Gujarat government to step up surveillance and containment measures, according to a state government statement. Forest minister Arjun Modhwadia said monitoring is being carried out by the chief minister's office and the Prime Minister's Office, and preven-

tive measures, including large-scale deticking operations, have been intensified within a 10 km radius of the affected area.

No new cases were reported in the past two days, he said. Preliminary assessment indicates the cub deaths may be linked to babesiosis. Samples have been sent to the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre, with reports expected in three to four

days, according to the minister. Experts from Junagadh Veterinary College are also involved.

Lions within a 10 km radius have been isolated and deticking operations are being carried out in Gir and surrounding regions, the statement said.

Earlier, on May 26, the minister said two cubs were suspected to have died due to Babesia infection, while the remaining

deaths were due to infighting or other reasons. The Asiatic lion population, found only in Gujarat, stood at 891 in 2025, up from 674 in 2020, with the species spreading into Amreli, Gir Somnath and Bhavnagar. In 2018, an outbreak involving Canine Distemper Virus and Babesia led to the death of 24 lions in less than a month in the Gir landscape. Authorities then



● Forest minister Arjun Modhwadia said monitoring is being carried out by the chief minister's office and the Prime Minister's Office.

carried out isolation and treatment measures to contain the spread. Officials said no such clustering has been observed now.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi livid after missing out on a second consecutive century

New Delhi: It was heartbreak for Vaibhav Sooryavanshi as he missed out another hundred during the Qualifier 2 clash against Gujarat Titans and the RR opener struggled to contain te anger at himself. Sooryavanshi was dismissed in almost similar fashion as he was batting on 96 and tried to get to the landmark with a big shot. But much like in the SRH game, the ball went high in the air and caught at the third man region, leading to a stunned silence inside the stadium. The applause soon followed but the 15-year-old was beside himself on his way back to the pavilion. Sooryavanshi started on a slow note as GT started with a clear plan of targeting his body.

The 15-year-old got his first boundary in the third over of the innings, but wasn't at his explosive best as RR lost both Yashasvi Jaiswal and Dhruv Jurel early. He added one more boundary in the same over and found the perfect partner in Ravindra Jadeja, who got ensured that the run-rate was boosted up and Sooryavanshi was



kept calm at the other end. Jadeja and Sooryavanshi added 73 runs before the former had to go off with an injury. Once again, Sooryavanshi kept showing bursts of explosiveness here and there but it was a far cry from the 97 off 29 balls against SRH. He got to his fifty 31 deliveries and that was the moment where he went into overdrive. Once Jadeja returned to

batting, Sooryavanshi was able to explode in Mullanpur, scoring 46 off 15 balls and raced into the 90s. It looked like the stage was set for Sooryavanshi to get to his third IPL hundred, but then disaster struck for him and RR. This also meant that Sooryavanshi tied an unwanted record in the IPL. He became the fifth batter after KL Rahul, David Warner, Ruturaj Gaik-

wad and Glenn Maxwell to be dismissed in the 90s for the third time. It wasn't a bad day at the office for Sooryavanshi in the end as he became the fastest player to get to 1000 runs in the IPL, in terms of the number of balls faced. He got to the landmark in just 440 balls, a good 105 ahead of the former record-holder Andre Russell, who got to the landmark in 545 deliveries. In terms of innings to get to 1000 IPL runs, Sooryavanshi became the fastest Indian to get to the landmark and third-fastest overall. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, a 15-year-old RR opener, missed another century in Qualifier 2 against Gujarat Titans, dismissed on 96 while attempting a big shot. Targeted early by GT, he paced his innings cautiously, forming a strong 73-run partnership with Ravindra Jadeja, who later left injured. Sooryavanshi accelerated after reaching fifty, scoring 46 off 15 balls and nearing his third IPL hundred, but his dismissal in a similar manner to a previous game led to heartbreak for him and RR.

Vinesh Phogat makes winning Asian Games trial start in 53kg

Buenos Aires: Vinesh Phogat made a stupendous start in her pursuit of a spot in the Indian team for the Asian Games, beating Jyoti 7-1 in her opening bout at the selection trials here on Saturday. Vinesh was cautious in the beginning and largely involved in standing wrestling but comfortably made her moves as the bout progressed. She began with a push point on counter and soon went for a double leg attack that did not yield any points. She was put on clock at the start of the second period and from there she began to dominate. She converted a right leg attack into a takedown move to go 3-0 up. Jyoti too launched a furious leg attack but Vinesh used all her strength to foil the attempt. On counter attack, Vinesh made two quick moves to make it 7-0, while Jyoti got on board with a push-out point. Vinesh will



next take on Nishu, who won by fall against Riya. Meanwhile, Antim Panghal needed only 34 seconds to make a winning start as she defeated Tannu by technical superiority. In no time, Antim had her rival locked in a 'fitley' move and rolled Tannu five times to finish the bout in a jiffy. Antim and Vinesh are drawn to meet in the final. Vinesh, though, will have to contend with the talented Meenakshi Goyat in the semifinals. Earlier in the day, two-time world cham-

pionships medallist Vinesh was allowed to compete in the women's 53kg category after the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) reversed its earlier stand of restricting her participation to the 50kg division. The dramatic turn of events came during the official weigh-in on Saturday morning when Vinesh was informed that she would be permitted to compete only in the 50kg category, citing her participation in that weight class in her last four international choice.

Sangakkara lashes out at Sam Curran for missing IPL 2026 after injury claim

Chandigarh: The Director of Cricket and Head Coach of Rajasthan Royals, Kumar Sangakkara, lost his cool during the post-match press conference after his team's defeat against the Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 2, which resulted in their elimination from IPL 2026. Sangakkara was answering a question of player unavailability, and he mentioned English all-rounder Sam Curran, who is currently leading Surrey in the T20 Blast 2026.

He has played three matches for Surrey this season. "We were told that Sam Curran had a season-ending injury, but I think I saw him playing for Surrey for two or three games now. So that was disappointing! We'd have loved to have had him here playing for us," said Sangakkara. Curran was involved in the high-profile pre-auction trade between Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Rajasthan Royals, a deal that saw CSK acquire Sanju Samson while RR brought in Ravindra Jadeja and Sam



Curran. But due to a groin injury, Curran was ruled out of the tournament. On dealing with player unavailability, he said, "I think a proper tight policy around that is always a requirement. BCCI has a strict policy on that. Every person goes through injuries. And if it's a serious injury, a season-ending injury, of course, we understand. I mean, we've had quite a few injuries.

We've also had players like Adam Milne, Shimron Hetmyer, quite a few who've come here, not had much of

a game. Lhuan-dre Pretorius and Kwen Maphaka are some of them. They've been here. They've done the hard yards. They've practised. They've carried water for the team. And they've really worked as hard as anyone else to support the team in this journey." So, I mean, it's really up to that individual player to decide whether they want to come or not. But I think the BCCI policy around it is very strict now. And that's the way it should continue, be very strict to make sure that contractual

obligations are all met properly and genuinely. And I think every side in the IPL will benefit from that," he added. In the second qualifier, GT defeated RR by seven wickets. After GT put RR to bat first, a fine knock from Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (96 in 47 balls, with eight fours and seven sixes) and a cameo from Donovan Ferreira (38* in 11 balls, with two fours and four sixes) took the Royals to 214/6 in 20 overs. Later in the chase of 215 runs, skipper Shubman Gill (104 in 53 balls, with 15 fours and three sixes) and his 167-run stand with Sai Sudharsan (58 in 32 balls, with eight fours and a six) set the platform for a three-wicket win.

This was the highest target chased in the IPL playoffs, outdoing the target of 204 chased by Punjab Kings (PBKS) against Mumbai Indians (MI) in last year's Qualifier two. This is also GT's highest IPL run-chase, outdoing their 204-run chase against Delhi Capitals (DC) in 2025.

Portugal head coach believes Cristiano Ronaldo can play the 2030 World Cup

New Delhi: Portugal manager Roberto Martinez has refused to rule out the possibility of Cristiano Ronaldo featuring at the 2030 FIFA World Cup, when the Portuguese forward will be 45 years old. The comments come as Ronaldo prepares to lead Portugal in his sixth World Cup, this year in USA, Mexico and Canada. The discussion around Ronaldo's longevity adds to a wider debate about how elite athletes are redefining career spans in modern football through fitness, discipline and evolving sports science. "No one should doubt that (he could play in 2030)," Martinez said during an appearance on Cade-na SER radio, as quoted by Reuters. "He's earned it." Ronaldo, who made his Portugal debut in 2003 at the age of 18, remains the national team's most capped player with 226 appearances and its all-time leading scorer with 143 goals. He has been central to Portugal's modern success, guiding them to the Euro 2016 title and a fourth-place finish at the 2006 World Cup — their best result in 40 years. "I have worked with many players that have won a Champions League or a Ballon d'Or, and the next day they lose their appetite. What we have with Ronaldo is an example of a different mentality," he added. "I believe that having that goal is what allows for longevity. Of course, there is a



genetic aspect, the work he puts in - he uses everything that can help his body - and his mentality." He also became the first player to score in five different World Cups with a penalty against Ghana in Qatar in 2022. Ronaldo and Lionel Messi are both expected to feature in the 2026 World Cup, which would mark a record sixth appearance in the tournament. Portugal are set to compete in Group K at the expanded 48-team 2026 World Cup, opening their campaign against the Democratic Republic of Congo in Houston on June 17. While focus remains on the upcoming tournament, Martinez's comments have already shifted attention toward what could be an unprecedented extension of Ronaldo's international journey. The idea of Ronaldo playing in 2030, a home World Cup would require him to maintain elite physical and competitive standards well into his mid-40s, something few footballers in history have achieved at the international level. However, Martinez's

backing highlights the forward's extraordinary longevity and influence, as well as Portugal's continued reliance on his experience and leadership. Portugal manager Roberto Martinez has not ruled out Cristiano Ronaldo playing in the 2030 World Cup at age 45. Preparing for his sixth World Cup in 2026, Ronaldo exemplifies exceptional longevity, fueled by fitness, discipline, and mentality. As Portugal's most capped player and top scorer, he has been pivotal to their success, including the Euro 2016 win. Martinez praises Ronaldo's unique drive, emphasizing that maintaining elite performance into his mid-40s would be unprecedented in football history. The Portugal captain picked up the injury while playing for Al Nassr in late February and has since been undergoing treatment. Speaking during the squad announcement, Portugal head coach Roberto Martinez confirmed that the decision was precautionary as the team looks to manage Ronaldo's fitness carefully ahead of the World Cup. "It's a minor muscle injury, and we think he can be back in a week or two," Martinez said. "Everything Cristiano has done physically this season shows that he's in great shape." Portugal are set to face Mexico on March 28 at the Azteca Stadium, followed by a clash against the United States in Atlanta on March 31.

Satwik-Chirag and Dhruv-Tanisha reach Singapore Open semifinals

Singapore: India's doubles stars Satwiksairaj Rankireddy/Chirag Shetty, Dhruv Kapila/Tanisha Crasto advanced to the semifinals of the Singapore Open 2026 on Friday at the Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore. Fourth-seeded Satwik-Chirag fought back from a game down to defeat Malaysia's Kang Khai Xing and Aaron Tai 19-21, 21-17, 21-13 in a 65-minute battle. The Indians then fought through a neck-and-neck second game before forcing a decider and dominating the third to secure their semifinal spot. They will next face reigning world champions and world no.1 pair Kim Won Ho and Seo Seung Jae of Korea. In mixed doubles, Dhruv-Tanisha progressed after third-seeded Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei of Malaysia retired during the opening game.

The Indian pair will next face Japan's Yuichi Shimogami and Sayaka Hobara for a place in the final. In men's singles, All England 2026 runner-up Lakshya Sen went down fighting against Japan's Koki Watanabe 19-21, 21-15, 15-21 in a 68-minute clash. Meanwhile, PV Sindhu's campaign ended in the quarterfinals following a 21-17, 21-14 loss to World



No.1 An Se Young in a grueling 48-minute encounter. With the victory, the Korean extended her head-to-head record to 9-0 against the Indian star. With this win, India now lead the four-match series 2-1 after bouncing back from a defeat in the opening game with a 4-2 shootout victory in the second match. The third match between the two sides witnessed a disciplined defensive display from both teams, as the first two quarters saw no goals, and it remained 0-0 at half-time. India eventually found the breakthrough in the third quarter when Sonam (36') scored a field goal to put the visitors ahead. India continued their momentum in the final quarter as Lalremisiami (49') doubled the lead with another field goal, sealing a 2-0 win for her team. India women secured a hard-fought

win in the second match at the Perth Hockey Stadium to level the four-match friendly series 1-1. The visitors came from behind in the final quarter to force a 1-1 draw and then edged the hosts 4-2 in the shootout. The Indian badminton contingent witnessed a day of contrasting fortunes at the Singapore Indoor Stadium during the quarterfinals of the Singapore Open 2026. While the nation's premier singles superstars suffered disheartening exits, India's doubles pairs stood tall, putting on a spectacular show of resilience, tactical superiority, and grit. Star men's doubles duo Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, alongside the rapidly rising mixed doubles pair of Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto, stormed into the semifinals of the BWF Super 750 tournament.

Gwalior Cheetahs unveil squad featuring Rajat Patidar for the upcoming MPL T20

Gwalior: Gwalior Cheetahs released the squad for the upcoming season of Madhya Pradesh League (MPL) T20 Scindia Cup. The squad also features IPL-winning captain Rajat Patidar, along with talented fast bowlers like Akash Singh Raghuvanshi and Mangesh Yadav, adding quality and depth to the pace attack. Madhav Singhania of Gwalior Cheetahs, owned by JKC Sports, praised Rajat Patidar and expressed confidence in the balance and strength of the squad. "We are delighted to have Rajat Patidar in the squad. Winning an IPL title as captain speaks volumes about his leadership qualities and experience. Our squad has a very good balance of experienced players and exciting young talent, which gives us a lot of confidence going into the season. We believe this is a strong and settled group capable of playing positive cricket throughout the tournament," said Madhav Singhania. According to a press release from Gwalior Cheetahs, the franchise will begin the campaign against Ujjain Falcons at the Holkar Stadium, Indore, on June 3.

Three new franchises have been added to the men's tournament with Malwa Stallions, Ujjain Falcons, and Royal Nimar Eagles joining defending champions Bhopal Leopards, along with Bundelkhand Bulls, Chambal Ghariyals, Gwalior Cheetahs, Indore Pink Panthers, Jabalpur



Royal Lions, and Rewa Jaguars. The women's competition has also grown with Gwalior Shernis and Royal Nimar Eagles being the new entrants. They will compete alongside Bhopal Wolves, Bundelkhand Bulls, and Chambal Ghariyals in the five-team tournament. Gwalior Cheetahs Squad: Akash Singh Raghuvanshi, Anil Mourya, Anubhav Agarwal, Arpit Patel, Ishan Afridi, Kartik Parihar, Kuldeep Gehi, Mangesh Yadav, Parth Chaudhary, Rajat Patidar, Saumy Kumar Pandey, Tushar Verma, Vandit Joshi, Varun Shinde, Varun Tiwari, Vikas Sharma. The gold medal marked Suruchi Singh's seventh medal at the ISSF World Cup circuit, adding to an impressive resume that already includes an individual gold at the ISSF World Cup

Final in Doha last year. Friday's triumph also secured the 20-year-old a direct qualification berth for this year's ISSF World Cup Final, scheduled to be held in Rome in December. Meanwhile, Esha Singh claimed silver with 241.2 points, finishing less than a point behind her compatriot in a closely contested final. The reigning Asian champion continued her impressive run in Munich after winning the women's 25m pistol title earlier this week with a world record score.

Choo Gaecun of South Korea secured the bronze medal with 220.2 points. The final also featured Celine Goberville, the silver medallist at the London 2012 Olympics, who finished sixth with 158.6 points. In the qualification round, Muskan was

the highest-placed Indian, finishing sixth with a score of 579-16x while competing under Ranking Points Only (RPO). Suruchi Singh and Esha Singh qualified eighth and ninth, respectively, both registering identical scores of 578. Meanwhile, Manu Bhaker finished 20th with 575-17x to miss her second successive final in Munich. She will next compete in the 10m air pistol mixed team event. Anahat Singh, 18, has emerged as one of the brightest young Indian stars in the world of squash. She won the bronze medal at the 2025 World Junior Championships in Cairo and was also a part of the team which made history by capturing the Squash World Cup last year. Her recent performances include a successful defence of the Indian Open title. She has 16th PSA level titles overall. Anahat said that having squash included in the Olympics is a dream for every athlete and has excited everyone in the sport.

She added that she is training with the goal of reaching her peak by the 2028 Games and hopes to win a medal for India. "It's every athlete's dream. Everyone was really excited when squash was included and has been working towards it. Hopefully, I'll be at my peak by the time the Olympics happen and will get a medal for India," she said as quoted by Olympics.com. Anahat, who originally started out with badminton, her growth in squash