

Mizoram CM graces mixed martial arts event

Aizawl, Jun 01: Chief Minister Lalduhoma attended the MISMA Fight Night organised by the Mizoram Mixed Martial Arts Association (MISMA) as the chief guest at R. Dengthuama Indoor Stadium, Muallpui.

UFC Flyweight Champion Joshua Van also attended the event as special guest.

The Chief Minister, in his address, stated that honoring Joshua “The Fearless” Van, the first-ever UFC Champion from Southeast Asia, was a matter of great pride for the people of Mizoram. He emphasized that the Mizos, Chins, and Kukis belong to one ethnic family and that maintaining unity and brotherhood among them is of utmost importance. Joshua Van, he said, stands before the world as a representative of his people, and his achievements further strengthen the bonds and solidarity among these communities.

The Chief Minister praised Joshua Van’s remarkable accomplishments, highlighting his professional record of 17 victories, including 9 knockouts. He remarked that such achievements go beyond statistics and serve as an inspiration and chal-



lenge to young people. Referring to his own attainment of an Honorary 7th Dan Black Belt from the World Pro Taekwondo Headquarters Federation, Lalduhoma stressed that reaching such heights requires self-discipline, perseverance, and strong mental fortitude. The Chief Minister also expressed his delight

that he had received an Honorary Black Belt from Shariq Babu, Senior Vice President of the Asian MMA Federation.

Lalduhoma further noted that Joshua Van’s success encourages Mizo youth to set higher goals and confidently face the challenges of the world. Expressing his gratitude

to the UFC champion, he assured him that Mizoram would continue to support him in all his future endeavors. Lalnghinglova Hmar, Minister of Sports and Youth Services, in his address informed the gathering that approval had been secured under the North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme

– Other Than Roads Infrastructure (NESIDS-OTRI) of the Ministry of DoNER for the construction of a Centre of Excellence for Boxing and various contact sports in Mizoram, at a cost of Rs 38 crore. He described the approval as a significant achievement for the state’s sports sector.

Rio Urges Centre to Secure Release of Abducted Naga Persons

Kohima, Jun 01: Nagaland Chief Minister Dr. Neiphiu Rio said he had sought the intervention of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other senior central officials for the safe and early release of the six Naga persons abducted in Manipur.

In a letter addressed to United Naga Council (UNC) president, N.G. Lohrii, Rio said he had spoken to Shah on May 29 and conveyed the deep concern of the Nagas over the incident. He said he requested the Union Home Minister’s personal intervention and urged the Government of India to make all possible efforts to trace the abducted persons, bring the perpetrators to justice and secure their release at the earliest.

According to Rio, Shah assured him that the matter would be accorded the highest priority and that all necessary measures would be un-

dertaken by the concerned agencies to trace the abducted persons, identify those responsible and ensure that the law takes its course. Rio further disclosed that he had also spoken to the Union Home Secretary and the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, impressing upon them the urgency and sensitivity of the matter and requesting immediate and coordinated action by all concerned agencies. He said both officials assured him that the matter was being actively pursued. Acknowledging the anxiety and anguish faced by the families of the abducted persons and the wider Naga community, Rio appealed to all concerned to exercise restraint and extend full cooperation towards efforts aimed at the safe recovery of the abducted persons and the maintenance of peace and harmony in the region.

Tripura Gets Central Backing for Infrastructure, Sanitation and Power Upgrades

Agartala, Jun 01: Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs and Power, Manohar Lal Khattar has said that the Centre is extending all possible support to Tripura for strengthening urban infrastructure, sanitation and power services. Addressing mediapersons at the State Guest House in Agartala on Sunday after reviewing issues related to the Swachh Bharat Mission and the Power Department, the Union Minister said that significant funds have already been sanctioned for solid waste management projects in the state and the remaining works will be completed in a phased manner. He said that financial assistance



provided to Self-Help Groups engaged in waste collection would continue as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission.

The Minister informed that Tripura has been asked to submit proposals for additional sanitation projects by 30th June, after which further

funds would be sanctioned.

The Minister further announced that Rs 27 crore would be provided for sanitation and beautification work in Agartala, Dharmanagar, Melaghar and Udaipur.

In addition, Tripura would receive Rs 1,200 crore from

the Urban Challenge Fund after submission and approval of project proposals by the state government.

On the power sector, Khattar said that under the PM Surya Ghar Yojana, efforts are being made to expand rooftop solar installations and increase electricity connectivity.

He stressed the need for curbing power losses, preventing illegal connections and ensuring the installation of smart meters for efficient power management.

The review meeting was attended by Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, Power Minister Ratan Lal Nath and senior officials of the concerned departments.

Arunachal BJP backs Khandu amid CBI probe

Itanagar, Jun 01: The BJP’s Arunachal Pradesh unit has backed Chief Minister Pema Khandu amid speculation over his political future following a Supreme Court-directed CBI inquiry, asserting that there is no question of a leadership change while an investigation is underway. The party’s comment comes a day after an Assam-based news portal reported that Khandu would resign in view of the ongoing CBI probe, triggering social media speculation across the state. The Supreme Court had in April ordered a preliminary CBI inquiry into charges that public work contracts worth approximately Rs 1,270 crore were awarded between 2015 and 2025 to firms allegedly linked to members of Khandu’s family. The probe is currently underway. Arunachal Pradesh BJP president Kaling Moyong dismissed the news report suggesting an imminent leadership change in the state, describing the claims as baseless and misleading. Moyong clarified that there is no proposal or discussion within the Bharatiya Janata Party regarding the replacement of Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

Kuki Inpi Manipur Temporarily Suspends Shutdown Across Kuki-Zo Areas

Imphal, Jun 01: Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), the apex body representing the Kuki community in Manipur, has announced the temporary suspension of the total shutdown that had been imposed across Kuki-Zo inhabited districts in the state. In a statement KIM said the decision was taken following discussions with government authorities on May 29 and 30, during which several positive developments and assurances emerged. The organization stated that the shutdown was being suspended with immediate effect as a gesture of goodwill and cooperation. The decision comes amid

heightened tensions in the state following the killing of three Church leaders and reports regarding the continued detention of six Naga individuals in Kangpokpi district since May 13. There have also been reports that 14 Kuki individuals are being held in Senapati district.

According to KIM, the temporary withdrawal of the shutdown is intended to facilitate administrative processes and provide the government with an opportunity to take responsible and decisive action to deliver justice and address the concerns of the Kuki-Zo community. The organization, however, clarified that the suspension

should not be interpreted as a weakening of its position or a compromise on its demands and rights. KIM emphasized that the move was made in good faith and in the larger public interest. The apex Kuki body said it had exercised restraint and patience despite the challenges faced by the community and expressed hope that the government would take concrete measures to address the issues raised by the Kuki-Zo people. At the same time, KIM warned that if there is no visible progress or meaningful action from the authorities during the relaxation period, it, along with allied organizations, may in-

tensify democratic protests and reinstate the shutdown. Meanwhile, the inter-district economic blockade imposed in Naga-dominated areas of Manipur continues. The blockade, which began on May 17, was launched by the Working Committee of the United Naga Council (UNC), the apex body of the Naga community in Manipur, demanding the safe rescue and release of the Naga hostages. The continuing blockade and the unresolved hostage crisis underscore the fragile security situation in Manipur, even as efforts are underway to ease tensions and restore normalcy across the state.

AIIMS Guwahati launches epilepsy surgery services

Guwahati, Jun 01: In a major milestone for neurological healthcare in the Northeast, the Comprehensive Epilepsy Programme at AIIMS Guwahati has now introduced epilepsy surgery services, offering hope to patients suffering from difficult-to-control epilepsy across the region. Speaking on the occasion, Prof Ashok Puranik, Executive Director, AIIMS Guwahati and the team at AIIMS Guwahati emphasized that epilepsy is a treatable condition and that patients with uncontrolled seizures should seek timely expert consultation.

Meghalaya CM Urges Integrated Early Childhood Development System

Shillong, Jun 01: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Monday inaugurated a three-day ECD (Early Childhood Development) Implementation Science Workshop in Shillong, bringing together policymakers, development practitioners, experts and stakeholders from across the country to strengthen integrated systems for early childhood development.

The workshop is being organised under the Meghalaya Early Childhood Development Mission (MECDM) in collaboration with the State Capability Enhancement Project (SCEP), the Van Leer Foundation and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Organised under the theme, “From Science to State Action — Building Integrated Systems for Early Childhood Development,” the workshop seeks to translate scientific evidence, global learning, and policy priorities into practical actions that improve outcomes for children and families.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Sangma said that one of the guiding principles of his administration since assuming office in 2018 has been the belief that meaningful change does not always require new schemes or policies, but rather better implementation of existing ones.

The Chief Minister noted that both Central and State Government schemes are largely designed to address

existing developmental challenges and that the real challenge often lies in implementation.

He pointed out that improvements in implementation have led to significant gains across sectors in Meghalaya.

Referring to MGNREGA, he said that stronger execution had resulted in a nearly threefold increase in utilisation and absorption capacity. Similar improvements, he added, have been achieved across departments, leading to a four-to-five-fold increase in the utilisation of centrally sponsored schemes and externally aided projects.

Sangma noted that Meghalaya is currently implementing nearly Rs 12,000 crore worth of externally aided projects, exceeding the portfolio of many other small states.

Emphasising the importance of political and administrative leadership, he said that while governments often understand the science, evidence and data behind development challenges, progress ultimately depends on the collective will to act.

“The point I am trying to make is that we often know the problems. We understand the science, the data and the analysis behind them. But ultimately, there has to be a will to make a difference,” he said.

He added that the role of leadership is to identify capable individuals, place them in positions where they can

contribute effectively, and provide them with the confidence and support needed to perform.

The Chief Minister stressed that governments do not always need entirely new ideas but rather a stronger capacity to implement existing ideas effectively. He underscored the importance of having a shared vision and clarity of purpose, while also recognising that no single model can be applied uniformly across different contexts.

Drawing on Meghalaya’s experience in addressing maternal mortality, Sangma said that the State initially assumed that increasing institutional deliveries would solve the problem. However, a deeper analysis revealed that the real barriers were economic and logistical in nature, including transportation costs, distance, and the lack of support systems for expectant mothers. “We were encouraging institutional deliveries without recognising the economic realities these mothers faced,” he said.

He noted that this focus on outcomes led the government to adopt a more integrated approach to development. Discussions with Additional Chief Secretary Sampath Kumar and other officials reinforced the understanding that maternal mortality, infant mortality, and early childhood development are not isolated issues but are interconnected aspects of an individual’s life journey.

Assam Targets National Sports Hub, Seeks Centre’s Aid

Guwahati, Jun 01: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday held discussions with Union Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on strengthening sports infrastructure in the state and improving welfare measures for workers.

The meeting at the Union Minister’s official residence lasted for over an hour.

Later, in a post on X, the Chief Minister shared details of the discussion and highlighted what he described as the BJP’s guiding philosophy of ‘Sewa First’. ‘Sewa First’ is a philosophy which binds every karyakarta of BJP. I am thankful to Hon’ble Union Minister Shri Mansukh Mandaviya ji who gave his time this morning, on his birthday, to discuss various matters related



to developing sports infrastructure in Assam and creating an enabling atmosphere for our Shramjeevis,” Sarma wrote.

According to the Chief Minister, the discussions focused on expand-

ing sports infrastructure across Assam and exploring ways to create better opportunities and welfare mechanisms for workers in the state. Sarma said he conveyed his birthday wishes to the Union Minister and

sought continued support from the Centre in Assam’s efforts to emerge as a major sporting destination in the country. “I wished him the very best on this special day and requested him to continue his support in our endeavour to build Assam as a Sports Hub of India,” he added.

The meeting assumes significance as the Assam Government has been actively investing in sports infrastructure and hosting national and international sporting events in recent years as part of its broader vision to position the state as a leading sports destination in the Northeast and the country. The state government has repeatedly emphasised that strengthening sporting facilities, nurturing young talent and attracting major sporting events will play a key role in Assam’s development agenda.

Centre extends tenure of Mizoram environmental clearance panels till December 2026

Aizawl, June 01: The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has extended the tenure of Mizoram's two key environmental regulatory bodies responsible for evaluating and approving development projects, ensuring that the environmental clearance process in the state continues without interruption.

According to a notification issued by the ministry on May 31, the tenure of the chairman and members of the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Mizoram, and the State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC), Mizoram, has been extended from three years to three years and six months.

The decision means that the existing members of both bodies will continue to serve until December 12, 2026. The extension has been granted to maintain continuity in the appraisal and clear-

ance of projects that require environmental approval at the state level. The SEIAA is the authority responsible for granting environmental clearances to various projects, while the SEAC plays a crucial role in examining, evaluating and recommending project proposals before they are considered for approval by the authority.

In its notification, the ministry stated, "The central government considering it necessary and expedient, hereby extends the term of the chairman and members of the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority, Mizoram, and the term of the chairman and members of the State Level Expert Appraisal Committee, Mizoram, for a period up to December 12, 2026."

The ministry also clarified that the extension will remain valid until the reconstitution of the SEIAA and SEAC, whichever takes place earlier.

Assam Rifles strengthens monsoon readiness with boatmanship training in Mizoram

Aizawl, June 01: Assam Rifles has conducted a five-day Boatmanship Training Cadre in Mizoram to enhance the preparedness of its personnel for monsoon-related emergencies and flood rescue operations across the state. The training programme, held from May 26 to May 30, was aimed at improving the operational capabilities of troops deployed in flood-prone and remote areas.

According to an official release, the cadre focused on key aspects of water-based operations, including boat handling, river navigation, flood rescue techniques, casualty evacuation, outboard motor handling, safety procedures and tactical river-crossing methods. Officials said the training included extensive practical sessions designed



to equip personnel with the skills required to respond effectively during natural disasters and emergencies that commonly occur during the monsoon season in the Northeast.

The programme concluded with a comprehensive field exercise involving river-crossing operations and rescue drills. The exercise was conducted to assess and validate the skills acquired by participants during the training period. Assam Rifles said the initiative reflects its continued commitment to maintaining a high level of operational readiness and strengthening disaster response capabilities in the region. Often referred to as the "Sentinels of the Northeast", the force plays a significant role in supporting civil authorities and assisting local

communities during floods, landslides and other natural calamities.

Meanwhile, in a separate operation highlighting its enforcement role, Assam Rifles, in coordination with the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), seized approximately seven lakh Yaba tablets worth around Rs 8 crore during a joint anti-narcotics operation at Mungiakami on May 16. Acting on specific intelligence inputs, security personnel intercepted a pickup vehicle and recovered the large consignment of contraband tablets during a detailed search.

One person, identified as 28-year-old Kauchar Hussain, a resident of Jatan Bari in Tripura's Gomati district, was arrested in connection with the smuggling attempt.

Dimapur traders report sharp fall in business as market activity slows

Kohima, June 01: Businesses across Dimapur are facing a difficult period, with traders reporting a significant decline in sales, reduced customer footfall and increasing financial pressure amid a broader slowdown in commercial activity. A week-long survey conducted across the city from May 25 to May 30 found that traders from different sectors were experiencing a similar trend, with many estimating that business had fallen by more than 50 per cent compared to previous years. The survey covered a wide range of businesses, including electronics shops, clothing stores, footwear outlets, restaurants, hardware dealers, vegetable vendors, pan shops and second-hand clothing sellers.

Traders from all sectors expressed concern over the current market situation. Several business owners said customer turnout had declined sharply over the past few months. A retailer dealing in garments said there were now long stretches during the day without a single sale, a situation that was rare in previous years. Similar observations were shared by traders operating in other parts of the city. Many respondents attributed the slowdown to rising fuel prices, which they said had increased transportation costs and pushed up the prices of goods. According to traders, higher prices have affected consumer spending and



reduced purchasing power. "Prices of almost everything have increased because of rising fuel costs," one retailer said, adding that customers are becoming more cautious about spending. The impact has been particularly severe on small traders. An elder-

ly vegetable vendor at New Market said there were days when her earnings were not enough to cover daily expenses. She explained that unsold vegetables often spoiled, resulting in further losses after accounting for transportation charges and market

fees. Some traders also pointed to structural changes in the region's trading network.

They claimed that the relocation of several godowns and wholesale supply centres to neighbouring districts in Assam had affected Dimapur's role as a

major commercial hub. According to them, the shift has disrupted supply chains and diverted business activity away from the city. Interestingly, traders largely rejected weather conditions as a reason for the decline.

They noted that in previous years, markets remained crowded even during the peak summer months, suggesting that other economic factors were responsible for the downturn. Another issue highlighted by several respondents was the burden of what they described as multiple taxation. While acknowledging payments made to underground groups, some traders alleged that they were also expected to make contributions to various organisations in the form of donations. "These payments add to our burden, especially when sales are already low," a hardware dealer said. A restaurant owner said many small businesses were struggling to survive. "We are barely managing to pay rent and meet our daily expenses.

On top of that, we face multiple financial demands," he said. Traders were also asked whether stricter implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system had affected customer numbers. Most respondents dismissed the suggestion, saying that local residents continued to form the bulk of their customer base. The slowdown was visible beyond indi-

vidual businesses. Observations made during the survey period showed noticeably lighter traffic and fewer pedestrians in several of Dimapur's busiest commercial areas, even during hours that would normally witness heavy activity. Parking attendants stationed in key market locations confirmed the trend.

They reported that parking spaces that were once occupied throughout the day now often remained vacant for long periods. "Earlier, it was difficult to find an empty parking slot. Now many spaces remain vacant even during peak business hours," one parking attendant said. Traffic police personnel also acknowledged a decline in vehicular movement and crowd density.

While one officer noted that improved traffic management through recently installed CCTV and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras had contributed to smoother traffic flow, he agreed that overall market footfall had dropped significantly. Commercial hubs such as New Market, Hong Kong Market and Batta Charali, which were once known for bustling crowds and heavy business activity, now appear noticeably quieter. Traders say the situation reflects a broader economic slowdown that is affecting businesses across the city and has left many shopkeepers uncertain about the months ahead.

Kuki Inpi Manipur Temporarily Suspends Shutdown Across Kuki-Zo Areas

Imphal, June 01: Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), the apex body representing the Kuki community in Manipur, has announced the temporary suspension of the total shutdown that had been imposed across Kuki-Zo inhabited districts in the state. In a statement KIM said the decision was taken following discussions with government authorities on May 29 and 30, during which several positive developments and assurances emerged. The organization stated that the shutdown was being suspended with immediate effect as a gesture of goodwill and cooperation. The decision comes amid heightened tensions in the state following the killing of three Church leaders and reports regarding the continued detention of six Naga individuals in Kangpokpi district since May 13. There have also been reports that 14 Kuki individuals are being held in Senapati district. According to KIM, the temporary withdrawal of the shutdown is intended to facilitate administrative processes and provide the government with an opportunity to take responsible and decisive action to deliver justice and address the concerns of the Kuki-Zo community. The organization, however, clarified that the suspension should not be interpreted as a weakening of its position or a compromise on its demands and rights. KIM emphasized that the move was made in good faith and in the larger public interest. The apex Kuki body said it had exercised restraint and patience despite the challenges faced by the community and expressed hope that the government would take concrete measures to address the issues raised by the Kuki-Zo people. At the same time, KIM warned that if there is no visible progress or meaningful action from the authorities during the relaxation period, it, along with allied organizations, may intensify democratic protests and reinstate the shutdown. Meanwhile, the inter-district economic blockade imposed in Naga-dominated areas of Manipur continues. The blockade, which began on May 17, was launched by the Working Committee of the United Naga Council (UNC), the apex body of the Naga community in Manipur, demanding the safe rescue and release of the Naga hostages. The continuing blockade and the unresolved hostage crisis underscore the fragile security situation in Manipur, even as efforts are underway to ease tensions and restore normalcy across the state.

Prime Accused Killed in Police Encounter After Fatal Attack on Youth and Teen Girl in Nalbari

Nalbari, June 01: The prime accused in the sensational Gangapur attack case in Assam's Nalbari district was killed in a police encounter on Sunday, a day after a brutal assault left a young man dead and a teenage girl critically injured. The accused, identified as Roz Ali, was reportedly shot during a police operation at a riverine sandbar near Mukalmua after he allegedly refused to surrender and attempted to snatch a service weapon from a police officer.

According to Nalbari Police, officers had tracked down Roz Ali following an intensive manhunt launched after Saturday night's attack. During the operation, police asked the accused to surrender, but he allegedly attempted to flee. In the ensuing confrontation, he reportedly tried to seize a weapon from one of the officers, prompting another policeman to open fire.

Roz Ali was immediately taken to Nalbari Medical College and Hospital in critical condition but later succumbed to his injuries. The incident stems from



a shocking attack that occurred near Gangapur under Mukalmua on May 30.

The victims, 17-year-old Class XII student Mridumudra Deka and her relative, 20-year-old Madhurjya Barman, were returning home when they were allegedly intercepted by Roz Ali and another accused, identified as Hitesh (Ashik) Ali. Police said the attackers allegedly assaulted the

duo with a machete. Madhurjya Barman, Assistant General Secretary of the West Nalbari Regional Students' Union and a resident of Balipathar in Chamata, sustained grievous injuries and later died.

Mridumudra Deka remains in critical condition at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), where she is undergoing intensive treatment. Family

members of the teenage girl have alleged that Roz Ali had been harassing her for a considerable period after she rejected his marriage proposal. According to her mother, the accused repeatedly threatened both her and her daughter when his proposal was turned down. The case has generated widespread outrage across Assam, with several organizations demanding swift justice.

While some groups have described the incident as a case of "love jihad," police have not officially confirmed any specific motive and have urged the public not to draw conclusions until the investigation is completed. Authorities continue to investigate the involvement of other accused persons and are working to establish the full sequence of events leading to the attack.

Police have assured that all those responsible will be brought to justice. The tragic incident has shocked the state and intensified calls for stronger measures to protect women and curb violent crimes.

Two Arrested in Alleged Murder Plot Linked to Extramarital Affair in Assam's Goalpara



Goalpara, June 01: A sensational case of attempted murder allegedly stemming from an extramarital relationship has come to light in Assam's Goalpara district, leading to the arrest of two individuals who have since been remanded to judicial custody.

The incident occurred at West Simulbari village under Lakhimpur Police Station and has sparked widespread concern and discussion among local residents. According to police investigations, a woman was allegedly involved in a long-standing extramarital relationship with Mofidul Islam, a relative of her husband, Shafiqul Islam. Investigators suspect that the pair conspired to eliminate Shafiqul, whom they allegedly viewed as an ob-

stacle to their relationship. Police said Shafiqul had returned from Guwahati on May 26 to celebrate Eid with his family.

During the night, at around 2 a.m., his wife allegedly persuaded him to step outside the house on the pretext of using the toilet.

As part of the alleged plan, Mofidul Islam then attacked Shafiqul with a sharp weapon, leaving him critically injured before fleeing the scene. Following a complaint lodged by family members at Lakhimpur Police Station, police registered a case and launched an investigation. Based on evidence gathered during the probe, Shafiqul's wife was first arrested and sent to judicial custody.

Later, police apprehended

the main accused, Mofidul Islam, who had been absconding since the incident. He was subsequently produced before a court and remanded to jail. Police officer Jiban Daimari stated that investigators also recovered the weapon allegedly used in the attack during an operation conducted with the accused. Meanwhile, Shafiqul Islam remains hospitalized and is reportedly fighting for his life.

Police said the investigation is ongoing, and further details may emerge as the probe progresses. The shocking incident has triggered strong reactions across the locality and raised concerns about rising crimes linked to domestic disputes and illicit relationships.

Himanta Meets Jaishankar on Regional Trade Opportunities



Guwahati, Jun 01: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and discussed ways to strengthen the Centre’s Act East Policy while exploring Assam’s potential role in enhancing trade and tourism ties with neighbouring countries.

Sharing details of the meeting, which took place at the External Affairs Minister’s official residence, on social media platform X, Sarma described the interaction as insightful and said Jaishankar’s perspective on global affairs and India’s approach to current geopolitical challenges was always enlightening.

“This morning, I had the pleasure to call upon Hon’ble External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar ji. His perspective on global affairs and how India is navigating current geopolitical headwinds is always enlightening,” the Chief Minister said.

Sarma said he thanked the External Affairs Minister for sharing his insights on further strengthening India’s Act East Policy, a key initiative aimed at deepening India’s engagement with countries in Southeast Asia and the broader Indo-Pacific region.

The Chief Minister also expressed hope for continued guidance from Jaishankar on how Assam can contribute to strengthening trade and tourism linkages with neighbouring nations, leveraging the state’s strategic location as a gateway to the Northeast and Southeast Asia.

The discussions came amid ongoing efforts to boost regional connectivity, cross-border commerce and economic cooperation under the Act East framework, with Assam expected to play an increasingly important role in advancing these objectives.

Two Held in Goalpara Murder Conspiracy Tied to Alleged Extramarital Affair

Goalpara, Jun 01: A sensational case of attempted murder allegedly stemming from an extramarital relationship has come to light in Assam’s Goalpara district, leading to the arrest of two individuals who have since been remanded to judicial custody.

The incident occurred at West Simulbari village under Lakhipur Police Station and has sparked widespread concern and discussion among local residents.

According to police investigations, a woman was allegedly involved in a long-standing extramarital relationship with Mofidul Islam, a relative of her husband,

Shafiqul Islam. Investigators suspect that the pair conspired to eliminate Shafiqul, whom they allegedly viewed as an obstacle to their relationship.

Police said Shafiqul had returned from Guwahati on May 26 to celebrate Eid with his family. During the night, at around 2 a.m., his wife allegedly persuaded him to step outside the house on the pretext of using the toilet.

As part of the alleged plan, Mofidul Islam then attacked Shafiqul with a sharp weapon, leaving him critically injured before fleeing the scene.

Following a complaint lodged

by family members at Lakhipur Police Station, police registered a case and launched an investigation. Based on evidence gathered during the probe, Shafiqul’s wife was first arrested and sent to judicial custody. Later, police apprehended the main accused, Mofidul Islam, who had been absconding since the incident. He was subsequently produced before a court and remanded to jail.

Police officer Jiban Daimari stated that investigators also recovered the weapon allegedly used in the attack during an operation conducted with the accused.



Meanwhile, Shafiqul Islam remains hospitalized and is reportedly fighting for his life. Police said the investigation is ongoing, and further details may emerge as the probe progresses.

The shocking incident has triggered strong reactions across the locality and raised concerns about rising crimes linked to domestic disputes and illicit relationships.

SLBC Assam organised outreach programme on Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme

Guwahati, Jun 01: The State Level Bankers’ Committee (SLBC), Assam organised an outreach programme on Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 5.0 at Assam Water Centre, Guwahati on Saturday with the objective of creating awareness among MSMEs, banks and other stakeholders regarding the scheme and its benefits.

The programme aimed to create awareness among MSME entrepreneurs, bankers and other stakeholders regarding the scheme and its benefits. Addressing the gathering, Safal Tripathi, General Manager and Convenor, SLBC Assam, said that ECLGS 5.0

has been launched by the Government of India to provide additional liquidity support to eligible MSMEs facing financial stress and working capital constraints. He informed that eligible borrowers can avail additional credit of up to 20 per cent of their peak working capital utilisation during the fourth quarter of FY 2025-26, subject to a maximum limit of ₹100 crore. He further stated that the scheme offers 100 per cent credit guarantee coverage through the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC) without any guarantee fee, enabling easier and faster access to credit for MS-

MEs. The programme was attended by several senior officials, including Amit Ranjan, Deputy General Manager, SLBC Assam Bibhuti Dutta, State Head of the Association of Chamber of Commerce, Gaurav Joshi, Director, MSME, Shri Loken Das, Chief General Manager, NABARD and Satya Ranjan Panda, General Manager, UCO Bank. Garima Kapoor, Deputy Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS), Government of India, addressed the participants virtually and highlighted the role of ECLGS 5.0 in supporting MSMEs, safeguarding jobs and ensuring business continuity.

Key accused in Assam fisheries scam arrested from Odisha

Guwahati, Jun 01: Padma Kanta Hazarika, a key accused in the alleged financial irregularities in Assam Fisheries Development Corporation Ltd (AFDCL) has been arrested from Puri in Odisha.

A team of officials from the Directorate of Vigilence and Anti-Corruption arrested Hazarika, the then OSD cum Project Director of AFDCL, on Saturday and he will be brought to Guwahati on a transit remand. An official press release stated that Hazarika has been arrested in connection with ACB PS Case No. 30/2023 related to misappropriation of funds of AFDCL. He was produced before the court in Puri last night and the court granted four days transit remand for bringing him to Guwahati. Simultaneously, teams of Directorate of Vigilance ift: Anti-Corruption, Assam conducted searches at three flats in Guwahati belonging to Hazarika.

Six Naga Persons Abducted in Manipur; Nagaland CM Seeks Centre’s Intervention

Dimapur, Jun 01: Nagaland Chief Minister Dr. Neiphiu Rio has sought the intervention of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other senior central officials to secure the safe and early release of six Naga persons who were abducted in Manipur.

In a letter addressed to United Naga Council (UNC) President N.G. Lohrii, Rio stated that he had spoken with Amit Shah and conveyed the deep concern and anguish prevailing among the Naga community over the incident. He urged the Union Home Minister to personally intervene and ensure that all possible efforts are made by the Government of India to trace the abducted individuals, bring those responsible to justice, and secure their release at the earliest.

According to Rio, Amit Shah as-

sured him that the matter would be treated with the highest priority and that all concerned agencies would take necessary measures to locate the abducted persons, identify the perpetrators, and ensure that legal action is taken.

The Chief Minister further revealed that he had also held discussions with the Union Home Secretary and the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, stressing the urgency and sensitivity of the matter. Both officials assured him that coordinated efforts were underway and that the case was being actively pursued. Expressing concern over the anxiety and suffering faced by the families of the abducted persons and the wider Naga community, Rio appealed to all stakeholders to exercise restraint and cooperate ful-

ly with efforts aimed at securing the safe recovery of the victims while maintaining peace and harmony in the region. He also appreciated the constructive role played by the United Naga Council and expressed hope that coordinated efforts and goodwill among all parties would help achieve a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

In a significant appeal, Rio urged the UNC to persuade Naga volunteers who are reportedly holding 14 Kuki individuals in their custody to facilitate their safe and unconditional release. He stressed the importance of upholding the values of Christianity, including compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation, as well as the Naga tradition of protecting innocent lives and preserving human dignity. The Chief Minister also

welcomed the appeal issued by the Christian Forum, comprising church leaders and faith-based organisations, which called upon all parties to reject violence and retaliation, respect the sanctity of human life, and work towards a peaceful resolution of the ongoing crisis.

Rio further urged the UNC to continue engaging with authorities and stakeholders and to extend full support to efforts aimed at securing the safe release of the abducted Naga persons. He noted that the collective voice and cooperation of Naga civil society organisations, church bodies, and community leaders would be crucial in maintaining communal harmony and preventing any further escalation of tensions.

Mukesh Singh Takes Over as Director General of Police in Manipur

Imphal, Jun 01: IPS officer Mukesh Singh has assumed charge as the Director General of Police of Manipur on Monday.

A 1996-batch IPS officer of the Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram-Union Territories (AGMUT) cadre, Singh arrived in Imphal on Saturday ahead of taking over as the state’s top police officer. He previously served as the Director General of Police in Ladakh.

Upon his arrival at the Police Headquarters (PHQ) in Mantripukhri, Singh was accorded a Guard of Honour by Manipur Police.



Following the ceremonial reception, the DGP held a brief introductory meeting with senior police officers.

Singh discussed key policing priorities and emphasised the importance of professionalism, upholding the Constitution of India and the rule of law, coordination with sister agencies, and impartiality and neutrality in the discharge of duties to the public.

Senior officers of Manipur Police were present on the occasion.

He replaces Rajiv Singh

who relinquished the charge of DGP, Manipur on Sunday after serving the State for the past three years.

On the occasion, the outgoing DGP expressed his gratitude to the people of Manipur, elected representatives, civil society organisations, and public leaders of hill and valley districts for their cooperation and support during his tenure. He also conveyed his sincere appreciation to the security forces, including the Army, Assam

Rifles, CRPF, BSF, ITBP, SSB, CISF, and other sister agencies for their continued cooperation and assistance in maintaining peace and security in the State.

Singh further extended his best wishes to the new DGP and to all officers and personnel of Manipur Police and expressed confidence that the force would continue to serve the people of the State with dedication, professionalism, and commitment in the years ahead.

June 18 RS Election: BJP to Support MDA Nominee

Shillong, Jun 01: The BJP has decided to support a consensus candidate of the NPP-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance ahead of the Rajya Sabha election for the lone Rajya Sabha seat in Meghalaya on June 18.

Expecting that the MDA would field a consensus candidate, BJP spokesperson Mariahom Kharkrang said his party, which has only two MLAs in the Assembly, will not field any candidate for the Rajya Sabha polls.

“We hope there will be a consensus candidate after consultations. We have decided to support a consensus candidate,” Kharkrang said on Sunday.

Going by tradition, the Rajya Sabha seat from Meghalaya has been shared alternately between the Garo Hills and the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. With the current term of incumbent MP, Wanwei Roy Kharlukhi coming to an end, it is now the turn of the Garo Hills to send its representative to the Upper House of Parliament.

NPP national president and Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma’s elder brother, James P.K. Sangma, is leading the race for the ticket. The party’s Garo MLAs are strongly pushing for a leader from the Garo community to represent Meghalaya in Parliament.

Apparently, there is currently no contender from the Khasi-Jaintia Hills to challenge James Sangma’s candidature even as the name of NPP leader Himayala M. Shangpliang is doing the rounds.

However, the BJP’s decision to support the MDA’s consensus candidate has further bolstered James Sangma’s prospects.

As of now, the NPP is yet to finalise its candidate. The party is expected to hold discussions in the coming days before announcing the official nominee.

Nagaland Home Dept directs village authorities to enforce ban on single-use plastic

Kohima, Jun 01: The Nagaland Home Department has directed all village authorities in the state to strictly adhere to the guidelines pertaining to the total ban on single-use plastic. The directive was issued in pursuance of the Supreme Court judgement dated 14. 02. 2026, and in terms of the Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules 2021 as notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and

Climate Change (MoEFCC) under section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act 1986. The banned single use plastic includes all plastic carry bags with or without handles, irrespective of thickness and size, plastic cutleries including plates, cups, forks, spoons, straws, etc, cutlery and other decorative made of styrofoam (thermo-col), polythene, nylon, Poly Vinyl Carbohydrates (PVC), Poly Propylene, Polystyrene, etc.

Nalbari Murder Case

Prime Accused Killed in Police Encounter

Nalbari, Jun 01: The prime accused in the sensational Gangapur attack case in Assam’s Nalbari district was killed in a police encounter on Monday, a day after a brutal assault left a young man dead and a teenage girl critically injured.

The accused, identified as Roz Ali, was reportedly shot during a police operation at a riverine sandbar near Mukalmua after he allegedly refused to surrender and attempted to snatch a service weapon from a police officer.

According to Nalbari Police, officers had tracked down Roz Ali following an intensive manhunt launched after Saturday night’s attack. During the operation, police asked the accused to surrender, but he allegedly attempted to flee. In the ensuing confrontation, he reportedly tried to seize a weapon from one of the officers, prompting another policeman to open fire.

Roz Ali was immediately taken to Nalbari Medical College and



Hospital in critical condition but later succumbed to his injuries.

The incident stems from a shocking attack that occurred near Gangapur under Mukalmua on May 30. The victims, 17-year-old Class XII student Mridumudra Deka and her relative, 20-year-old Madhurjya Barman, were returning home when they were allegedly intercepted by Roz Ali and another accused, identified as Hitesh (Ashik) Ali.

Police said the attackers alleged-

ly assaulted the duo with a machete. Madhurjya Barman, Assistant General Secretary of the West Nalbari Regional Students’ Union and a resident of Balipathar in Chamata, sustained grievous injuries and later died. Mridumudra Deka remains in critical condition at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), where she is undergoing intensive treatment.

Family members of the teenage girl have alleged that Roz Ali had been harassing her for a consider-

able period after she rejected his marriage proposal. According to her mother, the accused repeatedly threatened both her and her daughter when his proposal was turned down.

The case has generated widespread outrage across Assam, with several organizations demanding swift justice. While some groups have described the incident as a case of “love jihad,” police have not officially confirmed any specific motive and have urged the public not to draw conclusions until the investigation is completed.

Authorities continue to investigate the involvement of other accused persons and are working to establish the full sequence of events leading to the attack. Police have assured that all those responsible will be brought to justice.

The tragic incident has shocked the state and intensified calls for stronger measures to protect women and curb violent crimes.

Union Minister Unveils 20 Buses at APSTS Golden Jubilee

Itanagar, Jun 01: Union Minister Ajay Tamta on Sunday flagged off 20 new buses of Arunachal Pradesh State Transport Services (APSTS) at Khonsa in Tirap district as part of the golden jubilee celebrations of the organisation.

To mark the historic milestone at the very place where the service began in 1975, Tamta, the Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, flagged off the new buses.

From its humble beginning with just two buses on the Khonsa-Naharkatia route, APSTS has completed an inspiring journey of 50 years, connecting remote corners of Arunachal Pradesh and serving as a lifeline for the people of the state.

Addressing the valedictory function, Tamta congratulated the state transport department and APSTS for five decades of dedicated public service in promoting socio-economic development and connecting remote borders.

The Union minister emphasised that robust transport infrastructure acts as a catalyst for growth. He highlighted that strategic road networks, including National Highway-13, would significantly boost tourism, improve local livelihoods, and drive economic progress.

Lok Sabha member Tapir Gao, State Transport Minister Ojing Tasing, MLAs Wangling Lowangdong, Wanglem Sawin, Chakot Aboh, and other distinguished guests were present on the occasion.



North East Chronicle

JUNE 02 2026 VOL 02 NO. 98



The Decline of Neighbourhood Trust

Urbanisation has transformed communities, but it has also weakened neighbourhood relationships. Many people no longer know those living around them, reducing trust and social connection. In earlier times, neighbourhoods often functioned as informal support systems during emergencies and personal difficulties. Today, increasing mobility and busy lifestyles have weakened these bonds. The decline of neighbourhood trust contributes to social isolation and reduces the sense of shared responsibility. Strong communities are built through interaction and cooperation. Rebuilding local connections can strengthen both social resilience and quality of life.

Priorities for NDA 3.0

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, the chief minister of Assam, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday in the nation’s capital and gave him an update on the goals and initial developments of the recently established NDA 3.0 government in Assam. Dr. Sarma has properly carried out this significant ceremony, particularly since the state’s BJP-led government has begun its third straight innings. This government’s performance will have a lasting effect on the state as well as the broader Northeastern area. The precise topics or concerns that the Chief Minister discussed with the Prime Minister or prioritized have not been made public. However, it is well known that the top priority on Dr. Sarma’s list of priorities is development, specifically socio-economic development, which should contain multiple subpoints. The BJP-led alliance is dedicated to protecting the interests of the state’s indigenous communities while working to improve the region’s broader national security situation, whether or not Dr. Sarma makes it public. There are various facets to this problem.

Dr. Sarma has stated that he supports 10% sample re-verification in the other districts and 20% sample re-verification in border districts and districts that have had significant demographic changes, even

though the NRC re-verification process has not yet begun. Given that NRC re-verification and the preparation of a perfect NRC are essential for maintaining national security and safeguarding the country’s sovereignty in the Northeast, which would also improve protection for the indigenous communities in the face of the ongoing dangerous demographic invasion, it is assumed that he brought this matter before the Prime Minister. However, since he started the NDA’s campaign for the 2026 Assam Assembly election, Dr. Sarma has made one point very clear. The goal of the eviction drive is to free all government land from the grasp of individuals with questionable citizenship backgrounds, sometimes known as illegal migrants. One way to prevent illegal migrants from settling in Assam is to protect government land as well as land owned by different religious and spiritual organizations. The eviction push would undoubtedly lead illegal migrants to search for space or land in other Indian states, even though large-scale deportations may not be achievable right away. In such a case, individuals may face prosecution under the citizenship laws that apply in other regions of the nation where the Assam Accord’s stipulations might not be relevant.

George Floyd is reminiscent of Yves Sakila’s passing. When will Ireland face its own racism

It is difficult to avoid being reminded of George Floyd’s agonizing death after seeing the terrifying video of what would turn out to be Yves Sakila’s last moments of consciousness. Shortly after being forced to the ground by security personnel outside Arnotts, a department shop in the city center, Sakila was pronounced dead in a Dublin hospital on May 15.Sakila, a Congolese native, allegedly fled the business after being suspected of theft. The reason we know anything about what transpired in the crowded, pedestrian-only street outside is because onlookers recorded it on camera. The 35-year-old is being restrained by a group of security guards for about five minutes in these extremely upsetting photos. When one of the men seems to put his knee on the back of Sakila’s neck, he tries to object, but his cries are muffled in the concrete. Sakila has stopped moving by the end of the video.Due to an initial post-mortem study that was apparently inconclusive, the cause of death has not yet been determined. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the police investigation into allegations of excessive force will reveal the precise thoughts of individuals involved. However, this is what I want to comprehend. Why would someone kneel on someone’s neck when they could see that they were being restrained by other men?

If the individual who was suspected of stealing had been white, would things have been different?Under Black Lives Matter banners, we assembled and staged street protests six years ago. After being ignored for so long, racism in Ireland was now being addressed. Was it all for nothing? Following the death of George Nkencho, a young black man who was shot and killed by gardai outside his Dublin house a few months later, we had to raise similar questions. As Black people in Ireland, it seems like we are often urged to ignore these terrible “incidents,” as if they were isolated tragedies with no connection to any bigger systemic problems or patterns. However, Sakila’s passing was not an isolated incident. We may comprehend this in a broader context of long-standing racism by watching the video of the incident and what has transpired thereafter.

While I was growing up in Dublin in the 1990s, some people welcomed me and others hated me. Because of the color of my skin, local racists verbally and physically intimidated me and spat at me. Like the majority of Irish people of color, I have experienced the security officers’ vigilant scrutiny when going into places like Arnotts. This was before to social media giving racists a platform. It came before the riots in Dublin, the violent assaults on

migrants, and the burning of asylum-seeker shelters. These voices are now more prominent than before due to online radicalization. I’m still in fight-or-flight mode in Ireland at the age of 37.However, the majority of the population seems to be in denial even after an incident that has garnered international notice. In addition to offering his sympathies, Taoiseach Micheál Martin stated that “a lot of people are clearly very concerned about what has transpired here” and that “the situation will have to be thoroughly investigated.” However, failing to consider whether racism might have contributed to Sakila’s treatment increases the risk. Martin ought to act more forcefully to expose and battle systemic racism, but how can he do this when he publicly attempts to place the responsibility for homelessness and his government’s startling housing shortcomings on immigrants?A few weeks prior to Sakila’s passing, Martin’s party colleague and former taoiseach Bertie Ahern was caught on camera discussing his worries about immigrants during a byelection campaign. On the threshold, he stated, “The Africans are the ones I worry about,” adding, “We can’t be taking in people from the Congo and all these places.” I believe there are too many people from those areas. He emphasized that Ukrainian migrants

were unique. The fact that private security guards reportedly worked for a well-known Irish company in the events leading up to Sakila’s death is another thing to take into account. A representative for the Selfridges Group-owned Arnotts offered sympathies. “A retail security incident should never result in a loss of life,” they stated. “We acknowledge the profound pain and anxiety this tragedy has caused within Dublin’s Congolese community and among the general public, and we take those concerns with the utmost seriousness.” However, we are left with the impression that a human life was not as valued as the private property of a multimillion-pound company—the purportedly pilfered perfume bottle. Interestingly, the store announced that it was reviewing its security offerings. Will the multinational accept accountability or, like our politicians, attempt to delegate that task to its hired assistants?A large portion of contemporary Ireland can be characterized by the dominance of multinational corporations. It is characterized by the disparity in income between the big pharmaceutical and tech classes and the rest. It is characterized by a crisis in the cost of living that ordinary people are finding intolerable, while anonymous multinational corporations benefit from significant corporate tax advantages.

Sakila’s death has been presented by Ireland’s media in an oddly subdued manner. The wording used is frequently passive (Sakila “became unresponsive”), as if the horror that transpired in front of consumers was a weird accident rather than a brutal assault.There are justified concerns about not prejudicing the investigation. However, the absence of a thorough discussion about structural racism runs the risk of encouraging future acts of violence in an environment where previous prime ministers participate in the scapegoating of marginalized and frequently racialized populations for the failures of decades of failed leadership. Regardless of the motivation, remarks like Ahern’s serve as xenophobic fodder for irate, marginalized individuals. Unemployed and homeless persons who are in dire need of someone to hold accountable for their misery.

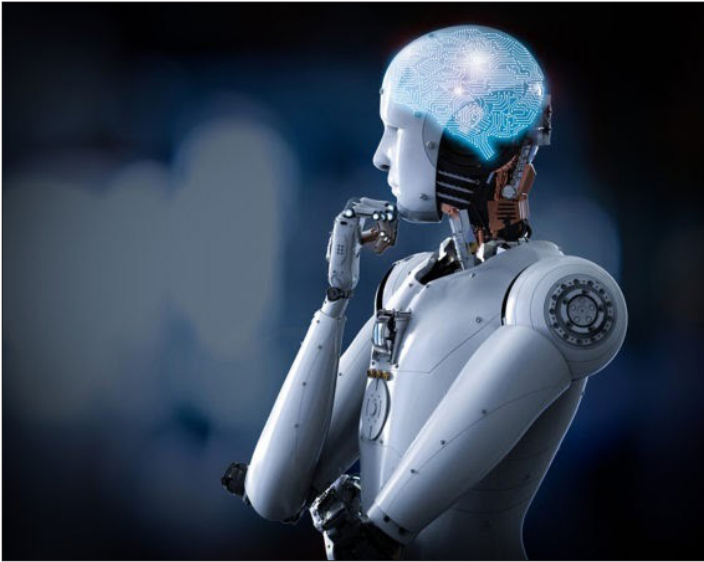
Ireland upholds an impeccable public image overseas: amiable, gregarious, and hospitable to the outside world. People I meet while traveling are startled to learn that racism affects a large number of Irish people. How long before a situation like that of Yves Sakila occurs again? Black and people of color are furious because they worry about our safety. We want answers, but we also want to know if white Irish folks have similar questions.

AI lacks humanity and purpose. Because of this, its bland voice is appropriate for the current political climate

I’ll give you a nightmarish scenario. You’re writing a book about how artificial intelligence is changing reality. With the assurance that you are practicing good hygiene by not allowing it to write a single sentence of the book, you begin employing it as a research companion. You believe you’ll be cautious and double-check everything.

When your book is released, it seems to contain more than six false or misattributed quotes. The unhappy author, Steven Rosenbaum, admitted that occasionally the results of AI were “staggeringly wrong,” but mistakes continued to occur. Others exist. There were accusations that a short tale that won the Commonwealth Prize had AI characteristics. And every time I come across a story about a journalist being duped by phony AI quotes while conducting research, I cross myself—there but for the grace of God go I—but I never touch the item to make sure it’s not up to grace alone. When AI results appear as the default in a search engine, I reject and criticize them as though they carried a sinister magic that would take over my synapses through simple interaction. AI is a dangerous and unreliable research tool, but that’s not the only reason for this monastic, almost paranoid approach. It is a tone, a frequency, and a voice. From press releases to social media postings to customer service, AI language stalks me in a million similar tinny chants. Even as

I write this piece, I’m concerned that it might seem artificial intelligence-like. that I have somehow absorbed its excess and blandness through constant exposure. its succinct declarative phrases. The narrative is advertorial. It mimics personhood informally. Hello there! I hope everything is good. I thought you might be interested in a column about artificial intelligence (AI), a topic that writers and thought leaders are becoming more and more interested in. Do you want to know more?In this fire, what are we losing? Writing is more than merely putting ideas into words in a certain form, such as literary fiction, analysis, or narrative. It is about the unique chemistry of one person using their own distinct characteristics to create an idea. It has to do with how their brains function, the peculiarities they have acquired along the way, their politics, their past, their relationships, and even how they perceive the world. AI can generate a thousand Dickens and Rumis, but it cannot develop a new classic author. You are limited to using the existing chorus of styles. You can never create; you can only derive. The atrophy comes next. the inability to create a verbal image or fight for a word. As a deadline draws near, I might save valuable time by asking AI to come up with a catchy statement, or I could linger and imagine that avoiding AI writing is like attempting to avoid breathing in an airborne sickness. It may not be a very



good simile, but it’s mine, damn it. Additionally, it aids in the consolidation of my thoughts while I write. Leaning on AI for everything from research to writing breaks the link between emotion and expression, whether it’s a political text or an email. It deprives everything of color and stifles the ability to meet, channel, and be taken aback by the thoughts that are racing through your mind. Technology eventually becomes an inhibitor of true consciousness when it starts to focus on labor reduction in every manner. It should come as no surprise that relying too much on LLMs may lower brain engagement.The fact that this self-cauterization is so appropriate for the current political climate, which is characterized by an abundance of content and false information, is even

more disheartening. AI is pervasive on social media, where accounts post lengthy paragraphs authoritatively on everything from the Middle East’s battles to dramatic personal experiences that never happened in a kind of fan-fiction reality. And in politics, where the voice of Keir Starmer predominates in a dull monotony of hedging responses and repeating, meaningless phrases. As a result, there are either centrist politicians who are afraid to challenge the current quo or loud, radical right-wing agitators who skim the froth of misinformation. The odd effect of trying not to communicate with too much emotion lest you be accused of having a real ideology obscures whatever little policies or ideas they do have. I apologize for sounding like a luddite

and for experiencing some moral panic over a technology that is supposedly democratizing information and lowering obstacles to writing. However, its calibration is entirely incorrect, which causes actual AI use and general AI sound to blend together. Running texts through AI detectors and accusing authors of cheating has become somewhat of a witch hunt, a reaction to the perplexing penetration of that sound into everything and the widespread use of AI.

Rosenbaum stated, “Anyone who is a working writer today who sits in front of a computer, whether doing longform or on deadline or at magazines, whatever the cadence of your work is, you’re using AI in one way or another at least in part because it’s not only seductive as hell but really incredibly valuable.” This comment, which refuses to accept the possibility of a world where we have a choice whose significance transcends convenience, is incredibly insightful and revealingly cynical. A promise to strive, imperfectly but consistently credibly, is at risk rather than merely a few regrettable mistakes here and there. There is a whole social compact that supports our capacity for mutual trust. Resisting AI is an investment in preserving the authenticity of the world we live in. “The liar’s punishment is not in the least that he is not believed, but that he cannot believe anyone else,” as George Bernard Shaw once stated.

The Enduring Impact of Madhabdeva

Madhabdeva is a pivotal figure in Assamese history, renowned for his transformative role in religion, literature, and culture. Born in 1489 in Letekupukhuri, Assam, during a time of societal upheaval, he initially adhered to the Shakta tradition before becoming Sri-manta Sankardeva’s most significant disciple, focusing on the Neo-Vaishnavite movement. Madhabdeva’s conversion to Vaishnavism marked a crucial turning point in Assamese culture, as he dedicated his life to promoting the Ekasarana Naam Dharma.His major contributions include institutionalizing Assamese culture through performing arts, leveraging music, poetry, and theater for social education and integration.

He is particularly noted for his innovation in the Borgeet tradition, producing over 191 devotional songs that combine spiritual themes with melodic sophistication, significantly enriching Assamese musical heritage. These Borgeets, composed in Brajavali, remain central to religious life in Assam. Madhabdeva also significantly impacted Assamese theater, rejuvenating Sankardeva’s dramatic traditions and creating accessible plays like the Jhumura, which conveyed spiritual and moral lessons through humor and relatability. His work established a connection between religion and everyday life.Furthermore, he contributed to the Xattriya dance tradition,

enhancing its expressive elements while maintaining spiritual integrity. He helped shape Xatras and Namghars into cultural centers that preserved these artistic traditions, ensuring their continuity within Assamese society. Ultimately, Madhabdeva’s multifaceted influence solidified a rich cultural identity for Assamese people, blending devotion with artistic expression, which continues to resonate today.Madhabdeva played a crucial role in the preservation and advancement of performing arts within a structured institutional framework, which included costume design, mask-making, dancing, recitation, musical accompaniment, and dramatic presentations. His

efforts ensured that these art forms remained integral to the community’s religious and social life, transforming the Namghar into a unique democratic cultural space that emphasized collective participation over passive observation. Under his influence, art became a communal experience, accessible to all rather than limited to professional performers.

Madhabdeva’s literary achievements, particularly his notable work, Naamghosha, stand out in Assamese religious writing. Comprising approximately a thousand verses, it serves as a scripture of devotional poetry aimed at emphasizing the spiritual significance of chanting God’s name, which he

framed as a potent spiritual path during the Kali Yuga. The simplicity, lyrical quality, and philosophical depth of Naamghosha make it a beautiful piece of literature, suitable for group recitation and embedded in Assamese prayers and daily life. Madhabdeva’s other significant works include Bhakti Ratnavali, Janma Rahasya, Naam Malika, and Guru Bhatima, which demonstrate his ability to articulate complex theological ideas in relatable terms, merging artistic beauty with spiritual insight.

A defining aspect of Madhabdeva’s philosophy is the notion that devotion and creativity are intertwined parts of the same spiritual journey. He per-

ceived artistic expression as a form of worship, positioning literature, music, dance, and theater as sacred practices that elevate human consciousness. This framework prevented the performing arts from becoming trivial or purely entertaining and instead encouraged them to embody both artistic richness and spiritual depth.

Madhabdeva’s contributions also led to significant social changes; his community-engaged practices, such as congregational worship and collective artistic performances, broke down social barriers and fostered a shared cultural identity. He facilitated inclusive artistic and spiritual experiences across varying social backgrounds,

allowing the performing arts to become instruments for cultural and social unity.The legacy of Madhabdeva extends well beyond his time, with enduring influences on contemporary Assamese culture. His musical compositions, particularly Borgeets, continue to be central to devotional music, while the classical dance form Xattriya has gained international recognition. Namghars still act as communal centers in Assam, and traditional theatrical forms like Jhumura and Bhaona remain influential.

Not only recognized as a spiritual leader, Madhabdeva was also a poet, musician, dramatist, and cultural visionary. His body of work exemplifies

how artistic expression can drive social transformation and spiritual awakening, culminating in a rich cultural heritage that defines Assamese identity. By merging tradition with innovation, Madhabdeva synthesized spirituality with artistry, ensuring his contributions resonate through generations in the music of Borgeets, the teachings of Naamghosha, and the vibrant cultural practices tied to Xatras and Namghars. His profound impact on Assamese culture solidifies his legacy as one of its greatest advocates and torchbearers, embodying both the essence of the Neo-Vaishnavite movement and the continuous evolution of Assamese civilization.

Gross FDI inflows in FY26 at \$95 bn; net FDI rises to \$7.7 bn

Mumbai: In a major relief for the government, which has faced criticism over the outflow of capital, gross FDI inflows increased 18% to \$94.5 billion during FY26 from \$80.6 billion a year ago. Similarly, net FDI inflows rose to \$7.7 billion from \$1 billion during the same period, according to the May edition of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) monthly bulletin. According to the RBI, gross FDI inflows have been encouraging. “This will remain robust with the recent spree of greenfield FDI announcements, especially in the finance and tech sectors,” the central bank said in its bulletin.

Net foreign direct investment (FDI) in March remained positive for the second consecutive month. According to the RBI Bulletin for May, net FDI during the month



stood at \$1.6 billion against \$4.6 billion in February. During March, the country received gross FDI inflows of \$6.2 billion. Outward FDI declined in March, with more than half of the flows directed towards Singapore, the UAE and the Neth-

erlands. In a major relief for the government, which has faced criticism over the outflow of capital, gross FDI inflows increased 18% to \$94.5 billion during FY26 from \$80.6 billion a year ago. Similarly, net FDI inflows rose to \$7.7 billion

from \$1 billion during the same period, according to the May edition of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) monthly bulletin. According to the RBI, gross FDI inflows have been encouraging. “This will remain robust with the recent spree of greenfield FDI announcements, especially in the finance and tech sectors,” the central bank said in its bulletin. Net foreign direct investment (FDI) in March remained positive for the second consecutive month. According to the RBI Bulletin for May, net FDI during the month stood at \$1.6 billion against \$4.6 billion in February. During March, the country received gross FDI inflows of \$6.2 billion. Outward FDI declined in March, with more than half of the flows directed towards Singapore, the UAE and the Netherlands.

Ashok Leyland, BEL, 1 more stock upmove: Bajaj Broking

Mumbai: Shares of defence-related companies have largely outperformed the market since the start of the US-Iran war despite bouts of volatility. According to ACE Equity data, the Nifty Defence index has surged over 13 per cent since the start of the West Asia conflict (February 28, 2026), while the NSE benchmark Nifty 50 has dipped nearly 5 per cent. Among individual stocks, MTAR Technologies has more-than-doubled in the last three months, up 109 per cent. Apollo Micro Systems, Aequus, Axiscades Technologies, Solar Industries India and Paras Defence and Space Technologies from the Nifty Defence space are the other major gainers - up in the range of 30-72 per cent.

Given this background, Pabitra Mukherjee, Associate Vice President - Research at Bajaj Broking identifies three defence-related stocks namely - Ashok Leyland, Bharat Electronics and Garden Reach Shipbuilders - that recently con-

solidated and seem ready for the next up-move. BEL stock has remained in a steady uptrend over the last 10 months, moving within a rising channel that reflects strong buying interest even at higher levels. The stock is now approaching the lower end of the channel, which makes the current decline look like a healthy pullback and offers a fresh entry opportunity with a favourable risk-reward setup, says Pabitra Mukherjee.

On the upside, the analyst expects the stock to gradually head towards the ₹464-mark in the coming months, which is the high made in April 2026.

If it manages to break above this level decisively, the rally could extend further towards the upper end of the channel near ₹495, he adds. On the downside, Mukherjee sees strong support for the stock in the ₹400-₹390 zone, which coincides with both the lower band of the rising channel and the 200-DEMA.

Govt urges people to use electricity judiciously as heatwave pushes power demand to record high

Mumbai: Amid growing demand for electricity due to heatwaves in the country, power ministry on Friday urged citizens to use electricity judiciously. The ministry, however, said though there is no shortage of electricity, it should be used wisely.

In the last four days, electricity demand has broken all previous records due to the searing heat across the country, which has led to increased use of cooling devices by people. In fact, the peak power demand has even crossed the estimated 270.82 GW, the highest so far, surpassing the ministry's projection of peak power demand in the country.

Over the past four days, power demand has continued to rise. For instance, the peak power demand met on May 18 was 257.37 GW, on



May 19 it was 260.45 GW, on May 20 it reached 265.44 GW, and on May 21 it hit the highest level of 270.82 GW.

The peak daytime demand usually occurs between 2 PM and 4 PM. Although we are prepared to

supply electricity as required, due to the intense summer, let us all try to use electricity wisely and judiciously,” said the Power Ministry in a social media post on The spike in electricity consumption comes amid severe heatwave conditions

across northwest and central India. According to the India Meteorological Department, temperatures in several regions are nearing the 45-degree Celsius mark. Last summer, India recorded a peak power demand of 242.77 GW in June 2025, although it remained below the government's projected estimate of 277 GW. In May 2024, the country's peak power demand had touched 250 GW, surpassing the previous record high of 243.27 GW recorded in September 2023.

According to the ministry, the peak demand was met through a diversified energy mix comprising 59 GW from solar power, 14 GW from wind energy, 15 GW from hydro power, 169 GW from thermal power, 2.386 GW from gas-based generation, and 7.20 GW from nuclear power.

Markets rebound: Sensex up 1,144 pts intraday; Nifty tops 24k; key reasons

Mumbai: Stock Market rally: Extending the gains for the second consecutive session, Indian equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty 50 traded sharply higher on Monday, May 25, following a rally in global markets amid signs of the US-Iran peace deal, decline in crude oil prices, and easing inflation concerns. Decline in crude oil prices: Oil prices have declined sharply on hopes of a deal that could bring an end to the US-Israel war with Iran. Brent crude was down 5.47 per cent at \$97.88 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was down 5.63 per cent at \$91.16. In Delhi, petrol prices climbed by ₹2.61 per litre to ₹102.12, crossing the ₹100 threshold, while diesel rates went up by ₹2.71 to ₹95.20 per litre, industry officials said.

Positive global cues: Japan's Nikkei 225 surpassed the 65,000 mark for the first time on Monday, reaching a record high during thin holiday trading in Asia. Investor sentiment improved after reports suggested that the vital Strait of Hormuz shipping route could reopen soon, easing concerns over oil supplies. Last checked, Japan's Nikkei 225 index was trading 3.14 per cent higher at 65,333.44 levels.

Rally in OMC stocks: Shares of three state-run oil marketing companies, including Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), gained over 4 per cent each as petrol and diesel prices were raised again on Monday. The latest increase marks the fourth fuel price hike since May 15, pushing the cumulative rise in petrol and diesel rates to nearly ₹7.5 per litre after daily price revisions resumed following a long freeze.

The BSE Sensex closed with a gain of 1,073.61



points, or 1.42 per cent, at 76,488.96. The NSE Nifty 50 rose 312.40 points, or 1.32 per cent to settle at 24,031.70.

During the day, the Sensex touched a high of 76,559.07, up 1,144 points, or 1.5 per cent. Likewise, the Nifty 50 hit an intraday high of 24,054.45, up 335 points, or 1.41 per cent. On the sectoral front, barring Nifty FMCG, all the indices closed higher. The Nifty PSU Bank index surged 2.9 per cent to emerged as the top sectoral gainer. The Nifty Private Bank index also climbed more than 2 per cent.

The Nifty Bank index, which tracks the movement of 14 listed banks, and the Nifty Financial Services added more than 2 per cent each. The Nifty Auto and Realty finished higher by 1.9 per cent and 1.5 per cent, respectively. In today's rally so far, investors gained more than ₹6 trillion, as the

total market capitalisation of all BSE-listed companies jumped to ₹468.8 trillion, compared with the previous session's all-India market capitalisation of ₹462.25 trillion. Stock Market Rebound: Here's why the Sensex and Nifty are rising today: Easing geopolitical concerns: On Saturday, US President Donald Trump said that a deal with Tehran was “mostly finalised” and that more details would be revealed soon. However, the next day, he cautioned his negotiating team against moving too quickly toward an agreement. Earlier, Trump had said the agreement would involve reopening the strategically important Strait of Hormuz shipping route, though he did not provide additional details. The narrow passage, which normally carries about one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies, has effectively remained shut since the conflict began on February 28, 2026.

Nifty Midcap 100 index hits record high; Adani Total Gas surges 11%

Mumbai: Shares of midcap companies were in demand with the Nifty Midcap 100 index hitting a record high of 62,324.20, up nearly 1 per cent on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) in Tuesday's intra-day trade on the back of a sharp rally in power and metal stocks. The midcap index surpassed its previous high of 62,113.85 touched on May 8, 2026. In the past one month, the Nifty Midcap 100 index has outperformed the market by gaining 3.4 per cent, as compared to 0.1 per cent decline in the Nifty 50. Since April, Midcap index soared 18.4 per cent, as against 7.8 per cent rise in the benchmark index. Among individual stocks, BSE, Laurus Labs and Polycab India from the Nifty Midcap 100 index hit

their respective all-time highs in intra-day trade. Total Gas rallied 11 per cent to ₹731.40 on the NSE in intra-day deals. The market price of the Adani Group company hit a 52-week high of ₹798 on September 23, 2025. The counter saw huge trading volumes, with a combined 16 million shares changing hands on the NSE and BSE. Tata Investment Corporation, Info Edge India, JSW Energy, Premier Energies, Waaree Energies, Tata Communications, Steel Authority of India (SAIL), Oil India and Paytm were up in the range of 3 per cent to 5 per cent. Meanwhile, since April, the market price of Bharat Heavy Electricals (BHEL) has zoomed 71 per cent, while Vodafone Idea surged 66 per cent followed by BSE (62

per cent), Hitachi Energy India and Tata Communications (49 per cent each), Oracle Financial Services (47 per cent), Adani Total Gas (44 per cent), Motilal Oswal Financial Services (41 per cent) and Sulzon Energy and Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) (40 per cent each).

Meanwhile, based on provisional data, foreigners invested ₹822 crore while domestic players invested ₹3,857 crore in Indian equities on Monday, May 25, 2026. Broader-market indices were mirroring this bullish rotation. Following a three-week consolidation phase, the Nifty Midcap index successfully resumed its upward trajectory and hit an all-time high in intra-day today

Adani Power jumps 12% in 2 days, hits new high

Mumbai: Shares of Adani Power hit a new high of ₹245.40, surging 5 per cent on the BSE in Tuesday's intra-day trade amid heavy volumes. The stock price of the Adani Group company extended its up move, rallying 12 per cent in the past two trading days. It zoomed 89 per cent from its February low of ₹130.15 on the BSE.

At 12:47 PM, Adani Power stock was quoting 4.5 per cent higher at ₹244, as compared to 0.26 per cent decline in the BSE Sensex. The average trading volumes at the counter jumped nearly two-fold, with a combined 66.49 million shares changing hands on the NSE (61.74 million) and BSE (4.75 million). Meanwhile, Adani Power's performance in the fourth quarter (January to March 2026) was particularly strong with an EBITDA of ₹6,498 crore, marking a significant 27 per cent increase year-over-year.

The financial year 2025-26 (FY26) was marked by weather-induced demand volatility, lower peak temperatures and increased renewable generation. As a result, merchant prices remained subdued for most of the

year. However, core demand drivers linked to economic growth remain intact and demand recovery is already visible as the company moves into the financial year 2026-27 (FY27).

What's driving Adani Power stock price? Further, Adani Power inked a Business Transfer Agreement for the acquisition of the 180 MW thermal power plant of Jaiprakash Associates located in Churk and other related assets, including 11.49 per cent shares of Prayagraj Power Generation Company Ltd, held by Jaiprakash Associates. Adani Power believes that FY27 will see a strong growth in overall power demand as well as peak demand. Adani Power on May 21, 2026 said it entered into definitive agreements to acquire a 24 per cent stake in Jaiprakash Power Ventures and other thermal assets from Jaiprakash Associates for about ₹4,193.59 crore. According to a regulatory filing, the company inked a Share Purchase Agreement for the acquisition of 24 per cent shares of Jaiprakash Power Ventures Ltd, held by Jaiprakash Associates.

Gold jewellery sales volumes in India

Mumbai: India's organised gold jewellery sector is heading for its worst sales year in a decade. A combination of persistently high gold prices and a steep customs duty hike on imports is expected to push volumes down 13-15% this fiscal year, following an 8% contraction last year, according to a Crisil Ratings report released on Friday. The sector's total volume, covering jewellery, coins, and bars, is projected to land between 620 and 640 tonnes this fiscal, a level not seen since the Covid-disrupted fiscal 2021, which is excluded from the comparison. Why volumes are falling: The government recently more than doubled customs duty on gold to 15%, up from 6%, as part of efforts to rein in the trade deficit and stabilise the rupee. In fiscal 2026 alone, India imported around 720 tonnes of gold, resulting in a foreign currency outflow of approximately \$72 billion, as per the report. Himank Sharma, Director at Crisil Ratings, attributed the demand slowdown

squarely to this policy shift. With gold currently priced at around Rs 1,60,000 per 10 grams (24 carat), realisations per unit sold are expected to be 35-40% higher on-year. That price tailwind is powerful enough to drive revenue growth of 20-25% for the sector this fiscal, and lift absolute EBITDA by around 20%, even as margins face some pressure from deeper customer discounts, higher promotional spending, and a greater mix of lower-margin bars and coins. “The central government's decision to more than double the customs duty on gold to 15% from 6% will be a significant deterrent to demand for gold jewellery,” he said, adding that a shift toward bars and coins driven by investment interest is unlikely to fully compensate for the overall drop. According to the report, high prices have already been reshaping buying behaviour. Domestic gold prices surged roughly 55% last fiscal, driven by global geopolitical uncertainty and a weakening rupee against the dollar.

Apple Unveils Apnea Detection Feature for

Mumbai: Apple on Thursday introduced new health-focused features for users in India, enabling sleep apnea notifications on Apple Watch and a clinically validated hearing test on AirPods Pro, aimed at helping users detect potential health conditions and monitor their wellbeing through wearable devices. The sleep apnea notification feature works through a new Breathing Disturbances metric that uses the Apple Watch's accelerometer to detect wrist movements associated with interruptions in normal respiratory patterns during sleep, analysing breathing disturbance data every 30 days and alerting users if it detects consistent signs of moderate to severe sleep apnea. Users can also export a PDF report containing breathing disturbance data to support discussions with healthcare professionals. Apple noted that sleep apnea affects more than one billion people globally and often remains undiagnosed, potentially increasing the risk of hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and cardiac issues if left untreated.

AirPods Pro users in India will now be able to access a clinically validated hearing test based on pure-tone audiometry that can



be completed in around five minutes using AirPods Pro paired with a compatible iPhone or iPad, with users receiving a summary of their hearing levels including loss measurements for each ear, classifications, and recommendations. The results, including an audiogram, will be securely stored in the Health app and can be shared with healthcare providers. The Hearing Test feature is supported on AirPods Pro 2 and later models running the latest firmware paired with compatible devices using iOS 18 or iPadOS 18 and above. Sumbul Desai, Apple's Vice President of Health and Fitness, described the launch as bringing “meaningful capabilities” to users in India, underscoring the company's growing focus on health monitoring through its wearable ecosystem.

Netanyahu directs army to seize 70 percent of Gaza Strip

Gaza: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has instructed the Israeli army to expand its control of the Gaza Strip to 70 percent, according to remarks aired by Israeli media.“At this point, we are fully in control of 60 percent of the territory of the Gaza Strip ... and my directive is to get to ... 70 percent,” Ne-tanyahu said in footage recorded by Channel 12 and aired on Thursday. When someone in the audience shouted that Israel should take the entire besieged enclave, the prime minister said “we are going in order”, according to The Times of Israel. “First 70 percent,” he said without disputing that a complete takeover could take place. “We’ll start with that.The Israeli army had in mid-March quietly sent maps to aid organisations showing it had already expanded its control to about 11 percent beyond the so-called “Yellow Line” demarcating areas of the enclave oc-cupied by Israeli troops. That line was agreed in a United States-brokered “ceasefire” in October 2025. That meant it controlled 64 percent of the Palestin-ian territory, instead of 53 percent.Due to the Israeli army occupation, Palestinians cannot access about two-thirds of Gaza. A further seizure of the territory would force two million of them, already living in disastrous conditions, into an even smaller territory after enduring two years of genocidal war. Despite the nominal truce reached last year, Israeli bombing in Gaza continues with near-daily attacks. An Al Jazeera tally from October to April counted at least 2,400 Israeli violations. Earlier on Thursday, health authorities said an Israeli air raid killed at least 10 people, including four children, and wounded 20 others. According to the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs’ (OCHA) latest report, the hu-



manitarian situation for civilians in Gaza remains critical, with displaced families living in overcrowd-ed tents, schools or damaged structures. Clean wa-ter is scarce, and poor waste collection is increasing health risks, including the spread of rats and in-sects. Many neighbourhoods across Gaza are also still dangerous, with frequent air strikes, shelling and shootings happening in or near residential ar-eas, the report said.Last week, the high represen-

tative overseeing theUS-founded Board of Peace for Gaza, Nickolay Mladenov, warned that the de-teriorating status quo in the enclave risks becoming “permanent”. Speaking to the UN Security Coun-cil, he urged the international body to use “every means at its disposal” to press Hamas to disarm and to push Israel to uphold its commitment under the October ceasefire, pointing to its continued killings and restrictions on humanitarian flow. The war that

Israel launched following the October 7, 2023, at-tacks on southern Israel by Hamas and other armed Palestinian groups has killed more than 72,775 Pal-estinians. The Israeli military continues to maintain a strict security regime, and many hundreds more have been killed in the past seven months. Conflict monitors warn that since the US-Israel war on Iran started in February, Israeli bombardment of Gaza has accelerated.

GOP Senator Cassidy Loses Primary Trump Backs His Opponent

Israeli: Republican Sena-tor Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, a two-term incumbent, lost his primary after President Trump backed his challenger, Congressman Julia Let-low. Cassidy is the first GOP senator in nearly a decade to lose renomination. President Trump had vowed revenge against Senator Cassidy after he voted to impeach Trump following the January 6 in-surrection. In his concession speech on Saturday, Senator Cassidy made an apparent reference to Trump, saying, “Our country is not about one individual.”Sen. Bill Cassidy: “And when you participate in democracy, sometimes it doesn’t turn out the way you want it to. But you don’t pout. You don’t whine. You don’t claim the election was stol-en. You don’t find a reason why.”President Trump en-dorsed Representative Julia Letlow, who finished first in Saturday’s primary with 45% of the vote. Louisiana state Treasurer John Fleming came in second with 28%. Both of them will advance to a run-off in June. President Trump took to Truth Social to cele-brate Senator Cassidy’s defeat and went after Kentucky’s Republican Congressmmen-ber Thomas Massie, who co-authored the bill compell-ing the Justice Department to release the Epstein files. Trump wrote, “Tom Massie of Kentucky, the worst and most unreliable Republican Congressman in the history of our Country, is an even bigger insult to our Nation than Sena-tor Bill Cassidy of Louisi-ana, who suffered an unpre-cedented loss tonight by not even being allowed to run in the Republican Primary. This is the first time such a thing has ever happened to a sit-ting U.S. Senator!” President Trump escalated his threats against Iran on Sunday, post-ing on Truth Social, “For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won’t be anything left of them.” Ceasefire negotia-tions remain deadlocked over Iran’s demands for war re-pairations, an end to the U.S. blockade and a halt to fight-ing in Lebanon. On Sunday, a drone strike sparked a fire at an electrical generator on the perimeter of the UAE’s Barakah nuclear power plant, the first and only nuclear power station on the Arabian Peninsula. No group claimed responsibility, but the UAE has faced repeated Iranian drone and missile attacks since the war began in Feb-

Negotiator on U.S.-Iran Talks, Abraham Trump’s Threat to Blow Up Oman

Israeli: Nearly two months after the United States and Iran agreed to a ceasefire, are the two sides any closer to a lasting peace deal?We speak with Robert Malley, the Middle East pro-gram director at the International Cris-is Group, who worked in multiple Democratic administrations and helped negotiate the Obama-era Iran nuclear deal with Iran. He says Trump’s decision to pull the U.S. out of that deal in 2018 “was a completely reckless and absurd one,” with the Trump administration renegotiating many of the same issues, as well as pushing to reopen the Strait of Hor-muz, which Iran did not previously control. “We should never have been in the position we’re in now.” NER-MEEN SHAIKH: Tensions are rising in Iran and the Persian Gulf after Iran and the U.S. traded military strikes early on Thursday, just hours after President Trump said he was getting closer to sealing a deal with Iran. Fol-lowing the U.S. strikes in the Strait of Hormuz, Iran’s Revolutionary Guards say they targeted an unspecified U.S. air base that was the source of the American strikes. Kuwait’s military says it has activated its air defenses in response to a drone and missile attack, and the U.S. military is accusing Iran of violating the ceasefire agreement by attacking Kuwait.During a Cabinet meeting at the White House Wednes-day, President Trump warned the Gulf state of Oman, a longtime U.S. ally, that it would face a bombing campaign if it entered into an agreement with Iran to share control over the Strait of Hormuz. This is an exchange with ABC News reporter Rachel Scott. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: It’s international waters. Nobody’s go-ing to control it. We’re going to watch over it. We’ll watch over it. But no-body’s going to control it. That’s part of the negotiation that we have. They would like to control it. Nobody is go-ing to control it. It’s international wa-ters. And Oman will behave just like everybody else, or we’ll have to blow them up. They understand that. They’ll be fine. NERMEEN SHAIKH: Well, Robert, you’re back at the Internation-al Crisis Group. You were previously the president, now Middle East pro-gram director. The latest Crisis Group monitor on Iran has, of course — as you have, too, now — cautioned against any speculation about the deal, because it’s not clear exactly what it contains yet, but also elaborates on a new institutional arrangement Iran has made around the Strait of Hormuz. The so-called Persian Gulf Strait Au-thority was formalized by Iran’s Su-preme National Security Council earli-er this month, on the 18th and 19th of May, which, quote — and this is taken from the Crisis Group Monitor docu-ment — quote, “appears designed to turn ad hoc Revolutionary Guards in-terdictions into a permanent regulatory apparatus. Vessels seeking transit must file ownership details, insurance docu-mentation, crew manifests and cargo declarations with the authority before receiving a permit.” Now, this is pre-sumably entirely unacceptable, not

only to the U.S., but also to Gulf coun-tries. If you could talk about the signif-icance of this, and where it might fit into any potential deal?ROBERT MALLEY: Right. Well, so, first, just a reminder, I said it earlier, but we’re now negotiating over an issue that wasn’t even existing before the war, and the main topic of negotiation is opening the strait, that was not closed prior to the launching of this illegal war. So, that’s point number one.Point number two, yes, what Iran — it’s dis-covered that it has this ability — again, it always had it, but it’s now put it into practice — of stopping and restarting and imposing conditions for naval — for vessels to cross the Strait of Hor-muz. That is something that is unac-ceptable under international law. It’s unacceptable to the neighbors, as you just said. The point is, it’s a reality. And so, when President Trump says Iran will not be in control of the strait at the end of this, if there’s a deal, he’s right in one respect, which is, I sus-pect, the deal will not entrench and formalize any form of control like the one you just mentioned. On the other hand, it’s a simply — it’s a statement of fact that if at any point Iran is dissat-isfied with the implementation of the deal or feels like it’s being violated or for any other reason it decides to close the Strait of Hormuz or to impose con-ditions, it can do so.AMY GOOD-MAN: “Have to blow them up,” Pres-ident Trump said about Oman, U.S. ally. President Trump also said he felt no pressure from the looming midterm elections to make a deal. He also sug-gested signing a deal with Iran might be contingent on more Arab and Mus-lim countries signing the Abraham Ac-cords.PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: And we’d like to have the countries we were talking about — Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and the oth-ers — we’d like to have them immedi-ately join the — and Steve Witkoff is working on that with Jared and some others, but we’d like to have them join the Abraham Accords. It will be histor-ic if they do it. And we would — I think they — I think they owe that to us, to be honest. ... I’m not sure we should make the deal if they don’t sign. AMY GOODMAN: For more on all of this, we’re joined by Robert Mal-ley, the Middle East program director at the International Crisis Group, was a senior Middle East official under Pres-idents Clinton, Obama and Biden, and most recently former U.S. special en-vooy for Iran in the Biden administra-tion, co-author with Hussein Agha of the new book Tomorrow Is Yesterday: Life, Death, and the Pursuit of Peace in Israel/Palestine., we could spend hours trying to dissect every statement by the president. It’s not clear that it’s par-ticularly useful, because he says the most extravagant things. Yesterday may have taken the cake in some respects, threatening to blow up Oman, but also making this connection between a ne-gotiation with Iran and expanding the Abraham Accords, including to Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and making this strange argument that somehow they owe it to the president, even though, if



anything, right now what they have towards the president is real resent-ment, because he’s the one who got them into this mess. It’s because of his unlawful, unnecessary war that the Strait of Hormuz is closed. So, I don’t know by what logic he thinks that they owe him something because he’s go-ing to get them out, perhaps, of the mess that he created. In any event, it’s a completely illusory, elusive chase. There is not a chance at all that Qatar, Saudi Arabia, coming out of this war, with this Israeli government and under this — in this context, are going to nor-malize relations with Israel. One hopes that he just threw that out and will quickly forget it. But if it becomes, in his mind, a condition for a deal, there simply won’t be one.NERMEEN SHAIKH: And, Robert, you were one of the key negotiators for the 2015 Iran nuclear deal during the Obama admin-istration, and several people are now speculating that whatever deal emerges between Iran and the U.S., it will not be very different from the 2015 deal. Could you just elaborate on that?ROBERT MALLEY: I mean, you know, the situation is different from 2015, so the comparison is going to be very inexact. Iran is not in the position it was before. It has discovered a tool, the control of the Strait of Hormuz, that it didn’t really know it had, or if it knew it had it, it wasn’t prepared to use it. Its nuclear program is in a very dif-ferent state than it was in 2015. In some ways, it’s weak, because it’s been bombed. In other ways, it’s strong, because Iran has accumulated irreversible knowledge. I think the comparison, in some ways, is sort of a futile exercise. I don’t think — I don’t want the president to think that what-ever deal he reaches is going to be worse than the JCPOA, because that will just give him another incentive not to conclude a deal.I think the main question is, number one, what this war shows and where we are today demon-strates that his decision to withdraw from the deal in 2018 was a com-pletely reckless and absurd one, be-cause we’re now in a position where we’re renegotiating issues that had already been settled, and negotiating a new issue that never should have been on the table in the first place,

which is reopening the Strait of Hor-muz. The one lesson, though, the com-parison where I think some of the critics of the JCPOA are having a very hard time with the current re-ality, is that the two main criticisms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — number one was that Iran retained its right, what it con-sidered its right, to enrich uranium, something that critics thought never should have been the case, and, sec-ond, the deal never addressed issues like Iran’s ballistic missile program, its support for regional allies or its — now its drone program. Whatever deal comes out of the current nego-tiations, one thing is for sure: Iran will retain what it considers its right to enrich, and the deal will not touch on those other issues that I just men-tioned. So, the logic of the deal, even if the details will be different, the basic construct of the deal, which is nucle-ar constraints in exchange for sanc-tions relief, that’s the only deal that’s on offer. And again, we should never have been in the position we’re in now. You know, the president’s de-cision to rip up the deal, to impose maximum-pressure sanctions and then to go to war has left us in a weaker position and without any op-tion for getting a deal that would be dramatically different from the one that was concluded in 2015, at best. But I do think, I mean, that one of the reasons why the negotiations are complicated is that Iran is insist-ing that it wants some form of economic relief for the damage that was caused by this war, and the most obvious one, from its perspective, other than sanctions relief, is imposing some kind of toll, some kind of payment system in the Strait of Hormuz. Very difficult, as you said, for the neigh-bors to accept it. They’re trying to see whether they could do some-thing in which some of the proceeds of that tolling system, of that fee system, could be shared with other Gulf countriesof transit through the Strait of Hormuz, and that’s some-thing that’s one of the legacies of this war that everyone is going to have to contend with.

Wrestles with mental shocks of war

London: After more than two years of relentless bom-bardment and war — from Israel’s genocide in Gaza and the Hamas-led assault on southern villages in October 2023 that preceded it, to the country’s successive wars and strikes on Iran, Lebanon, Syria and other neighbouring states — analysts, observers, and numerous studies from within Israel have concluded that the country has become moulded by trauma.A recent survey by Maccabi Health-care Services found that about one-third of Israelis believe they need professional mental health support. Among those who have served in the army, as either conscripts or reserv-ists, the picture is even starker. In January, Israel’s Defence Ministry reported a near-40 percent rise in the number of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) cases among its sol-diers since September 2023, with a 180 percent increase expected by 2028. The gov-ernment has not published the number of soldiers discharged due to mental health over the same period, despite a legal obligation to do so, Israeli me-dia has reported.Earlier this month, Magen David Adom, Israel’s paramedic service, launched a dedicated men-tal health emergency service after registering a 45 percent spike in the number of calls it was receiving. The majority, it said, were linked to the con-tinued strain of the country’s multiple wars.The number of suicides, a key indicator of mental health, has sharply increased across society as a whole, but particularly among the military, with 78 percent of military suicides in 2024 linked to combat operations in Gaza, the occupied West Bank and Lebanon, The Je-rusalem Post reported in Feb-ruary. Incidents of domestic violence, as well as mental health conditions such as de-pression and stress, have all spiked since what many in the country regard as its end-less series of wars began in October 2023, as well. Israel-el’s President, Isaac Herzog, appeared to acknowledge the trend in late May, referring to the increase in violence across Israeli society itself, including that perpetrated by rampaging Israelis from illegal settle-ments against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, and the spike in violence target-ing Christians.Speaking at an awards ceremony, he said, “I wish I could speak today only about unity. But to my great sorrow, we are living through days in which violence is not the only thing rearing its head. Alongside it, at the margins of our magnificent Israeli soci-ety, a terrible process is creep-ing in — a terrible process of brutalisation. It is a slow and disturbing process, one that threatens to enter the main-stream of Israeli society, and we will not allow it.” “Octo-ber 7 was like a switch, and the trauma it caused is wide-spread and ongoing,” Tuly Flint, an Israeli mental health practitioner and combat veter-an, told Al Jazeera. “People’s sense of security was shat-tered,” he said, arguing that the gap between past conflicts and the present ones had created a false sense of safety, along-side misplaced confidence in Israel’s military and tech-nological superiority, which had kept what he described as the “occupation and op-pression” of Palestinians at a secure distance.“People have lost confidence in their soci-ety, government and institu-tions,” institutional betrayal among those who relied on the state for its failure to do so. “In some cases, this has led people to embrace right-wing politics, adopt a more forceful response to per-ceived threats, that shows no sign of slowing.

The vocalist married her long-time partner, Callum Turner in London



Upon exiting London's Old Marylebone Town Hall following her marriage to Callum Turner, Dua Lipa opted against a conventional wedding dress. Rather, the artist embraced high-fashion bridal tailoring, presenting one of the most discussed celebrity wedding appearances of the year.

For her intimate civil ceremony, Dua Lipa leaned into vintage glamour and fashion history. At the heart of the look was a custom ivory Schiaparelli Haute Couture skirt suit designed by creative director Daniel Roseberry. Rather than opting for a conventional wedding dress, Lipa chose sharply tailored separates that felt both timeless and fashion-forward. The outfit featured a structured ivory blazer with a sculpted waist, statement gold buttons, and a matching asymmetrical skirt.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the ensemble was its apparent nod to one of fashion's most iconic brides: Bianca Jagger. Several fashion publications pointed out similarities between Lipa's wedding look and Bianca Jagger's legendary 1971 Saint Laurent wedding outfit, which featured a tailored white skirt set paired

with a dramatic hat. No element of the look drew more attention than the oversized wide-brimmed hat created by renowned milliner Stephen Jones. The dramatic accessory elevated the entire ensemble from chic courthouse attire to full-fledged fashion moment.

Lipa completed the ensemble with pointed white pumps from Christian Louboutin. The shoes maintained the clean lines of the outfit while adding understated sophistication.

Adding a touch of luxury sparkle, Lipa accessorized with Bulgari high jewellery pieces. A Serpenti diamond necklace along with dainty earrings aligned perfectly with the overall aesthetic.

While the London ceremony officially marked the couple's marriage, reports suggest a larger multi-day celebration is still expected in Palermo, Sicily. If her courthouse ensemble is any indication, Dua Lipa's wedding wardrobe may end up becoming one of the defining celebrity bridal fashion stories of 2026.

10 Stylish Nail Art Designs You Will Desire To Experiment With

National Nail Polish Day is observed every year on June 1, promoting beauty aficionados to showcase their individuality through vibrant and imaginative nail art.

From minimalist styles to intricate designs, nail art continues to be one of the most popular forms of personal expression in beauty and fashion. Modern French Tips: The classic French manicure gets a contemporary twist with colourful edges, metallic finishes and geometric accents. Floral Nail Art: Delicate flowers painted across nails create a fresh, feminine look that's perfect for spring and summer. Chrome Nails: Mirror-like chrome finishes continue to dominate beauty trends with their futuristic and eye-catching appeal.

Marble Effect Nails: Inspired by natural stone patterns, marble nails add an artistic and luxurious touch to any look. Minimalist Nail Art: Simple dots, lines and tiny patterns prove that less can often be more when it comes to nail design. Glitter Accent Nails: A touch of sparkle can instantly elevate an everyday manicure into a glamorous statement. Abstract Art Nails: Bold colours and free-flowing patterns turn nails into miniature canvases of creativity. Ombré Nails:



Smooth colour transitions create a sophisticated and elegant manicure suitable for every occasion. Pearl Finish Nails: Soft pearlescent tones offer a sophisticated and timeless look that

pairs beautifully with any outfit. Pastel Rainbow Nails: Pastel rainbow shades bring a playful yet stylish finish that is perfect for brightening up your manicure.

Steer clear of these 5 common luggage errors that many Indian travelers inadvertently commit



Summer travel tends to highlight every poor luggage choice you have ever made. This could range from attempting to squeeze your oversized baggage onto the plane to grappling with a malfunctioning wheel during your trip. Everyone has seen that one traveler at the baggage claim, desperately perched on an overstuffed suitcase, trying to zip it closed while the zipper stubbornly resists. The managing director of Swiss Military has discussed common luggage errors that travelers from

India frequently encounter. 1. Choosing style over functionality: Anuj highlighted that a suitcase might look good on a website or in a shop. That doesn't always mean it's good for travel. Many people buy luggage just because they like the aesthetic. "A bag that looks good is only useful if it can handle being thrown around and makes travelling easier, not harder," added Anuj. You need a suitcase that's travel-friendly, not just a pretty bag. 2. Ignoring the importance of lightweight luggage: During summer

travel, especially with family vacations and multiple airport transfers, heavy luggage quickly becomes exhausting. Lightweight suitcases are especially helpful when you're in a hurry at the airport, loading bags in the car, or carrying them upstairs while traveling. 3. Overpacking "just in case": Indian travellers are known for packing in excess like extra clothes, shoes, socks, and even snacks for backup, especially during long international travels. This makes their luggage heavy and hard to move around. Anuj

recommends choosing suitcases that have different compartments like wet pockets and organisers for clothes and accessories.

4. Not checking wheel and handle quality: "Many travellers realise the importance of good wheels only after dragging a stuck suitcase across uneven roads or crowded railway stations," said Anuj.

When suitcases have wheels and handles that break easily, it can really ruin the whole trip. Getting around easily is important, especially during the summer when a lot of people

are travelling, and the airports and train stations are very crowded. 5. Buying cheap luggage that doesn't last: The pricing matters, but buying the cheapest thing is not always a clever idea. This is because the cheapest option can break easily. For example, the zipper can break, the outside can crack, the wheels can get damaged, or the fabric can tear. Nowadays, people are travelling a lot. So, it is important that the things they buy are durable. The luggage needs to be durable so that it can withstand all the trips that people take.

K-Beauty may not always be suitable for Indian skin

Korean skincare has achieved significant global popularity, with concepts such as glass skin, skin flooding, and 10-step routines becoming integral to daily beauty discussions.

From sheet masks to snail mucin and fermented components, Korean beauty, often referred to as K-beauty, offers the promise of radiant, well-hydrated, and flawless skin. However, a crucial question persists: Are the trends in Korean skincare genuinely appropriate for Indian skin? The response is not merely a straightforward yes or no. "Skincare trends can be exciting, but healthy skin is not achieved by copying routines blindly. What works for one skin type or climate may not necessarily suit another," Dermatologist Dr Nivedita Dadu of Dadu Medical Centre, tells Health Shots.

Indian and Korean skin are not the same

Skin concerns are shaped by genetics, climate, lifestyle, and environmental exposure. Korean skincare is largely designed around East Asian skin types and cooler, less humid environments. Indian skin, on the other hand, has its own unique characteristics.

Indian skin usually contains higher melanin levels, which provide some natural protection against sun damage but also make it more prone to pigmentation, tanning, melasma, and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation.

This means even minor acne or irritation can leave behind stubborn dark marks. At the same time, many parts of India experience intense heat, humidity, pollution, and prolonged sun exposure, all of which significantly influence skincare needs.

Why does K-beauty appeal to so many?

One reason Korean skincare has become popular is

its focus on prevention and hydration. Unlike harsh skincare routines that aggressively target flaws, K-beauty emphasises maintaining the skin barrier and supporting long-term skin health. Hydrating toners, lightweight essences, ceramide-based moisturisers, and sunscreen are often beneficial for many skin types, including Indian skin.

"Korean skincare introduced people to the importance of hydration and barrier repair, which are valuable concepts in dermatology," says Dr Dadu. However, appreciating the philosophy does not mean every trend should be adopted without thought.

How to use Korean skincare trends safely?

Please note these pointers before trying anything on your own:

Many people attempt elaborate Korean routines seen online without understanding their own skin condition. A 10-step routine may sound luxurious, but layering multiple products can overwhelm the skin, especially in India's hot, humid weather. Excessive layering may lead to clogged pores, irritation, breakouts, or increased oiliness. People with acne-prone or sensitive skin often make the mistake of experimenting with multiple active ingredients at once, assuming that more products mean better results. In reality, overdoing skincare can compromise the skin barrier and trigger inflammation. Pigmentation and acne need special attention

Another big difference between Korean and Indian skin concerns is the frequency of pigmentation disorders. Indian patients commonly struggle with melasma, tanning, acne marks, and uneven skin tone. While many Korean products prioritise glow and hydration, they may

not always address these concerns effectively. For Indian skin, ingredients such as niacinamide, azelaic acid, retinoids, vitamin C, and carefully prescribed pigmentation treatments often play a more central role. Similarly, acne management must be personalised. Viral skincare products promoted online may not suit acne-prone Indian skin and can sometimes worsen breakouts.

Sunscreen matters more than trends

If there is one skincare lesson Indian consumers should prioritise, it is sunscreen. Sun exposure remains one of the leading causes of pigmentation, premature ageing, and skin damage. While Korean sunscreens are often praised for their elegant textures, the most effective sunscreen is ultimately the one that suits your skin and is used consistently. "People chase trending products but neglect daily sun protection. No skincare routine can succeed without sunscreen," Dr Dadu explains. Keep skincare simple and personalised

Healthy skin does not depend on following social media trends or owning dozens of products.

A practical skincare routine for most Indian skin types usually includes:

A gentle cleanser
A moisturiser suited to the skin type
Broad-spectrum sunscreen

Targeted treatments only when required

The focus should remain on skin health rather than chasing perfection.

"Korean skincare offers useful ideas, but skincare should never be trend-driven. Understanding your own skin and choosing treatments suited to Indian conditions will always give better and safer results than copying routines seen online," concluded Dr Nivedita Dadu.

Madhuri Dixit defends Aishwarya Rai against trolls with strong reply



Mumbai: Bollywood actress Madhuri Dixit has quite boldly spoken against the on-line trolling of Aishwarya Rai, over her appearance at the Cannes Film Festival 2026. The Bollywood actress called out the harsh culture of constant judgement on social media. She said that while people have always made remarks and constant criticism, earlier there were limited platforms for such opinions, whereas now social media gives everyone an immediate space to comment freely.

Defending her Devdas co-star, Madhuri said that Aishwarya has represented India globally for over two decades at Cannes, and she cannot

be reduced to a number on a scale or a number on the dress. While speaking to PTI, Madhuri Dixit was asked about the judgement and trolling faced by actors Ananya Panday and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, and whether the world has become harsher towards celebrities today. She replied, “I feel there were such people earlier too, and there are still such people today who comment. Earlier, they didn’t have a way (platform) to comment, but today they have got that means (platform).”

“Especially Aishwarya, when she went to Cannes, she has a legacy. She has been going there for 20 years. She has made the whole country

proud. She is a global star. You cannot reduce her to a number on a scale or a number on the dress or the size or a number on the calendar years. You cannot reduce her to that. She is beautiful. She looks beautiful but she is beautiful inside. “I have worked with her. I think people have to realise that. When you do these kind of comments, what kind of message are you sending to the youngsters today? That your worth is on how you look, not on your achievements? I think this is a completely wrong message being sent,” she said.

Bollywood actress Tripti Dimri also put forward her opinion on this topic, stating how easy it is for people to comment from the comfort of their homes without understanding the effort and struggle behind public success. It’s very easy to sit at home comfortably in your pajamas and comment on others. But it’s important to be in their shoes—people who have worked their entire lives to achieve something, whether it is Ananya or Aishwarya ma’am. Both of them have worked very hard in their lives,” she said.

Imtiaz Ali calls Ranbir Kapoor a ‘pure actor’ fit for lord Rama in Ramayana



Mumbai: Director Imtiaz Ali recently opened up about Ranbir Kapoor’s casting as Rama in Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana. Imtiaz Ali said that Ranbir Kapoor is a pure actor who becomes the characters he plays. The director said that it would be interesting to see Ranbir approach Rama in a personal way and even benefit from playing the character.

Imtiaz said, “Ranbir can do anything as an actor. He should do different roles, and when he does different roles, he’ll become them. He is a pure actor, and I hope he does all kinds of roles. I am very happy he is doing Lord Rama’s role because he can bring a certain effect or reality to the character. It will be nice to approach Lord Rama’s character in a humane and personal way.” The director, who has worked with Ranbir in Tamasha, also told Filmibeat in the same chat, “It’ll be hugely beneficial for Ranbir to have played Rama because he is the kind of actor [who] imbibes from the

character. He will take from Rama, and that will be so enriching for him.”

Recently, in an interview with director Nitesh Tiwari for Top Magazine, Ranbir admitted that he initially questioned whether he was worthy of playing Lord Rama. However, that fear gradually turned into gratitude as he began understanding the depth of the epic and the values associated with Rama’s journey. He shared, “Will I be able to do justice? Am I worthy enough?” The actor added that the anxiety soon transformed into love and

reverence for the part. He said, “But I think very soon that fear turned into love and gratitude because I understood not that it would be something like a career-defining move for me, but it was definitely life-defining, you know, it changed my life.”

He added, “You know, it got me closer to understanding the Ramayana, to understanding Lord Rama’s journey. I think it made so many positive changes in my life. You know, my bad habits, it changed my value system, the way I look at life, the way I look at loss, the way I

look at sacrifice, the way I look at Dharma, and I think I really needed that in my life.”

Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, Ramayana is being mounted as a two-part cinematic spectacle. The first instalment is scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release in October 2026. The film stars Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Rama, Sai Pallavi as Sita and Yash as Ravana. Adding further scale to the project is the musical collaboration between A.R. Rahman and Hans Zimmer, making Ramayana one of the most anticipated Indian films in recent years.

Jay Bhanushali supports Mahhi Vij exit

Chennai: Mahhi Vij bid adieu to her show Seher Hone Ko Hai as she finished shooting for her role in the serial. Sharing a picture from her last day on set, the actress attached a long note thanking the team behind the show for their support and love. As Mahhi penned the heartfelt note, her ex-husband and TV star Jay Bhanushali, along with her co-star from the show, reacted to it.

Jay Bhanushali, who continues to share a cordial equation with Mahhi Vij following their divorce, took to the comment section and dropped clapping emojis. Meanwhile, her co-star Rishita Kothari, who plays her daughter on the show, also commented on the post. “Kaha se start karu, samajh



nahi aa raha hai. Thank youuuu for being soooo warm, welcoming, and soooo cheerful. Lucknow to Film City, it was a rollercoaster of emotions. Love, confusion, friendship, and jokes that only you can crack. Kausar, meri pyaari ammi. Love you to the moon and back,” she wrote. While sharing the happy picture on social media, Mahhi Vij wrote, “Today, as I bid goodbye to this role, this room, and the journey that became such a significant part of my life, I leave behind countless memories that I will cherish forever. Every scene, every emotion, and every moment spent bringing this character to life has been truly special.”

Thanking the entire team behind the show, Mahhi added, “I want to thank each and every person who helped me build this character, my director, producer, creative team, fellow actors, crew members, and everyone at @colorstv. Your support, guidance, and belief made this journey unforgettable.” Mahhi Vij is known for playing the role of Nakusha in Laagi Tujhse Lagan and Nandini in Balika Vadhu. She also participated in and won the dance reality show Nach Baliye 5 in 2013 with her husband, Jay. Mahhi was also a contestant on Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa 4 and Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi 7. “As I move forward, I carry these beautiful memories with me. And yes, I will miss Kausar dearly. Thank you for the love, the trust, and for being a part of this incredible chapter of my life. Goodbye,” the actress concluded her post.

Legendary voice: Singer Suman Kalyanpur passes away at 89

Mumbai: Veteran playback singer Suman Kalyanpur has passed away on May 31, 2026, at the age of 89. She breathed her last at her residence in Mumbai. The Indian music world is mourning her loss, as countless admirers believe her passing marks the close of a cherished era of timeless melodies.

Suman Kalyanpur was

born as Suman Hemmadi. She has recorded songs for movies in several languages including Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Assamese, Gujarati, Kannada, Angika, Bhojpuri, Rajasthani, Odia and Punjabi. In one of her previous interviews, the late singer had emphasised on how her family did not approve of public performan-

ces before, despite having a strong inclination towards music. However, she did not say no to an offer to sing for the All India Radio in 1952. Then she sang for a Marathi film, Shukra Chi Chandni. It was released in 1953. She began singing in Hindi cinema with the 1954 film Mangu.

She sang for movies like

Miyan Bibi Razi (1960), Baat Ek Raat Ki (1962), Dil Ek Mandir (1963), Dil Hi To Hai (1963), Shagun (1964), Jahan Ara (1964), Sanjh Aur Savera (1964), Noor Jehan (1967), Saathi (1968) and Pakeezah (1971). She has worked with artistes like Shankar Jaikishan, Roshan, Madan Mohan Kohli, S. D. Burman, N Datta, Hemant

Kumar, Chitragupta, Nausad, Nashad, S. N. Tripathi, Ghulam Mohammed, Kalyanji Anandji, Vasant Desai. Ravi Shankar Sharma, Laxmikant-Pyarelal, Bulu C Rani and Usha Khanna. Further updates about her last rites are awaited. We offer our heartfelt condolences to her family, friends and fans at this difficult hour.



Bobby Deol addresses rumoured rift with Alia Bhatt on alpha sets



Agency: Bollywood actor Bobby Deol has finally reacted to the rumours that claims him and Alia Bhatt had a conflict on the sets of Alpha. The Bollywood actor straight away dismissed the rumours, stating that he is quite shocked to see such rumours getting circulated online.

It was also said that the situation escalated to an extent where the producer Aditya Chopra had to step in to ensure

the rest of the shoot took place smoothly. In a conversation with Rajat Sharma on ‘Aap Ki Adalat’, Bobby Deol said, “Mujhe bhi kisi dost ne bheja uss cheez ka aur main hairaan hua. Log itne velle hai ke kuch bhi banaa dete hai. Maine Ranbir ke saath film ki uske baad jab yeh film offer hui Alia ke saath toh maine socha ho kya raha hai mere saath, dono mere favourite actors hai.

Toh it was so nice. Itni acchi actress hai, itna hard work karti hai. Usko fight sequence karne hai, and she was so prepared. (I also read about it, a friend sent it to me. People are so free to just make all these things up. After doing ‘Animal’ with Ranbir Kapoor, when I was offered this film with Alia, I was so happy because they are both my favourite actors. She was so nice to work with, such a good actor and so well prepared for all the action scenes and everything.” He added further, “Aisa bhi likha tha ke Bobby itna naaraaz tha ke Aditya Chopra ne usko ek aur film offer kardi. I can’t go around proving the point to everyone but it’s not true. Zyadatar joh aap Instagram se influenced rehte hai usmein 90 percent kahaaniyan asli nahi hoti. (It was also written that I was so upset that Aditya Chopra had to offer me another film but none of this is true).”

Directed by Shiv Rawail, Alpha is an action thriller that includes Alia Bhatt, Shashvati Wagh, Bobby Deol, and Anil Kapoor in key roles. The highly anticipated film is scheduled for a theatrical release on July 10, 2026.

Suriya gifts luxury cars to Karuppu crew after success



Chennai: Suriya is basking in the success of Karuppu, and the film is having a dream run at the box office. Karuppu collected Rs 200 crore at the worldwide box office. Following this success, the actor has gifted a new Mahindra BE6 Batman edition car to cinematographer GK Vishnu for his work in the film.

GK Vishnu took to his X account to share a picture of the new car. In the caption, he wrote, “Just God things!! Thank you, Suriya sir. You have a huge heart!!!!” Music director Sai Abhyankar and editor Kalaivanan received similar gifts from the actor. The composer shared a

picture on social media featuring him standing next to a Mahindra BE6 car. In the caption, Sai wrote, “Love you dear Suriya sir.” Meanwhile, referring to a Karuppu line and Suriya’s cameo in Vikram, the editor wrote, “Just God things. The surreal moment... Thank you Anna. Got my life time settlement from ROLEX.” Talking about Karuppu, Trisha Krishnan is seen as the female lead in the film. Karuppu is directed by RJ Balaji and is based on a screenplay by Ashwin Ravichandran, Rahul Raj, TS Gopi Krishnan, and Karan Aravind Kumar. The film will get a sequel.

Chand Mera Dil day 10: Ananya,Lakshya film crosses ₹24 crore

Mumbai: Chand Mera Dil may have completed 10 days in theatres, but the film is still searching for the kind of audience response that could give its box office run a much-needed boost. Despite being backed by Dharma Productions and featuring Ananya Panday and Lakshya in the lead, the romantic drama has found it difficult to maintain momentum since its release.

Directed by Vivek Soni, the film hit cinemas on May 22 and opened to mixed-to-negative reviews. While it managed to attract some footfall during its opening weekend, the collections began slowing down soon after, making its theatrical journey an uphill battle. According to trade website Sacnilk, Chand Mera Dil earned ₹1.8 crore on its second Sunday, which marked its 10th day at the



box office. The figure was only slightly higher than its Saturday collection of ₹1.75 crore. The romantic drama had opened with ₹3 crore on day one. It then saw a weekend rise, collecting ₹3.75 crore on Saturday and ₹4.25 crore on Sunday. However, the film struggled to hold steady during the weekdays, with earnings witnessing a gradual decline. So far, its India net collection stands at ₹24.30 crore, while the India gross total has reached

₹28.59 crore.

The film also found itself trailing behind a new competitor. Hollywood horror release Obsession, which has been generating significant buzz on social media, outperformed Chand Mera Dil on Sunday by collecting ₹3.06 crore. Set against the backdrop of Hyderabad, Chand Mera Dil follows two college students whose romance takes an unexpected turn after an unplanned pregnancy. The couple decides to embrace

parenthood and gets married, but the pressures of their new reality begin to strain the relationship. As frustrations build, a heated confrontation changes the course of their lives and becomes the central conflict of the story. Among the cast, Lakshya has largely drawn positive reactions for his performance. Responses to Ananya Panday, however, have been more divided. One of the biggest talking points around the film has been her Bharatanatyam fusion dance sequence, which went viral online shortly after release.

The performance sparked criticism from several social media users and Bharatanatyam practitioners, with many questioning both the choreography and its execution. Amid the debate, dancer-choreographer Sandip Soparrkar publicly defended the actor.

Kiara Advani: women revered in pregnancy, judged post childbirth

Mumbai: Actor Kiara Advani has spoken candidly about motherhood and the expectations women often face after having a baby. In a recent chat with Bombay Times, the actor reflected on how conversations around women can quickly shift from celebrating pregnancy to scrutinising their appearance and discussing when they will return to work.

Speaking about the changes motherhood has brought to her life, Kiara described the experience as transformative and said it has given her a deeper understanding of herself and the world around her. “The experience is so enriching in every way; I feel directors who will work with me now, will get the best version of me. This journey (of motherhood) has opened a new side to me, to my life and to my understanding of the world.”

The actor also addressed the pressure many women face after childbirth, pointing out how society’s attitude can change dramatically once a baby is born. “The earlier part of



your question when you spoke about conversations about women getting back to work – it’s true. And what is interesting is that – when you’re pregnant, everyone goes like, ‘Oh my God, you’re glowing, this, that. ‘And the minute you’ve had a baby, it changes to, ‘Abhi moti lag rahi hai, thodi yeh lag rahi hain, thodi woh lag rahi hain.’” Kiara went on to explain that while pregnancy is often celebrated, the period after childbirth is

when women need the most support. “When you are pregnant, you are this devi and the minute you deliver the baby, they expect you to be back in shape and back on track. But the hardest part for the woman is after. That is the part where she needs support.” The actress also went on to add that motherhood is not just about raising a child but also about supporting the woman who is stepping into a new role.

Rahul Gandhi says CBSE answer sheets scanned using mobile phones

New Delhi: Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Sunday blamed the Centre and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) for compromising the evaluation process of answer sheets of the Class 12 examinations, alleging that changes in tender specifications led to answer sheets being scanned on mobile phones. He was responding to a social media post by Sarthak Sidhant, a Class 12 student from Jharkhand, who alleged that the board gradually altered technical requirements across three consecutive rounds of tenders in a way that favoured the vendor that ultimately secured the contract.

The Congress MP's remarks come as the CBSE faces mounting pressure after reports of technical glitches in its post-result portal and irregularities in evaluated answer sheets. In a post on X, Gandhi pointed to a CBSE tender released in May 2025 and alleged that key technical standards for scanning answer sheets



were diluted in a revised version issued later.

"CBSE's May 2025 tender required answer sheets to be scanned with automatic robotic scanners, spines preserved, at a minimum of 300 DPI. The

tender reissued in August quietly removed all of it. 'Scanners' became generic. Resolution dropped to 200 DPI," Gandhi said. He also claimed that answer sheets had been scanned using mobile phones. "Now we know

what that meant in practice. It has been exposed that COEMPT scanned the answer sheets using mobile phones. The blurred copies, the missing pages, the unscanned books -- they are not 'errors.' They are the predictable outcome of a contract written to fit a vendor," Gandhi alleged. Describing the issue as "fraud", Gandhi said, "This is fraud. And every child whose marks were wrongly evaluated is a victim of it."

Targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and education minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Gandhi questioned why the government had not responded to the issue.

"This morning, the Prime Minister had time to speak about mangoes. He has not had time to speak about 18.5 lakh children whose answer sheets were scanned with phones. Dharmendra Pradhan still sits in office. Modi's silence is no longer indifference. It is complicity," Gandhi said. Notably, he was responding to a post by Sidhant, who spent several days examining tender

documents available on the Central Public Procurement portal and later shared his findings on his website. Sidhant said that the key issue was that the technical and eligibility requirements for the OSM contract were gradually relaxed across three rounds of the Request for Proposal process, eventually allowing Coempt Edu Teck to qualify. He alleged that several of the changes appeared to align closely with the company's profile. The board is set to take action against its on-screen marking (OSM) service provider, Coempt Edu Teck, over issues linked to the online evaluation of Class 12 answer sheets. The Hyderabad-based firm will face penalties under the provisions of the tender document issued in August 2025, the officials said.

The tender, released on August 28, includes a series of financial penalties tied to the time taken to resolve issues. These include a fine of ₹1 lakh for every 15-minute delay in fixing a problem after it is reported by a CBSE official to the helpdesk.

Centre to set up air-raid warning systems in 244 districts



New Delhi: The Centre is working to set up modern air-raid warning systems across India's vulnerable districts under the Air Raid Warning System (ARWS) project and has begun recruiting former Indian Air Force (IAF) officers with expertise in air defence operations to lead the initiative, according to officials aware of the matter. When complete, the project will ensure that all 244 vulnerable districts (mostly near the borders) have a standard, modern, and fully functional warning network to alert civilians in the event of aerial threats, including drones, missiles, and aircraft.

"The project will ensure that there is a standard air warning system on the ground in accordance with what the civil defence manual mentions. The initiative to establish a new warning system was proposed just after Operation Sindoor last year. The use of drones in warfare mandates having air defence warning systems for civilians. Once this is established, the training of the civilian volunteers too will be tweaked

in keeping with the changes over the years and learning from Operation Sindoor," an official aware of the matter said.

reported that after completion of the drills, held on May 7, April 22 and June 30 against the backdrop of a looming war with Pakistan following the Pahalgam attack, an internal assessment found that most air-raid warning systems were found to be faulty; the ones that existed were non-functional and had to be replaced with temporary sirens. "vintage, old, needed review and done in a slapdash manner."

Documents seen by HT showed that the Directorate General (Fire Service, Civil Defence & Home Guards), a federal agency under the Home Ministry, is leading the project and hiring experts from the IAF who have worked extensively in air defence operations, radar systems and air-raid warning procedures. The experts leading the project will be former IAF officers with a rank not below wing commander (equivalent to an army lieutenant colonel).

Education Ministry fact-checks viral claims of fire at its Delhi office

New Delhi: The Ministry of Education on Monday issued a clarification after some media reports incorrectly stated that a fire had broken out at its office in the national capital, stressing that the incident actually occurred at the premises of the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) and not at the ministry's headquarters. In an official statement, the ministry said its office is located at Kartavya Bhavan-2 on Dr Rajendra Prasad Road in New Delhi, while the fire incident took place at the School of Planning and Architecture's campus at Indraprastha Estate on Vikas Marg near ITO.

"Certain media reports have incorrectly stated that a fire broke out in the Ministry of Education office," the statement said. The ministry added that the clarification was being issued to prevent the spread of misinformation surrounding the incident. Ac-



cording to Delhi Fire Services (DFS), a fire broke out on the second floor of the School of Planning and Architecture building near the PWD headquarters on Monday morning.

A call regarding the blaze was received at around 9.37 am, following which multiple fire tenders were rushed to the spot. Firefighters

launched operations on the affected floor soon after arriving at the scene. The initial response included five water tenders equipped with additional breathing apparatus sets, one water bowser, one breathing apparatus support vehicle and a multipurpose vehicle. Senior fire officials, including the Divisional Officer, As-

sistant Divisional Officer and Station Officer, also reached the site to supervise the firefighting operation. The fire was brought under control by around 11 am, officials said. The Education Ministry said the fire at the SPA building was minor in nature and was quickly brought under control. "No loss of

life or property has been reported," the ministry said in its statement. Delhi Fire Services officials also confirmed that no injuries were reported in the incident. Authorities are now working to ascertain the cause of the fire. Details regarding the extent of any damage to the building were not immediately available. The ministry reiterated that the incident was confined to the SPA premises and had no connection with its office at Kartavya Bhavan. The clarification comes at a time when the Ministry of Education and Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan are facing intense scrutiny over the CBSE's On-Screen Marking (OSM) system used for Class 12 board examinations. Thousands of students and parents have raised concerns over alleged discrepancies in evaluation, including missing marks, answer-sheet mismatches and other is-

sues linked to the new digital assessment system. The Centre has acknowledged that there were "some discrepancies" in the process and has promised corrective measures.

Pradhan recently said the government accepts responsibility for glitches in the OSM system and assured students that no grievance would be left unresolved.

The ministry has also said premier institutions including IIT Kanpur and IIT Madras have been involved in overseeing the technology and review process. The controversy has also taken a political turn, with Rahul Gandhi questioning the awarding of the OSM contract and accusing the government of failing students. The war of words between the Congress leader and Pradhan has intensified in recent days, with the minister defending the system while promising accountability for any lapses.

17-year-old girl strangled to death by relatives in UP's Meerut over suspicion of romantic relationship

Lucknow: A 17-year-old girl was allegedly murdered by her maternal uncle and stepbrother in Meerut's Lohianagar area after they suspected her of being involved in a romantic relationship.

According to police, the duo strangled her to death, carried her body on a motorcycle, and dumped it in a mango orchard about five kilometres from their home.

The maternal uncle has been arrested, while efforts are on to trace and apprehend the absconding stepbrother. The victim, a resident of Humayunnagar, was reported missing on Friday night. Her body was discovered in a mango orchard in Narhada village on Saturday morning, triggering a major police investigation.

According to deputy superintendent of police, Abhishek Patel, police received information that the body of a teenage girl was lying in the orchard. Lohianagar police and a forensic team reached the spot and initiated an investigation.

Police examined CCTV footage from roads leading to and from Narhada village, which helped investigators identify the suspects. Police subsequently questioned the victim's father, Javed, and her maternal uncle, Sartaj, a resident of Zakir Colony.

During interrogation, Sartaj allegedly confessed that he and the victim's stepbrother, Soeb, strangled her at around 11 pm on Friday.

The duo then allegedly transported the body to the orchard and concealed it in bushes at around 3 am.

Police said Sartaj told investigators that the family was upset over the victim's frequent phone conversations and online chats. Tensions had reportedly escalated after she left home without informing her family two months ago.

He claimed he had tried to counsel her, but alleged that her continued use of the phone led to the fatal attack.

At the time of the incident, the victim's father Javed and his wife Shahjahan were reportedly away visiting relatives.

Police also found strangulation marks on the



victim's neck and believe she was assaulted before being killed.

FIFA breaks silence after World Cup finally gets a broadcaster in India

Agency: At long last, the FIFA World Cup 2026 finally has a broadcaster in India. After months of back-and-forth, the world body put pen to paper, and the tournament now has a new home in India. On Monday, FIFA announced that it has reached an agreement with 'Z' to broadcast and distribute a wide-ranging portfolio of FIFA competitions in the country for an eight-year period from 2026 to 2034. As a part of this newly-signed deal, 'Z' would be broadcasting tournaments, including this year's World Cup, the FIFA Women's World Cup 2027 and the FIFA World Cup 2030. Under the partnership, the broadcaster will be delivering coverage of 39 FIFA events across this period, including men's, women's, and youth competitions. The agreement also includes documentary content linked to these competitions.

The FIFA U-17 World Cup, the FIFA U-20 World Cup, the FIFA Women's U-17 World Cup, the FIFA Women's U-20 World Cup, FIFA Futsal World Cups, and the FIFA Intercontinental Cup, alongside the flagship FIFA World Cup, will all be telecast and streamed by 'Z'. The FIFA World Cup matches



and related programming will be distributed across Z's linear television channels (UNITE8 Sports) and digital platform (Zee 5), with multilingual coverage designed to increase accessibility and fan engagement across India.

"The FIFA World Cup is the greatest show on earth, and we are glad to partner with 'Z' for the first time, to bring this global spectacle to India," said FIFA's Chief Business Officer, Romy Gai, in an official statement.

"The Indian market is of strategic importance for FIFA as it displays immense potential driven by a young and passionate audience. We believe the extensive broadcast and digital distribution ecosystem of 'Z', coupled with their deep understanding of local view-

ers and multi-platform capabilities, will play a pivotal role in expanding the reach of football with fans across every part of India," he added. The world body also stated that its aim with the new partnership is to strengthen the visibility of its competitions in India, led by the FIFA World Cup 2026 and connect with a growing and passionate football audience by leveraging Z's established broadcast and digital ecosystem. "We are excited to bring one of the world's biggest sporting spectacles to Indian audiences," said Punit Goenka, CEO, Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd.

"Football cuts across regions and demographics, and the investments in garnering the media rights and launching dedicated sports channels reflect our clear belief in its long-term potential. Our approach has been to invest in properties where we see current relevance and future growth potential. Our partnership with FIFA will enable us to unlock the true value of the sport in line with our sharp focus on growth and profitability, while amplifying the excitement of the game for every fan," he added.

Cristiano Ronaldo at 2030 World Cup? Portugal chief disagrees with Roberto Martinez's optimistic view

The Portuguese Football Federation's president, Pedro Proenca, has claimed that it would be 'a huge surprise' if Cristiano Ronaldo played for the national team at the 2030 FIFA World Cup. His comments came after Portugal head coach Roberto Martinez reignited the idea that Ronaldo could also appear in his seventh World Cup, citing his competitive mindset. Speaking to Cadena Ser, he said, "No one should doubt it. He's earned it." "I've worked with many players who won a Champions League or a Ballon d'Or, and the next day they lose their motivation. What we see with Ronaldo shows a different mindset.

"I think having that goal allows you to persevere. There's a genetic aspect to it, and also the work he puts in; he uses everything to help his body, in addition to his mindset," he added. Portugal will be co-hosting the 2030 World Cup. But Proenca has downplayed expectations that Ronaldo could feature on the



pitch then. Speaking at the Bola Branca Conference, he said, "I'll say that, physiologically, a huge surprise would have to happen for him to be in another World Cup. And the European Championship? That will depend on who's in charge at the time, how the player is doing, a set

of technical factors that now, it's not a matter of commenting or not commenting... With absolute certainty, and I'm fully aware of this, those who are the best players at the time will be in the national team." "And therefore, until then... Cristiano Ronaldo will always be inextricably

linked to the national team, to the federation. And therefore, what is ensured in terms of quality as a player, or not as a player, today, the brand of the Portuguese Football Federation, the brand of the national team, is intertwined with the brand of Cristiano Ronaldo."

Proenca pointed out that Ronaldo's impact on Portuguese football will always remain permanent. "Cristiano Ronaldo will be whatever he wants to be in Portuguese football. I dare say that. It's an absolutely extraordinary case, not only in terms of notoriety, capacity, and brand mobilization.

Sporting-wise, I dare say it's a unique case of talent development in Portuguese football. And therefore, Cristiano will be whatever he wants to be in Portugal and in world football. We all have time to think about where Cristiano will first feel happy and where he will also help Portuguese football to position itself and maintain the position it has," he said.

CSK Congratulates RCB as They Rack Up Back-to-Back IPL Titles

CSK Congratulates RCB on Consecutive IPL Titles

New Delhi: Royal Challengers Bengaluru capped off a dream season on Sunday by winning back-to-back IPL titles, defeating Gujarat Titans by five wickets in the 2026 final at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. The triumph made RCB only the third franchise in IPL history to successfully defend the trophy, joining an elite club featuring Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians. Soon after the victory, CSK congratulated the champions with a special message on social media. The five-time champions wrote, “Winning back to back is always a special feeling. Congrats @RCBTweets and welcome to the club.” The post quickly resonated with fans as it welcomed RCB into one of the tournament’s most exclusive groups. CSK achieved the feat themselves under MS Dhoni, winning consecutive IPL titles in 2010 and



2011. They defeated MI in the 2010 final before successfully defending their crown the following season with a victory over RCB in the summit clash. For much of their history, RCB carried the tag of under-achievers despite boasting some of the biggest names in world cricket. That narrative changed in 2025 when they finally ended their long wait for a maiden IPL title. A year later, they have reinforced their status as one of the league’s powerhouse

franchises by retaining the trophy. The achievement was particularly significant for Virat Kohli, who once again played a key role in RCB’s successful campaign. Having represented the franchise throughout his IPL career, Kohli added another landmark moment to his legacy by helping Bengaluru secure a second successive title. RCB delivered a dominant all-round performance to defeat the Titans by five wickets in the IPL 2026 final. After winning the toss,

skipper Rajat Patidar elected to bowl first, a decision that proved decisive. The Bengaluru bowlers kept the Titans in check throughout the innings, restricting them to 155 for eight in their 20 overs. Rasikh Salam was the standout performer with three wickets, while experienced pacers Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood chipped in with two wickets each. Although Washington Sundar fought back with an unbeaten 50 off 37 balls, Gujarat struggled to build momentum and fell short of a competitive total. Chasing 156, RCB got off to a brisk start before Virat Kohli took control of the innings. The veteran batter remained unbeaten on 75 from 42 deliveries and brought up the fastest half-century of his IPL career in just 25 balls. Kohli’s knock ensured there were no late hiccups as RCB chased down the target in 18 overs, sealing the title with 12 balls to spare.

How RCB’s Strategic Bowlers Outthought and Outplayed Gujarat Titans in IPL Final



New Delhi: Royal Challengers Bengaluru turned the IPL 2026 final into a showcase of preparation and execution, with their pace attack making full use of a sluggish Ahmedabad surface to stifle Gujarat Titans. Persisting with hard lengths and well-directed short balls, RCB dismantled the hosts’ batting line-up and restricted them to a below-par 155 for 8 at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Sunday. On a surface where timing the ball proved difficult, RCB’s seamers quickly identified that pitching the ball short of a length and forcing batters onto the back foot was the most effective route to success.

What followed was a masterclass in execution as Gujarat repeatedly fell into the same trap. Josh Hazlewood set the tone by removing Gujarat captain Shubman Gill for 10. Gill showed his intent by charging at the Australian early, but Hazlewood

responded with a delivery that climbed sharply off the surface. The attempted pull produced only a leading edge, with Rajat Patidar completing the catch. Sai Sudharsan soon followed. Bhuvneshwar Kumar resisted the temptation to pitch the ball up and instead continued to test the left-hander with short deliveries. Sudharsan’s attempted ramp shot against a rising ball resulted in a top edge that was safely pouched by the wicketkeeper, leaving Gujarat without their two premier run-scorers.

Having exposed the effectiveness of that approach, RCB refused to deviate. Rasikh Salam Dar accounted for Nishant Sindhu after spotting the batter advancing down the pitch and responding with another delivery banged into the surface. The mistimed stroke found Devdutt Padikkal in the deep, making it three wickets to balls

bowled into the wicket. Even when Washington Sundar received a reprieve after a fine-leg catch was overturned on review, the warning signs remained. Jacob Duffy had hurried him into an ill-timed pull with yet another short delivery, reinforcing the challenges batters faced against RCB’s pace strategy. Hazlewood returned to ensure Gujarat’s troubles deepened further. Arshad Khan, looking to accelerate, was rushed by a hard-length ball and top-edged his pull shot to a waiting fielder as the Titans slipped to 99 for 5 in the 15th over. The pressure never eased.

Every attempt by Gujarat Titans to break free was met with another breakthrough. Rahul Tewatia became the next victim when Rasikh Salam extracted extra grip from a cross-seam delivery. The ball jagged back off the surface, took the inner half of Tewatia’s bat and ballooned towards mid-on, reducing Gujarat to 115 for 6. RCB’s short-ball strategy then claimed another wicket. Bhuvneshwar Kumar dug one into the pitch for Jason Holder, who was hurried on the pull and could only manage a towering top edge. Josh Hazlewood settled under the skier at short third man to complete the catch, underlining how effectively Bengaluru’s seamers had exploited the conditions throughout the innings. What stood out was not merely the wickets but the consistency of the approach. Rather than searching for swing or overusing slower deliveries, RCB trusted the surface and repeatedly attacked the splice of the bat with hard lengths.

Zee Secures FIFA Broadcasting Rights Till 2034, Bringing World’s Biggest Spectacle

New Delhi: Zee Entertainment Enterprises CEO Punit Goenka on Monday expressed excitement over the company’s strategic partnership with FIFA, saying it will bring one of the world’s biggest sporting spectacles to Indian audiences. Zee will be airing major FIFA events, including the FIFA Men’s U-17 World Cup (2026-2034), FIFA Women’s U-17 World Cup (2026-2034), FIFA U-20 Men’s World Cup (2027, 2029, 2031 and 2033), FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup (2026, 2028, 2030, 2032 and 2034), FIFA Futsal Men’s World Cup (2028 and 2032), FIFA Futsal Women’s World Cup (2029 and 2033), FIFA Women’s World Cup (2027) and FIFA Intercontinental Cup (2026-2030), in addition to the FIFA World Cup 2026 and FIFA World Cup 2030, according to a press release.

We are excited to bring one of the world’s biggest sporting spectacles to Indian audiences. Football cuts across regions and demographics, and the investments in garnering the media rights and launching dedicated sports channels reflect our clear belief in its long-term potential,” Goenka said. He added that the approach of Zee has been to invest in properties with both current relevance and future growth potential. “Our partnership with FIFA will enable us to unlock the true value of the sport in line with our sharp focus on growth and profitability, while



amplifying the excitement of the game for every fan,” he noted. The partnership follows Zee’s acquisition of Indian broadcast and streaming rights for 39 FIFA events spanning 2026 to 2034, including the FIFA World Cups 2026 and 2030, and the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2027. The move is expected to expand Zee’s footprint in football, a market historically dominated by cricket in India. Speaking on FIFA’s strategic partnership with Zee Entertainment Enterprises in India, Romy Gai, FIFA Chief Business Officer, described the collaboration as a key step in bringing the “greatest show on earth” to Indian audiences. The FIFA World Cup is the greatest show on earth, and we are glad to partner with ‘Z’ for the first time to

bring this global spectacle to India. The Indian market is of strategic importance for FIFA as it displays immense potential driven by a young and passionate audience.”

He added, “We believe the extensive broadcast and digital distribution ecosystem of ‘Z’ coupled with their deep understanding of local viewers and multi-platform capabilities, will play a pivotal role in expanding the reach of football with fans across every part of India.” ZEE has also announced the launch of 4 dedicated sports channels, namely, Unite8 Sports 1, Unite8 Sports 1 HD, Unite8 Sports 2, and Unite8 Sports 2 HD, according to a press release. The investment will enable a multi-fold advantage to FIFA’s Nation.

Eighteen Years for One, Twelve Months for Another: RCB Are Champions Again

Ahmedabad: Eighteen years of hurt, heartbreak, and howling at the moon. And then, boom. Two titles in 12 months like they had been doing this all their lives. Royal Challengers Bengaluru have officially gatecrashed the most exclusive club in Indian cricket. Only Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians had done the back-to-back before them. The old money. The establishment. The untouchables. Well, move over, gentlemen. There is new royalty in town, and they are wearing red. And they did not just win. They steamrolled. They pulverised. They made it look, frankly, embarrassing. Gujarat Titans arrived in the final hoping for a coronation of their own. What they got instead was a tutorial, a brutal, unforgiving masterclass in how a team operating like a Swiss watch, fuelled by rocket fuel, conducts its business. If the 2025 and 2026 campaigns are anything to go by, Royal Challengers Bengaluru are not a flash in the pan. They are not a Cinderella story. They are the story. Full stop.



Lock it in. They are here to stay, here to dominate, and they would very much like you to take note. 18 points to bulldoze their way to the top of the group stage table. A savage 92-run hammering of Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 1 to book a direct ticket from the mountains of Dharamsala to the heat of Ahmedabad. And then? A walk in the park in the final. An absolute, utterly serene, almost offensively relaxed stroll in front of nearly a lakh fans at the Narendra Modi Stadium. Rajat Patidar and his band of marauders had said they wanted to be called attacking champions. Earned.

Stamped. Certified. It felt as though the 12-month intermission, which had seen retirements, reshuffles, and more MS Dhoni farewell rumours than anyone can count, had changed precisely nothing for RCB. They picked up right where they left off, as though someone had simply pressed the resume button. The final at Narendra Modi Stadium was technically Gujarat Titans’ home ground. In theory. On paper. In reality? It was an RCB house party, and Gujarat were the uninvited guests who showed up late and immediately regretted it. From the evening before the

game, hundreds of red shirts descended on Ahmedabad, a city that sits proudly along the banks of the Sabarmati, where ancient ghats meet modern ambitions and the air hums with history, chanting RCB, RCB outside the venue like an army laying siege to a castle. By Sunday, more than 80 per cent of that packed crowd was draped in crimson. A hostile takeover. RCB had the luxury of arriving early, setting up camp, training twice, sweating it out in the blistering 40-degree Celsius heat, and soaking in the vibes of the city before a single ball was bowled. They knew the ground. They knew the pitch. They knew exactly what was coming. And then they put on the show their fans had crossed the country to witness. After winning the toss, RCB bowled first. The pitch, baked, sluggish, roughed up by the merciless Ahmedabad sun, was not a track that promised fireworks. Tough, yes. Unplayable, no. But against a bowling attack this precise, this relentless, this suffocatingly well-drilled? Tough was more than enough.

Luis Suarez Omitted from Uruguay World Cup Squad; Valverde and Nunez Make Cut

New Delhi: Marcelo Bielsa has made the biggest selection call of Uruguay’s FIFA World Cup campaign by leaving veteran striker Luis Suarez out of his final 26-man squad. The former Barcelona and Liverpool forward, Uruguay’s all-time leading scorer, was among the notable omissions as Bielsa unveiled his squad on Sunday. While Suarez misses out on a place at the tournament, midfield star Federico Valverde and striker Darwin Nunez headline a youthful squad that reflects Bielsa’s long-term vision for the national team. Suarez, 39, had not completely closed the chapter on his international career despite announcing his retirement from Uruguay duty. The veteran forward had recently suggested that he would be willing to return if the national team required his services during the World Cup. However, Bielsa opted against recalling the striker, who has been absent from the



international setup for nearly 20 months. The decision comes months after Suarez publicly criticised the Argentine coach’s management style, claiming it had created divisions within the dressing room. “I retired from the national team to make way for other players, and because I felt that a moment had arrived when I could no longer be of use to the squad. But if they need me, I will never say no to the national team. That is impossible, as long as I am still playing, as long as I remain active,” Suarez had said

earlier this year, leaving open the possibility of a comeback despite stepping away from international football. The relationship between player and coach appeared strained after Suarez accused Bielsa of creating a difficult environment within the squad. Although the former striker later stated that he had apologised for those remarks, it was not enough to convince Bielsa to include him in the World Cup plans. The omission of Suarez was not the only major talking point from the squad announcement.

Carlos Alcaraz Enjoys Portugal Beach Vacation Amid Injury Layoff Period

New Delhi: Carlos Alcaraz appears to be making the most of his time away from the tennis court. The Spanish superstar was recently spotted enjoying a beach holiday in Portugal as he continues his recovery from the wrist injury that has sidelined him during a crucial part of the 2026 season. Alcaraz spent time in Comporta, a popular coastal destination south of Lisbon, where he was seen relaxing with friends at the JNcQUOI Beach Club on Praia do Pego. The 23-year-old has frequently chosen Portugal as a holiday destination between tournaments, using the quieter surroundings to recharge away from the spotlight. The vacation comes amid encouraging signs regarding his recovery. A recent video circulating on social media showed Alcaraz wearing a much smaller wrist support than the bulky splint he had been seen with in previous weeks, prompting optimism among fans about his rehabilitation progress. While there is still no confirmed date for his



return, the images suggest that the injury is healing steadily. Alcaraz’s injury troubles began during the Barcelona Open in April when he sustained a right wrist injury in his opening-round victory over Otto Virtanen. The issue proved more serious than initially expected, forcing him to withdraw from the tournament and subsequently miss the remainder of the clay-court season. The setback also ruled him out

of Roland Garros, where he was the defending champion, and later Wimbledon, a tournament he has won twice and where he finished runner-up in 2025. Announcing his withdrawal from the grass-court swing, Alcaraz admitted that although his recovery was progressing well, he was not yet ready to compete at the highest level.

Before the injury, Alcaraz had enjoyed another impressive sea-

son. He compiled a 22-3 win-loss record and captured titles at the Australian Open and Qatar Open, underlining why he remains one of the leading figures in men’s tennis. For now, however, the focus remains on recovery rather than trophies. And judging by the latest images from Portugal, Alcaraz seems determined to return refreshed, fully fit and ready to challenge once again for the biggest prizes in the sport. Carlos Alcaraz is recovering from a right wrist injury sustained at the 2026 Barcelona Open, which forced him to miss key tournaments including Roland Garros and Wimbledon. Currently on holiday in Portugal, he is showing signs of steady rehabilitation. Before his injury, Alcaraz had a strong season with a 22-3 record and titles at the Australian Open and Qatar Open. While no return date is set, he remains focused on recovery, aiming to come back fully fit and competitive. using the quieter surroundings to recharge away from the spotlight.