

Consensus on Farming Reached at Assam-Meghalaya Border Meeting

Guwahati, Jun 03: A high-level meeting, involving political representatives, senior civil and police officials and representatives of the concerned local bodies from the Meghalaya and Assam governments was held along inter-state border on Tuesday to deliberate on issues relating to the Lapangap area of difference.

The meeting was convened in continuation with the initiative taken by the Meghalaya chief minister, who recently held discussions with the Assam chief minister to find an amicable and peaceful resolution to the issues arising in the areas.

The meeting brought together political leaders, senior officials and local representatives to facilitate consensus-building on the ground.

Representing Assam were Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) chief executive member Tuliram Ronghang; MP Amarsing Tisso; additional chief secretary (home and political) Ajay Kumar Tiwari; MLA and executive member, KAAC, Surjya Rongphar; MLA and EC, KAAC, Lunsing Teron;

MLAs Habbey Teron and Niso Terangpi; Deputy Speaker, KAAC Avijit Kro; Headsing Rongphar, Member of Autonomous Council, KAAC; West Karbi Anglong DC, Preeti Kumari and West Karbi Anglong SP, Dinesh Kumar.

Representing Meghalaya were deputy chief minister Sniawbhalang Dhar; principal secretary Frederick R. Kharkongor; commissioner and secretary Cyril V. Diengdoh; secretary Garod L.S.N. Dykes; chief executive member, Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council (JHADC) Thombor Shiwat; West Jaintia Hills DC, Abhinav Singh and West Jaintia Hills SP, Jagpal Singh Dhanoa.

Following detailed deliberations, it was agreed that the villagers of Lapangap would continue paddy cultivation in the foothill areas of the area of difference, while the villagers of Tahpat shall continue plantation of seasonal crops such as banana, pineapple, ginger and other similar crops on the hilltops and slopes.

It was further decided that the matter relating to permanent boundary demarcation in



the area of difference shall be considered and decided by the appropriate committee at the state level.

Besides, it was agreed that both sides shall maintain peace, harmony and tranquillity and

shall refrain from any activity that might trigger disturbance or affect the prevailing law and order situation.

It may be recalled that an earlier meeting of village representatives held on May 18,

2026, facilitated by the DC and SP, West Jaintia Hills District, remained inconclusive owing to differing views regarding the nature of plantation activities to be permitted in the area.

Naga Youth Body Opposes Release of Detainees as Manipur Shutdown Paralyzes Zeliangrong Areas

Ukhrul, Jun 03: The Naga youth organization Khanuithot-Khon, Voice of the Naga Youth, has strongly opposed any move to release detained Kuki individuals without first securing verifiable proof of life and the safe return of six Naga civilians allegedly abducted during the ongoing ethnic crisis in Manipur.

In a strongly worded statement, the organization expressed concern over reports that the remaining detainees could be released despite the continued uncertainty surrounding the fate of the six missing Nagas, including church leaders Rev. Dr. Manu Thiumai and Pastor Kenpibou.

The group stated that despite repeated appeals, public demonstrations and sustained efforts by Naga civil society organizations, no credible information has emerged regarding the whereabouts, condition or safety of the missing civilians. Khanuithot-Khon argued that releasing detainees without concrete assurances about the hostages would amount to a betrayal of the missing Na-

gas and their families. The organization questioned whether any proof of life had been established, what guarantees existed for their safe return, and what contingency measures had been put in place if they failed to return.

Describing the issue as one of justice and accountability rather than political convenience, the youth body warned that any unconditional release arrangement could weaken the Naga community's efforts to seek truth and justice. The organization also cautioned the leadership of the United Naga Council (UNC), stating that any adverse consequences arising from decisions taken without transparency and public accountability would rest with those responsible for authorizing such actions.

Khanuithot-Khon further stressed that the public has a right to know the details of any negotiations concerning the missing civilians and insisted that no agreement should be implemented in secrecy while their families continue to suffer uncertainty.

The organization addi-

tionally called for a clear distinction between civil leadership and security-related operations, warning that combining administrative authority with operational responsibilities could weaken accountability and public trust.

Reiterating its demand, the youth body urged the UNC to immediately halt any unconditional release process until verifiable proof of life of the six abducted civilians is produced and a reciprocal, simultaneous exchange is guaranteed. Meanwhile, normal life came to a standstill across Zeliangrong-inhabited areas of Manipur following an indefinite emergency shutdown called by the Joint Tribes' Council (JTC) Manipur, representing the Inpui, Liangmai, Rongmei and Zeme communities. The shutdown disrupted movement across Noney district and National Highway-37, a key route connecting Imphal and Jiribam. Markets, commercial establishments, banks and fuel stations remained closed, while only essential services were allowed to function.

Assam CM Courts Investors During Meeting with PepsiCo India and Business Leaders

Guwahati, Jun 03: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said he had a productive meeting with Jagrut Kotecha, Chief Executive Officer of PepsiCo India, at his official residence in the national capital. In a post on X, the Chief Minister said he discussed the progress of PepsiCo India's ongoing operations in Assam as well as the company's future expansion plans in the state. "Had a good meeting with Mr Jagrut Kotecha, the CEO of PepsiCo India. Discussed the progress of the group's ongoing operations in Assam and its expansion plans in the coming days. Assam is steadily emerging as a preferred hub of various industrial activities," Sarma posted. The meeting comes as part of the Chief Minister's continued engagement with leading industry figures to attract investments and accelerate industrial growth in Assam. During his five-day visit to the national capital, Chief Minister Sarma met several industry leaders, including Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Chairman and Managing Director S.N. Subrahmanyan, Bharti Enterprises Vice Chairman and Managing Director Rajan Bharti Mittal, and representatives of the Rashmi Group, to press for the early execution of ongoing projects and encourage further investments in Assam. The Chief Minister highlighted the state's con-



ducive law and order situation, stable economy, investor-friendly policies and incentives, including initiatives aimed at improving Ease of Doing Business. The Rashmi Group, a Kolkata-based, family-owned industrial conglomerate, has a diversified portfolio spanning iron and steel, cement, power and logistics sectors, with operations across India. The outreach forms part of As-

sam's sustained efforts to attract investments following the successful Advantage Assam 2.0: Investment and Infrastructure Summit held in Guwahati in February last year. The summit showcased the state's expanding infrastructure, strategic connectivity, abundant natural resources and business-friendly policy environment, helping generate substantial investment commitments and investor

interest across sectors such as manufacturing, food processing, logistics, energy, tourism and technology. With a focus on infrastructure development, industrial expansion and investor facilitation, the Assam government has been actively engaging with major business groups and corporate leaders, positioning the state as one of the fastest-emerging investment destinations in Northeast India.

Assam CM, Dharmendra Pradhan Discuss IIM Guwahati



Guwahati, Jun 03: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday announced that significant progress has been made towards establishing the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Guwahati following a meeting with Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in the national capital.

Sharing details of the meeting on social media platform X, the Chief Minister said discussions held on Tuesday evening at the Union Minister's official residence focused on finalising the contours of the proposed IIM Guwahati campus, which is expected to play a key role in strengthening higher education infrastructure in the state.

"Assam will become East India's next education hub and we are trying to get the best possible institutions here. Today I had a very good meeting with Hon'ble Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Ji on finalising the contours of the IIM-Guwahati campus. Grateful for his relentless support towards strengthening education infrastructure in Assam," Sarma wrote.

The proposed IIM Guwahati is part of the Assam Government's broader vision to transform the state into a premier educational destination in eastern India by attracting top-tier academic and research institutions.

The Chief Minister also acknowledged the Union Education Minister's continued support in expanding educational opportunities and infrastructure across Assam. The development is expected to boost management education, research, and skill development in the region while enhancing Assam's reputation as an emerging education hub.

Further details regarding the campus location, infrastructure plans, and timeline for implementation are expected to be announced after consultations between the state and central governments are completed.

Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland sign reform-linked MoUs under Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0

Itanagar, Jun 03: As a remarkable step towards sustainable, assured, and citizen-centric rural drinking water supply across India, reform-linked memoranda of understanding (MoUs) were signed today under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0 with four states -- Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Jharkhand, and Tamil Nadu, and one UT (Puducherry).

The reform-linked MoU man-

dates a Gram Panchayat-led, service-based and community-centred model of rural water governance, aligned with the objectives of Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 and seeks to ensure that every rural household has access to drinking water supply in adequate quantity and of prescribed quality on a regular basis, through strengthened community participation (Jan Bhagidari) and bringing in structural reforms for sustain-

able operation and maintenance of rural water supply systems, thereby enhancing the living standards of rural communities contributing to long-term water security aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

The MoUs were signed in the presence of the Union Minister of Jal Shakti, C.R. Patil, Minister of State, V. Somanna and the Chief Ministers of the respective States/

UT during five separate scheduled meetings conducted via online video conference. Senior officials from the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), including Ashok K. K. Meena, Secretary, DDWS, Kamal Kishore Soan, Additional Secretary & Mission Director, National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM), Joint secretaries, Directors and Deputy Advisors were also present during the MoU signing.

Native Peoples' Convention in Manipur Calls for SoO Abrogation, NRC Update and Indigenous Unity

Imphal, Jun 03: A Native Peoples' Convention held at Makhn Village in Manipur adopted a series of resolutions aimed at strengthening unity among the state's indigenous communities and addressing issues concerning their future and security.

The convention, attended by representatives of various indigenous groups, particularly Meitei and Naga communities, emphasized collective action to safeguard the interests of Manipur's native peoples. The event featured presentations by several resource persons, including K. Timothy Zimik, Dr. Y. Premanda of Manipur University, demographer Dr. R.K. Narendra, and Homen Thangjam of Indira Gandhi Tribal University.

Among the resolutions adopted unanimously was a commitment to jointly resist what participants described as external aggression against Manipur and to combat narco-terrorism, which they identified as a major threat to the state. The gathering also resolved to develop common policies and programmes to protect the interests of indigenous communities.

In a significant political demand, the convention called for the immediate abrogation of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with armed groups and sought the withdrawal of the Assam Rifles from Manipur. Participants also demanded the updation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and proposed a joint consultative



meeting with elected legislators to discuss matters concerning the future of the state and its indigenous inhabitants.

The convention further resolved that members of the Native Peoples' Convention, Manipur (NPCM), would collectively respond to any threats faced by in-

digenous communities and would not support policies perceived to undermine unity among native groups, whether introduced by the state or central government.

To strengthen public participation, the gathering decided to observe June 2 every year as Native Peoples' Day and organise consultative meetings across district headquarters in Manipur to raise awareness and discuss issues affecting indigenous populations.

Another key resolution called for the formation of a select committee tasked with creating awareness among national leaders, citizens across India, and the international community about the challenges facing Manipur and its indigenous peoples.

DENSU steps up demand for SIT and fast-track probe in minor assault case

Dimapur, June 03: The Dimapur Eastern Naga Students' Union (DENSU), with support from the Western Naga Youth Front (WNYF) and several civil society organisations, on Tuesday intensified its demand for a fast-track investigation and the constitution of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) in connection with the alleged sexual assault of a minor girl in Dimapur. Representatives of the organisations gathered at the Women Police Station in Dimapur and submitted memoranda to the authorities, urging a transparent, impartial and time-bound investigation into the case.

They also sought stricter legal action against those allegedly involved. Addressing the media, WNYF president Aga Rengma expressed full support for DENSU's ongoing campaign for justice. He said the youth body stood firmly behind the student organisation and would continue supporting all legitimate

efforts aimed at securing justice for the victim. "We give them our full support. Whatever demands and grievances they have raised today, we stand by them completely," Rengma said. He stated that investigators should not limit the case only to provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

According to him, all relevant provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the POCSO Act and the Arms Act should also be considered during the investigation. Referring to information allegedly emerging from the victim's statement, Rengma claimed that a weapon had reportedly been used to threaten the child.

He argued that the accused should face charges under the Arms Act as well if the allegations were substantiated during the investigation. "Whether the weapon was licensed or not, the accused must also be booked



under the Arms Act because a weapon was allegedly used to threaten an innocent child and facilitate an illegal act," he said.

DENSU president Thongule Sangtam raised concerns over what he described as procedural lapses in the handling of the case. He also questioned certain aspects of the investigation and demanded that the accused's mother and elder sister be questioned. According to Sangtam, the alleged

abuse reportedly continued over an extended period in the same household.

He argued that all individuals who may have had knowledge of the alleged incidents should be examined as part of the investigation. "The crime allegedly took place in her own house over a long period. Why did she remain silent? Concealing a crime is equally wrong," he said. The student organisation also demanded the arrest and questioning of

said. He further claimed that the victim was facing severe psychological distress and continued to struggle despite receiving counselling support. Calling for urgent action, he stressed the need for a sensitive and speedy investigation. The organisation demanded that the proposed SIT be headed by an officer not below the rank of Deputy Inspector General (DIG) or Inspector General (IG). It also sought direct monitoring of the investigation by Nagaland Director General of Police Rupin Sharma.

"Our demand is clear: there should be no procedural lapses and the case must be resolved swiftly through a fast-track process," Sangtam said. DENSU general secretary Sharen Shiu reiterated the demand for a detailed investigation into the role of the accused's mother. He also alleged that the victim had been made to remain in the same environment where the abuse reportedly took place.

Thunderstorm alert issued as hot and humid weather continues across Tripura

Agartala, June 03: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast thunderstorms, lightning and light to moderate rainfall across Tripura over the next seven days, while hot and humid conditions are expected to continue in several districts during the next few days. According to the Mid-Day Weather Bulletin issued by the Meteorological Centre, Agartala at 11:30 am on Wednesday, light to moderate rain or thundershowers are very likely at one or two places across the state on June 3 and June 4. Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are also expected at isolated locations during this period. The weather office said hot and humid conditions are likely to prevail in West Tripura, Khowai, Sepahijala, Gomati and South Tripura districts. Residents have been advised to remain cautious, particularly during the afternoon and evening hours when thunderstorm activity is more likely to occur. The IMD has indicated that rainfall activity is expected to increase from June 5 onwards. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely at a few places across the state on June 5. The rainfall coverage is expected to expand further between June 6 and June 10, when many parts of Tripura are likely to receive light to moderate rain or thundershowers. Thunderstorms and lightning may continue at isolated places, especially between June 5 and June 8, the bulletin stated. The department has also forecast above-normal daytime temperatures during the next two to three days. Maximum temperatures are likely to remain 3°C to 5°C higher than normal, while minimum temperatures are expected to stay near normal levels. Meteorologists warned that the combination of high temperatures and increased humidity could lead to uncomfortable weather conditions and may pose health risks, particularly for children, elderly people and those with pre-existing medical conditions.

Tripura boosts fish production under PMMSY, but reliance on imported fish remains

Agartala, June 03: Tripura's fisheries sector has recorded significant growth under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), with government figures showing increased fish production, expanded aquaculture infrastructure and support for thousands of fish farmers. However, despite these achievements, the state continues to rely heavily on fish imported from other states, highlighting a gap between local production and market demand. According to the latest Economic Review of Tripura, the fisheries sector has emerged as an important contributor to rural development and livelihood generation.

During the financial year 2024-25, the Department of Fisheries invested more than Rs 8,139.77 lakh under PMMSY, benefiting 18,912 individuals through various fisheries-related projects. Official data shows that nearly 19,000 beneficiaries received support under the scheme. The assistance facilitated the establishment of freshwater hatcheries, construction of fish ponds, promotion of integrated fish farming, expansion of cage culture and adoption of modern technologies such



as biofloc fish culture and ornamental fish farming. The Fisheries Department has cited several achievements under the programme, including the stocking of more than 24.54 lakh fish fingerlings in the Dumbor Reservoir and support for 1,464 cage culture units across the state. Officials believe these initiatives have strengthened the fisheries ecosystem and contributed to increased fish production. Despite the reported progress, fish markets in Agartala and other parts of Tripura continue to depend substantially on fish supplied from Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Assam. Traders and consumers say imported fish remains a regular feature in local markets throughout the

year. The continued inflow of fish from outside the state has led to discussions among stakeholders about whether local production is currently sufficient to meet the growing demand of consumers.

While official figures point to rising production levels, market observations indicate that Tripura has yet to achieve complete self-sufficiency in fish production. Experts say the success of fisheries development programmes should be assessed not only through production statistics and beneficiary numbers but also through their impact on market supply and income generation for fish farmers. Kiran Bhowmik, a PhD scholar in Agricultural Economics at Tripura University, said

PMMSY has opened up considerable opportunities for fish farmers by improving infrastructure and encouraging the adoption of modern aquaculture practices. However, he stressed that greater financial support from the Central Government would be necessary to fully realise the sector's potential. "PMMSY has created substantial opportunities for fish farmers by improving infrastructure and encouraging modern aquaculture practices. Greater financial support from the Central Government is necessary to fully unlock the sector's potential," Bhowmik observed. Tripura has significant untapped potential for aquaculture expansion, particularly in rural and tribal areas.

They argue that increased allocations under PMMSY could help create additional ponds, hatcheries, feed units and marketing infrastructure, enabling more farmers to engage in commercial fish production. Stakeholders have also called for stronger awareness campaigns in remote areas, improved monitoring at the district level, regular impact assessments and enhanced technical support to ensure long-term sustainability of fisheries assets created under the scheme. They further emphasised the importance of market linkages, entrepreneurship development, skill enhancement programmes and scientific fish farming practices to improve productivity and reduce post-harvest losses.

While official reports present an encouraging picture of growth in Tripura's fisheries sector, the state's continued dependence on imported fish suggests that further efforts will be required to bridge the gap between production and consumption. Experts maintain that higher investment, stronger implementation and wider outreach among fish farmers will be essential for achieving genuine fish self-sufficiency and sustainable growth in the years ahead.

Assam among top three states in school internet connectivity growth, says Himanta Biswa Sarma

Guwahati, June 03: Assam has emerged among the top three states in the country in terms of growth in school internet connectivity, a development that reflects a wider transformation in the state's education sector over the past decade, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Tuesday. Reacting to the recognition by the Government of India, Sarma said the achievement goes beyond internet access and represents broader improvements in educational infrastructure across Assam under the NDA government's tenure.

In a post on X, the Chief Minister said the state's ranking highlights the steady progress made in several key areas that directly affect the learning environment in schools. "When the Government of India ranks Assam among the Top 3 states for growth in school internet connectivity, it reflects a larger transformation," Sarma said.

He noted that important indicators such as electricity supply, availability of computers, construction of girls' toilets and access to internet facilities have improved significantly over the last ten years. According to the Chief Minister, these improvements are the



result of sustained efforts to strengthen the education system and create better learning opportunities for students across the state. He said the focus has been on improving infrastructure in schools, including those located in rural and underserved areas where access to basic facilities was once limited. Sarma said that better internet connectivity is helping schools become more connected and better equipped to support modern learning methods.

The expansion of digital infrastructure, he added, is an important part of the state's efforts to prepare students for a technology-driven future. Highlighting the government's broader education agenda, the Chief Minister said

the gains recorded so far are only the beginning of a larger push aimed at improving the quality of education and ensuring that students have access to essential facilities.

"Electricity, computers, girls' toilets, internet access—every key indicator has improved over a decade of NDA governance. And we are just getting started," he said. The recognition comes at a time when both the Central and Assam governments are focusing on expanding digital infrastructure in educational institutions. Efforts are also underway to bridge the digital divide and ensure that students, regardless of their location, have access to technology and learning resources.

Meghalaya speeds up reforms in education, and CM evaluates PGI performance

Shillong, June 03: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Wednesday chaired a high-level review meeting with the Education Department to assess the State's performance in the Performance Grading Index (PGI) and review the wide-ranging reforms being undertaken to strengthen the State's education ecosystem. During a detailed presentation, officials outlined the various indicators that contribute to the PGI framework and highlighted the significant interventions already underway to improve learning outcomes, strengthen school infrastructure, expand vocational education, and enhance data management systems.

The Chief Minister reiterated that Meghalaya remains firmly committed to improving educational outcomes and ensuring that every child in the State has access to quality education. The presentation highlighted Meghalaya's unique educational landscape, with nearly 14,600 schools serving a population of approximately 30 lakh. The extensive network reflects the State's longstanding commit-



ment to ensuring that even the most remote communities have access to schooling, making Meghalaya one of the most accessible education systems in the Northeastern region. Officials informed that the Government has undertaken a series of transformational reforms over the last few years, including investments in foundational learning, teacher welfare, school infrastructure, digital learning facilities, and student support systems.

The review noted that "Learning Outcomes," which carries the highest weightage under the PGI framework, remains a key focus area for

the Government. A range of initiatives aimed at strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy, improving classroom teaching, and supporting students are being implemented across the State. The meeting also reviewed the ongoing phased upgradation of school infrastructure. Significant efforts are being made to establish and strengthen science laboratories, ICT facilities, smart classrooms, libraries, kitchen gardens, rainwater harvesting systems, drinking water facilities, and solar-powered infrastructure in schools across Meghalaya. A major focus of the review was vocational and

skill-based education. Officials highlighted the Community Skill Integrated Curriculum, through which students from primary to secondary levels are being introduced to practical and skill-oriented learning.

The initiative is expected to contribute significantly to future educational outcomes and performance indicators. The Government is also strengthening several student welfare initiatives, including improvements in the Mid-Day Meal programme, installation of sanitary pad vending machines and incinerators in girls' schools, and other measures aimed at creating a safe and supportive learning environment. The Chief Minister directed the department to continue closely monitoring all performance indicators and undertake targeted interventions wherever necessary. He assured full government support to ensure that schools receive the resources and assistance required to achieve measurable improvements. The meeting also reviewed ongoing efforts to strengthen digital governance and educational data systems.

The Assam-Meghalaya border meeting concludes with a consensus on cultivation in the area of difference

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Deputy Speaker, KAAC Avijit Kro; Headsing Rongphar, Member of Autonomous Council, KAAC; West Karbi Anglong DC, Preeti Kumari and West Karbi Anglong SP, Dinesh Kumar. Representing Meghalaya were deputy chief minister Sniawbhalang Dhar; principal secretary Frederick



R. Kharkongor; commissioner and secretary Cyril V. Diengdoh; secretary Garod L.S.N. Dykes; chief executive member, Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council (JHADC) Thombor Shiwat; West Jaintia Hills DC, Abhinav Singh and West Jaintia Hills SP, Jagpal Singh Dhanoa.

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ter relating to permanent boundary demarcation in the area of difference shall be considered and decided by the appropriate committee at the state level. Besides, it was agreed that both sides shall maintain peace, harmony and tranquillity and shall refrain from any activity that might trigger disturbance or affect the prevailing law and order situation.

It may be recalled that an earlier meeting of village representatives held on May 18, 2026, facilitated by the DC and SP, West Jaintia Hills District, remained inconclusive owing to differing views regarding the nature of plantation activities to be permitted in the area.

Congress Accuses Arunachal Government of Hindering Supreme Court-Monitored CBI Probe

Itanagar, Jun 03: The Congress on Tuesday accused the BJP-led government in Arunachal Pradesh of attempting to obstruct a Supreme Court-monitored Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into alleged irregularities in the awarding of public works contracts in the state. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Congress general secretary in-charge of communications Jairam Ramesh alleged that the state government had abandoned transparency and accountability despite clear directions from the Supreme Court. According to Ramesh, the controversy relates to a preliminary CBI inquiry into allegations that public works contracts were awarded to firms allegedly owned by or linked to members of Chief Minister Pema Khandu’s family. “The BJP has chosen to brazen it out in

Arunachal Pradesh even after the Supreme Court ordered a CBI investigation and the Chief Minister’s decisions came under scrutiny,” Ramesh said. The Congress leader claimed that efforts were being made to slow down or obstruct the investigation despite judicial oversight. He alleged that the CBI continued to face pressure and stressed that all relevant documents and records connected to the case should be made available to the investigating agency. Ramesh also questioned why Chief Minister Pema Khandu had not stepped down or been removed from office after the Supreme Court directed the CBI to investigate allegations of corruption linked to the case. Referring to a report submitted by the CBI to the Supreme Court in April 2026, Ramesh alleged that contracts

worth approximately ₹1,270 crore were awarded between January 2015 and December 2025 to firms linked to members of the Chief Minister’s family. He described the matter as a serious violation of principles of accountability and called for an independent and impartial investigation into the allegations. The Congress leader further stated that the case raises broader concerns regarding transparency in public procurement and potential conflicts of interest within the state administration. The BJP and the Arunachal Pradesh government had not immediately responded to the allegations. The Supreme Court-directed investigation into the alleged contract irregularities is currently underway, with further developments expected as the CBI probe progresses.

Tripura Gets Northeast’s First Mission Language School

Agartala Jun 03: The Tripura government has signed an agreement with Ramakrishna Mission at Viveknagar in Agartala to establish the first Ramakrishna Mission School of Languages in Northeast India, along with a Centre for Human Excellence.

The he proposed School of Languages will offer courses in Hindi, Sanskrit and Bengali, as well as foreign languages including German, French and Spanish. The Centre for Human Excellence will feature a computer training centre, language laboratories, smart classrooms and a meditation hall. Terming the initiative as a major step towards educational advancement and youth development, Chief Minister Manik Saha



said the project acknowledges the Ramakrishna Mission’s longstanding contribution to education, value-based learning and human development in Tripura and across the country. “In Tripura’s journey towards educational excellence and youth empowerment, the State Government and Ramakrishna Mission,

Viveknagar, Agartala have joined hands in a landmark initiative with the signing of an agreement for the establishment of North East India’s first-ever Ramakrishna Mission School of Languages and the Ramakrishna Mission Centre for Human Excellence,” Saha stated. “Glad to be present on this occasion

which stands as a recognition of the extraordinary contribution of the Ramakrishna Mission in the fields of education, value-based learning and human development, both across the nation and particularly in Tripura,” the Chief Minister said. “It is a visionary step towards equipping the youth of Tripura with the knowledge, skills and values required to embrace the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly evolving global scenario,” he added. The facility will initially begin operations with 100 students at the Ramakrishna Mission campus on Gangail Road. The permanent campus will later be developed on the Mission’s land in Dhaleswar and is expected to accommodate up to 1,000 students annually.

Nitin Gadkari reviews National Highway projects in Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland

Aizawl, Jun 03: Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari reviewed the quality and maintenance progress of 1,489 km of National Highway projects in Mizoram, 1,759 km of National Highways in Manipur, and 1,578 km of National Highways in Nagaland, based on inputs received through media and social media.

The review was conducted in New Delhi on Tuesday with officials from NHAI, NHIDCL, MoRTH, and project contractors.

During the review, Gadkari emphasised timely execution, strict adherence to quality standards, and the adoption of advanced technologies to ensure sustainable and efficient highway infrastructure. He stated that improved road connectivity plays a vital role

in enhancing connectivity, driving economic growth, and improving commuter convenience. The Minister also directed officials to ensure comprehensive monsoon preparedness through preventive measures and robust response systems to uphold road safety and durability. Gadkari stressed the need to accelerate on-ground execution, strengthen quality monitoring, and adopt modern construction practices to enhance asset life, improve riding quality, and ensure seamless connectivity across key corridors. He further directed officials to undertake advance monsoon preparedness, including effective drainage management, slope protection, and quick-response mechanisms to minimise disruptions and ensure commuter safety.

Shillong set to host North Eastern Council’s 73rd Plenary Session

Shillong, Jun 03: The North Eastern Council (NEC) will hold its 73rd Plenary Session on Thursday in Shillong, under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister and Chairman, NEC, Amit Shah. The session will be attended by Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and Vice Chairman, NEC, Jyotiraditya M. Scindia; Minister of State for DoNER, Dr. Sukanta Majumdar; the Governors and Chief Ministers of the eight North Eastern States; other Members of the Council; and Senior Officers of Central and State Governments. A pre-Plenary meeting to discuss flagship initiatives such as Bam-

boo, Agarwood, and the Ashtalakshmi Darshan, and other issues was held today. The meeting was attended by Secretary, MDoNER and Chief Secretaries of the eight North Eastern States, Secretary, NEC along with Senior Officers of M/o DoNER, NEC, State Governments and other Central Agencies. The North Eastern Council, established under the North Eastern Council Act, 1971, serves as the apex regional planning body for the North Eastern Region and plays a pivotal role in fostering coordinated development and strengthening cooperative federalism in the region. The Plenary session will discuss and deliberate on progress made

by the CM High-Level Task Forces constituted for critical sectors of regional development. Presentations will be made on Tourism; Agriculture & Horticulture; Investment Promotion; Self-Reliance in Milk, Eggs, Fish and Meat; Sports Promotion; Economic Corridor Development; Infrastructure & Connectivity; and Handloom & Handicrafts. The deliberations are expected to facilitate coordinated action among States and stakeholders for achieving shared developmental goals. The meeting will also review important initiatives of the Ministry of DoNER, including updates on major schemes and programmes, outcomes of the North East Investment

Summit and Bankers’ Conclave, youth-focused initiatives, and efforts relating to tourism, logistics, and the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) projects in the region. The Plenary Session will further deliberate on the North East Vision Plan 2047, which seeks to provide a long-term roadmap for transforming the North Eastern Region into a vibrant hub of economic growth, connectivity, innovation, sustainability, and cultural prosperity by the centenary year of India’s independence. The Members of the North Eastern Council will also share their perspectives on regional development priorities and opportunities for enhanced inter-state cooperation.

Meghalaya Speeds Up Education Reforms: CM

Shillong, Jun 03: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Wednesday chaired a high-level review meeting with the Education Department to assess the State’s performance in the Performance Grading Index (PGI) and review the wide-ranging reforms being undertaken to strengthen the State’s education ecosystem.

During a detailed presentation, officials outlined the various indicators that contribute to the PGI framework and highlighted the significant interventions already underway to improve learning outcomes, strengthen school infrastructure, expand vocational education, and enhance data management systems.

The Chief Minister reiterated that Meghalaya remains firmly committed to improving educational outcomes

and ensuring that every child in the State has access to quality education.

The presentation highlighted Meghalaya’s unique educational landscape, with nearly 14,600 schools serving a population of approximately 30 lakh.

The extensive network reflects the State’s longstanding commitment to ensuring that even the most remote communities have access to schooling, making Meghalaya one of the most accessible education systems in the Northeastern region.

Officials informed that the Government has undertaken a series of transformative reforms over the last few years, including investments in foundational learning, teacher welfare, school infrastructure, digital learning facilities, and student support systems.



The review noted that “Learning Outcomes,” which carries the highest weightage under the PGI framework, remains a key focus area for the Government. A range of initiatives aimed at strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy, improving classroom teaching, and supporting students are being implemented across the State.

The meeting also reviewed the ongoing phased upgradation of school infrastructure. Significant efforts are being made to establish and strengthen science laboratories, ICT facilities, smart classrooms, libraries, kitchen gardens, rainwater harvesting systems, drinking water facilities, and solar-powered infrastructure in schools across Meghalaya.

A major focus of the review was vocational and skill-based education. Officials highlighted the Community Skill Integrated Curriculum, through which students from primary to secondary levels are being introduced to practical and skill-oriented learning. The initiative is expected to contribute significantly to future educational outcomes and

performance indicators.

The Government is also strengthening several student welfare initiatives, including improvements in the Mid-Day Meal programme, installation of sanitary pad vending machines and incinerators in girls’ schools, and other measures aimed at creating a safe and supportive learning environment.

The Chief Minister directed the department to continue closely monitoring all performance indicators and undertake targeted interventions wherever necessary. He assured full government support to ensure that schools receive the resources and assistance required to achieve measurable improvements.

The meeting also reviewed ongoing efforts to strengthen digital governance and educational data systems.

Govt dismisses liquor retailers’ concern over excise reforms

Shillong, Jun 03: In the wake of liquor retailers’ concern over reduced profit margins due to the newly introduced Integrated Excise Management System (IEMS), the state government has defended the system as “aligned with modernisation drives across the country. Excise reforms measures, including IEMS, are aimed at transparency, revenue protection, and aligning with national regulatory trends, according to an official statement issued by the Excise, Registration, Taxation & Stamps department on Tuesday. Taking note of statements by certain associations of liquor retailers regarding IEMS and rationalisation of retailer margins, the department said, “Several claims being circulated are selec-

tive, incomplete and fail to present the larger public interest, fiscal realities and national regulatory context within which these reforms are being undertaken.” Asserting that the initiatives taken by state government are consistent with other states, it said, “Across India, state governments are increasingly modernising excise administration through QR-based bottle tracking, digital inventory management, stricter compliance systems, supply-chain monitoring, structured pricing frameworks, and enhanced revenue protection measures.” “States such as Delhi, Karnataka and several others are presently undertaking major excise reforms focused on transparency, digitisation and tighter regulatory oversight.”

Outrage in Barpeta After Two Teenagers Allegedly Tied, Beaten and Tonsured Over Pigeon Theft Accusation

Barpeta, Jun 03: A shocking case of alleged mob justice and moral policing has sparked widespread outrage in Assam’s Barpeta district after two teenagers were reportedly tied to a pole, brutally assaulted and forcibly tonsured over allegations of pigeon theft. The incident occurred at a ferry ghat near the residence of village headman Omar Uddin in Saorad Bhitha village under the jurisdiction of Baghbar Police Station. According to local sources, the two minors from Balajan Char were accused of stealing pigeons from the residence of Hamed Ali, a resident of the same area.

Instead of being handed over to the police, the teenagers were al-

legedly subjected to public humiliation and physical punishment by a group of villagers. Eyewitnesses claimed that the two teenagers were tied to a pole and mercilessly beaten in public.

Their heads were also forcibly shaved as part of the punishment. A video purportedly showing the teenagers being tied up and assaulted has since gone viral on social media, drawing widespread condemnation and raising serious concerns about law and order in the area. The victims were eventually rescued by their family members, who arrived at the scene and took them home. The incident has generated strong reactions among local residents, particularly as the alleged act of

vigilante justice reportedly took place in the presence of members of the Village Defence Party (VDP) from Morabhaj village. Residents and rights activists have questioned why the teenagers were not handed over to law enforcement authorities if they were suspected of theft.

They described the incident as a disturbing example of “mob justice” and demanded accountability. The incident has triggered anger across the Baghbar region, with growing demands for a thorough investigation and strict action against those involved in the alleged assault and public humiliation of the minors. Police have not yet issued an official statement regarding the incident.

DoNER Ministry, Manipur govt to promote polo as the state’s USP

Imphal, Jun 03: The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and Manipur government has identified polo as its promotion as an Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of the state.

The decision was made at a virtual conference convened by the convened by the Ministry of DoNER on Tuesday, which saw the participation of DoNER Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Manipur Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh among others.

“As the birthplace of polo, Manipur holds immense potential to emerge as a global hub for the sport. Had a productive discussion with Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh on developing a comprehensive roadmap to position Polo as Manipur’s USP,” Scindia said.

“Attended the Virtual Conference convened by the Ministry of DoNER at the Secretariat, along with Minister Kh. Loken Singh and senior officials of the Tourism Department. Dis-



cussions focused on Polo’s Unique Selling Proposition (USP) and its distinct heritage “ the Chief Minister posted on social media.

“Originating in Manipur, Polo is an ancient indigenous sport that reflects our

rich traditions, civilization, and cultural legacy. We remain committed to preserving and promoting our indigenous games and heritage,” the Manipur Chief Minister stated.

He also appreciated the efforts of technical officials, the Director of Tourism, and all concerned officers for the seamless organisation of the programme, stating that their professionalism reflects the government’s commitment to efficient and responsive administration.

Meghalaya govt intensifies efforts to check spread of African Swine Fever

Shillong, Jun 03: Meghalaya government has intensified efforts to contain the spread of African Swine Fever (ASF) and imposed restrictions on pig transportation and trade in affected districts, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said on Wednesday. Sangma said the outbreak was being closely monitored and immediate measures had been put in place to prevent the disease from spreading further. “This has been a problem in the past also. We are monitoring the situation and taking immediate action. The department is taking measures to ensure that ASF doesn’t spread on a large scale,” he told reporters.

The Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Government of Meghalaya, has issued a notification following the confirmation of ASF outbreaks in several villages across the State. The notification has been issued in exercise of the powers conferred under Sections 6 and 20 of the Prevention and Control of Infectious and Contagious Diseases in Animals Act, 2009, with the objective of preventing, controlling and eradicating the disease. According to the notification, confirmed cases of African Swine Fever have been detected in villages under Pynursla Block, East Khasi Hills District, namely Urksew Wahpathaw

and Mawkajein; Mawlai Block, including Mawlai Mawkyrnroh and Mawlai Umrynjah; Mawthadraisban Block, including the Base Pig Breeding Farm, Nongkasen and Wahliei long in West Khasi Hills District; Umsning Block in Ri-Bhoi District, including the Regional Pig Breeding Farm (RPBF), Kyrdemkulai (Multiplier/Nucleus/State Plant/RKVY), Lum Umphih, Nongthymmai Umsning, Umsning Proper B, Lum Nongrim, Rongpharkong, Umiarong, Umsnorshor and Umsaitnsniang Nongpdeng; Bhoirymbong Block, including Mawkyrdep, Nongthymmai Kyrdem, Syllei-U-Lar, Umroi

Madan and Labansaro; and Mawphan-niew village under Mairang Block in Eastern West Khasi Hills District. In accordance with the National Action Plan for Control, Containment and Eradication of African Swine Fever formulated by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India, villages falling within a one-kilometre radius of infected premises have been designated as “Infected Zones,” while villages within a ten-kilometre radius have been designated as “Surveillance Zones.” The prescribed restrictions have come into force with immediate effect.

Meghalaya govt coalition alliance names James Sangma as Rajya Sabha candidate

Shillong, Jun 03: The Meghalaya Democratic Alliance-II (MDA-II) on Wednesday unanimously endorsed National People’s Party (NPP) leader James PK Sangma as its candidate for the Rajya Sabha election scheduled for June 18 after coalition partners agreed to follow the convention of backing the nominee of the alliance’s largest constituent. The decision was taken during a meeting of leaders of the parliamentary parties of all MDA-II constituents chaired by Chief Minister and

alliance leader Conrad K Sangma. Announcing the decision, MDA-II parliamentary party secretary and West Shillong MLA Paul Lyngdoh said member parties had initially proposed different names from their respective political organisations for consideration. However, as no consensus emerged around a single candidate, the alliance resolved to adopt the established parliamentary convention of endorsing the proposal put forward by the NPP, the largest partner in the coalition.

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The Pressure of Living Beyond One’s Means

Consumer culture often encourages people to spend as if appearances matter more than financial stability. Expensive gadgets, luxury lifestyles, and social expectations create pressure to spend beyond one’s actual capacity. Easy access to credit and digital payment systems has made overspending even easier. Many households find themselves

trapped in cycles of debt while trying to maintain a particular image. Financial stress affects mental health, family relationships, and long-term security. True financial success lies not in visible spending but in stability, savings, and responsible planning. Living within one’s means remains one of the most valuable financial habits.

A different strategy

The majority of people would question the Union government’s opportunism in announcing price increases for gasoline and diesel after elections to numerous state legislatures had concluded, but they would not contest the necessity of such increases. They would assume that the increase in the global price of oil must be transferred to the final customers. But this is an error. It can be demonstrated that when global oil prices rise, the economy would benefit more from not raising final prices to consumers than from raising prices.

This is not only because working people would be spared the agony of inflation, but also for a more subtle and profound reason: while raising prices results in a contraction of output and employment compared to the original situation, not raising prices results in an expansion of output and employment compared to the original situation. This is due to the fact that the domestic economy’s demand for petroleum products is price-inelastic, meaning that demand does not decrease proportionately as prices rise. Raising the price of petroleum products consequently results in a decrease in demand for these other goods, which in turn causes a contraction in output and employment in those sectors and, consequently, in the economy as a whole.

In actuality, both the price increase and the subsequent recession lower the overall demand for petroleum products, which is equivalent to a decrease in the domestic economy’s supply of such goods. Thus, when prices are permitted to rise in circumstances such as these, the recession becomes part of the system’s methodology. However, let’s say that despite the decreased supply to the domestic sector, the prices of petroleum goods remain unchanged, and that demand is reduced by restricting petroleum items.

The rationing can be set up so that it only affects the final consumption of petroleum products—and that of the wealthier segments—and does not limit their usage as inputs for the creation of other finished goods. The expenditure on petro-product consumption would decrease since fewer petro-products would be used for final consumption while their prices remained unchanged. This would give consumers more purchasing power, which would raise their demand for other goods and, consequently, output. As a result, relative to the initial state, the economy’s

overall output and employment would rise. Therefore, while increasing domestic petro-product prices in response to a global shortage that has increased global oil prices has a recessionary effect on the domestic economy, rationing such products instead (which only affects their final consumption) has an expansionary effect.

At first glance, this would seem strange: how can a gain in output and employment in the domestic economy result from a decrease in the supply of petro-products? However, this is predicated on the idea that the impact of a decreased supply of crude oil only affects the end consumption of petro-products rather than their utilization as inputs. Given the surge in global oil costs, domestic manufacturers and distributors of petroleum goods may need to be compensated if the government decides against raising their prices. However, a larger budget imbalance can do this. Assume for the moment that the higher fiscal deficit gives petro producers and distributors exactly the same amount of money in the absence of a price increase as they would have received in the event of one. In the same manner that they would have otherwise raised prices, they would utilize it to pay overseas suppliers. Additionally, the greater budget deficit would have helped to eliminate inflation rather than increase it. The text discusses the need for careful rationing of resources, particularly petro-products, in light of rising global oil prices.

It argues that rationing among affluent consumers alone will not suffice to balance demand and supply. The author suggests extending rationing to the defense sector, similar to measures taken in 2013, to free up fiscal resources that the government can invest to stimulate demand, output, and employment. It also reflects on India’s history with petro-product rationing, citing the odd-even scheme in Delhi, while cautioning against simply raising domestic prices due to increased world oil prices. This approach, it claims, could lead to mistakes reminiscent of the post-oil shock years of 1973-74, which caused rampant inflation and a subsequent global recession in 1975 due to restrictive fiscal policies in the name of inflation control. The author warns that repeating these past mistakes could further harm working people and emphasizes the need for a balanced approach to manage inflation without triggering recession.

Not yet scared about dictatorship in Britain? For this reason, you ought to be

You wouldn’t believe how near tyranny is to Britain. One of the key players in Reform UK, Zia Yusuf, recently posted something on social media. He added, “Recent events demonstrate why I view the Tory and Labour politicians who created the burning injustice of modern Britain as traitors to their country.” “There will be a reckoning.”

He did not specify those “recent events” or what his reckoning would involve, but historically, people who are considered “traitors to their country” do not fair well. You may be reassured by British exceptionalism that dictatorship is impossible in this country. According to a new analysis, American exceptionalism once ruled out the idea of someone like Donald Trump becoming president, let alone destroying US democracy at a rate “unprecedented in modern history.” Trump has consolidated authority in the executive branch, suppressed the media, targeted voting rights, politicized the federal bureaucracy, weaponized the legal system against his opponents, and sent the National Guard to Democratic cities in less than 16 months. On British soil, an authoritarian leader may advance more quickly. We lack state governments, federal courts, a codified constitution, and free speech protections akin to those found in the First Amendment. Any party with a majority in the Commons has very few barriers to its agenda because of parliamentary sovereignty.

It is easy to neutralize our unelected second chamber. Reform proposes replacing the House of Lords “with a much smaller, more democratic second chamber”, which sounds superficially appealing, except how it would be “more democratic” is intentionally left undefined. Its 2024 manifesto states, “Structure to be debated.” An authoritarian structure has already been constructed by succeeding administrations for Reform to occupy and expand. Anti-protest and so-called “anti-terror” measures have stifled democratic freedoms for decades.

The anti-genocide direct action group Palestine Action was banned as a terrorist organization by Keir Starmer’s government, which also arrested a large number of people, many of them elderly, for carrying supportive signs. See how pro-Palestinian left-wing pundits Hasan Piker and



Cenk Uygur were recently prohibited from entering the UK due to the Home Office’s claim that their presence “may not be conducive to the public good.”

Reform intends to remove the legal safeguards against the state by repealing the Human Rights Act and withdrawing from the European Court of Human Rights. It seeks to establish a British equivalent of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the US deportation agency that apprehends immigrants from residences, places of employment, and public spaces. It would function with a much more centralized state in this situation. It would be in charge of a large-scale deportation effort that would target both unauthorized immigrants and those with indefinite leave. Social housing residents who are foreign nationals would be deported. Yusuf boasts, “Our legislation will mean lawyers and judges will be powerless to stop any of it.” “Watching the degenerate lawyers’ expressions when they realize this will be entertaining.” As stated in 2024, reform will politicize the civil service by giving ministers the au-

thority to fire civil workers and replacing its heads “with successful professionals from the private sector, who are political appointees.” Under the guise of a war on “activist judges,” the administration would be given direct control over the police and attack the judiciary’s independence. Reform calls for an end to “two-tier policing,” claiming without proof that minorities and left-wing movements receive lenient treatment while far-right riots and “white British people” face persecution.

In actuality, that translates to a reform crackdown on minorities and the left. Reform is determined to outlaw pro-Palestinian demonstrations, accusing them of “inciting hate and violence.” Anticipate that additional protests, even those against Reform itself, will be subject to the same justification. Farage has called for the outlawing of “Antifa” as a “hate organization.”

There is no group known as “Antifa.” It’s just a handy way to refer to left-wing criticism. Essential legal safeguards against discrimination would be destroyed if the Equality Act were repealed.

According to Farage, more and more young Muslims do not adhere to British ideals. To think that state-sponsored Islamophobia will stop at prohibiting “all face coverings in public” and large-scale Muslim prayers close to historical monuments would be foolish. After Bangor University’s politics society turned down a Reform MP’s request to speak, Yusuf threatened to cut funding. In its 2024 manifesto, the party promised to “cut funding to universities that undermine free speech,” a euphemism for establishments that reject hard-right ideology. Voting rights will be curtailed, from limiting postal voting to denying Commonwealth citizens the ability to vote, but don’t expect it to stop there. Remember how Reform claimed that “sectarian voting and cheating” was the reason it lost the Gorton and Denton byelection, even though the police found no proof? An authoritarian death spiral would descend upon Britain. People will unavoidably reject these unacceptable attacks on democracy, and more restrictions on civil freedoms will be imposed in response. On the grounds

of violent incitement, pro-Palestinian activism and opposition to British ICE raids would put left-leaning figures in jail. They will have to decide whether to fight from exile or stay and battle. Don’t expect Kemi Badenoch’s Tories to constrain a minority Farage government.

They also favor outlawing protests, assaulting the independence of the court, removing the Human Rights Act, and establishing a British ICE. The so-called center-right has disintegrated throughout the west. The idea that the far right should be viewed as illegitimate, known as the postwar cordon sanitaire, has been violated. Observe how few Republicans in the US ultimately opposed Trumpism. All of this would be encouraged by our right-wing newspapers. Given that the government controls the BBC’s financing settlement, renews its royal charter, and has influence over senior selections, it may be easily neutralized. It is not dystopian science fiction that British democracy is collapsing. This is a logical evaluation of the evidence, not scare tactics. You’ve been alerted.

Donald Trump has eight weeks to create a red box. The Mandy files have now truly infuriated me

The TL;DR era of Keir Starmer’s administration is upon us. “I ain’t reading all that” is an ancient and now immortal memed response to an online rant that is more stimulating than the most recent Mandelson files. However, I’m glad for you, or regret that occurred. In any event, I can tell you that the most recent files only have two horribly iconic moments to spare you the trouble.

The first is, of course, Pat McFadden’s already widely shared assessment of Labour’s blindly self-serving backbenchers and possibly those far closer to the center of government: “Who can we tax in order to pay benefits to others?” is a question I ask at every meeting. Yowch. Liam Byrne recently released a new note.

However, the second issue is even more significant than that. The second item in the entire file dump may be the bloodiest and most iconic. It is only ten words long, but when I read it yesterday afternoon, I reclined in my chair in disbelief at the complete situation of the country. That’s it, I thought. That literally sums up our nation’s current situation and the scope of the challenge of how on earth we



can overcome it. It is completely foreseeable and incredibly startling at the same time. I won’t issue a trigger warning or anything, but I will mention that it appears in the email part regarding Trump’s request to receive a replica ministerial red box as a present during the state visit last year. In any case, “the manufacturer gave a lead time of 8-10 weeks.”-God, oh God. “A lead time of eight to ten weeks was provided by the manufacturer.” There you have it—everything. It will take two months for you, the government, to acquire a briefcase. It makes sense why it is impossible to construct a train line that travels anywhere. Can you picture commissioning a custom suitcase as your final email of the day

in China? The maker would have to be warned not to wake you up in the middle of the night to inform you that it was finished. Is it possible to submit the request in India? The same thing. Heaven knows the US has its share of issues, especially with the man for whom we are purchasing the briefcase.

However, if anyone believes for even a moment that it would take eight or ten days to obtain this item in the US, I would love to sell them a large order of do-me-a-favors. And don’t worry, it will be ready right away. Please excuse me for focusing on the red box; we can all agree that they are exquisitely crafted, one-of-a-kind artisanal goods, etc. However, so what? It was necessary to accom-

plish this. It is possible. It’s a unique situation that was unique, even in the case of a headcase.

Unfortunately, it isn’t the point. Overall, the UK is being left behind by nations where things don’t truly take a long time to complete since that’s just the way things are. God bless them, but the statement “The company’s history is interwoven with the history of the United Kingdom” on the website of the red box manufacturer seems inadvertently true. At this point in our country’s history, when aspirational countries are on a roller coaster, we truly need to do something—perhaps even in a slightly quicker and unusual manner! It still requires eight to ten weeks. I’m sorry, buddy. I wish I could assist, but...So let’s continue the Mandelson scandal’s seemingly never-ending death rattle. If only procedure-mining select committee hearings and email drops could lead to advancement. However, relitigating what now amounts to decreasing returns of Westminster gossip via document releases won’t save the nation, as was previously stated here in a Mandelsonian perspective.

Both Peter Mandelson and

Starmer will soon be gone. If he was indeed there at all. It is difficult to believe Starmer has ever been much involved in the most recent file release because the purported prime minister’s views and goals for his administration are so lacking. Georges Perec, a French writer, once wrote a whole book without using the letter e. If you don’t know the idea, the translation’s title, A Void, reads inexplicably unsettling; if you do, it seems even more unsettling. It is clear from reading this most recent collection of official correspondence that Starmer is the head of this administration. He’s just not there. And that is really, really strange. When Starmer took office, he declared that his administration would be mission-driven and that accelerating economic growth would be its top goal. However, it didn’t seem to have taken any time to figure out how to accomplish that goal or what that mission would actually entail.

After nearly two years, it is hard to recall a single action taken by the government that has increased growth, which is purportedly its main goal. Unfortunately, there are a lot of things it has

done that have hindered or slowed progress. Infrastructure, housing, and incentives for significant capital investment are all necessary for Britain.

It requires both governmental and private investment in innovation and technology, as well as planning reform. It requires a cogent industrial strategy that is relentlessly followed. In a world that has been dangerously reorganized, it needs enough money—ideally produced by the aforementioned—to significantly improve public services and spend much more for defense. And that’s only the beginning. But where are the practical solutions? Neither Andy Burnham nor Wes Streeting—the two Labour candidates we presently know desire to lead it—will be able to tackle the nation’s problems with any of the exceedingly flimsy solutions they have put forth thus far. Make it Manchesterism with a red briefcase? Growth, but called forth by an antiquated New Labour cargo cult? Even if they all seem like good ideas, it would likely take eight to ten weeks for them to be revealed as simply the continued lack of them.

Flls up short bets in Nifty futures amid Tuesday’s pullback, shows F&O data

Mumbai: Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) increased short positions in Nifty futures amid Tuesday’s over 300-point intra-day recovery on the NSE benchmark, shows the NSE futures & options (F&O) data.

The Nifty on Tuesday slipped to an intra-day low of 23,229 - down 154 points from the previous close. However, a sharp intra-day recovery saw the index surge up to 328 points or 1.4 per cent from the day’s low to a high of 23,557. At the end of the day, the Nifty settled with a gain of 101 points or 0.4 per cent at 23,484.

Meanwhile, the NSE F&O data shows that FIIs were net sellers of Nifty futures for the fifth straight trading day, with net sales of 7,619 contracts (Lots). With this, FIIs’ total net sales in Nifty futures now stand at 83,828 Lots in five days.

This is second to 86,541 Lots net sold in 17 consecutive trading sessions in the July 2025 series. According to the NSE data FIIs’ open interest (OI) in Nifty has increased by over 40 per cent or 60,046 Lots in the first four trading



sessions of the June series. In comparison, FIIs OI in Bank Nifty futures.

Nifty MidCap has declined by 16 per cent and 2.9 per cent, respectively, in the same period.

Data further shows that FIIs long-short ratio in overall index futures has now dipped to 0.10 as against 0.11 in the previous trading session. The long-short ratio is calculated by considering the number of open positions on the buy side as against the sell side

trade. The current ratio implies that FIIs hold around 90 per cent of OI on the short side of the tradeFor other participants such as Domestic Institutional Investors, Proprietary Traders and Retail Investors the long-short ratio stands at 1.99, 1.31 and 3.25. Retail ratio is at its highest point since October 13, 2025, shows data.Nifty Outlook TodayDhupesh Dhameja, Derivatives Research Analyst at SAMCO Securities reckons that technically,

the Nifty has managed to defend the crucial 23,300–23,250 support zone, which has repeatedly acted as a demand area over the past few weeks.

However, he believes that the Nifty is still in a cautious phase as the rebound failed to reclaim the 20-DEMA (Day Exponential Moving Average).

Dhameja sees immediate resistance for the Nifty placed around 23,740–23,860, coinciding with the 20-DEMA and previous breakdown area; above which he believes a short-covering rally can trigger a move toward the 24,000-mark.

On the downside, the analyst reiterates 23,300–23,250 as first line of defense, followed by 23,116, which marks an important swing support. He further highlights that options data suggests a likely range-bound trade in the near future.“Nifty options structure remains range-bound with significant call writing is visible around 23,500 and 24,000 strikes, highlighting overhead resistance; while put writers continue to defend the 23,300 and 23,500 strikes,” says Dhameja.

India’s MSMEs remain resilient

Mumbai: India’s micro, small and medium enterprises “remain resilient despite global geopolitical uncertainties” and the sector’s credit exposure rose to about Rs 46 lakh crore in April 2026, a report said on Tuesday.

The report from credit bureau CRIF High Mark said MSMEs’ resilience is supported by strong domestic demand, policy support, and diversified credit participation.

The overall credit exposure in the sector rose 12.8 per cent year on year, supported by asset quality gains, diversified geographic and sectoral participation.

However, early impact of global geopolitical uncertainties into domestic credit supply in certain sectors and borrower segment is evident through a slowdown in credit growth, with portfolio expansion and active loan growth moderating significantly compared to last year

Between December 2025 and April 2026, POS growth slowed to 3.1 per cent compared to 9.7 per cent in the prior year, while active loans declined by 3.5 per cent.The report highlighted that manufacturing and trade — which together account for more than 60 per cent of point of sale share — showed the first signs of stress, with manufacturing growth



moderating to 4.3 per cent from 10.4 per cent last year. Sectors such as shipping & transport, food processing, and auto & ancillaries recorded moderate POS declines amid global uncertainties.Early-stage delinquencies in manufacturing also rose slightly from 1.6 per cent to 1.8 per cent between March-April 2026. However, these movements may also reflect cyclical factors and merit ongoing observation to gauge their persistence.Lenders have adopted a more cautious approach, with credit growth slowing across PSU banks, private banks, and NBFCs, reflecting heightened risk sensitivity amid global

uncertainty.Early warning indicators are beginning to surface, including rising delinquency levels in the micro segment, manufacturing sector, PSU bank portfolios, and cash credit facilities.Working capital utilisation remains elevated, suggesting businesses are relying more heavily on existing credit lines to manage operational and supply-chain pressures. The impact remains selective rather than systemic, with portfolio quality largely stable and stress concentrated in specific sectors and borrower segments rather than across the broader MSME ecosystem, the report noted.

Rupee falls 10 paise to close at 94.95 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee depreciated 10 paise to close at 94.95 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, amid renewed geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran and surge in crude oil prices.

Forex traders said the strength of the American currency in the overseas market and Israel-Lebanon tensions also deteriorated global risk sentiments.At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 94.93 against the US dollar, then touched an intraday high of 94.73 and a low of 95.03 during the day.

At the end of Monday’s trading session, the rupee was quoted at 94.95 (provisional), down 10 paise from its previous close.On Friday, the rupee appreciated 73 paise to close at 94.85 against the US dollar on suspected interventions by the RBI.“We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on renewed geopolitical tensions and an overnight surge in crude oil prices. A strong dollar and rising US treasury yields may also weigh on the rupee,” said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset ShareKhan.Choudhary further noted that any continued peace talks may prevent a sharp fall. “USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 94.60 to 95.30,” he added.Forex traders said attention has now shifted toward the upcoming RBI Monetary Policy Committee meeting scheduled for June 3-5. The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), headed by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, will announce its decision on June 5.Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 99.04, up 0.10 per cent.Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 3.47 per cent at USD 94.28 per barrel in futures trade.On the domestic equity market front, Sensex dropped 508.40 points to settle at 74,267.34, while the Nifty was down 165.15 points to 23,382.60.Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 21,105.86 crore on a net basis on Friday, according to exchange



dataAccording to the RBI’s latest data released on Friday, India’s forex reserves dropped by USD 7.511 billion to USD 681.384 billion during the week ended May 22.In the previous week, the kitty had dropped USD 8.094 billion to USD 688.894 billion.According to government data released on Monday, gross GST collections rose 3.2 per cent to over Rs 1.94 lakh crore in May on higher supplies of goods and services, as well as collection from imports. Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump has said the US and Iran are close to a “very good deal,” but if Washington does not get what it wants, then it will “end it in a different way.”Trump said the Iranians are “good negotiators,” but argued that the United States now holds “all the cards” because Iran has been “militarily defeated.”

The Centre’s revenue surpasses Rs 2.12 lakh crore in April

Mumbai: The Government of India has received ₹2,12,679 crore, which represents 5.8 per cent of the total receipts for the corresponding BE 2026–27, for April this year. This comprises ₹1,78,492 crore of tax revenue (Net to Centre), ₹24,293 crore of non-tax revenue, and ₹9,894 crore of non-debt capital receipts on account of loan recoveries, according to a finance ministry statement issued on Monday.

The monthly review of the Centre’s accounts also shows that ₹87,779 crore has been transferred to State Governments as Devolution of Share of Taxes by the Government of India during this period. This is ₹6,044 crore higher than the previous year. Total expenditure incurred by the Government of India is ₹5,74,892 crore, which is 10.8 per cent of the corresponding BE 2026–27. Out of this, ₹3,85,151 crore is on the revenue account, and ₹1,89,831 crore is on the capital account. Of the total revenue expenditure, ₹1,09,562 crore is on account of interest payments and ₹43,633 crore is on account of major subsidies.

The subsidy outgo is set to increase in the current financial year due to the rise in the cost of petroleum products such as LPG and fertilisers because of the Middle East conflict and the choking of the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 per cent of the world’s exports of oil and gas transit during normal times.

This is expected to increase the outgo on LPG subsidy for the poor and on fertiliser subsidy, which ensures that farmers are cushioned from the global cost rise in the use of crucial inputs for growing their crops.

While the market price of LPG has shot up to ₹1,200



per cylinder globally, Ujjwala households are still being supplied gas at ₹613 per 14.2 kg cylinder, as the government is footing a subsidy of ₹587 per cylinder, a senior petroleum ministry official said.

In effect, Ujjwala households are paying only half the market price for gas, while the government is bearing the cost of the other half through a subsidy to protect them from the price rise triggered by the Iran war, he added. The price of LPG in India is also much lower than in neighbouring countries. While general households are paying ₹913 per LPG cylinder and those under the Ujjwala scheme are paying ₹613, in Sri Lanka, families have to shell out ₹1,241 per cylinder, in Nepal, ₹1,207, and in Pakistan, ₹1,046.

FIIs up short bets in Nifty F&O data indicates futures during Tuesday’s decline

Mumbai: Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) increased short positions in Nifty futures amid Tuesday’s over 300-point intra-day recovery on the NSE benchmark, shows the NSE futures & options (F&O) data.

The Nifty on Tuesday slipped to an intra-day low of 23,229 - down 154 points from the previous close. However, a sharp intra-day recovery saw the index surge up to 328 points or 1.4 per cent from the day’s low to a high of 23,557. At the end of the day, the Nifty settled with a gain of 101 points or 0.4 per cent at 23,484.

Meanwhile, the NSE F&O data shows

that FIIs were net sellers of Nifty futures for the fifth straight trading day, with net sales of 7,619 contracts (Lots). With this, FIIs’ total net sales in Nifty futures now stand at 83,828 Lots in five days. This is second to 86,541 Lots net sold in 17 consecutive trading sessions in the July 2025 series. According to the NSE data FIIs’ open interest (OI) in Nifty has increased by over 40 per cent or 60,046 Lots in the first four trading sessions of the June series. In comparison, FIIs OI in Bank Nifty futures and Nifty MidCap has declined by 16 per cent and 2.9 per cent, respectively, in the same period.

Data further shows that FIIs long-short ratio in overall index futures has now dipped to 0.10 as against 0.11 in the previous trading session. The long-short ratio is calculated by considering the number of open positions on the buy side as against the sell side trade. The current ratio implies that FIIs hold around 90 per cent of OI on the short side of the trade.

For other participants such as Domestic Institutional Investors, Proprietary Traders and Retail Investors the long-short ratio stands at 1.99, 1.31 and 3.25. Retail ratio is at its highest point since October 13, 2025, shows data.

Adani firms report record \$16 bn capex, all-time high Ebitda in FY26

Mumbai: Adani group companies reported a record capital expenditure of ₹1.53 trillion (\$ 16.1 billion) and an all-time high EBITDA of ₹94,834 crore (\$ 10 billion) in the 2025-26 fiscal year, underscoring an accelerating infrastructure expansion cycle while maintaining leverage below its stated target.The investment programme -- the largest annual capex undertaken by an Indian corporate group -- lifted the portfolio’s gross asset base to ₹7.85 trillion (\$ 82.8 billion), with nearly 80 per cent of spending directed towards energy, utilities, transport, and logistics businesses.Consolidated EBITDA rose 5.6 per cent year-on-year, according to the group’s annual results and credit compendium released on Tuesday.

Nearly 80 per cent of FY26 investments were directed toward core infrastructure businesses, including energy, utilities, transport, and logistics, underscoring the group’s continued focus on sectors linked to India’s infrastructure build-out.

The investment cycle comes as several large projects entered operations, including 5.1 GW of renewable energy capacity, battery energy storage systems, Navi Mumbai International Airport, the Guwahati terminal, the Ganga Expressway, and a copper smelter. The ports-to-energy conglomerate said these assets are expected to contribute more meaningfully to earnings and cash flows FY27 onwards.Core infrastructure businesses generated ₹82,083 crore of EBITDA during FY26, accounting for 87 per cent of portfolio

earnings. The transport segment, led by Adani Ports, recorded the strongest growth, with EBITDA rising 23.2 per cent to ₹25,228 crore. Utility businesses reported EBITDA growth of 4.6 per cent to ₹45,377 crore. Despite the sharp increase in capital spending, the group maintained net debt-to-EBITDA at 3.3 times, below its stated ceiling of 3.5 times. Cash and cash equivalents stood at ₹55,852 crore at the end of March, equivalent to 15 per cent of gross debt.

Sufficient liquidity is maintained across portfolio companies to cover debt servicing requirements for at least the next 17 months. The group’s average borrowing cost declined to 7.8 per cent in FY26 from 9 per cent two years earlier, supported by rating upgrades across operating companies. Adani said all of its assets now carry domestic credit ratings of A- or higher. Among key businesses, Adani Green Energy expanded operational renewable capacity by 5.1 GW to 19.3 GW, while Adani Ports handled a record 500.8 million metric tonnes of cargo, up 11 per cent from a year earlier.Adani Energy Solutions reported an under-construction transmission pipeline worth ₹71,779 crore and crossed 10 million smart meter installations.Adani Enterprises, the group’s incubator business, raised ₹24,930 crore through a rights issue during the fiscal year under review, while its airports portfolio handled 95.3 million passengers across eight airports.The results highlight the group’s transition



into a new investment phase after years of rapid balance-sheet expansion, with management positioning infrastructure, energy transition and logistics as the primary drivers of future growth. “FY26 marks an important inflection point for the Adani Portfolio, as group companies began its next phase capex cycle. The scale of capital deployment during the year is comparable to the asset base we had built over our first 25 years, reflecting both the infrastructure opportunity before India and the group’s confidence in its long-term growth trajectory,” according to compendium, which provided an overview of performance and insights into its credit strength and long-term resilience.

Giving operational details, it said renewable energy arm, Adani Green Energy Ltd saw operational capacity expand by 5.1 GW to 19.3 GW. It had BESS capacity of 1.38 GWh at the end of FY26, now scaled to 3.37 GWh at Khavda in Gujarat -- one of the largest single-location deployments. Electricity transmission company Adani Energy Solutions Ltd had under-construction trans-

mission pipeline of ₹71,779 crore and crossed 1 crore smart meters installation. It has an order book at 2.5 crore as against national opportunity of 10.3 crore. Adani Power is targeting a capacity of 42 GW by FY32, with 23.7 GW already locked-in vs current 18.2 GW.Adani Ports & SEZ Ltd handled 11 per cent more cargo at 500.8 million tonnes. It completed acquisition of NQXT Australia (50 million tonnes capacity) in December 2025.Ambuja Cements completed acquisition of Orient Cement, strengthening market position. Cement sales volumes rose 16.1 per cent to 73.7 million tonnes in FY26. Headquartered in Ahmedabad, the Adani Portfolio is the country’s largest and fastest-growing platform of diversified infrastructure businesses, spanning energy and utilities, transport and logistics, metals and materials, and consumer sectors. Headquartered in Ahmedabad, the Adani Portfolio is the country’s largest and fastest-growing platform of diversified infrastructure businesses, spanning energy and utilities, transport and logistics, metals and materials, and consumer sectors.

Saving global economic governance ‘Trump shock’



London: Since Donald Trump took office again in early 2025, his administration’s economic policies – in such areas as trade, energy security, climate change, financial/monetary stability and international aid – have together constituted a dramatic break with the post-war economic consensus. This report considers how other countries can best respond to this ‘Trump shock’ as well as to China’s longer-term resistance to some critical international economic norms.

The report advocates the establishment of a permanent alliance of market-oriented economies – a ‘third pole’ in the global economy. Its goal would be to preserve and improve, in the largest economic space possible, the core principles and rules of economic openness, absence of coercion and pursuit of mutual benefit. The group would be open in principle to all but would not, for the foreseeable future, include either the US or China. To be large enough to be effective, without being unwieldy, the third pole should have at its core the EU and the 12 countries of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), plus potentially some other major economies whose objectives are aligned with those of the pole, such as Brazil, South Africa and South Korea. Rules-supporting countries urgently need a practical way to sustain international economic governance without the US or China. Establishing a ‘third economic pole’ open to all, but based initially on an alliance between the EU and CPTPP, is likely to be the most effective way to achieve the required scale and substance. President Donald Trump’s second-term economic policies represent a dramatic break with the past 80 years. The US has substantially increased average tariffs on imported

goods. The administration has also withdrawn its support for key global public goods, including the net zero transition, worldwide energy security, international monetary and financial stability, and the global elimination of poverty. Trump’s policy shifts have had less immediate impact on US and global economic growth and financial market confidence than might have been expected. But the reduction in Middle East oil and gas supplies that has followed the US-Israeli attack on Iran may change this. It is in any case likely to be only a matter of time before the full suite of Trump policies substantially reduces trend growth and economic stability in the US, and possibly the wider world. Meanwhile, China has never fully accepted the core principles underpinning open international markets for goods, services and capital. Nor has it aligned its trade, industrial and exchange rate policies with these principles. China is far from the only country to behave in this way, but as the second largest national economy after the US, it has become a highly disruptive influence.

Against this background, some commentators have argued that other countries have no choice but to align themselves economically with either the US or China. Others have called for ‘variable geometry’ in which so-called middle powers form coalitions of the willing to achieve collective goals.

2 This report takes a different approach, arguing that other market-oriented economies should establish a permanent ‘third pole’³ in the global economy without the US and China. The goal would be to preserve and improve, in the largest economic space possible, the core principles and rules underpinning economic openness, absence of coercion and pursuit of mutual benefit.

These principles have served the world well since the Second World War. Over the medium term – say, five to 10 years – this approach would be more beneficial to many countries than accepting the subservient economic relationships on offer from the US and China. The establishment of a third pole, independent of the US and China, is also likely to be the most effective route to save worldwide economic and financial governance over the longer term (i.e. 10–25 years).

Establishing a third pole in the global economy will not be straightforward, however. There is no hegemonic power among the likely participants, and many countries are currently tied to the US through military alliances. But today’s direction of US and Chinese economic policies creates space for a third pole to stand for something different – and positive – in international affairs. This fact alone could enable such a concept to attract increasingly strong political support, creating the conditions for prospective members to overcome obstacles to their participation.

This report sets out a proposed political and diplomatic process for establishing a third pole in the global economy.

The author argues that the best place to start is through a non-military alliance between the EU and the 12 members of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), plus potentially some other major economies such as Brazil, South Africa and South Korea. The alliance should focus in the first instance on maintaining and developing the international trade and investment system. But its remit should be expanded as quickly as possible to cover other key areas in global economic and financial governance undermined by US and Chinese actions. Prospective members of the new grouping will need to take some calculated risks, including facing up to the possibility of retaliation from the US and China. They will also need to prioritize deployment of the political, diplomatic and technical resources required to get the initiative off the ground. Moving quickly is vital both to forestall further erosion of international economic cooperation and to provide an urgently needed counter-narrative to the positions being taken by the US and China respectively. There is no time to lose.

Ethiopia needs more than an election to calm internal and regional conflict

Gaza: Ethiopia’s election on 1 June is likely to be among the least competitive of the seven national elections held since multiparty democracy was introduced in 1991. In the period since then, elections have been staged with the aim of reinforcing the incumbent government’s power, rather than offering Ethiopians tangible plural political choices. This time the build up to the election is also being overshadowed by tensions in the Tigray and Amhara regions, closely connected to Ethiopia’s strained relations with Eritrea and Sudan, heightening fears that regional conflict could further escalate. Perfunctory polls Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is seeking an election victory that will enable his ruling Prosperity Party (PP) to reaffirm its mandate. It has also been suggested that an electoral victory could offer Abiy a route to enacting constitutional reforms that would strengthen central authority, such as creating an executive presidency and making changes to Ethiopia’s ethnic federal structure. On the surface, the numbers suggest a competitive electoral process. The National Election Board has reported more than 50 million registered voters (of a total population of around 130 million), with more than 11,000 candidates from 47 parties. But some opposition parties are reportedly aligned with the government, which is understood to be negotiating post-election power-sharing arrangements with them and is tactically not contesting some parliamentary seats. In 2021, the opposition Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice (EZEMA) and the National Movement of Amhara (NaMA) parties won four and five seats respectively and were given ministerial positions. Many challengers to the ruling PP will not contest the elections. Some are in exile, some are banned, some are imprisoned, and many may see little incentive to abandon their armed struggle against the government. This severely constrained political landscape and election process at best resembles an elite bargain.

Lacking a genuine choice, citizens find themselves trapped between apathy, the ballot and the bullet. The Fano armed group in the Amhara region have warned that they consid-

er anyone participating in the elections as an enemy of the Amhara people. In Oromia, the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) has increased its attacks since federal forces were deployed towards Tigray in the north in February. The polls will not take place in Tigray, which is still recovering from the devastating 2020-2022 war, with tensions between the federal government and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) reaching boiling point again. In Tigray, the 2022 Pretoria Agreement between the government and the TPLF has unravelled in recent weeks. The TPLF has moved to restore its regional authority by reconstituting the pre-war legislative council, subsequently electing party chairman Debretsiion Gebremichael as regional president. This followed the federal government unilaterally renewing the term of the interim regional administration president General Tadesse Worede, a retired Ethiopian general and chief of the Tigray Defense Forces (formed to fight federal forces during the 2020-2022 war), who was seen as a compromise candidate. The TPLF had also been barred from participating in the general election. Despite both the government and TPLF not favouring a return to war, the risks of renewed conflict are significant. The TPLF’s unilateral assertion of regional authority leaves little room for the federal government to back down without appearing weak. Yet Abiy may not want to rush an armed response before the election, and severe fuel shortages resulting from the Iran war do not favour another drawn-out military campaign.

Amid a decline in relations since the Pretoria Agreement was signed, the government appears to have attempted to undermine the TPLF’s dominance in Tigray with a dual strategy. Alongside squeezing Tigray economically, it has attempted to delegitimize the TPLF by tacitly supporting other Tigrayan opposition, including Abiy’s current advisor Getachew Reda’s Simret party, which is seeking to build a broader coalition.



AI water usage requires governments to rethink their approach to water

America: Recent months have seen a growing backlash against AI technologies as they develop and are deployed at scale. Water use in data centres and the stress that use is putting on local water resources has been part of this backlash. A recent survey found that most Americans would rather have a nuclear power plant in their area than a data centre. Globally, communities are now facing competition over their water from AI-driven data centre operations. Many of these communities were already feeling the effects of longstanding water management challenges exacerbated by climate impacts. As countries including the UK embrace the rapid build out of AI infrastructure, governments and companies must ensure that water use is managed sustainably and transparently or risk further backlash against AI on a wider scale. The connections between AI and water are wide-ranging, spanning from local impacts that are intertwined with national politics through to geopolitical risks related to water use in global supply chains.

Most visibly at the local level, technology companies that are building and operating large-scale digital infrastructure platforms are facing scrutiny on how they use water, especially in some of the world’s driest areas. Data centre water use is closely connected to the enormous electricity consumption required for computation. That energy use generates heat that must be dissipated, and evaporative water cooling systems are currently a common way to do that. Despite major water use efficiency improvements and more waterless innovations being deployed in data centres, AI’s rapid growth means that data centres are still becoming a fast-growing driver of water demand. In the UK, although data centres currently account for a very small proportion of water demand, there are reported plans to build around 100 new centres by the early 2030s. These are expected to become a significant new source of demand. The UK government has positioned AI as central to its growth plans, pledging £68 billion in investment since January 2025 and designating five AI Growth Zones. This embrace of AI implies an assessment that water allocated to grow the digital economy will, over time, lead to a higher tax revenue and stronger growth. The government is also planning to build the first new reservoirs in 30 years to keep up with increased demand. But despite these well-meaning plans, there are still concerns over water: 84 per cent of proposed UK data centres are planned in areas that are projected to be water stressed by 2040. How much water is used for AI, and the extent to which water for AI should be prioritized over uses in other sectors, is a complicated issue and subject to debate. AI is evolving rapidly; it is difficult to quantify exactly how much water



it consumes for different purposes, such as using a chatbot or processing a prompt. Simply quantifying water in data centres and then comparing that figure to water use in another sector, such as agriculture, fails to capture the full scope of the footprint. Local considerations on AI water use are also connected to geopolitical risks and impacts further down the supply chain. Governments should take these into account when calculating the impact of AI water use. A data centre might look like an isolated piece of industrial infrastructure in a local community, but the servers inside it connect it to global mining and manufacturing supply chains. These servers rely on complex components such as high-powered semiconductor chips, which are tied to global supply chains that have their own intense water impacts. Taiwan produces over 90 per cent of the world’s advanced semiconductors. Semiconductor manufacturing is water-intensive, due to the high consumption of ultra-pure water (UPW) required to maintain extreme purity levels in manufacturing processes.

But Taiwan’s hydrological balance relies on seasonal typhoons to replenish groundwater, and climate change has made typhoons less predictable, increasing the risk of drought. This water-based risk is compounded by other geopolitical risks such as shifting tariff policies and the potential of military conflict with China, leaving the global supply chain vulnerable to shocks that should be factored into water-related strategic decision making.

Armenia’s election: Voters to decide on Pashinyan’s peace agenda

America: On 7 June Armenia will hold one of its most pivotal elections since regaining independence in 1991. The vote arrives as the country is poised between a painful redefinition of its identity and a still uncertain horizon of opportunity. In 2023 Armenia definitively lost the territory of Mountainous Karabakh to Azerbaijan. The struggle to control the region was a driving force of Armenia’s 1990s national independence movement, and its loss deprived Armenian nationalism of a key foundation. Yet the loss of Karabakh has also loosened Russian control over Armenian foreign policy, demonstrating Moscow’s declining power in the South Caucasus and the limits of its patronage. Under the banner of a ‘Real Armenia’ – rather than one with ambitions for wider borders – incumbent Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his Civil Contract party are campaigning for a final peace accord with Azerbaijan. They hope to end four decades of conflict with a final renunciation of territorial claims and Armenia’s integration into regional connectivity. Pashinyan has also recalibrated Armenia’s foreign policy with a widely discussed ‘pivot’ to the West – a move which has led to warnings of a ‘Ukraine scenario’ from Russian President Vladimir Putin. The opposition to Pashinyan includes blocs seeking to rehabilitate ties with Russia, and smaller parties with little chance of passing the threshold to enter parliament. Polls put Civil Contract ahead of its nearest rival, the ‘Strong Armenia’ bloc led by Russian-Armenian billionaire Samvel Karapetyan, with a plurality of voters onside. Many voters remain undecided. But in a mid-



Moscow is the only way to prevent further calamity. Much has been made of Armenia’s ‘pivot’ to the West. Indeed, many recent outcomes would have been unimaginable a few years ago, when the country was often perceived as a submissive Russian client.

Even if ‘Real Armenia’ is accepted as a geopolitical reality, how it is going to deal with displaced Armenians and the legacy of Karabakh remains an open question – one that must ultimately be decided by Armenians themselves. A public endorsement of peace

At a White House summit in August 2025 the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers initialled – but did not sign – a peace agreement in the presence of President Donald Trump. There have been no military fatalities since February 2024, and Azerbaijan and Turkey have both taken steps towards dismantling their long-standing blockade of Armenia. Armenia’s geopolitics unfortunately work against a measured discussion of its democracy. The 2018 ‘Velvet Revolution’ that swept Pashinyan to power consciously defined itself as a purely domestic affair, leaving Armenia’s alliance with Russia intact. But the final loss of Karabakh in 2023 released Pashinyan from the need to uphold this alignment. At the same time, it solidified the opposition’s belief that rapprochement with

Moscow is the only way to prevent further calamity. Much has been made of Armenia’s ‘pivot’ to the West. Indeed, many recent outcomes would have been unimaginable a few years ago, when the country was often perceived as a submissive Russian client.

This unprecedented progress remains provisional. Signing the agreement depends on Armenia’s adoption – at Azerbaijan’s insistence – of a new constitution with all references to Mountainous Karabakh removed. Adopting a new constitution will require a separate referendum after the election. That makes this election effectively a preliminary referendum on the terms Pashinyan has negotiated and the trajectory he plans for Armenia. Armenians certainly sense the improvement in security after a decade of near-continuous frontline violence, including defeat to Azerbaijan in 2020’s war, an Azerbaijani offensive on Armenia’s territory in September 2022, and Baku’s military incorporation of Karabakh in September 2023. The need to come to lasting terms with Baku is widely recognized. But the loss of Karabakh has left severe fractures in Armenia’s body politic. These have surfaced during the campaign in unfortunate and ominous ways.

Pashinyan has had a series of vitriolic encounters on the campaign trail with citizens challenging his peace narrative. And a video of masked men threatening violence against him has circulated online. Such threats are not taken lightly in a country that has witnessed repeated political violence, including the assassination of an entire tier of leadership in 1999’s parliament shooting. Meanwhile, many in civil society are uncomfortable with what they see as an attempt by the government to enforce amnesia about the loss of Mountainous Karabakh and the mass displacement of its population. Indeed, some claim that government rhetoric spills into hate speech towards former Karabakh Armenians. Pashinyan and his supporters, however, see such claims as masking resistance to the terms of the peace with Azerbaijan. This febrile atmosphere adds to accumulating worries over Armenia’s democratic trajectory, as polarization shapes an ‘all or nothing’ attitude to political allegiance. The tone of exchanges between the prime minister and a growing number of constituencies – parts of the opposition, the Armenian Apostolic Church and Karabakh Armenians – is fuelling concerns about the direction of Armenia’s political culture.

lifting weights actually help you live longer



Doing 90 minutes to two hours of weight training per week can greatly reduce the risk of an early death, according to new research.WWDData gathered from decades-long studies suggested that carrying out regular resistance or weight training over an extended period can significantly lower the chance of death from heart disease and stroke.The benefits also included reducing the risk of death from neurological disease

Experts said it was further evidence that strength-based training can help prevent or delay poor health and could ease pressure on overstretched health services.Kate Hogarth is only 28, but is already thinking about staying healthy later in life. She enjoys weight training and the confidence boost she feels it gives her now, but she also recognises the long term health benefits from it.“I want to be independent later in life.

“There’s so many studies out there which show all of the benefits from strength training, for your cardiovascular health, your muscles, your bones, your mental health.“I want to be able to be travelling the world when I’m in my 70s, 80s, 90s and I want to be able to pick up my grandkids and play with them, and having that level of independence is really important.” Doing 90 minutes to two hours of weight training per week can greatly reduce the risk of an early death, according to new researchData gathered from decades-long studies suggested that carrying out regular resistance or weight training over an extended period can significantly lower the chance of death from heart disease and stroke.

The benefits also included reducing the risk of death from neurological disease. Experts said it was further evidence that strength-based training can help prevent or delay poor health and could ease pressure on overstretched health services.Kate

Hogarth is only 28, but is already thinking about staying healthy later in life. She enjoys weight training and the confidence boost she feels it gives her now, but she also recognises the long term health benefits from it.“I want to be independent later in life

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Kangana Ranaut appears as if she has stepped directly from a royal painting

Actor and politician Kangana Ranaut consistently seizes every opportunity to showcase her fashion sense. Whether she is participating in a parliamentary session or promoting a film, style is always a priority. Her most recent appearance was no exception. At the trailer launch of her forthcoming film Bharat Bhagya Vidhata, the 40-year-old captivated onlookers in a breathtaking handwoven Kanjeevaram silk saree designed by renowned textile revivalist Gaurang Shah. Let us analyze her outfit and gather some fashion insights.

Kangana Ranaut stuns in handwoven Kanjeevaram saree

Kangana took to Instagram and shared a carousel of stunning pictures, looking every bit like royalty. She draped a stunning ivory handwoven Kanjeevaram silk saree featuring delicate floral motifs scattered across the body. The

highlight of the ensemble was the rich magenta-purple border adorned with intricate gold zari work, adding a regal contrast to the soft ivory base. Complementing the saree was a matching half-sleeved silk blouse in a vibrant jewel-toned purple, embellished with traditional gold butis and an ornate zari border at the sleeves. The combination of ivory, purple and gold created a striking yet elegant palette that perfectly balanced sophistication with grandeur.

How she styled her look

Kangana kept her accessories rooted in tradition, opting for an exquisite kundan and emerald jewellery set. A layered choker necklace, matching statement earrings, delicate bracelets and rings added just the right amount of sparkle without overpowering the look. Her beauty game was equally on point. She chose a radiant, dewy base, softly kohled eyes, fluttery lashes and nude lips that allowed



the saree to remain the focal point. A tiny bindi added a touch of classic Indian elegance, while her hair, styled in a half-updo and adorned with fresh white flowers, brought a graceful, almost vintage feel to the look.

About Kangana Ranaut

Kangana Ranaut is an Indian actor, filmmaker and politician who has been serving as the Member of Parliament from Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, since June 2024. Over the course of her career, she has earned widespread acclaim, winning four Na-

tional Film Awards and four Filmfare Awards. She has also featured multiple times on Forbes India’s Celebrity 100 list. In recognition of her contributions to Indian cinema, she was awarded the Padma Shri, India’s fourth-highest civilian honour, in 2020.

Can excessive protein consumption be detrimental

Protein has been widely recognized for its importance in muscle development, aiding metabolism, and promoting prolonged satiety. Consequently, high-protein diets have gained significant popularity, with numerous individuals seeking methods to enhance their daily consumption. However, is it possible to consume an excessive amount of something beneficial? The New York Times highlights that while protein is an essential nutrient, consuming more than the body needs may carry certain health risks. The report outlined five potential concerns linked to excessive protein intake. A 2025 survey of 3,000 US adults found that 71% were trying to eat more protein, up from 59% in 2022. While protein is an essential nutrient, experts say that more is not always better. Bettina Mittendorf,

professor of nutrition and exercise physiology at the University of Missouri School of Medicine, told The New York Times that consuming significantly more protein than recommended may come with certain health risks. She noted that potential concerns can arise when people regularly consume well above 1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day. 1. Increased risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes

Much of the protein consumed in the United States comes from animal-based foods. According to a 2021 study by researchers from the US Department of Agriculture, animal foods such as beef, chicken and cured meats account for nearly 70% of people’s protein intake. Donald Hensrud, associate professor of nutrition and preventive medicine at

the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine, told The New York Times that diets high in red and processed meat have been linked to a greater risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. Research published in 2023 found that eating an additional 100 grams of red meat daily was linked to an 11% higher risk of heart disease, while an extra 50 grams of processed red meat per day was associated with a 26% higher risk. Another large study found that people with the highest red meat intake had a significantly greater risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. According to Dr Hensrud, saturated fats in red and processed meats can increase LDL, or “bad” cholesterol, while also contributing to inflammation and insulin resistance. 2. Greater risk of certain cancers

High consumption of red and processed meats has also

been linked to certain cancers, particularly colorectal cancer. A 2024 study reported that diets rich in red meat were associated with a 30% higher risk of colorectal cancer, while processed meat consumption was linked to a 40% increase in risk. Darius Mozaffarian, cardiologist and director of the Food Is Medicine Institute at Tufts University, recommends prioritising healthier protein sources such as beans, lentils, soy foods, nuts, fish and yoghurt. 3. Constipation and digestive issues

Marc O’Meara, a nutritionist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, told The New York Times that people trying to increase protein intake often reduce their consumption of fibre-rich foods such as vegetables and whole grains, especially when following low-carbohydrate diets. Fibre plays a key role

in maintaining healthy digestion, supporting the gut microbiome and promoting regular bowel movements. Inadequate fibre intake may contribute to constipation, bloating and other digestive complaints. O’Meara recommended aiming for balanced meals that include vegetables, whole grains and protein rather than focusing heavily on protein alone.

4. Weight gain

Although protein can support weight management, eating more than the body requires can still contribute to weight gain. According to Dr Mozaffarian, excess calories from protein are ultimately stored as fat if they are not used for energy. Larger portions of protein-rich foods can also significantly increase calorie intake compared to vegetables and other nutrient-dense foods.

A blow-dry brush ultimate solution for overcoming a bad hair day



Do you frequently find yourself dedicating more time to your hair in front of the mirror than to assembling your complete outfit? You may be overlooking the benefits of a blow-dry brush. These 2 or 3-in-1 blow-dry brushes merge the capabilities of a hair dryer and a styling brush into one device. They streamline and accelerate the hair styling process, enabling you to dry, detangle, smooth, and style your hair using just one hand, thus enhancing convenience and

efficiency. Another major benefit of a blow-dry brush is that it can create a variety of hairstyles, including smooth straight looks, soft waves, and voluminous blowouts, all without the hefty price tag.

Difference between a multi-styler and a blow-dry brush

7 blow-dry brushes

To help you pick the right multi-tasking blow-dry brushes, here’s a curated list of options from Amazon India’s top-rated picks.

1. Winston 2-in-1 Hair Styling Blow Brush for

Women - 1200 Watts: The Winston 2-in-1 Hair Styling Blow Brush helps you dry and style your hair at the same time, making your routine faster and easier. Customers often like how it adds volume, smooths frizz, and creates a salon-style blowout at home. The lightweight design is easy to handle, even for beginners. Many users find it suitable for daily styling and quick touch-ups. It works best on damp hair and helps achieve soft, shiny, naturally styled results without needing mul-

iple hair tools.

2. PROTOUCH Born To Shine 2-in-1 Styling Blow Brush | Hair Dryer & Volumizer Brush | Straightens, Smooths & Adds Shine: PROTOUCH Born To Shine is designed for people who want smooth, shiny hair with less effort. Customers appreciate its ability to dry and style hair together, saving time during busy mornings.

The oval brush helps create volume at the roots while reducing frizz. Many reviewers mention that it leaves hair looking soft, polished, and manageable. The brush is easy to use, making it suitable for both beginners and regular users who want a salon-like finish from the comfort of home.

3. Urban yog MakeMee-Bold 3-in-1 Hot Air Brush| 1.5-inch Barrel: The Urban Yog MakeMeeBold 3-in-1 Hot Air Brush combines drying, volumising, and styling in one convenient tool. Customers often praise its versatility and value for money. Many users like how it helps create smooth hair, natural volume, and soft curls without using multiple devices.

The ergonomic design makes styling comfortable, while adjustable heat settings suit different hair types. Reviewers frequently mention that it is a great choice for everyday styl-

ing and delivers quick, salon-inspired results at home.

4. Bombae Hairess Ionic 3-In-1 Hot Air Brush Dryer, Curl, Volumizer & Straightener|Hair Dryer For Woman|Blow Dryer For Women: Bombae Hairess Ionic 3-In-1 Hot Air Brush is designed to simplify hairstyling while helping reduce frizz. Customers appreciate its ionic technology, which helps hair look smoother and shinier after styling. The multiple styling functions allow users to dry, volumise, and shape their hair with a single tool. Many find it easy to use and effective for creating soft blowouts at home. Its user-friendly design and versatile attachments make it a popular option for people looking for effortless everyday styling.

5. MakeMeeBold 3-in-1 Hot Air Brush | Hair Dryer, Straightener & Volumizer | 1.5-Inch Barrel: The MakeMeeBold 3-in-1 Hot Air Brush is loved for its ability to dry, straighten, and add volume using one styling tool. Users often mention that it saves time and reduces the need for multiple hair appliances. The brush helps smooth hair, tame frizz, and create a naturally polished look. Customers also appreciate its comfortable grip and simple controls. Whether you’re preparing for work

or a special occasion, it offers an easy way to achieve neat, well-styled hair at home.

6. AGARO HV2179 Professional Volumizer Hair Dryer: AGARO HV2179 Hot Air Brush is a practical styling tool designed for everyday use. Customers often like its ease of handling and ability to create volume while drying hair. The brush helps smooth strands and reduce styling time, making it convenient

for busy schedules. Many users find it suitable for achieving soft, natural-looking hairstyles without excessive effort. Its multiple heat settings allow flexibility for different hair textures, making it a reliable option for regular home styling.

7. AGARO HV2179 Professional Volumizer Hair Dryer: The Caresmith Bloom 2-in-1 Hair Volumizer Brush helps users create fuller-looking,

smoother hair with less effort. Customers appreciate its ability to dry and style simultaneously, reducing the time spent getting ready.

The brush is designed to add lift at the roots while leaving hair soft and manageable. Many users enjoy the salon-like blowout effect and find it easy to use even if they are new to styling tools. It is a convenient choice for everyday styling and quick hair refreshes.



Parineeti Chopra cherishes May moments with baby neer: ‘it’s the little things’

Mumbai: Bollywood actress and new mommy Parineeti Chopra took to a social media account on Wednesday morning to offer adorable sneak peak into her life in the month of May.

She shared a series of pictures that captured ‘little moments’ from the month of May that made it all special for her. The carousel post shared by Parineeti on her social media account reflected a lot of self-care moments, homemade treats, rainy day views and her baby boy Neer’s toys. Taking to her social media account, Parineeti captioned it as, “It’s the little things that made May,” followed by house and blue heart emoticon.

The first picture shows the actress posing elegantly in an off-shoulder white outfit. Another picture features a delicious mango



dessert topped with cream and white chocolate shreds. Another picture captures a

beautiful long area drenched in rain. Another click offers a glimpse of a red bunny-shaped toy resting on a Mickey Mouse-themed play mat. Talking about Parineeti Chopra, the actress post her sabbatical from work after embracing motherhood, has been seen returning to work.

For the uninitiated, Parineeti launched her own chat show, ‘Mom Talks With Parineeti Chopra’, where she invites celebrity parents to discuss their parenthood journeys and challenges. On the personal front, Parineeti and husband politician Raghav Chadha welcomed their first child, a baby boy, on October 19, 2025. Announcing his arrival on social media, the couple, in a joint post, had written, “He’s finally here, our baby boy. And we literally can’t remember life before!

Arms full, our hearts are fuller! First we had each other, now we have everything... With gratitude, Parineeti & Raghav.”

A month later, the couple revealed their son’s name as Neer.

For the uninitiated, Parineeti and Raghav tied the knot in a grand ceremony in Udaipur on September 24, 2023. Professionally, the actress was last seen in ‘Amar Singh Chamkila.’

Vicky Kaushal opens up on first day back at work after Vihaan’s birth: ‘my heart sank’



Mumbai: Actor Vicky Kaushal has opened up about how he is embracing fatherhood. Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal welcomed their first child, a baby boy named Vihaan Kaushal, on November 7, 2025. Now, as their son is growing older, Vicky opened up about the realisations that have hit him, especially the things that his parents were right about when he was growing up.

In a chat with The Nod Mag, Vicky mentioned that he now appreciates his mother and father’s parenting a

lot more. “When I look at my upbringing in retrospect,” Vicky said, “I understand so many things that they were right about. We weren’t financially flying. So, there was that pressure. But they had the responsibility of instilling the right values in me.” “It occurs to me at the most random moments that that [instilling the right values] is now my responsibility towards my son,” he added, “He is going to learn by observing how his parents are thinking, talking, and behaving. So, I’ve realised whatever you want to see reflected in him has to come in your actions rather than words.”

Vicky Kaushal took six weeks off work when Vihaan was born, and when he had to leave his son for four days for a shoot 230 kms away, it had a great impact on the actor. “My heart sank. It was hard,” he said. “There are so many new feelings that surface almost on a daily basis, because being a parent is new to me. I understand now when others would say ‘Yaar, bacha kitna jaldi bada ho raha hai’. And I would think, ‘What are you talking about? Your child is still a year old.’ Now I get it,” the actor mentioned. Meanwhile, on the work front, Vicky Kaushal was last seen in Laxman Utekar’s Chhaava, co-starring Rashmika Mandanna. He is currently shooting for Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s Love and War, which will reunite him with Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor.

Triptii Dimri responds to animal criticism, stands firm on her choices



Mumbai: Since its theatrical release in December 2023, Sandeep Reddy Vanga’s Animal has remained a major topic of conversation, one of the reasons also being the characters that defined its story. Among these was Triptii Dimri, whose role alongside Ranbir Kapoor drew attention and sparked intense public debate. She has now addressed the criticism and trolling she faced after the film’s success.

In a recent interview with India Today, Triptii

admitted that while she tries to maintain a stoic facade, the backlash on social media can be difficult to go through. She shared, “It is difficult. I try to put on a strong face sometimes and be like, ‘No, it doesn’t affect me. I don’t get affected, or I am going to push it under the rug’. But it doesn’t work that way, it does somewhere, pinch you.” Despite the negativity, Triptii remains unapologetic about her involvement in the project. She shared that participating in Animal was a deliberate, personal decision she feels confident about. She said, “It is a film that I did, and I am proud of it. There is nothing about that film that I am not proud of. It is a choice that I made for myself, and I was comfortable with. And I think I am proud of every film that I have done, whether it is Bulbbul or whether it is Qala.” Triptii also expressed her frustration about the double standards often applied to women in the industry, mentioning that they are frequently subjected to harsher judgment than their male counterparts. She added, “It is not fair, I feel. We are very quick to judge. And only the girl.”

Don 3 row settled: FWICE withdraws non-cooperation against Ranveer Singh

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh has received relief after the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) decided to take back its non-cooperation movement against him. The development comes shortly after the actor reportedly sent a legal notice to the film workers’ body, making the issue one of the biggest talking points in the industry.

The earlier directive had raised questions about future collaborations involving Ranveer Singh and ongoing projects linked to the actor. With FWICE now moving towards withdrawing its stand, industry workers will be free to work with Ranveer Singh’s upcoming projects. According to the latest development, FWICE has decided to revoke its earlier non-cooperation move following discussions with other producer bodies and



senior members of the film industry.

The latest development comes amid the ongoing Don 3 controversy, which has kept the actor in the headlines. The change in stance follows reports that Ranveer Singh had sent a legal notice to FWICE on Tuesday. The legal notice reportedly challenged the non-cooperation directive issued by the organisation last month. However, details of the legal communication have not been made public. As of now, FWICE has not issued

a separate statement responding to the reported legal notice. The organisation has also extended an appeal to the actor as efforts continue to resolve the matter.

Taking non-cooperative movement against Ranveer Singh back, FWICE said that it is in discussion with other producer bodies. They are making an appeal to Ranveer Singh, with due respect to him, that he should help finding a solution to the Don 3 row. The Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE)

issued the non-cooperation directive on May 25 following complaints linked to Don 3. Reports claimed the producers suffered heavy losses after Ranveer Singh allegedly walked away from the project during pre-production. The move has now sparked concern across the Hindi film industry because FWICE represents multiple workers’ unions connected to film shoots, including technicians, spot staff, make-up artists, lighting teams and costume workers.

The actor’s projects, including Aditya Dhar’s Chandragupta Maurya and the zombie thriller Pralay, had reportedly been caught in the fallout of FWICE’s non-cooperation directive. With the film body now taking back its earlier stand, the road has been cleared for Ranveer Singh to resume work and continue shooting his upcoming films.

Priyanka Chopra honors marilyn monroe’s 100th with ‘heavenly birthday’ tribute

Mumbai: Global icon Priyanka Chopra took to her social media account on the 2nd of June to pay a heartfelt tribute to Hollywood icon Marilyn Monroe on account of her 100th birth anniversary.

Priyanka posted a picture of the icon and revealed that she would have been ‘hundred years old today.’ Marilyn Monroe, in the picture shared by Priyanka, was seen dressed in a beautiful red dress. Sharing the post on her social media account, Priyanka Chopra wrote, “Happy heavenly birthday, Marilyn

Monroe. She would have been 100 today,” followed by many red heart emoticons.

Talking about Marilyn Monroe, she is regarded as one of the most celebrated figures in the history of Western cinema. Talking about Priyanka Chopra Jonas on the professional front, the actress is currently busy with the shooting of her upcoming movie, ‘Varanasi’ which has been directed by SS Rajamouli.

The movie along with Priyanka Chopra also stars Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Suv



kumaran in important roles. For the uninitiated, Priyanka Chopra had won the Miss World 2000 title and went on to build a career in Bollywood.

She made her acting debut in the movie, ‘The Hero, Love Story of a Spy.’ Priyanka who has been apart of the

Hindi cinema for over two decades, has delivered many superhit movies such as ‘Aitraaz’, ‘Fashion’, ‘Kaminey’, ‘Barfi’, ‘Mary Kom’, ‘Bajirao Mastani’, ‘Don’, etc. The actress has also built a successful career in Hollywood with projects including ‘Quantico’, ‘Citadel’, ‘The Matrix Resurrections’, ‘Baywatch’, and others. On the personal front, Priyanka Chopra is married to pop icon Nick Jonas. The couple together are parents to a daughter, Malti Marie whom they welcomed in 2022 via surrogacy.

Divyenndu reveals Ram Charan predicted his Munna Bhaiya craze in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: Thanks to the hugely popular web series Mirzapur, actor Divyenndu enjoys a strong fan following even in the Telugu States. The actor recently opened up about the overwhelming affection he received from audiences in Hyderabad while shooting for his Telugu debut, Peddi.

Divyenndu revealed that Ram Charan had earlier told him about the immense popularity of his iconic Mirzapur character, Munna Bhaiya, among Telugu audiences. Initially, the actor admitted that he did not fully understand the scale of that admiration. However, a memorable shooting experience soon changed his perspective. During the filming of a large-scale cricket sequence involving a massive crowd, Divyenndu experienced the excitement firsthand. The moment fans spotted him on set, they greeted him with enthusiasm and warmth.

According to the actor, the genuine appreciation from the audience made him realise that Ram Charan’s words were absolutely true. Many fans approached him to express how much they en



joyed his performances, especially in Mirzapur. Others spoke about their admiration for his acting style and screen presence. Divyenndu described the experience as both humbling and encouraging, adding that such heartfelt reactions give actors confidence and motivation. The appreciation comes at a time when the actor is enjoying a remarkable phase in his career. Audiences have

also been praising his performance in Glory, the recently released high-stakes sports crime thriller.

At several promotional events for Peddi, Divyenndu has spoken passionately about the film and director Buchi Babu Sana’s storytelling. He revealed that the narration moved him deeply because of the emotional layers and nuances embedded in the script. The

actor shared that he initially expected a conventional large-scale commercial entertainer but was surprised to discover a film filled with emotion, honesty, and soul. He has also described Peddi as one of the biggest and most special projects of recent years. In the film, Divyenndu plays Rambhujji, a character who locks horns with Ram Charan’s protagonist in the June 4 release.

Robert Pattinson denies batman gym rumors

London: Hollywood star Robert Pattinson has hit back at critics who claimed he did not work out for his role as the Caped Crusader in “The Batman”, saying he trained twice a day and even in the early hours of the morning. The British actor, who is set to reprise the role of Bruce Wayne aka The Batman in filmmaker Matt Reeves’ “The Batman: Part II”, told GQ magazine that the perception of him skipping the gym stemmed from a quip he made in an earlier interview.

“I worked out every f***ing day. Even after that, I still look like I didn’t work out. I worked out twice a day at, like, three o’clock in the morning. It’s just because I said it in an interview (that exercise was uncool). I was trying to sound cool,” Pattinson said. The 40-year-old actor said he has since set up a home gym at his Beverly Hills residence to prepare for the upcoming sequel. Pattinson, however, admitted he was yet to receive an official filming schedule, saying he only learned about the shoot’s demands through his stunt coordinator.

June 2026 box office clash: six major releases test film industry dynamics



Mumbai: June 2026 is one of the busiest months for Indian cinema, with at least six major theatrical releases from Bollywood and the South film industries. While a packed release calendar reflects confidence among producers and exhibitors, one must not forget that many big films arriving in a short span can also create challenges for the business. Wondering how? Let’s find out.

One of the first films which will arrive in theatres in June is Ram Charan and Janhvi Kapoor’s Peddi. A day later, Bobby Deol and Saba Azad’s action drama Bandar will hit theatres on June 5. This will be followed by Varun Dhawan’s Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai, which will be released on June 12. It will clash at the box office with Imtiaz Ali’s Main Vaapas Aaunga, starring Sharvari, Vedang Raina, Diljit Dosanjh and Naseeruddin Shah. Interestingly, Emily Blunt’s Disclosure Day will also be released on the same day. Starring Shahid Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna and Kriti Sanon, Cocktail 2 will then arrive in theatres on June 19. The month will end with Akshay Kumar’s Welcome To The Jungle, scheduled for

release in theatres on June 26.

One of the biggest concerns during a crowded release month is screen allocation. As reported by The Statesman, India has roughly 9,500 active multiplex and single-screen cinema halls. Therefore, multiple releases in a short span force exhibitors to divide showcasing among competing films. A film that performs below expectations during its opening weekend can quickly lose screens to a newer release arriving the following week. As a result, even star-led projects face immense pressure

to deliver strong opening numbers. When multiple high-profile films are released within weeks of each other, fans become more selective about where they spend their money. This often leads audiences to prioritise films which receive a strong word of mouth while waiting for others to arrive on streaming platforms. Films targeting similar audiences can end up hurting each other’s collections because viewers are forced to choose between them. This is generally called box-office cannibalisation.

USA enter FIFA World Cup 2026 rife with expectation and opportunity; how hosts deal with the big boys will define them

It isn't often that the USA enters football matches with too much pressure of expectation. By virtue of being overshadowed by other sports on American soil, the US always tend to have the narrative of the plucky underdog trying to make things happen with a small core of quality players. But things are different when you are the hosts for a FIFA World Cup – with all eyes on the US and their two continental neighbours this summer, there is certainly pressure to deliver in 2026. Part of it is the fact that they are helmed by a superstar coach in Mauricio Pochettino.

He might have had less-than-sparkling tenures with PSG and Chelsea leading into his appointment as head coach for the USMNT, but there is a reason why he is considered by top European clubs even to this day: a versatile thinker with a desire to play confident, flowing football, Pochettino brings pedigree to the US backroom that they have not had in many a year.

Second is the fact that this feels like a continuation of a successful American team in Qatar in the 2022 edition: that team was young, raw, talented, but not quite ready to challenge the big boys in international football. Four years on, the members of that team continue to be the backbone of the squad for the home WC, and with that bring a little bit of edge. The boon and the



bane for the US is that there is a general disgruntlement around the World Cup on home patch. Exorbitant ticket pricing means that fans are being shut out of attending games, taking away a key element of hosting a World Cup. Equally, this gives the Americans something to prove – this is the generation that is meant to give USA football that step up to the next rung, and with that worth fighting for, there is a strong sense of what this team needs to achieve.

Pochettino has settled on a system which uses three centre-backs, freeing up rapid full-backs Antonee Robinson and Sergino Dest to provide the width while Weston McKennie and Tyler Adams provide a real engine

ably have to get past. Granted a straightforward group, USMNT will expect to make the round of 32 with ease: from there, it's knockout football, but anything short of a round of 16 will likely be perceived as an underperformance. While they wait to hear back regarding a couple of injury worries within the team – notably centre-back Chris Richards – the other big question for USMNT is how they can find goals regularly at the World Cup. The system is designed to have solidity at the back and make up for the width using wing-back options – but this can often dry up quality through the centre of the pitch.

In names like Brandon Aaronson, Balogun, Weah, and Tillman, the creative spark is there, but Pochettino will have to be daring in his use of those names. But the burden will lie with Pulisic, entering his maturity at 27 years old, and aware that this is going to be the time when he finds himself at the peak of his powers to try and prise apart defences like he has done often enough throughout his career.

The USMNT has the personnel to make themselves a loud entity at FIFA World Cup 2026, and they have to coaching too – but the question regarding whether or not they can make that click will decide whether the class of 2026 can set a new home standard on home turf, or if they will be forgotten in oblivion very quickly.

Lionel Messi trains alone as Argentina begin World Cup preparation, hamstring score keeps champions cautious

Lionel Messi trained separately from the main Argentina group during the defending champions' first World Cup practice session in the United States, keeping his fitness under the spotlight less than two weeks before their tournament opener. As per Reuters, Messi worked on "specific exercises" at Argentina's base camp in Kansas City, where Lionel Scaloni's squad began their pre-tournament preparations on Monday. The 38-year-old Inter Miami captain has been managing muscle fatigue in his left hamstring since May 24, but he is still expected to be available for Argentina's World Cup opener against Algeria on June 16. The concern around Lionel Messi began during Inter Miami's 6-4 Major League Soccer win over Philadelphia Union, when he left the field in the 73rd minute after grabbing the back of his thigh following a free kick. The sight immediately raised concern because of the timing, with Argentina only weeks away from beginning their World Cup



title defence. Inter Miami later confirmed the nature of the problem, saying, "After undergoing further medical tests this Monday, the initial diagnosis indicates an overload associated with muscle fatigue in his left hamstring."

The club also added, "The timeline for his return to physical activity will depend on his clinical and functional progress."

Argentina have so far avoided panic around Messi's condition. The national team's latest update suggested that he is not the only player on a controlled programme and that the medical staff are managing minor issues inside the squad. "The players who are suffering from niggles and injuries continue to

work with the physiotherapy team on specific exercises on the pitch and are making good progress," Argentina's Football Association said. Messi's separate training does not currently appear to be a major setback, but Argentina's caution is understandable. At 38, he remains the emotional and technical centre of the side that won the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. He is also preparing for what could be his sixth World Cup appearance, an extraordinary late-career milestone for a player who has already won the Ballon d'Or eight times. Messi has scored 116 goals in 198 appearances for Argentina and remains their all-time leading scorer and most-capped player. His availability will shape not only Scaloni's tactical planning but also Argentina's wider mood before the tournament. Argentina will play their final warm-up match against Iceland on June 9 in Auburn, Alabama, before opening their World Cup campaign against Algeria in Kansas City on June 16. That gives Messi another week to build match fitness and move from an individual workload back into fuller team training.

Inter Miami coach Guillermo Hoyos had earlier tried to play down the issue, saying Messi appeared fatigued after playing on a "heavy" pitch. Still, Argentina are unlikely to take unnecessary risks with their captain before the matches that matter. For now, the message from the Argentina camp is one of caution rather than alarm. Messi is not fully integrated into team training yet, but the official update says the injured players are making progress. For the defending champions, that is the only update that matters before their World Cup defence truly begins.

A journalist, filmmaker, and former McKinsey consultant are designated as spokespersons by CJP

New Delhi: Online sensation Cockroach Janta Party on Tuesday announced the appointment of three spokespersons in a move to expand its reach ahead of a protest it proposed against failures in the education system. In a post on X, the outfit founded by Abhijeet Dipke said investigative journalist Saurav Das would serve as its chief spokesperson, while political researcher and filmmaker Vijeta Dahiya and former management consultant Ashutosh Ranka would represent the organisation before the public and the media.

"CJP is committed to changing the political discourse of India, and this will be led by a new generation of leaders," it said.

According to the an-



nouncement, Das brings experience in journalism focused on legal, judicial and social issues. The CJP also credited him with playing a leading role in the anti-pollution protests held at India Gate in November 2025.

Dahiya, a political re-

searcher, author and filmmaker, has worked on research and content production for several YouTube creators, the party said. A graduate of Delhi Technological University, he has authored the books Power of Universe and To Hell With That Job, and has written and directed the Haryanvi films Dararen and Opri Parai, it added.

Ranka, an alumnus of IIT Kanpur and the London School of Economics, previously worked with global consulting firm McKinsey & Company in London.

According to the party, he

Man accused of plotting to kill ex-BJP MP Rajesh Verma held after encounter in UP's Sitapur

Lucknow: A man accused of plotting to kill former BJP MP was arrested following a police encounter in Uttar Pradesh's Sitapur district, police said on Wednesday. The man, Shadab, sustained a bullet injury in his leg during the encounter late on Tuesday night and was admitted to a hospital for treatment, they said.

According to the police, he allegedly reached Verma's Tambour area residence with the intention of killing the ex-parliamentarian over an old land dispute. The BJP leader is currently serving as the chairman of the Uttar Pradesh State Commission for Backward Classes.

Police officials said the accused was carrying a country-made pistol, cartridges and a knife. Laharpur Circle Officer Abhishek Kumar said a search operation was launched after police re-



ceived information about it. "Late at night, police received information that the accused was hiding in a mango orchard near a brick kiln. A police team surrounded the area, but the accused opened fire at the personnel and fired two rounds," Kumar said.

The police retaliated in self-defence, during which a bullet struck the accused in the leg, injuring him. He was subsequently arrested at the spot and later taken to the district hospital for treatment, the officer said.

Police said a .312-bore pistol, two spent cartridges, two live cartridges and a knife were recovered from the accused. According to the police, Shadab has no prior criminal record. Necessary legal action has been initiated in the case and further investigation is underway.

Rajesh Verma represented the Sitapur Lok Sabha constituency for two consecutive terms from 2014 to 2024. He lost the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

Sachin Tendulkar analyzes IPL 2026 in precise detail, advocating for a new powerplay rule



New Delhi: Legendary India batter Sachin Tendulkar has shared his detailed assessment of the Indian Premier League’s 2026 season, praising teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi’s impact on Rajasthan Royals while also advocating a significant change to the tournament’s powerplay rules. Writing on Reddit after the conclusion of the IPL season, Tendulkar reflected on some of the moments, players and tactical trends that stood out to him. The former India captain said Sooryavanshi’s influence extended beyond the runs he scored, while also proposing that the traditional six-over powerplay be split into separate

batting and bowling powerplays to add a new strategic dimension to T20 cricket. “Watching cricket, you are always learning. In a tournament as long as the IPL, a few moments and performances tend to stay with you. While I couldn’t catch every game this season, these are some of my observations,” Tendulkar wrote. Tendulkar highlighted Josh Hazlewood’s dismissal of Jos Buttler in the first qualifier as one of the standout tactical moments of the season. According to Tendulkar, Buttler had already struck the Australian pacer for a four, six and another four before Hazlewood cleverly reduced his pace by 10 kmph, catching the batter off guard.

“What made the wicket special was how he subtly slowed down the next delivery by 10kms/hr and Buttler had already gone through his shot by the time the ball reached him,” Tendulkar wrote. The legendary batter reserved special praise for Rajasthan Royals teenager Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, saying the youngster’s presence alone influenced matches. Tendulkar noted that opposition teams were actively planning for Sooryavanshi and that fans eagerly awaited his arrival at the crease. He also praised the youngster for maintaining his aggressive intent during the Eliminator and Qualifier despite the increased pressure. “More importantly, his batting seemed to give Rajasthan Royals an added sense of belief every time he walked out to the middle,” Tendulkar said. Tendulkar felt Royal Challengers Bengaluru’s success this season was built around a culture of shared responsibility. While praising captain Rajat Patidar’s leadership, he also pointed out that the skipper had created an environment where multiple players were able to contribute consistently. “That balance between leadership and contribution was an important factor in their run to yet another final,” Tendulkar observed. One of Tendulkar’s most notable observations concerned the evolution of T20 tactics.

Suryakumar Yadav’s poor run persists as he fails in Mumbai T20 League after IPL

New Delhi: India T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav’s struggles with the bat continued on Tuesday as the star batter failed to make an impact in his first competitive outing since the Indian Premier League 2026. Turning out for Triumph Knights Mumbai North East in the Mumbai T20 League, Suryakumar managed just 19 runs off 12 balls in a chase of 210 against Ajinkya Rahane-led North Mumbai Panthers at the Wankhede Stadium. The dismissal extended a difficult run of form for one of India’s most explosive T20 batters, who has endured a disappointing IPL season and an underwhelming T20 World Cup campaign in recent months. Suryakumar arrived at the crease after Triumph Knights lost both their openers cheaply in the chase. The India captain briefly looked in fluent touch, striking four



boundaries and helping his side race to 56/2 by the end of the powerplay. However, left-arm spinner Rahul Sawant halted his progress, dismissing Suryakumar for 19 and triggering a collapse in the middle overs. Surya’s innings came in sharp contrast to what the team would have expected out of the India captain, who is also one of the most

decorated T20 player in the Indian cricketing ecosystem. Despite a spirited 93 off 56 balls from impact substitute Nutan Goel, Triumph Knights fell short of the target, finishing on 188/8 as North Mumbai Panthers secured a 21-run win in their opening game of the tournament. Suryakumar’s latest failure comes at the end of a

challenging phase in his career. The batter entered the T20 World Cup 2026 under pressure after battling poor form for nearly 18 months. He had appeared to rediscover his touch in India’s series against New Zealand before the tournament, scoring three half-centuries in five matches. That momentum, however, did not carry into the World Cup.

Joao Fonseca’s French Open dream run ends, but limits remain far from reached

Paris: Brazilian teenager Joao Fonseca insists he is yet to discover the absolute limits of his game or his body, despite his fairy-tale French Open campaign coming to an end at the hands of an ice-cool Jakub Mensik on Tuesday. In a highly anticipated battle of breakout stars under the Court Philippe-Chatrier roof, marking the youngest Roland Garros men’s quarter-final since Rafael Nadal played Novak Djokovic in 2006, it was Mensik who ultimately prevailed. The 20-year-old Czech history-maker booked his first-ever Grand Slam semi-final spot with a commanding 6-4, 6-3, 7-6(3) victory. In doing so, Mensik bypassed legendary compatriot Ivan Lendl to become the youngest Czech man to reach the last four of a major since 1981. He now advances to face tournament favourite Alexander Zverev. Despite falling in straight sets, the 19-year-old Fonseca left Paris with his head held high. Having arrived at the clay-court major with severe concerns over a recent injury, a giant-killing run that included stunning vic-



tories over Novak Djokovic and Casper Ruud heavily exceeded his expectations. “Coming from a little injury and not having any expectations for this tournament and doing a great run, this is a positive week,” Fonseca told reporters. “This tournament gives me more conviction and more confidence to keep going and, for sure, understanding a little bit more [of my] body and my limits.” “I have never seen my limit yet, but I already know that I can be comfortable with my physique,” the Brazilian added. “I think it’s more comfortable with my game, the way that I’m playing, that my mentality is on the right path... Maybe it’s the same Joao, but finding new stuff.” Fonseca refused to blame his own performance for the exit, offering

full praise to Mensik. “His serve is amazing,” Fonseca said. “The most important thing is he knows how to play in important moments. He’s not afraid. Today it was not me playing badly. It was all his merit.” For Mensik, the victory caps a resilient fortnight. Just days after collapsing on the red dirt from exhaustion following a sweltering second-round match, the cool evening following a spell of rain suited him perfectly. Mensik comfortably tightened his grip on the contest by securing single breaks midway through both the first and second sets, using his baseline defence like a wall to frustrate the teenager. However, the third set exploded into drama. Spurred on by a vocal crowd of adoring Brazilian fans, Fonseca

fought back furiously and broke to serve for the set at 5-4. Mensik, who was mentored by Djokovic during his junior days, managed to break back immediately but faced an immense test of nerves. The Czech squandered six match points before finally closing out the match in a high-quality tiebreak. “The last game and tiebreaker was one of my best performances so far,” Mensik said in his on-court interview. “A couple of match points I didn’t know if the ball was out or in... It was really tough to stay focused until the end, and I’m really happy that I managed to come back in the tiebreak and move my game a little bit forward.” “Joao is a great guy and a great competitor,” Mensik added. “Before the match, I knew it would be a tough one. We started a bit nervous and at the end of the match, there were some incredible shots.” While Mensik prepares for a blockbuster semi-final clash, Fonseca is already looking ahead to the upcoming grass-court season, bolstered by the knowledge that his body and mind belong on tennis’s grandest stages.

Legendary football veterans chase immortality, eyeing one final glorious FIFA World Cup

New Delhi: The countdown is on for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. As the world prepares for football’s biggest festival, a generation of modern greats is facing a bittersweet reality. This summer could mark the definitive end of the World Cup chapter for an elite group of veterans, led by the undisputed icons of the game, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. Going all the way and creating history will require an immense feat of endurance. The fierce North American summer heat is expected to test players in their physical prime to their absolute limits. For ageing legends like Luka Modric, Kevin De Bruyne, and Mohamed Salah, the hurdle is twice as high. To rewrite history one last time, these legendary figures will have to defy the odds and prove that world-class veterans can still prevail when the tank is running empty. Beyond



the headline acts, a trio of beloved global icons arrives at the 2026 tournament fiercely determined to leave a lasting impression. For forty-year-old veteran Edin Dzeko, simply reaching this grand stage after a dramatic qualification campaign is a magnificent testament to his enduring class, as the lethal striker aims to provide a final touch of clinical magic for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Meanwhile, James Rodriguez and Son Heung-Min carry the immense emotional weight of their respective

nations on their shoulders. James, an iconic World Cup hero, still possesses the sublime vision to unlock any stubborn defence, whilst Son remains the talismanic, hard-running heartbeat and leader of South Korea. The oppressive North American climate will undoubtedly test their physical stamina to the absolute limit. Yet, these revered figures are not here merely to make up the numbers. Their wealth of elite tournament experience will be vital as they strive to defy the elements and orchestrate

one final, unforgettable run. For over a decade, the narrative of modern African football has been defined by two talismanic figures. Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane, once unstoppable club teammates, now arrive on the global stage carrying the immense dreams of their respective nations. Crucially, an African team has never won the World Cup, making the 2026 tournament their definitive final shot at breaking that historic glass ceiling. At thirty-four, both forwards remain the undisputed focal points of Egypt and Senegal. Salah’s clinical brilliance and Mane’s explosive, direct running will be vital if their sides are to navigate a demanding tournament schedule. The fierce North American climate will undoubtedly push their physical conditioning to the limit, but these generational icons possess the elite experience required to thrive under pressure.

Praggnanandhaa creates history by defeating Magnus Carlsen once again

Oslo: Just as a very pleasant summer day in Norway’s capital was starting to give way to something colder, R Praggnanandhaa created heat on the chess board to take down Magnus Carlsen for a second time in the same tournament. The 20-year-old Indian, who had beaten the Norwegian World No. 1 with the white pieces last week, repeated the same trick, this time with the black pieces. With this victory, he also joins one of the very few players to have beaten the 35-year-old five-time world champion thrice in Classical chess. The signs about Carlsen being in danger were there even before the start of round eight. In his customary pre-round small interview with the local broadcaster, he admitted to ‘feeling shit.’ And he played a very uncharacteristic match from start to finish. In the end, after he equalised a dicey-looking position,



he walked his king into a forced checkmate as long as the young Indian could spot it. And Pragg, who himself has been having an up and down tournament, spotted the continuation. After 47 moves, it was level. Seconds later, the mood changed in the commentary box as experienced broadcasters couldn’t keep their excitement down. The eval bar jumped from 0.0 to #7 – in simple terms, a blunder of the highest order – after Carlsen’s move to

Kf4. With just 44 seconds on the clock, his opponent had to find 48. Qd4. And Pragg found it immediately. As soon as he played it, Carlsen’s already shaky body language dropped. He fiddled around with the king for two more moves but he had already realised that his king was about to be barbecued on the board. The win moves Praggnanandhaa to third on the table with two rounds to go. However, there was further disappointment as world champi-

on D Gukesh again lost, this time to Alireza Firouzja in another wild game. Carlsen, who collected a fourth Classical loss in eight, will hope this isn’t the start of something terminal. “This has nothing to do with the game. But I thought I might as well say it. Whoever is responsible for the NBA App... we have one of the best Western Conference finals (going on) and when people have ‘no spoilers on’ in the App, they expect no spoilers.” In isolation, this was the latest in a series of quotable Carlsen quips from inside the confession box. But what made it arresting on Wednesday was that it came during a very tricky opening. Playing with the black pieces, the World No. 1 had already been forced into a couple of deep-thinks by this point and Carlsen had already made a few trips to think aloud the was facing in front of him.

Ruben Neves takes late Diogo Jota’s number 21 for World Cup

Houston: The Portugal training session on Tuesday witnessed a visit from the national women’s team and unveiling of numbering on players’ jerseys, with the number 21, worn by late Diogo Jota, to be used by his close friend Ruben Neves. Jota, who passed away last year in a road accident in a car crash, will have his number worn by Ruben. Ruben had earlier spoken about the late footballer’s spiritual presence in the team during Monday’s presser. The number six jersey will be worn by Matheus Nunes and will play a bit as a right-back. Same will be wearing number 24. Tomas Araujo will be sporting number four on his back, while Nuno Mendes got the number 25, as per Publico. The remaining lower numbers will see Diogo Costa, Nelson Semedo, Ruben Dias, Diogo Dalot, Cristiano Ronaldo, Bruno Fernandes, Goncalo Ramos, Bernardo Silva and Joao Felix wearing numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 respectively. After having conquered club glory in every country/continent and having won international titles like the UEFA Euro and the Nations League, the 41-year-old Cristiano Ronaldo will be making his sixth FIFA World Cup appearance in a pursuit of the game’s grandest prize, which continues to elude him despite his legendary status in the game. The veteran’s confidence would also be really high after a fantastic Saudi Pro League title-winning season with Al Nassr. On his Premier League debut, Hugo Ekitike was im-



pressive, opening the goal tally for his side in the 37th minute to take the scoreline to 1-0 at half-time. Just four minutes after the whistle for the second half was sounded, Hugo was back in action, creating an opportunity for Cody Gakpo to deliver the second blow in the 49th minute. However, Bournemouth striker Antoine Semenyo, who had earlier reported facing racial abuse from the Liverpool’s passionate home crowd, gave the defending champions a massive scare, scoring twice in 12 minutes, in the 64th and 76th minute respectively. He exposed the defensive weaknesses that cost the Community Shield to the Premier League champions. The incident caused a three-minute stoppage midway through first half and a fan was ejected from the stadium, creating that one sour moment in a night that other-

wise a celebration of Jota’s life and career. In the final minutes of the match, the pendulum moved back in Liverpool’s favour as Chiesa left the bench to give his side the lead again in the 88th minute with a volley, and an emotional Salah capped a brilliant night off for Liverpool with a goal in the stoppage time, which extended his unbelievable record of scoring on opening weekend (10 goals) in the competition. Speaking after the match, Liverpool manager Arne Slot lauded Semenyo’s “mental strength” and said that the matter of racial abuse is under police investigation. “It is under investigation with the police now. We have made a very clear statement. This day should be about Diogo and the tribute, but we have to address this, so I am glad I have been asked. It is unacceptable,” said Slot as quoted by Sky Sports.