

CM Lalduhoma Urges Modern Practices To Boost Fish Productivity In Mizoram Today

Aizawl, May 13: The Mizoram Fish Farmers’ Meet, organised by the Fisheries Department, was held on Wednesday at Dawrpui Multipurpose Hall with Chief Minister Lalduhoma in attendance and Fisheries Minister Lalthansanga as the guest of honor. In his address, the Chief Minister emphasised that Mizoram has nearly 24,000 hectares suitable for fish farming, but only about 6,000 hectares roughly 25 percent have been developed into ponds. He noted that limited pond availability and inadequate storage facilities remain major challenges, while pro-

ductivity per hectare continues to be low Lalduhoma stressed that improving output from existing ponds should be prioritised, even if new ponds cannot be immediately established. He urged fish farmers to adopt modern technologies and scientific practices such as effective pond management, fish health care, and feeding methods to enhance productivity and profitability. He further stated that under the Fisheries Minister’s leadership, the Government is working to boost fish production through schemes including the Blue Revolution, Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana



(PMMSY), and the Bana Kaih (Handholding) Scheme. Preparations and action plans have

already been drawn up for the anticipated launch of PMMSY 2.0. last September, 27 benefi-

ciaries have been aided under the Special Package and five through loans, with applications still open for eligible proposals. Lalduhoma assured that additional initiatives beyond existing schemes would be considered if project details and financial requirements are viable. Earlier in the programme, Fisheries Secretary Er. Lalrothanga presented survey findings and issues raised by fish farmers. Director Zonunluangi delivered the welcome address, while Joint Secretary Zonunthari proposed the vote of thanks. For over 60 years, God has guided us, often using our weakness-

es as lessons for reflection and growth,” Zoramthanga stated, adding that the MNF’s concern for Mizoram and its people is credited by God as righteousness. He emphasized that the party does not rely on worldly power, echoing Biblical scripture: “The MNF does not put its trust in the strength of horses, nor do we boast in chariots.” His remarks came days after the MNF suffered a setback in the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) elections, where the ruling Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) secured 17 of the 19 seats, leaving MNF and Congress with one each.

Zoramthanga argued that the MNF had initiated reforms in the AMC, laying the groundwork for positive change despite internal strains and political repercussions. Criticizing ZPM, he said the party is perceived as a “pure virgin” since it has not governed the AMC, while its influence across Aizawl constituencies has grown significantly. He alleged that the current ZPM administration, led by Chief Minister Lalduhoma, withheld funds from the MNF-led AMC, hindering its functioning in local governance. Despite electoral losses Zoramthanga asserted.

Manipur Minister Condemns Kangpokpi Attack Assures Justice and Aid to Victims

Imphal, May 13: Manipur Minister Y. Khemchand Singh strongly condemned the brutal terror attack carried out by armed miscreants on a group of civilians between Kotlen and Kotzim areas in Kangpokpi district on Wednesday morning. The incident claimed the lives of three innocent civilians and left four others injured. Of the injured victims, three were rushed to Shija Hospitals and Research Institute in Imphal for treatment. Singh, along with Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho, Home Minister Govindas Konhoujam, MLAs and senior officials, visited the hospital to enquire about their condition. The minister said the Manipur government will bear all medical expenses of the injured and has directed authorities to ensure the best possible treatment. Calling the violence deeply disturbing, Singh said such acts threaten the state’s gradual return to peace and normalcy. He stressed that terrorism and violence against innocent civilians have no place in a civilized so-



ciety. Appealing for calm, he urged all communities to maintain peace, avoid emotional reactions, and immediately stop abductions, hostage-taking, and intimidation on communal lines. He assured

that the state government would use all available resources to bring those responsible to justice. Singh also expressed grief over the loss of lives and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Himanta Claims BJP Government in West Bengal Strengthens Assam’s Security

Guwahati, May 13: Himanta Biswa Sarma on May 13 stated that Assam feels more secure now that the Bharatiya Janata Party is in power in West Bengal. He said that political unity between the two neighbouring states would help improve coordination on common issues.

Speaking to reporters in Guwahati, a day after taking oath for a second consecutive term as Chief Minister, Sarma said Assam and West Bengal have long shared several challenges, especially in matters related to law and order and inter-state coordination.

He said that in the past, criminals often crossed into West Bengal, and cooperation between the two states was not always smooth. However, he added that the situation has now changed.

Sarma further said the new political arrangement would allow both governments to work together more effectively in areas

such as governance, security, and development.

He added that Assam and West Bengal can now jointly work in many sectors for the progress of both states, something that had not happened for many decades. According to him, the future now looks promising.

Referring to the presence of West Bengal’s leadership at his swearing-in ceremony on Tuesday, Sarma said it marked the beginning of stronger regional cooperation.

He also said that the attendance of the West Bengal Chief Minister and the warm support shown by the people of West Bengal indicate a bright future for the Northeast.

Sarma was sworn in for a second consecutive term after the BJP-led alliance retained power in Assam.

Kiphire District Launches Dengue Day Campaign

Kohima, May 13: A mass social work will be undertaken in Kiphire district of Nagaland coinciding with National Dengue Day on May 16. Additional Deputy Commissioner and Administrator, Kiphire Town Council, Longdiba L Sangtam, has notified that, in pursuance of the directive of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, National Dengue Day will be observed on May 16, 2026 across the country under the theme “Community participation Dengue Control: Check, Clean and Cover” and as part of pre-monsoon preparedness. He said that the general public, departments, institutions are requested to actively participate in the mass social work to be held on May 16 at Kiphire from 6 am onwards, aimed at preventing and controlling dengue.

Assam Crime Branch Summons Pawan Khera; Ripun Bora Calls It Vendetta Politics

■ *Pawan Khera appeared before the Assam Police’s Crime Branch for questioning related to allegations made by Riniki Bhuyan Sharma, wife of Himanta Biswa Sarma.*
■ *Khera had previously been granted seven-day transit anticipatory bail by the Telangana High Court, but Assam Police challenged it in the Supreme Court, which stayed the order.*
■ *The Gauhati High Court rejected Khera’s anticipatory bail plea, but the Supreme Court subsequently granted him bail, noting the issue arose from political rivalry.*

Guwahati, May 13: Pawan Khera on Wednesday appeared before the Crime Branch of Assam Police in Guwahati for questioning in connection with cases filed by Himanta Biswa Sarma’s wife Riniki Bhuyan Sharma.

The cases were filed after Khera raised allegations that she possessed multiple passports and had

undisclosed foreign properties and assets.

Speaking to reporters outside the Crime Branch office, Khera said he was cooperating with the investigation. He stated that he had been summoned by the police and had appeared accordingly, adding that he respects the law and the judiciary and was present as per legal procedure.

Khera also said he would speak to the media in detail after the questioning was completed.

Riniki Bhuyan Sharma had filed criminal complaints at the Guwahati Crime Branch Police Station under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

The charges against Khera include making false statements related to an election, cheating, forgery, using forged documents as genuine, intentional insult intended to provoke breach of peace, and defamation.

Earlier, Assam Police had visited

Khera’s residence in New Delhi, but he was reportedly not present there.

Khera first approached the Telangana High Court, which granted him seven-day transit anticipatory bail. However, Assam Police challenged the order in the Supreme Court of India. The apex court stayed the transit bail order and directed Khera to approach the Gauhati High Court.

Later, the Gauhati High Court rejected his anticipatory bail plea, after which Khera again moved the Supreme Court. The apex court subsequently granted him anticipatory bail, observing that the matter appeared to have arisen from political rivalry.

Meanwhile, a local court in Guwahati had earlier rejected Assam Police’s plea seeking a non-bailable warrant against Khera.

Senior Congress leader Ripun Bora later accused Himanta Biswa Sarma of pursuing a personal ven-

detta against Khera.

Bora said Khera appeared before investigators as a law-abiding citizen in compliance with the conditions linked to the bail granted by the Supreme Court.

He described the questioning as a routine legal process and said Khera was fully cooperating with the court’s directions.

However, Bora alleged that the matter had become a personal prestige issue for the Chief Minister and claimed that Khera’s arrest had earlier been ordered over a minor issue. He further alleged that the Assam government might now try to harass Khera through repeated questioning and prolonged interrogation, though police could not arrest him in the case after interrogation.

The controversy began after remarks made earlier by Khera, following which Assam Police registered the case and initiated legal proceedings.

United Naga Council Slams Ambush on Church Leaders, Seeks Hostages’ Release

Kohima, May 13: The United Naga Council has strongly condemned the brutal ambush on leaders of the Thadou Baptist Association in which three people were killed and five others seriously injured, according to available reports.

The attack reportedly took place between Kotzin and Kotlen while the church leaders were returning from Churachandpur. Among those killed was Rev. V. Silthou, former General Secretary of the Manipur Baptist Convention.

Expressing deep sorrow, the council conveyed condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for strength for them during this difficult time.

In a separate development a few hours after the ambush, the council said

around 20 Nagas from Kon-sakhul village were reportedly held hostage by residents of Leilon Vaiphei Kuki village. The council said it could not comprehend the action, which appeared to be a reaction to the earlier incident.

The council emphasized that Nagas condemn the ambush without reservation and stated that targeting innocent villagers and taking hostages is unacceptable and against all norms of civilized society.

It appealed for the immediate and unconditional release of the hostages, while urging civil society organizations, church leaders, and community leaders of all communities to work together for peace, communal harmony, and restoration of normalcy.

Kongkurayo Mirbuk Fest 2.0 Celebrated with Cultural Fervour in Pasighat

Pasighat, May 13: Kongkurayo Mirbuk Fest 2.0 was celebrated at Mirbuk Musup with the aim of preserving and promoting the rich traditions and identity of the Adi community under the theme, “My Roots, My Identity,” at Tigra Mirbuk musup (community hall) in Pasighat in East Siang district on Tuesday.

The programme began with “Taku Tabat,” an indigenous sacred ritual performed for blessings and well-being.

The event was attended by chief guest Oting Siram and guest of honour Oso Darang. Elderly women of Tigra Mirbuk were also felicitated for being the pillars of society and guardians of traditional knowledge.

Organising chairperson Jaya Tasung Moyong spoke about the im-

portance of preserving Adi identity, supporting local artisans, and honouring ancestors. She encouraged the younger generation to continue reviving traditional values and practices.

Chief guest Oting Siram thanked the organisers for holding such a meaningful festival and appreciated the younger generation for respecting and involving senior members of the community.

Advisor Rumi Tasung thanked all participants and stated that taking part in traditional games and cultural activities helps keep old traditions alive. She also prayed for everyone’s good health and well-being.

The judges were felicitated with “Geri,” a traditional gourd bottle, while winners of different competi-



tions were awarded local handicrafts made by village artisans. Snacks served during the programme were also prepared using locally produced crops.

The festival featured several traditional competition activities for men, women and general participants including Oying Pe Jung, Dore Poki, Rémi Iki, Tug of War, Sipiak Moki,

Binyat Léngki, Ledu Petkeng and Adi Agom Luki.

A special performance by the band “Kongkura:yo – Echoes of the Ancestors” added colour to the celebration.

The event brought together elders, youth and villagers in a collective effort to celebrate and preserve Adi heritage and traditions.

Himanta Cabinet Pushes UCC Plan, Announces Target for Massive Job Creation

Guwahati, May 13: The new Assam government led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on May 13 approved a major policy roadmap that includes introducing a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) bill in the Assembly and launching a fresh drive to generate two lakh government jobs over the next five years.

Addressing the media after the first cabinet meeting of the new term, Sarma said the Bharatiya Janata Party government would adopt its election manifesto as the “principal model” for governance in Assam.

The cabinet approved the introduction of the UCC bill on the last day of the ongoing Assembly session.

However, the government clarified that tribal communities and residents of hill areas would remain outside the scope of the proposed law.

The Chief Minister further stated that the proposed UCC would not interfere with the traditional customs, social practices, or

religious beliefs of protected communities.

According to the government, the proposed UCC framework in Assam would include provisions on minimum marriage age, prohibition of polygamy, property rights for women, legal recognition and regulation of live-in relationships, and a uniform age limit for marriage, along with other reforms.

In another key decision, the cabinet approved the formation of a task force to prepare a roadmap for providing two lakh government jobs to youths over the next five years.

The task force has been directed to submit its report within three months, detailing department-wise recruitment plans, employment generation strategies, and mechanisms for large-scale appointments.

These announcements come as the BJP government begins its second consecutive term in Assam with a focus on governance reforms, legal restructuring, and employment generation.

NE/EAST

Digboi Refinery has released an official statement regarding the controversy surrounding canteen dues

Digboi, May 13: The controversy surrounding nearly Rs 20 lakh in alleged unpaid dues owed to local vendors supplying the canteen at the Digboi Refinery of Indian Oil Corporation Limited has intensified, even as the refinery management issued an official clarification stating that the matter is being handled through contractual mechanisms. In a rejoinder sent to North East Now on Tuesday, the management of Indian Oil's Assam Oil Division (AOD) said that the refinery canteen is operated by M/S Vidya Caterers under a contractual agreement and that responsibility for clearing payments to local suppliers lies with the contractor. According to the refinery, the issue was immediately taken up with the contractor for "appropriate resolution of any pending dues, if found payable," and follow-up action is being carried out as per the contractual terms. The clarification came after allegations emerged that several Digboi-based suppliers providing vegetables, groceries, meat, and packaged drinking water to the canteen had not been paid for months, pushing many small businesses into severe financial hardship. Sources said the matter has now reached the refinery headquarters, which has reportedly sought a detailed report from the local administration, indicating that the issue is being monitored at the corporate level. In its response, the refinery reiterated that Indian Oil follows a "zero-tolerance approach towards any form of misconduct,

intimidation or unethical practices" and reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining fair and transparent engagement with stakeholders. However, the rejoinder did not address several serious allegations linked to the controversy. Most notably, the clarification made no mention of Dipak Bhuyar, the former canteen in-charge and an AOD employee who reportedly handled canteen-related operations under the supervision of Deputy General Manager (Employee Management Services) Jagadish Chandra Das and Chief Employee Relations Manager Sandeep Karketta. The refinery also remained silent on allegations that abusive and derogatory language was allegedly used against local vendors, as well as claims that commissions were demanded from suppliers. Another key issue left unanswered was an email reportedly sent by M/S Vidya Caterers to the refinery administration, requesting officials not to procure edible items in the contractor's name. Questions have now emerged over why certain AOD officials allegedly continued placing procurement demands on local vendors despite the communication from the contractor. The apparent disregard of the advisory has raised concerns about the authority under which such purchases were made, whether contractual procedures were bypassed, and who would ultimately be held accountable. The absence of any clarification on these allegations has further intensified concerns regarding administrative oversight



and accountability within the refinery. M/S Vidya Caterers continues to run the Digboi Refinery canteen under its second consecutive contract, which is reportedly valid until 2027 unless revised or terminated under contractual provisions. Sources further claimed that the former canteen official was later removed from the assignment after the allegations surfaced. The controversy has also revived debate over the outsourcing of essential services in major public sector establishments. Digboi-based businessman and former pro-talk ULFA leader Jiten Dutta said repeated disputes indicate deeper flaws in the outsourcing system. "As long as outside agencies continue to control essential services at AOD establishments, such issues will persist. There is very little sensitivity towards local concerns, while profit remains the primary motive, leaving small vendors vulnerable," he said.

District Council contractors barred

Agartala, May 13: Tipra Motha MLA Ranjit Debbarma today expressed displeasure over the Tripura government after it reportedly issued an order directing contractors belonging to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) not to participate in any tender process for PWD Roads and Bridges and National Highway projects. The MLA met PWD Chief Engineer Rajib Majumder along with MLAs Philip Kumar Reang and Pathan Lal Jamatia, as well as Members of District Councils including Suraj Debbarma, Jiten Debbarma and James Debbarma. Later, MLA Ranjit said, "We have come Rajib Majumder. Some days ago, some contractors who had taken licences from the Tripura Tribal Areas.

Lalenthangi Hnamte receives Florence Nightingale Nurses award



Aizawl, May 13: President Droupadi Murmu honored Lalenthangi Hnamte, also known as Maeni, with the National Florence Nightingale Nurses Award on International Nurses Day in New Delhi. Hnamte, who works at a Health and Wellness Centre in Mizoram's Lunglei district, was recognized for her contributions to grassroots healthcare and frontline health workers. The National Florence Nightingale Nurses Award is one of the country's highest awards for nursing practitioners, and it includes a medal, a certificate of recognition, and a monetary prize of Rs 1 lakh. The award is given yearly to nurses and healthcare workers who demonstrate remarkable devotion to public health services, particularly in distant and underserved areas. Hnamte was one of 15 awardees chosen from across the country this year. Mizoram

Governor Vijay Kumar Singh congratulated her on her feat, calling it a "proud moment for our state". "This esteemed recognition honours her outstanding dedication, compassion and selfless service in the field of public health," Singh stated. He noted that being picked as one of only 15 winners countrywide underlines the importance of her work and dedication to healthcare delivery. The Governor added that Hnamte's accomplishment would serve as an encouragement to healthcare personnel throughout the region, particularly those working in rural and challenging places. Hnamte is related with public healthcare services in the Lunglei district, where Health and Wellness Centres play an important role in delivering primary medical treatment, maternity health support, and preventative healthcare to local people.

Meghalaya Tura is set to experience an urban transformation initiative worth Rs2,000 crore

Shillong, May 13: According to Sangma, projects worth roughly Rs 200 crore have already been completed, providing "a solid foundation for the more extensive works to follow". May 13: According to Sangma, projects worth roughly Rs 200 crore have already been completed, providing "a solid foundation for the more extensive works to follow". Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma declared on May 12 that the state government is initiating a long-term development initiative for Tura, with an investment of approximately Rs 2,000 crore aimed



at transforming the town's urban environment. After a review meeting, the chief minister mentioned that the discussions centered on the current status of ongoing development efforts as well as future strategic projects for the town. "A review was held to evaluate the progress of ongoing development projects and to discuss strategic upcoming initiatives for Tura," Sangma shared in a social media update. He emphasized that the government's "collective vision" is to execute "transformative infrastructure interventions" that will progressively modernize the town in the

coming years. The proposed development strategy is expected to include urban infrastructure, connectivity, and public amenities as part of a larger effort to improve Tura's civic environment. However, the chief minister did not disclose timetables for the remaining projects or a comprehensive sector breakdown of the projected investments. Tura, the headquarters of the West Garo Hills district, has seen a number of government-led infrastructure initiatives in recent years as Meghalaya strives for better urban development outside Shillong.

Arjun Ram Meghwal engages with NGOs in Mamit; pledges assistance



Shillong, May 13: Union Minister for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal on Tuesday held an interaction with NGO representatives and community leaders in Mamit district of western Mizoram, assuring the Centre's continued support for the state's wel-

fare and development, official sources said. During the meeting, representatives of key civil society organisations, including the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizoram Upa Pawl, Mizoram Hmeichhia Insuihkhawm Pawl, Mizo Zirlai Pawl, and local village councils

raised several public grievances, developmental issues and challenges faced by communities, the sources added. Meghwal reiterated the Central Government's commitment to supporting Mizoram and assured that all possible assistance would be extended whenever required. He also emphasised that strengthening governance and addressing public concerns remain top priorities. The Union Minister appreciated the role of NGOs and community-based organisations in maintaining social harmony and contributing to development efforts in the state.

Earlier on Monday, Meghwal also reviewed ongoing development projects and welfare schemes in Mamit, the lone aspirational district of Mizoram, during a separate meeting with officials. He called for better coordination among departments to speed up development and ensure effective delivery of welfare benefits, especially in remote areas. He also highlighted the need to enhance public awareness to improve participation in government programmes.

The NDA rule has turned Assam into a center of education: Amit Shah

Guwahati, May 13: On Tuesday, Union Minister for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal engaged in discussions with representatives from NGOs and community leaders in the Mamit district of western Mizoram, reaffirming the Centre's ongoing commitment to the welfare and development of the state, according to official sources. During this meeting, representatives from prominent civil society organizations, such as the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizoram Upa Pawl, Mizoram Hmeichhia Insuihkhawm Pawl, Mizo Zirlai Pawl, and local village councils presented various public grievances, developmental concerns, and challenges encountered by their communities, the sources further indicated. "In the last 10 years, Assam has been transformed from an epicentre of violence to a hub of learning, healthcare, and development," Shah said in a post on X. The northeastern state had witnessed insurgent activities for several decades. The NDA government has laid a robust foundation of development and security, on which now a grand edifice of progress will be built, he added. "Electing the BJP-led NDA for the third consecutive term, the people of Assam have reaffirmed that the BJP-NDA governments are the dispensations of trust... I bow to the people of Assam for the historic mandate," the Union Home Minister said. The government will leave no stone unturned to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Assam, he said while congratulating Sarma and his newly sworn-in ministers.



Sarma acknowledged Shah's wishes and blessings and appreciated his presence during the swearing-in function. "Under the leadership of Adarniya @narendramodi ji and your support, our Govt will continue to deliver good governance to the people of Assam," he added. Earlier during the day, Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office and secrecy to Sarma as the chief minister, along with a new council of ministers. Besides Sarma, four MLAs — the BJP's Rameswar Teli and Ajanta Neog, AGP's Atul Bora and Charan Boro of BPF — took oath as ministers.

Meghalaya CM condemns attack on Northeast women in Delhi

Shillong, May 13: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Tuesday condemned the physical and racial harassment of two North East women in South Delhi. "Such repeated acts of violence and discrimination cannot be dismissed as isolated incidents and must be met with the strictest punishment under the law," Sangma posted on X. The Chief Minister urged authorities to

take immediate action into the matter. The assault occurred on Monday morning evening when the two women were allegedly subjected to derogatory remarks and physical assault near Nehru Place in South Delhi. Both women were escorted to AIIMS Hospital where their medical examinations were conducted, even as Delhi Police have registered a case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

KCP-PWG cadre arrested

Imphal, May 13: A joint operation by central and state security forces led to the arrest of an insurgent and the recovery of two hand grenades along with a threat note reading "Last warning, KCP PWG" in Imphal East district on Tuesday.

Police said two hand grenades were discovered at the residence of Guruaribam Bhavananda in Brahmapur Guruaribam Leikai under Porompat police station limits. The explosives, found inside a black plastic

bag along with the threat note were later safely defused by a bomb disposal squad that rushed to the spot after receiving information. Security forces intensified counter-insurgency operations across Manipur on May 11 and 12, leading to the arrest of several active cadres linked to banned militant outfits and the recovery

Following the recovery, a coordinated follow-up operation led to the arrest of an active cadre of the Kangleipak Communist

Party-People's War Group (KCP-PWG), identified as Khulem Shyam Singh (23) from Kongpal Chinggangbam Leikai in Imphal East. He was apprehended from the Langol Laimanai area under Lamphel police station in Imphal West. Police also seized two mobile phones and an Aadhaar acknowledgment receipt from his possession. Authorities confirmed that the accused and the recovered materials have been handed over to the concerned police stations for further legal action.

The former Speaker, Lalrinliana Sailo, is confronted with a corruption case

Shillong, May 13: The Governor of Mizoram has granted sanction to prosecute former Assembly Speaker and MLA Lalrinliana Sailo in connection with alleged criminal breach of trust and misappropriation of nearly Rs 98 lakh linked to a road construction project in eastern Mizoram, officials said.

Sailo had earlier served as a minister in the Congress-led government headed by Lal Thanhawla. Ahead of the 2018 Assembly elections, he left the Congress and joined the Mizo National Front (MNF). After winning from the Chalfih constituency, he was appointed Speaker of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly. Before the 2023 Assembly elections, Sailo joined the Bharatiya Janata Party but was defeated by MNF candidate H. Lalzirliana.

According to the prosecution sanction order issued recently by the Vigilance Department on behalf of the Governor, the state Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), which is probing the case, alleged



that Sailo abused his official position while serving as MLA of Tui-chang constituency. Investigators claimed that he allegedly influenced the main contractor, Colleen Lalsangpuii, who had secured the contract for the Khawzawl-Ngaizawl road construction project, to sublet the work to a particular individual from his constituency. The ACB alleged that Sailo borrowed Rs 65 lakh for execution of the

contract work and, in June 2017, transferred Rs 23.16 lakh to Zote Earth Movers, which was linked to the principal contractor, towards expenses connected to the tendering and bidding process. The investigating agency further alleged that while serving as Speaker in 2020, Sailo received illegal gratification amounting to Rs 66.81 lakh in two instalments, Rs 50 lakh on October 8, 2020 and Rs 16.81 lakh on

October 14, 2020 from the running account bills of the project. According to investigators, the money was allegedly routed through his personal assistant, H. Vanlalruati. The ACB also alleged that Sailo pressured sub-contractor Romuanpuii Zadeng to repay the borrowed Rs 65 lakh along with interest. In addition, Zadeng allegedly paid another Rs 54.20 lakh to the former Speaker

Authorities have estimated the total amount allegedly misappropriated at Rs 97.85 lakh. The Anti-Corruption Bureau registered the case on August 5, 2024, under provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, along with Section 409 of the Indian Penal Code. Officials said that after reviewing the materials placed before him, the Governor granted sanction for prosecution under Section 19 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, paving the way for trial before a competent court.

Himanta Says NDA 3.0 Focused on Assam’s Protection and Development



Guwahati, May 13: A day after taking oath as Chief Minister of Assam for a second consecutive term, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday began his first official programme with a visit to Nabagraha Shantisthal at Silpukhuri in Guwahati.

Sarma lit ceremonial lamps and laid floral wreaths at the statue and memorial of Bharat Ratna and Assam’s first Chief Minister, Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi and paid his solemn tributes.

Speaking to the media, Sarma described Bharat Ratna Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi as the architect of modern Assam.

He said Lokapriya Bordoloi dedicated his entire life to safeguarding and developing Assam.

The Chief Minister said the government is commit-

ted to the twin goals of protection and development. Referring to Lokapriya Bordoloi’s role before and after India’s Independence,

Sarma said he worked tirelessly for the welfare and advancement of Assam and the Assamese people.

He said the present State Government would formally begin its work from Wednesday. Before starting official responsibilities, the government visited Bordoloi’s memorial to seek his blessings and pay homage to him.

The Chief Minister said the government would continue to work tirelessly to ensure security for the people of Assam and sustained development of the State. He added that the government would speak through its work and people would witness its commitment through action.

NDA 3.0 Will Safeguard Indigenous Land Rights, Act Against Illegal Infiltration: Sonowal

Guwahati, May 13: Union minister and senior BJP leader Sarbananda Sonowal on Tuesday said the BJP-led NDA 3.0 government would continue to take strict action against infiltrators and protection of indigenous land rights during its five-year term.

“In the next five years, the NDA government will continue to take firm action against infiltrators and ensure protection of indigenous land rights. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi vision of ‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas’ and the strong, dynamic and people-oriented leadership of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the wave of development will continue across every region of Assam,” Sonowal said after attending the swearing-in ceremony of the NDA 3.0 government in Guwahati in the presence of the Prime Minister, Union home minister Amit Shah and senior NDA leaders.

The former Assam chief minister described the NDA government’s hat-trick and the oath-taking of Himanta Biswa Sarma as chief minister for the second straight term as a historic and proud moment for the people of Assam.

“I am deeply moved by the overwhelming affection, blessings and enthusiasm



shown by the people during the swearing-in ceremony of the NDA 3.0 government held in Guwahati in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji and NDA leaders,” Sonowal said.

“I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and all members of the council of ministers,” he added.

Sonowal further said Assam would achieve new milestones in rapid growth, self-reliance and inclusive progress during

the new tenure of the NDA government.

“Assam will witness major progress in employment generation for youth, women’s empowerment, agriculture, industry, education, healthcare and infrastructure development,” he said.

He also said the new phase of governance would further strengthen Assam’s culture, indigenous languages and the identity of its indigenous communities while reinforcing the vision of “Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.”

Arjun Ram Meghwal Assures Support To Mizoram NGOs

Aizawl, May 13: Union Minister for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal on Tuesday held an interaction with NGO representatives and community leaders in Mamit district of western Mizoram, assuring the Centre’s continued support for the state’s welfare and development, official sources said. During the meeting, representatives of key civil society organisations, including the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizoram Upa Pawl, Mizoram Hmeichhia Insuihkhawm Pawl, Mizo Zirlai Pawl, and local village councils raised several public grievances, developmental issues and challenges faced by communities, the sources

added. Meghwal reiterated the Central Government’s commitment to supporting Mizoram and assured that all possible assistance would be extended whenever required. He also emphasised that strengthening governance and addressing public concerns remain top priorities.

The Union Minister appreciated the role of NGOs and community-based organisations in maintaining social harmony and contributing to development efforts in the state. Earlier on Monday, Meghwal also reviewed ongoing development projects and welfare schemes in Mamit, the lone aspirational district of Mizoram, during

a separate meeting with officials. He called for better coordination among departments to speed up development and ensure effective delivery of welfare benefits, especially in remote areas. He also highlighted the need to enhance public awareness to improve participation in government programmes. Several organisations of Mizoram, the central YMA, Mizoram Elders’ Union, apex women’s body of the state, the MHIP and Mizo Students’ Union have appealed to the Mizo Zirlai Pawl to suspend further construction of the rest shed at Zophai. The MZP has not withdrawn from its agenda of safeguarding the boundaries

of Mizoram and has not back tracked from its attempt to build a rest shed at Zophai, but after monitoring the two state government’s mobilisation of its forces near the boundary we have withheld our agenda for the time being,” the student body’s official statement said. The union home ministry has directed the two chief secretaries of Mizoram and Assam to hold talk on March 20 to sort out an amicable solution to the boundary standoff. The Mizoram government has clamped CrPC 144 in Aizawl and at Kolasib district since last night. The Mizo Zirlai Pawl alleged the Mizoram government has still not n the boundary issue.

Manipur Police Issue Statement on Social Media Rumour

Imphal, May 13: Manipur Police have clarified that a village where houses have, according to social media reports, been allegedly set on fire, is located in Myanmar and not Manipur. “Information of reported burning of houses in Molnoi Kuki village on May 12, 2026 around 3 pm are doing round in various social media platforms. It is to clarify that Molnoi Kuki village is in Myanmar, and approximately 2 km from Border Pillar (BP) No. 113 in Kamjong District, Manipur. The incident is not related to India,” the state police force clarified. The development

comes at a time when political leaders and civil society organisations have appealed for peace and harmony among communities in the strife-torn state.

The police force further appealed to the public not to believe in rumours, and be vigilant of false videos. “The veracity of any circulation of unfounded videos, audio clips etc. may be confirmed from the number- 9233522822 of Central Control Room. Moreover, there are possibilities of many fake posts being circulated on social media,” it stated.

Mizo women body decry immoral trafficking of women from state

Aizawl, May 13: Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), the apex women’s association in the state, strongly condemned the alleged trafficking and exploitation of women from Mizoram under the guise of providing employment outside the state. The MHIP reaction came after Mizoram Police recently busted an alleged sex trafficking racket operating under the guise of a beauty salon and spa in Uttarakhand and rescued five Mizo women, including two minors, from forced prostitution and exploitation. The organisation in a statement said that Lahunsiami (30), a resident of New Diakkawn in Kolasib, and Mohammad (31) of Uttar Pradesh, who allegedly posed as her husband and owned the spa, were arrested in connection with the case by the Mizoram police in coordination with the Uttarakhand police on May 5. Describing the alleged exploitation of fellow Mizo women as “highly condemnable”, MHIP asserted that it would continue to pursue the matter to ensure the accused receive stringent punishment under the law.

Mizoram’s Lalenthangi Hnamte Wins National Florence Nightingale Award

Aizawl, May 13: Mizoram’s Lalenthangi Hnamte, popularly known as Maeni, has been honoured with the National Florence Nightingale Nurses Award for her exceptional service in grassroots healthcare. Currently serving at the Health and Wellness Centre in Lunglei district, Hnamte received the award from President Droupadi Murmu during the International Nurses Day ceremony in New Delhi on Tuesday. The award, regarded as one of the

country’s highest recognitions for nursing professionals, includes a certificate of honour, a medal, and a cash prize of ₹1 lakh. Hnamte was commended for her dedication, compassion, and contribution to public health delivery at the community level. Mizoram Governor Vijay Kumar Singh extended his congratulations, describing the achievement as a proud moment for the state. “This esteemed recognition honours her outstanding dedication,

compassion and selfless service in the field of public health. Being selected among only 15 awardees from across the entire country is a proud moment for our state,” he said. Singh added that Hnamte’s accomplishment stands as an inspiration to healthcare workers across India.

guided by divine purpose.

The chief minister emphasized Mizoram’s achievements, including being the first state

declared fully literate, ranking among the cleanest and least corrupt states, and making significant strides in tourism promotion. He also emphasized Mizoram’s reputation as one of the most peaceful states in the country, pointing out that a peace agreement was recently reached with the last remaining armed group. Dr. Paul commended the Mizoram government for its effective coordination with NITI Aayog and praised Lalduhoma’s lead-

ership, noting that the state is widely regarded by others as a model of peace and stability. State Tourism Minister Lalthinghlova Hmar, who joined the meeting, participated in discussions on upcoming joint initiatives, including a Tourism Conclave to be organised in partnership with NITI Aayog. Officials confirmed that a pre-conclave meeting will take place later this month in New Delhi to finalise plans.

During the discussions, NITI

Aayog officials outlined measures to strengthen Mizoram’s tourism policy, facilitate free training under the Institute of Hotel Management Ashok (IHM-A), and attract investors to the tourism sector, reinforcing the state’s agenda for sustainable development and growth. Criticizing ZPM, he said the party is perceived as a “pure virgin” since it has not governed the AMC, while its influence across Aizawl constituencies cantly.

Suspected Militants Attack Church Leaders in Manipur, Several Killed

● *Three Church leaders from the Kuki community were killed, and others injured, in an ambush on two vehicles in Kangpokpi district, Manipur.*
● *Security forces have initiated a search operation in the area following the incident.*

Imphal, May 13: At least three Church leaders, belonging to the Kuki community, were killed and several others injured after suspected militants ambushed two vehicles in Manipur’s Kangpokpi district on Wednesday morning.

A police official in Imphal said that unidentified armed cadres opened fire

on the two vehicles along Tiger Road in the hilly district, killing three persons on the spot.

According to sources, the victims were part of a delegation of senior clergy travelling from Churachandpur to Kangpokpi to attend an inter-association ecclesiastical meeting.

Security forces have reportedly moved into the area and launched a search operation following the incident. Authorities are yet to issue an official statement on the identities of the victims or the group behind the attack.

The Kuki Students’ Organisation (KSO) said that all the victims were Baptist Church leaders belonging to the Kuki community.

In a social media post, the KSO alleged that a Naga armed group ambushed the vehicles along the Kangpokpi — Churachandpur (Lamka) road while the victims were returning to Kangpokpi after attending the UBC Convention at Lamka. The KSO, however, claimed that four church leaders were killed and several others critically injured in the attack. The Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust (KOHUR) condemned the attack, alleging involvement of NSCN-IM cadres in collusion with ZUF, and termed it a “premeditated act” targeting peace efforts. The latest violence has raised fresh concerns over security in the hill districts of Manipur, which have



witnessed repeated incidents of armed clashes and attacks over the past year.

The incident remains under investigation, and further details are awaited.

Assures Justice and Aid to Victims Gaurav Gogoi Urges Amit Shah to Review Safety Measures for Northeast Citizens

Guwahati, May 13: Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi on Wednesday expressed concern over the alleged assault, molestation and racial abuse against two women from Assam and Bihar in Delhi’s Nehru Place area, urging Union Home Minister Amit Shah to strengthen institutional mechanisms for the safety and dignity of women and citizens from the North East in the national capital. In a letter to the Union Home Minister, Gogoi referred to the May 10 incident in which the two women were allegedly subjected to racist remarks, physical assault and molestation by a group of men near a hotel in Nehru Place.

Delhi Police have detained four individuals in connection with the case.

“I write to express deep concern over the recent incident reported from Nehru Place, New Delhi. where two women from Assam and Bihar were allegedly molested, assaulted, and subjected to racist abuse by a group of men in the early hours of 10 May 2026,” Gogoi said in the letter. According to media reports, the women were having tea outside a hotel when a group of men began catcalling and making derogatory racial remarks. What began as verbal harassment reportedly escalated into physical assault, with the women alleging that their clothes were torn and that they were violently abused in public.

Delhi Police subsequently con-

firmed that the women had been racially targeted and assaulted.

This incident is deeply disturbing not only because of its brutality, but because it reflects a recurring and deeply entrenched pattern faced by women and citizens from the North Eastern states in the national capital. “In light of these repeated incidents, I urge the Home Ministry to review whether the existing institutional mechanisms for the safety of North East citizens in Delhi are functioning effectively on the ground. While several measures exist on paper, recurring cases of racial harassment and violence indicate serious gaps in implementation, accessibility, and public confidence,” he said.

Himanta Biswa Sarma Maintains Lean Security Convoy, Eyes Caravan Model for Official Tours

Guwahati, May 13: As Narendra Modi pushes for austerity measures and reduced VIP convoys amid global economic uncertainty linked to the Iran war, Himanta Biswa Sarma is already operating with one of the leanest high-security convoys among Indian Chief Ministers.

Official sources said that despite being a Z Plus protectee, Sarma’s convoy within Guwahati consists of only six vehicles. Unlike many high-security political convoys seen across the country, his movement does not include separate ambulances or jammer vehicles.

Sources added that this is not merely a response to the

recent call for fuel conservation and austerity. Following the Prime Minister’s appeal for lower fuel consumption, smaller convoys, increased use of electric vehicles, and cost-cutting measures amid rising global oil prices linked to the West Asia crisis, Sarma has already been consciously following this minimal convoy model for the past five years. Officials familiar with the Chief Minister’s movement said he has continued maintaining the compact convoy structure even after assuming office for a second consecutive term. The convoy has been designed to remain operationally efficient while avoiding unnecessary vehicle deployment.

However, convoy size usually increases when the Chief Minister travels outside Guwahati, as district administration officials, police officers, and departmental teams join the movement during field visits and review meetings.

To address this, the Assam Chief Minister is now considering introducing a caravan-style official vehicle for district tours. According to sources, the proposal aims to accommodate district officials, senior bureaucrats, and key officers in one larger vehicle along with the Chief Minister during inter-district travel.

Officials said the new system is intended to reduce the number of accompanying ve-

hicles while also improving governance efficiency. Travel time could be used for administrative discussions, project reviews, and coordination meetings, helping save both time and resources.

The proposal aligns with the Centre’s broader austerity drive and could become a model for reducing VIP movement expenditure without affecting administrative coordination or security arrangements.

The move also reflects a growing trend among Bharatiya Janata Party-led governments to visibly project administrative minimalism and fuel-saving measures following the Prime Minister’s appeal for economic prudence.

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The Need for Better Civic Planning

Rapid urban growth has exposed weaknesses in civic planning across many towns and cities. Roads are expanded without proper drainage, residential projects emerge without supporting infrastructure, and public services struggle to keep pace. Poor planning results in recurring problems such as flooding, traffic congestion, water shortages, and waste accumulation. Short-term development priorities often overshadow long-term sustainability. Effective civic planning requires coordination between departments, data-driven decision-making, and consistent implementation. Cities cannot function efficiently without foresight. Development must be planned not just for present needs, but for future growth as well.

Public health and the arts: the all-singing, all-dancing science of ageing

Is it really news that the arts are good for you? On one level, the findings of a new study about the health benefits of engaging with music, dance and other artistic endeavours confirm what many of us feel instinctively that we already know. Creativity enhances life. That's why people admire and cherish it, in others and – if they have the confidence – in themselves.

But the results of one of the first attempts by researchers to quantify this benefit are fascinating all the same. The study, from a group of scientists at University College London, working with blood samples and survey data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study, showed that people who participated regularly in the arts aged more slowly than those who did not.

The benefits were found both among people who attended concerts or exhibitions and among those who sang in choirs or painted pictures themselves. Those who undertook an arts activity at least weekly were, on average, a year younger biologically than those who did so rarely. The effects were more pronounced in middle-aged and older adults, and in those who were involved in more than one type of activity.

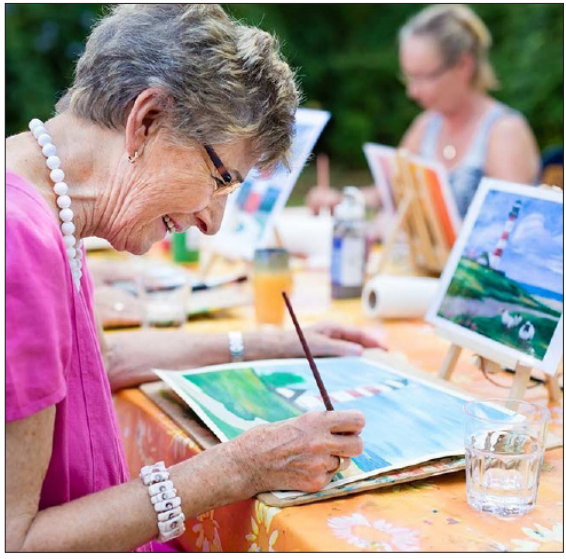
The tools used, known as “epigenetic clocks”, are relatively new and have some controversy attached to them. Questions about correlation versus causation can be asked about the ageing-related changes to DNA and other molecules that they measure, and also about the relationship between these biological markers and behaviour. It might not be that going to galleries makes you age more slowly, but that people who are ageing more slowly for other reasons go to galleries more often.

The researchers' call for the arts to be included in public health strategies is a bold one. Leisure facilities such as libraries and museums are widely viewed as contributing to the collective wellbeing of communities. But when health policy refers to lifestyle, it usually means more straightforwardly physical habits: diet, exercise, alcohol, smoking.

Does this study point towards a more holistic view of health and wellbeing, in which relationships and creativity are understood as basic human needs along with food and housing? Already, the rise of social prescribing has gone some way towards widening the range of activities that are officially viewed as conferring therapeutic benefits. Loneliness, in particular, has become a focus for policymakers as the adverse outcomes associated with it have become clearer.

Unsurprisingly, social interaction is one of the ingredients of a busy cultural life that could slow down ageing, according to this study. Others are cognitive and sensory stimulation, and stress reduction. To arts enthusiasts, this may seem like stating the obvious. Of course going out with friends to see a show puts a song in their heart. Do they need to know that doing such things regularly could affect them at a molecular level too, conferring similar benefits to exercise?

Perhaps not. The arts are not and never have been reducible to their impact on health. Since the earliest cave paintings, they have manifested the human capacity for imagination and connection, and have been a vital facet of communal and spiritual life. But there is radical potential in the discovery that the widely recognised psychological rewards of creativity may be mirrored in our cells.



The Padma barrage must address both water and sediment issues

As the Padma Barrage Project is placed before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for approval this week, an idea that has evolved since the 1960s may finally become a reality. The project, with phase-I costing Tk 33,474 crore and requiring a total investment of Tk 50,443 crore over seven years, will serve 6.5 crore people across the southwestern and northern regions of the country. The 2.1-kilometre structure that can store 2,900 million cubic metres of water in the Padma River demonstrates Bangladesh's engineering ambition and commitment to addressing water scarcity.

The project is designed to address the crisis that five decades of India's Farakka Barrage operation created. However, it will also potentially accelerate sediment starvation, thus threatening our delta's survival. As a geologist who witnessed the Mississippi Delta's catastrophic land loss, I recognise this pattern and the urgency of choosing a different path. The Farakka Barrage, commissioned in 1975 to divert Ganges water for Kolkata port, created a downstream catastrophe. A study by River and Delta Research Centre (RDRC) identifies 79 rivers as dead or dying in Bangladesh, while the state minister for shipping of the last Awami League government said in 2024 that 308 rivers have lost navigability. Khulna division has 25 dead or dying rivers, Rajshahi has 19, and Rangpur has 14; most of these rivers are dependent on the Ganges flows.

The Padma, which has historically been a deep river, now runs almost dry from February to May in many stretches. The Gorai River, once carrying a significant portion of the dry-season flow of the Ganges to southwest Bangladesh, receives virtually nothing now.

Water starvation forced unsustainable groundwater dependence. In the Barind Tract, the groundwater level has dropped by 10 to 15 metres in many regions. The 2025 government no-



tification prohibiting new irrigation wells in 4,911 villages across Rajshahi, Naogaon and Chapainawabganj acknowledges that extraction has become unsustainable. It was a politically difficult but necessary directive because continuing extraction will deplete aquifers beyond recovery.

The Padma Barrage responds to this crisis. It will store 2,900 million cubic metres for dry-season release, reviving the Gorai and Madhumati rivers and reducing salinity, which threatens the Sundarbans and the coastal regions. It will also help irrigate nearly 29 lakh hectares of farmland. These needs are legitimate and urgent, affecting millions dependent on water availability.

Yet, Professor Mashfiqus Salehin of Buet's Institute of Water and Flood Management warns the barrage “may cause upstream erosion and downstream sedimentation, similar to the effects of Farakka Barrage.” Other experts, too, say that the barrage would exacerbate silting and destroy the Padma River. The reservoir will trap sediment travelling downstream towards coastal areas where it is desperately needed.

Delta physics are well-established:

deltas exist in equilibrium between sediment deposition and land loss (subsidence and sea-level rise). When sediment delivery falls below land loss rates, deltas subside and drown. The Mississippi Delta loses one football field every 100 minutes because structures severed the sediment connection. The Nile stopped growing when the Aswan Dam trapped sediment. A 2023 Nature Communications study examined sediment delivery to the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta. The delta requires approximately one billion tonnes annually to counteract subsidence and sea-level rise.

Climate change with more intense monsoons could increase sedimentation delivery by 34-60 percent, but if planned dams and river diversification are fully implemented, delivery could decline by 15-80 percent, leading to catastrophic land loss in the delta. The study concludes that the fate of the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta is contingent more on policymakers' decisions than on climate change. Bangladesh still has the agency to prevent a Mississippi-scale catastrophe.

Coastal southwest Bangladesh has already lost 1 to 1.5 metres

of elevation from sediment starvation. Studies project significant submersion by 2050-2100 if delivery continues declining. The Padma Barrage compounds this as sediment escaping the Farakka deposits in Padma's reservoir, leaving coastal areas receiving even less.

The barrage is described as a “lifeline for the Sundarbans,” ensuring freshwater and preventing salinity that kills the mangroves. But the Sundarbans grows on land that is subsiding because of reduced sediment delivery. Providing water while cutting sediment creates a paradox. You cannot save a delta by providing water while cutting sediment that builds and maintains the land.

The objective of this article is not to argue against the Padma Barrage. Bangladesh's water crisis requires a large-scale response. This article presents a case for a fundamentally different design that addresses water and sediment as an integrated challenge. Sediment bypass systems exist and operate successfully worldwide. The Priest Rapids Dam on Washington's Columbia River was designed with a bypass to maintain downstream delivery. Similar approaches operate on

the Rhine River in Germany, as well.

Sediment bypass tunnels at Padma would allow controlled passage of sediment-laden flows during monsoon, while storing clear water for dry-season release. This is established engineering that requires recognising sediment as an essential resource. It also demands that the 1996 Ganges Treaty, set to expire in December this year, and which fails to recognise the importance of sediments, be replaced with an agreement that ensures the delta's survival. Building Tk 50,443 crore infrastructure to manage what the treaty was supposed to solve proves diplomatic failure. Therefore, any successor agreement must address sediment alongside water, require India's dams to include bypass systems, and establish monitoring with penalties when infrastructure traps sediment beyond the minimum threshold. Bangladesh's survival as a delta nation of 17 crore depends on sediment—the physical material maintaining land above sea level.

Internally, Bangladesh must manage received sediment effectively through channel re-excavation, distributary restoration, and controlled flooding, allowing the build-up of land. But even optimal internal management cannot compensate for 15-80 percent upstream loss.

The Padma Barrage demonstrates that Bangladesh possesses the capacity to implement large-scale infrastructure when survival demands it. The question is whether that framework enables solutions that take into account delta physics—both water and sediment—rather than forcing choices, solving one crisis while accelerating another. The window narrows once construction begins. The science is clear. The engineering is proven. What is required is political will to demand treaty transformation as well as internal action. The alternative is repeating Mississippi's trajectory: catastrophic land loss that restoration may arrive too late to prevent.

Why are so many farmers dying from lightning strikes



In other words, it strikes the tallest object in an open space.

Our farmers toil in vast, flat fields. In areas like the haors or beside open marshes, we often cannot see a single tall tree or structure for miles. Standing alone in a massive, empty expanse, the farmer inadvertently becomes the tallest object in the landscape. The immense electrical surge descending from the clouds inevitably finds them. To make matters worse, farmers naturally hold metal tools like sickles, weeders, and hoes. Because metal is highly conductive, the risk of disaster multiplies instantly, allowing the intense electric current to scorch a human body in a fraction of a second.

There used to be a time when the rural landscape of Bangladesh was dotted with tall palm, coconut, and betel nut trees. Planted

along the edges of fields, they acted as nature's own lightning arresters. An unspoken ecological harmony existed in our villages. Lightning would strike the thick, shock-absorbent bark of a palm tree rather than a human being. But driven by greed and a lack of foresight, we have indiscriminately chopped them down to feed the fires of brick kilns or sell them as timber. Vast agricultural lands have been stripped bare of their natural shields. Stripped of this ecological armour, farmers are quite literally working on the edge of death in this season.

The escalating climate crisis has poured fuel on the fire. Global warming is pushing the Earth's temperature upwards. Environmental scientists warn that for every one-degree Celsius rise in temperature, lightning strikes can

increase by 10 to 12 percent. A warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, leading to more aggressive cloud friction and consequently much stronger and more frequent lightning. While those of us in the cities can simply take cover under concrete roofs when the skies turn violent, the farmers labouring in the open have nowhere to hide. A cruel coincidence of weather and agricultural cycles also plays a fatal role. In Bangladesh, the intensity of Nor'westers and lightning peaks between April and June. The horror of this season is glaringly evident in recent numbers. By early May 2026, lightning had already claimed at least 72 lives across the country. On May 6 alone, eight people died across six districts. Just weeks prior, late April saw 14 farmers and labourers killed in a single day while harvesting

paddy.

This is the exact time when the Boro paddy harvest is in full swing across the vast haors of Sunamganj, Netrokona, Kishoreganj and other agricultural hubs. Farmers become desperate to bring home the crop they have nurtured all year. Even when black clouds loom, they refuse to abandon the fields, risking their lives to save the harvest from sudden flash floods. The sheer desperation of poverty and the deep love for their crops force them to stay in the open. When the sole breadwinner of the family dies in a flash of lightning, the entire household is pushed to the brink of starvation, and the entire nation loses a food producer. From a disaster science and management perspective, tackling this crisis requires a holistic approach blending structural and non-structural preparedness. Non-structural steps involve raising community awareness and empowering local youth to disseminate life-saving knowledge. Farmers need to understand that a darkening sky and distant thunder are immediate cues to seek safety. Structurally, we need a coordinated effort between the government, local socio-environmental organisations and NGOs. When thousands of labourers migrate to the haor regions for the harvest, emergency first aid camps must be established. An injured lightning strike victim can often be saved if CPR is performed timely. The Bangladesh government officially declared lightning a national disaster in 2016. While a

commendable step, effective implementation at the grassroots level remains painfully slow. If the farmer survives, the country survives. Our entire economy and existence lean on their shoulders. Therefore, it is high time we take rapid, science-backed action.

First, we must aggressively plant palm and other tall trees around agricultural lands and enact strict laws to protect them. Tree-planting initiatives must move beyond government ledgers and take root in reality. Second, it is imperative to build concrete shelters at regular intervals across the haors and vast agricultural zones, giving farmers a safe haven for when the sky turns hostile.

Finally, we must leverage modern technology. Projects to install lightning arresters in open fields should be fast-tracked. Simultaneously, early warning SMS alerts must be sent to farmers' mobile phones. Local information centres, volunteer groups, and even mosque loudspeakers can be utilised to broadcast immediate storm alerts.

Above all, we need a massive wave of public awareness. Survival tactics against lightning should be included in school textbooks and broadcast regularly across all media. We must convince our farmers that no crop is more valuable than their lives. A blend of awareness, ecological care, and the right technology can save our food growers from these premature deaths. Ensuring the safety of our farmers is not just a demand of the times but our collective moral obligation.

Despite BHEL shares reaching an all-time high, why does the analyst predict a decline of up to 65%



New Delhi: BHEL shares target price: Shares of Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) have been on a roll lately as the state-run capital goods major has surged as much as 67 per cent in the last one month, hitting its new all time highs, post its quarterly earnings, robust order book and strong demand for the products. However, select brokerage firms see up to 65 per cent fall in the stock. Shares of BHEL rose to Rs 408.90 on Friday, hitting its all time-high, commanding a market capitalization close to Rs 1.45 lakh crore. The stock has surged 67 per cent in month from Rs 245.20 in the first week of April, while it has nearly doubled investors wealth from its 52-week low at Rs 205.20 in little more than 8 months. BHEL shares are 40 per cent in 2026 so far, while the stock is up 50 per cent in the six months. The stock has delivered a solid 600 per cent return in the last five years, while the stock has zoomed more than 1,750 per cent in from its Covid-19 lows. Bharat

Heavy Electricals (BHEL) reported a 156 per cent YoY rally in the net profit at Rs 1,296.1 crore, while surged 37.2 per cent YoY to Rs 12,310.1 crore for the March 2026 quarter. Ebitda surged 111 per cent YoY to Rs 1,753.4 crore, with its margins increased 500 basis points to Rs 14.2 per cent for the quarter. BHEL’s growth during the quarter was driven by strong execution in its power segment which led to the sharp improvements in margins as well. Beside this The multibagger PSU player announced a final dividend of Rs 1.4 per share for its shareholders, highest amount in nearly 10 years. BHEL reported a strong uptick in execution in 4QFY26, as recent project wins contribution scales up to substitute for legacy projects. This is potentially reflecting an improvement in gross margin and cash flows at a faster pace than envisaged, said Kotak Institutional Equities. ”A large part of the margin expansion beyond gross margin appears to be driven by

provision write-backs and unrealized forex gains. We revise our fair value to Rs 140 (Rs 120 earlier), at broadly unchanged assumptions for thermal power ordering, near-term uptick in margins and build-up of opportunity in coal gasification,” it added. Its price target suggests 65 per cent fall in BHEL stock. Good accretion of orders and strong ordering pipeline will keep order inflows strong coupled with strong pick in execution from FY27E onwards. This will also help margins and return ratios to improve meaningfully over the next 2-3 years, it added. ICICIDirect has a ‘buy’ with fair value of Rs 460.

BHEL delivered a strong Q4FY26 performance driven by robust execution of its order backlog, while margin expanded supported by lower other expenses. BHEL has successfully commissioned 8.9GW of power capacity in FY26 reinforcing its positioning in the thermal space. Recent easing in localisation norms for HVDC is expected to support execution of key HVDC projects, said PL Capital.“With a robust order book of Rs 2.4 lakh crore, BHEL offers strong multi-year revenue visibility; however, sustained execution momentum and provision numbers remain a key monitorable.

The stock is currently trading at P/E of 40.4 times/27 times on FY27E/ FY28E. We roll forward to March 2028E and downgrade the stock to ‘reduce’ given the recent rally in stock, target price of Rs 321,” it added. The order inflow momentum is expected to sustain as the CEA has outlined a thermal capacity addition target of 97 GW by FY35, with incremental demand from replacement of 37 GW of ageing thermal plants that will cross 35 years of life by FY32, ICICIDirect. “We expect strong order inflow of Rs 1,23,000 crore over FY27-28E.”

Q4 profit triples, raises FY27 growth guidance to 80% MTAR Technologies jumps 10%

New Delhi: MTAR technologies’ net profit increased to Rs 44.23 in Q4FY26 from Rs 13.72 crore reported in Q4FY25. The company had reported Rs 34.68 crore profit in Q3FY26.The share price of MTAR Technologies has surged 10.04% in the intraday session today, a day after it announced its Q4FY26 results. The company has raised its FY27 revenue growth guidance to 80% from the earlier projection of 50%. The company also expressed confidence in securing large orders across its business verticals during FY27 In addition, MTAR Technologies expects its closing order book for FY27 to reach Rs 5,000 crore, significantly higher than the current order book of Rs 2,582 crore. MTAR technologies Q4FY26 high-



lights Consolidated revenue from operations of the company rose 67% year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 306 crore in Q4FY26, broadly in line with estimates. EBITDA surged 81% YoY to Rs 618 million, although it came

below analyst expectations of Rs 77 crore. The company also reported strong cash flow generation during the year. Cash flow from operations (CFO) nearly doubled, rising 94% YoY to Rs 2 billion in FY26. Meanwhile, net debt reduced to Rs 1.2 billion as of March 2026, compared with Rs 1.6 billion a year earlier.About MTAR Technologies MTAR caters to Clean Energy – Civil Nuclear Power, Fuel Cells, Hydel & Others, Aerospace and Defence sectors. The company has a long-standing relationship of over four decades with leading Indian organisations and global OEMs. MTAR has nine strategically based manufacturing units including an export-oriented unit each based in Hyderabad, Telangana.

Tejas Networks’ shares have decreased by 33% over

New Delhi: Shares of Tejas Networks Ltd were trading 0.20 per cent higher at Rs 473.85 in Tuesday’s late morning trade. Despite a 7.15 per cent rise over the past one month, the Tata Group-backed stock remains down 32.58 per cent on a yearly basis.On the earnings front, the company posted a wider consolidated net loss of Rs 211 crore for the quarter, against a loss of Rs 72 crore in the corresponding period last year.Ownly also does not offer any discounts. Revenue from operations plunged 82.5 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 333 crore in Q4 FY26 from Rs 1,907 crore in the year-ago period.Despite the weak financials, some market experts believe the recent recovery in the stock indicates selective buying interest at lower levels.“Tejas Networks, despite negative growth, has recently witnessed some buying action given the specific domain in which the company operates. This could be a bottom-fishing attempt. Investors with a high-risk appetite can add the stock on dips,” said Kranthi Bathini, Equity Strategist at WealthMills Securities.Ravi Singh, Chief Research Officer at Mastertrust, said the stock has recovered meaning-

fully from recent lows.“Tejas Networks has staged a sharp recovery from its Rs 300 lows. The Rs 390-400 zone is a key support area on any pullback. The major overhead resistance stands at Rs 550-570, and reclaiming that level would be the next structural milestone,” he stated. However, an analyst remains cautious on the near-term outlook. AR Ramachandran, a Sebi-registered research analyst at Tips2trades, said the stock appears technically weak despite being overbought on daily charts.“Tejas Networks is bearish but overbought on daily charts, with strong resistance at Rs 555. Investors should continue booking profits as the stock may slip towards Rs 427 in the near term,” he added.Tejas Networks is part of the Tata Group, with Panatone Finvest Ltd, a subsidiary of Tata Sons, acting as the majority shareholder. Meanwhile, both BSE and NSE have placed the stock under he short-term Additional Surveillance Measure (ASM) framework. Exchanges generally place stocks under ASM to alert investors about heightened volatility and speculative activity

Stocks making the biggest moves midday: Hindustan Zinc, Berger Paints, Dixon, Texmaco

New Delhi: Benchmark indices are stable in midday trade despite volatility across individual counters. The Nifty 50 held above 23,400, while the BSE Sensex was seen near the 74,560 mark. Stock-specific action dominated the market as investors reacted to earnings, policy changes, strategic announcements, and fresh order wins. From Hindustan Zinc and Berger Paints to Texmaco Rail and Dr Reddy’s Laboratories, several counters witnessed sharp swings during the session.Here are the top movers and shakers at this hour:Hindustan Zinc

Hindustan Zinc Ltd. share price rallied as much as 5.43% on May 13 after the government increased import duties on gold and silver as part of broader measures aimed at reducing precious metal imports amid rising pressure on India’s import bill during the ongoing West Asia crisis. By midday, Hindustan Zinc shares had touched Rs 676.80 on the NSE, while parent company Vedanta gained nearly 3% to trade around Rs 313.95. The Finance Ministry increased the overall customs duty on gold and silver to 15% from 6% by raising the social wel-



fare surcharge and agriculture infrastructure and development cess. The revised rates came into effect from May 13, only days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged citizens to avoid non-essential gold

purchases for a year. The metal space has been buzzing in trade today. Another key metal counter, MIDHANI or Mishra Dhatu Nigam is up 8% intra-day. The stock has moved in a bullish way, recording a

1-month return of approximately 17.91% to 26.46%.Berger Paints Berger Paints (India) Ltd. share price surged sharply on May 13 after the company reported strong March quarter earnings supported by improved product mix and lower raw material costs. Shares jumped as much as 9.27% during intraday.The paint maker reported a consolidated profit after tax of Rs 334.77 crore during Q4FY26, marking a 27.75% increase from Rs 262.05 crore reported in the corresponding quarter last year. Revenue from operations during the January-March 2026 quarter rose 6.06% year-on-year to Rs 2,868.03 crore from Rs 2,704.03 crore. Management commentary appeared to strengthen sentiment further. Berger Paints Managing Director and CEO Abhijit Roy said the company witnessed healthy volume growth of 11.8% during the quarter, supported by gradual demand improvement, softer raw material prices and better product mix. According to the company, the automotive segment performed well after GST reductions and lower financing costs improved demand conditions.

3 ‘Buy’ recommendations by Motilal Oswal, with 17% to 44% upside potential



New Delhi: “Management indicated that FY27 could potentially be the strongest year for Odisha discoms, supported by operational initiatives implemented over the past few years,” Motilal Oswal said in its report.The brokerage also noted that Tata Power’s FY27 capital expenditure guidance stood at Rs 25,000 crore after FY26 spending came below guidance due to transmission delays and right of way issues. It added that the company’s Noida and manufacturing expansion plans could support long-term earnings growth across renewable and power infrastructure businesses. Motilal Oswal Financial Services has retained its positive stance on select companies across utilities banking and electronics manufacturing after reviewing March quarter earnings and business trends for FY27. The brokerage has kept its ‘Buy’ rating on Tata Power Punjab National Bank and Dixon Technologies, citing expansion plans stronger operating metrics and improving earnings visibility over the next two financial years. The brokerage said Tata Power could benefit from additional rooftop solar growth and gains in Odisha distribution operations. Punjab National Bank remained among its preferred public sector lenders while Dixon Technologies

continued to attract confidence after reporting better-than-expected quarterly earnings and stronger export traction.Motilal Oswal on Tata Power: ‘Buy’Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. maintained its ‘Buy’ rating on Tata Power Company Ltd. with a target price of Rs 490, implying an upside potential of 17%. The brokerage said FY27 could turn into a strong operational year for the company as multiple business segments gather pace simultaneously.

According to the report, rooftop solar installations doubled year on year to around 1.7 gigawatt in FY26, while the company expects rooftop solar operations to grow another 50% to 60% in FY27. Motilal Oswal also pointed to the renewable energy pipeline where Tata Power plans to commission 2.5 gigawatt each in FY27 and FY28. The brokerage said Tata Power’s renewable energy business continued to gather momentum with management prioritising hybrid renewable projects and storage-led opportunities due to stronger return ratios. It also noted thatmodule manufacturing EBITDA more than doubled year on year in FY26, strengthening confidence in the company’s renewable manufacturing ambitions.

MMRDA achieves a significant tunnelling milestone This project is expected to reduce travel time by 90%

Mumbai: HDFC Bank, India’s largest private sector bank, is shifting from reactive patching to what it calls “secure software manufacturing”, embedding AI-led controls into development and threat detection as cyber risks evolve. CIO Ramesh Lakshminarayanan tells Kshipra Petkar how the bank is responding to the rapid rise of advanced AI models.From an industry perspective, how do you see what’s happening with AI right now?If you look at it from an industry perspective, this is a new type of opportunity that is coming. It’s not something to look at only from a risk angle. AI models are becoming intelligent by the hour. Over the last three to five months, the growth has taken a different trajectory because of the complex models that are coming in.It started with ChatGPT and OpenAI, then others came in, then you had the Chinese model DeepSeek shaking up the market. Now Anthropic’s Claude has started taking the lead. The leadership and

the leaderboards are changing very rapidly. It’s not like one company is saying, “I have the market.” That’s the good part. But because of the sophistication of these models — especially multi-agent capabilities — the risk dimension has changed. Mythos is an extension of the Claude models. It’s not built specifically for security, but because of the way it operates, it has major implications for security. While working on it, they found that it could identify vulnerabilities never discovered by humans. Zero-day vulnerabilities are usually found by ethical hackers or testers manually reviewing code. This was the first time a machine could find them at that speed. The second issue is sequencing. Earlier, attacks were sequential. You would find one vulnerability, patch it, then move to the next layer. Now the model can look across firewall, server, database and software simultaneously and sequence vulnerabilities together. It’s like a number lock — earlier

someone tried one digit at a time. Now all combinations are being evaluated in parallel. That’s the risk.How are governments responding?In India, discussions are happening at multiple levels. There is coordination between CERT-In, regulators and industry forums. Eventually, RBI may come out with an advisory to tighten patching and infrastructure review. It’s not about banning models. It’s about controlled deployment and ensuring the ecosystem is protected. The risks are no different for us. But we have taken several steps.First, a lot of our development has moved in-house. Around 1,500 of our technology staff focus on development. When you build your own software, you can secure it at the manufacturing stage itself. Security cannot be done after buying a product. We are bringing AI into our DevOps pipeline so that code gets scanned while it is being built. Second, we are reviewing patching strategies and infrastructure more rigorously.

We are looking at zero-day vulnerabilities and asking third-party vendors to do the same. Third, we are strengthening our red teams — ethical hackers who simulate attacks. Cybersecurity today requires deep engineering talent, not just policy-driven oversight. Fourth, we are accelerating zero trust architecture and micro-segmentation. Every packet entering the network is treated as untrusted. Even if someone gets in, their movement is restricted. Fifth, we are upgrading our Security Operations Centre (SOC). Traditional SOCs monitor and react. We are bringing AI capabilities so that suspicious traffic can be blocked immediately. Talent is critical. The person who can hack the system may not manage 100 people — but that person could be your most important resource. We are building what we call a security factory — recruiting specialised talent, going to colleges early and creating different career paths for engineers.

As the Iran War hangs over negotiations, Trump is scheduled to meet with Xi Jinping in China for a crucial summit



China: The first US president to visit China in over ten years, Donald Trump is scheduled to arrive in Beijing on Wednesday night in an attempt to restore his authority and reputation, which have been damaged by the war in Iran. Elon Musk of Tesla and Tim Cook of Apple are among the tech executives Trump will summon, and he intends to make deals that will make headlines. He has stated that he hopes Xi Jinping, the leader of China, would “give me a big, fat hug when I get there.”

As the third month of the conflict approaches, Washington is finding it difficult to transform a precarious truce into a long-term agreement as Tehran is strengthening its hold over the Hormuz Strait. Behind closed doors, US officials have been pressuring China, Iran’s largest oil consumer and one of the few nations with influence in Tehran, for weeks to put pressure on the Islamic Republic to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which typically transports about a fifth of the world’s oil supply, while agreeing to US demands for peace.

The US recently sanctioned several Chinese firms accused of assisting Iranian oil shipments and supplying satellite imagery allegedly used in Iranian military operations. China condemned the measures as “illegal unilateral sanctions” and invoked a rarely used blocking statute prohibiting Chinese enti-

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

orders in its history, will be announced during the trip, the Bloomberg news agency reported. Trump and Xi will also discuss creating a new board of trade to manage what China should buy from the US and vice versa. Beijing, too, has reasons to avoid escalation. China’s economy remains burdened by sluggish domestic demand and a prolonged property crisis, while the closure of the strait of Hormuz has exposed its heavy dependence on Middle Eastern energy supplies. Trump’s trip will be closely scrutinised in Taiwan for any sign of weakening US support. On Monday, he said he would speak to Xi about US arms sales to Taiwan, a departure from historic US insistence that it will not consult Beijing on its support to the island. Additionally, he maintained that a Chinese invasion of the island would be thwarted by his personal friendship with Xi.

He remarked, “I think we’ll be fine.” “I get along really well with President Xi. He is aware that I do not want it to occur. AI is another possible area of focus, and both nations are being urged to work together on international norms and protections. The independent US senator Bernie Sanders encouraged Trump and Xi to reach a consensus on permitting top scientists to exchange technological data and create “AI redlines” regarding risky behavior. Sanders stated: “Reagan and Gorbachev

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

“China has goals that they would like: to extend the ceasefire, to reduce tech restrictions on the imports of semiconductors and lower tariffs. But even if they don’t get much on any of those things, as long as there’s not a blow up in the meeting and president Trump doesn’t go away and look to re-escalate, China basically comes out stronger.”

The head of WHO advises nations to get ready for an increase in hantavirus cases

Europe: The president of the World Health Organization has advised nations to get ready for an increase in hantavirus cases. According to Parisian officials, a French lady who got the virus on board the MV Hondius had the most severe form of the illness and was placed on a ventilator. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus encouraged authorities to heed the WHO’s advice and guidelines, which include a 42-day quarantine and ongoing surveillance of high-risk contacts, and hailed Spain for its “compassion and solidarity” in taking in the crippled cruise liner. He stated during a news conference in Madrid on Tuesday, “There is currently no indication that we are seeing the beginning of a larger outbreak, but of course the situation could change and, given the long incubation period of the virus, it’s possible we might see more cases in the coming weeks.” After three passengers—a Dutch couple and a German national—died from the virus, the MV Hondius, which was traveling from Argentina to Cape Verde, became the epicenter of the outbreak. In rare instances of intimate contact, the hantavirus can transfer from person to person even though it is typically shared by wild rats. The WHO has so far confirmed nine cases of the Andes variant of the virus, among them a French woman and a US national who tested positive after being evacuated from the ship. Late on Tuesday, Parisian medical authorities said that the French patient had been transferred to critical care due to “the most severe form of cardiopulmonary presentation.” The 65-year-old had pre-existing conditions, Dr. Xavier Lescure told reporters, but he did not elaborate. “To hopefully help her get through this stage, she is on an artificial lung and a blood bypass,” he stated. One of the fourteen Spaniards who were evacuated off the ship and placed in quarantine at a military hospital in Madrid, according to the Spanish health ministry, tested positive for hantavirus and was exhibiting symptoms. “The patient who tested provisionally positive yesterday has been confirmed positive for hantavirus,” it said in a statement. “The patient presented with a low-grade fever and mild respiratory symptoms yesterday, but is currently stable and shows no evident clinical



deterioration.” Tedros, who was speaking alongside Spain’s prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, said more cases were likely to appear because of the degree of interaction between the passengers onboard the ship before the alarm was raised and the first case confirmed in a passenger on 2 May. “We would expect more cases because, as you may remember, the index case – the first case in the ship – was on 6 April ... [and] there was a lot of interaction, actually, with the passengers. And as you know, the incubation period is also six to eight weeks.” So because of the interaction while they were still in the ship – especially before they started taking some infectious prevention measures – because of the interaction, we would expect more cases because of some of what happened during the travel.” Tedros said individual countries were now responsible for their citizens after the evacuation, adding: “I hope they will take care of the patients and the passengers, helping them and also protecting their citizens as well. That’s what we expect.” According to the UK Health Security Agency, ten individuals from isolated South Atlantic islands linked to the hantavirus outbreak on cruise ships will be transported to the UK in case they contract the disease.

Following communication with people impacted, the group from the UK overseas territories of Saint Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha islands is being “brought to the UK to complete their

self-isolation as a precautionary measure,” according to officials. Whether British nationals are part of the group is currently unknown. Twenty British people from the MV Hondius, together with a German citizen of the UK and a Japanese passenger, are getting ready to depart the Arrowe Park hospital in Wirral. The WHO chief also paid tribute to the Spanish government and the people of Spain for responding to the plight of those onboard the ship after authorities in Cape Verde refused it permission to dock. More than 120 passengers and crew members were evacuated from Tenerife in a carefully coordinated operation on Sunday and Monday. “I’d like to thank Spain and, especially, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, for the outstanding leadership and coordination,” he said. “I know this is a model – and I hope other countries also learn from this – not just the obligation part but the compassion and solidarity that Spain has shown.” In a “divided and divisive world”, he added, “kindness and taking care of each other” were important. Sánchez echoed the sentiment, saying: “This world doesn’t need more selfishness, nor more fear. What it needs is countries that show solidarity and want to move forward.” The prime minister also offered his condolences once again to the family of a Guardia Civil officer who died of a heart attack while taking part in the evacuation on Sunday. Despite objections from the regional government of the Canary Islands, Spain’s central government

allowed the MV Hondius to anchor in port in Tenerife – and then, briefly, to dock – as it oversaw the evacuation operation. France’s health minister, Stéphanie Rist, said on Tuesday that while it wasn’t currently clear whether the hantavirus strain involved in the outbreak may have mutated, officials were “rather reassured”. Rist told the National Assembly: “There are things ... we do not know about this virus. We do not yet have the complete sequencing of the virus, which allows us to say with certainty today, even if we are rather reassured to date ... that this virus has not yet mutated.” The final planes carrying passengers and crew left the Canary Islands on Monday night and arrived in the Netherlands early on Tuesday. Dutch authorities said all 26 passengers onboard the first evacuation flight had tested negative for the virus. Two more repatriation flights landed later in the Netherlands, carrying 28 more evacuees who will also undergo quarantine. A Dutch hospital quarantined a dozen members of staff on Tuesday after urine and blood from a patient with hantavirus were handled without using the necessary protocols. The 12 people would be quarantined for six weeks, a spokesperson for the Radboudumc hospital in Nijmegen said, adding that the infection risk was very low and patient care continued uninterrupted. The MV Hondius, which refuelled and restocked in Tenerife, is now sailing back to port in Rotterdam with a crew of 25 as well as a doctor and nurse.

Charities demand that Labour keep its pledge to introduce the Clean Air Act

London: Before the king’s speech on Wednesday, a group of more than 60 charities urged ministers to propose a new clean air act that would prohibit the burning of wood, remove diesel vehicles from the road, and compel councils to reduce pollution. While in opposition in 2023, Labour promised a clean air act; however, this was removed from the final election platform, and the government has not taken any action to bring it back. “Dirty air is the biggest environmental health risk in this country,” stated Jemima Hartshorn, founder and director of the Mums for Lungs charity, one of the organizations responsible for the letter. Every year, air pollution costs us almost £27 billion and is associated with dementia, cancer, wheezing, and asthma. We are all being harmed by the polluted air, and the economy is also suffering. We do, however, know how to resolve this issue. Organizations with over 230,000 members made the request at the same time that one of the nation’s top authorities on health and pollution called on ministers to outlaw the burning of wood in cities. The Royal College of Physicians’ special adviser on air quality, Stephen Holgate, told the British Medical Journal (BMJ) that it was a “disgrace” that so few complaints regarding wood burning led to any kind of enforcement action. There were at least 15,195 complaints against wood burning in England between August 2024 and August 2025, but only 24 penalties were imposed. The origins of current air regulations can be traced back to a time when coal was the primary source of contaminated air. According to Holgate, “we now know that these particles [from burning wood] are at least as toxic, if not more toxic than those coming

from coal.” We now have regulations to prevent this, but they are never followed. However, this problem has resulted in thousands of complaints. Additionally, Hartshorn demanded that wood-burning stoves be phased out and that rural residents who depend on them be assisted in switching to greener, lower-carbon heating options like heat pumps. “Unnecessary wood burning is increasing in this country,” she stated, citing the recent surge in wood burner sales to urban residents. The BMJ also revealed that the Scottish government had been lobbied by the Stove Industry Association (SIA), which represents manufacturers of wood burners, before it abandoned plans to ban wood burners from new homes. The UK government was also lobbied, with eight meetings between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and SIA representatives between October 2021 and June 2024, when the Tories were in power.

Conservative ministers or Defra officials met clean air campaigners only twice over the same period. Since Labour took office, three meetings have been held between Defra and the SIA, and 14 with clean air campaigners. The government undertook a consultation on wood burning earlier this year, but campaigners said it was toothless, as it in effect ruled out any form of ban in favour of a potential health warning on stoves. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) refused to provide details of any meetings with the stove industry, as requested by the BMJ under the Freedom of Information Act. Last month, MHCLG issued new guidance to housebuilders – called the Future Homes Standard – that would al-

low wood-burning stoves to be installed in new housing, despite having indicated that the rules would require low-carbon heat pumps to be installed. Hartshorn said: “I am shocked by the lobbying and devastated on behalf of all the children, hundreds of thousands of them, who are attending hospitals, struggling to breathe and scared – because our air is making them sick.” She added: “This government committed to raising the healthiest generation of children ever. Well, this is the test: will they cut ties with the SIA and other industry lobbying bodies and finally do right by our children and public health? [They must] end the sale of new wood stoves and phase out all non-essential wood burning.” A spokesperson for the SIA said: “Our engagement with both the Scottish and UK governments has been conducted openly and in line with standard democratic processes followed by all sectors. “We fully recognise the importance of protecting air quality and public health, and we support proportionate, evidence-based measures that deliver meaningful emission reductions,” the spokesperson said.

“Our position consistently supports the transition to modern, Ecodesign compliant stoves, alongside the promotion of best practice in fuel use and stove operation.” The spokesperson added that a ban on wood burning would “negatively impact the UK’s manufacturing and rural economies”. However, Ecodesign stoves, though an improvement on older models, have been found to still emit air pollutants. A government spokesperson said: “Our new rules will reduce harms from domestic burning and we will continue to monitor pollution from this source to inform any future action.”

Experts believe the breakthrough in the US fentanyl epidemic may have begun in China

China: As Donald Trump visits to Beijing this week, fentanyl – and China’s participation in its supply chain – remain a source of contention in bilateral ties. At a UN meeting in March, the US accused China of failing to prevent its chemical industry from selling the precursors needed to make the potent synthetic opioid, while China claimed the US was shifting blame for its domestic drug problem. However, there are mounting indicators that the US fentanyl epidemic has turned a corner, with some experts believing that efforts in China had a significant impact. “There was a supply shock: fentanyl purity fell,” said Keith Humphreys, a Stanford University professor. “The question is: Why was there a supply shock? “And most indicators point to China.” When Trump returned to the White House, he made fentanyl a foreign policy priority, promptly designating the criminal groups trafficking it as foreign terrorist organizations and imposing tariffs on countries involved in its supply chain, including China, the primary source of fentanyl precursors, many of which are basic

chemicals with legitimate applications. However, by the summer of 2023, during the Biden administration, overdose deaths at the national level had already begun to decline. By November 2025, they had decreased by more than a third. Investigators are still attempting to figure out what caused the decline, but one explanation proposed by Humphreys and his co-authors in a new Science research relates it to efforts in China that may have produced a long-term interruption in the fentanyl supply chain.

The authors point to a dramatic fall in the purity of fentanyl being seized by US law enforcement from May 2023 to the end of 2024 – the latest data publicly available – which correlates with the fall in overdose deaths. A comparable drop in purity was seen in Canada, a different fentanyl market, implying that the explanation may be found in China, where they both receive their precursors. The claim that the flow of precursors was stopped is backed by accounts from 2024 of cartel chefs trying to get them, as well as the appearance of new and odd adul-

terants in fentanyl on US streets, implying that those cooks were experimenting with alternate synthesis paths. However, there are significant cautions. For starters, it is difficult to determine which of China’s self-reported interventions is responsible. Furthermore, it is uncertain if the drop in purity is what caused the drop in overdose deaths. Nonetheless, Liu Pengyu, the spokesperson at the Chinese embassy in Washington, said in a statement that China was glad to see fentanyl overdose deaths had decreased and noted that the US government’s 2025 National Drug Threat Assessment “implies that Chinese government efforts have made [a] contribution to addressing the fentanyl problem in the US”. Henrietta Levin, who was director for China on Biden’s National Security Council, said her former colleagues saw the Science paper as showing that their pressure on China had worked. “I think China could have done more,” said Levin. “But what they did do mattered.” Further supply side interventions are likely to be on the agenda at this week’s summit.

‘Think outside the bots’: How to stop AI from turning your brain to mush

Years ago, I forced myself to start using AI as often as possible. If I was going to be writing about it, I also had to use the technology. But an emerging crop of studies over the last year or so have me worried – am I harming my brain in the process?

These studies suggest people who lean too much on tools like ChatGPT could have problems with creativity, attention span, critical thinking, memory and more. Others raise concerns that AI users could be surrendering the cognitive friction that makes thinking sharp, and that as a society we may have fewer original ideas. But the science on this is brand new, and we don’t have the answers. So should we be worried?

“On a high level, yes,” says Adam Green, a professor of neuroscience and director of the Laboratory for Relational Cognition at Georgetown University in the US. There’s a lot of nuance here, but AI will do work that used to require mental labour. “There’s plenty of evidence that if you are not doing as much of the actual thinking, then your capability to do that kind of thinking is going to atrophy.”

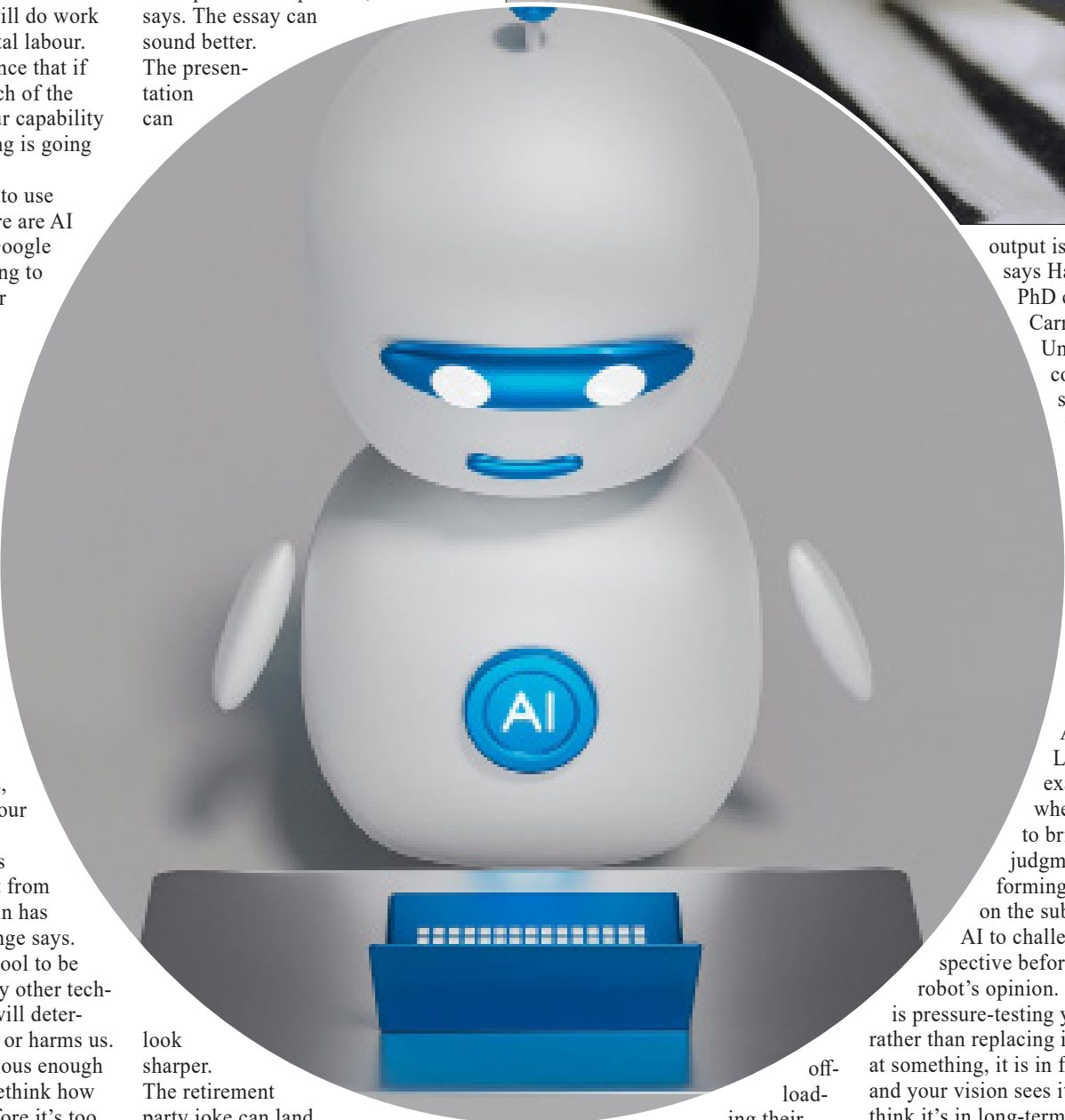
Even if you don’t seek to use ChatGPT or Claude, there are AI responses at the top of Google and tech giants are rushing to shove more of it onto our phones. The technology is getting hard to avoid, but there are steps you can take to avoid the biggest potential risks. This isn’t all or nothing though, according to Jared Benge, a professor and clinical neuropsychologist at Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin. Using AI doesn’t automatically mean it’s going to be bad for you. For example, if AI frees up your brain space for other more important things, that might be great for your cognition.

“Why do we think AI is going to be that different from other things that our brain has already adapted to?” Benge says. “It’s not inherent to the tool to be good or bad.”As with any other technology, how we use AI will determine whether it helps us or harms us. But the concerns are serious enough that you might want to rethink how you use these tools – before it’s too late.

With this in mind, I spoke with some leading experts in this field to find out how they think we should use AI to ensure it doesn’t dull our minds. Twenty years ago, an idea cropped up that overreliance on technology might cause some kind of “digital dementia” resulting in the deterioration of short-term memory and other cognitive processes. Benge recently co-authored a meta-analysis that looked at 57 studies covering

more than 411,000 adults. All told, he and his co-author found no evidence for digital dementia. Technology use actually seemed to reduce the risk of cognitive impairment.

But that doesn’t mean there’s nothing to fear.Studies have found that people who rely on satellite navigation like GPS stop building mental maps of their surroundings and their spatial memory continues to decline over time. A similar phenomenon called the “Google Effect” emerged when search engines took over. Apparently, we’re less likely to remember information that we find using a search engine because it takes so little effort. It seems the brain gets worse at tasks when we outsource them. And AI is the most powerful outsourcing tool of all time. “What’s happening with AI is that it’s giving us, for the first time, an easy way to trade process for product,” Green says. The essay can sound better. The presentation can



look sharper. The retirement party joke can land perfectly. But the mental work, the struggle, the false starts and that moment when something finally clicks is exactly what your brain needs. “It’s like you’re at the gym and a robot lifts the barbell for you,” he says. “You get nothing.”So how can you use AI and still give your brain a work out?

One recent study found heavier users of AI scored significantly worse on a standard critical thinking test, apparently because they’re used to



output is great or not,” says Hank Lee, a PhD candidate at Carnegie Mellon University who co-authored the study. “That’s the danger.”

The fix starts before you open the app. If you wouldn’t trust a random stranger’s answer to a question, you shouldn’t trust AI either, says Lee. Those are exactly the topics where you need to bring your own judgment first. Try forming a rough view on the subject and using AI to challenge your perspective before you get the robot’s opinion. That way AI is pressure-testing your thinking, rather than replacing it. “If you look at something, it is in front of you and your vision sees it, you often think it’s in long-term memory when it is not,” says Barbara Oakley, an emeritus professor of engineering at the University of Oakland in the US who studies how the brain learns.

There is some early research to suggest that AI can mess with your ability to retain information. A survey of 494 students also found who used ChatGPT more often were more likely to report memory loss. Self-reported assessments aren’t hard science, but other research, such as an unpublished 2024 study, reveals that

priming your brain with some light problem solving before using an AI chatbot can improve what you learn from the AI.

When you’re asking AI for your information you need to remember, it’s also worth slowing down to engage with it. Take notes – ideally by hand, but typing them out works too. You can even ask the AI to quiz you, or to come up with flashcards. The work makes it stick. It sounds fussy, but friction is the point. AI is remarkably good at coming up with ideas. That’s the problem. Research suggests that people who use AI for creative tasks produce ideas that are more predictable and less original than people who don’t. This could be weakening your ability to be creative.

Your brain builds creative capacity by making unexpected connections, Green says. Hand that job to AI, and you skip the workout. “We’re worried about losing your creative muscle,” says Green. “AI is tricking us in a number of ways to make us think that it is actually making us more creative.” One approach to overcome this is to put your own ideas down on paper first, even if they’re rough. Spend more time with a blank page and write whatever comes. The quality doesn’t matter. What matters is that your brain is making the connections, and reaching across your own experiences, memories and knowledge to produce something only you could have come up with. That’s the workout. Then use AI to develop, poke holes in or refine what you’ve got. You’ve made it this far into the article. Well done. But if your attention is starting to wander, you’re not alone. It could be that my writing is boring you. Some research, however, also suggests the onslaught of technology is making

it harder for us to focus. AI could compound the problem: answers are at your fingertips and with plenty of opportunities to skip difficulty and discomfort.

But you can apply a similar logic to the other tips here: do things the slow way on purpose. Don’t make ChatGPT summarise that long article. Sit with a hard problem before you ask a robot. Let yourself get bored. Unpleasant is the goal. That’s your brain learning to tolerate, and eventually enjoy, the friction that deeper thinking requires. I’m not here to tell you to stop using AI chatbots like ChatGPT, Claude or Gemini. But I’m forcing myself to be more thoughtful when I reach for them to try and keep my brain in the driver’s seat.

And that could leave me – and you – in a better position in the future. Green says human brains are structurally different from AI in ways that really matter: we make connections that are personal, unexpected and genuinely novel in ways that digital probability machines simply can’t replicate. “The distinctness and diversity of human ideas is going to be the great value add in the coming years,” he says. Green predicts that forcing ourselves to “think outside the bots” will become a natural survival impulse to make it in society.

And, as Benge points out, we’ve been down this road before. “Our brains have always adapted to technology. We adapt all the time. It is our strength as a species,” he says. “Have we lost the ability to run marathons because we have cars? No. It becomes something that humans do because we want to do it.” The tools change. But apparently, the desire to think, create and figure things out for ourselves is harder to automate.

Google unveils Googlebook, a new line of AI-native laptops

Google on Tuesday unveiled Googlebook, its new line of laptops built around Gemini, Google’s flagship family of AI models. The tech giant is working with partners like Acer, Asus, Dell, HP, and Lenovo to make the first Googlebooks in a variety of shapes and sizes.

The company says the Googlebook, set to launch this fall, is the first laptop designed from the ground up around Gemini to offer personal and proactive help.

Googlebooks will ship with “Magic Pointer,” a new AI-powered cursor with Gemini built in. Rather than just pointing and clicking, wiggling the cursor will surface quick, contextual suggestions based on what’s on your screen. For example, if you point at a date in an email, you can quickly set up a meeting. Or, if you select two images, like your living room and a new couch, you can visualize them together.

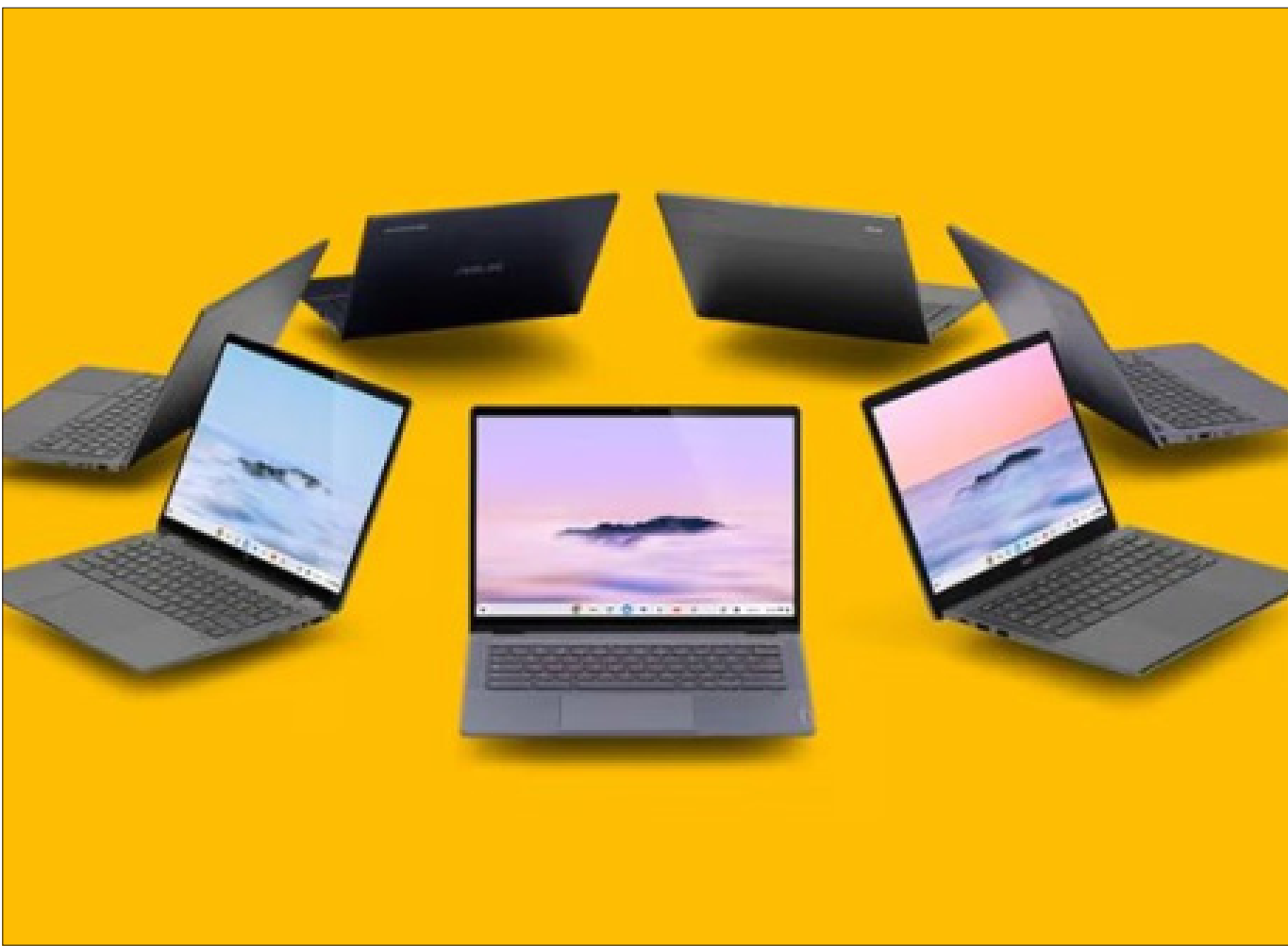
“We thought, we can take Gemini Intelligence and make the pointer truly smart and intelligent,” said Alexander Kucher, Google’s senior director of Android tablets and laptops, in a briefing with reporters. “As you wiggle and you move over

the screen, it will tell you what it can interact with, and contextually offer you the actions that you can do ... It really exemplifies how we think about AI features throughout Googlebooks. It’s built in, but not in your face.”

The new laptops will also be compatible with Android phones, allowing people to use apps from their phone directly from their Googlebook. For example, if you’re using your laptop and remember you need to complete your daily Duolingo lesson but don’t want to reach for your phone, you can access the app directly on your laptop instead.

Additionally, users will be able to easily access files from their phone directly through Googlebook’s file browser, allowing them to view, search, or insert them directly on their laptop.

Users will also be able to use Google’s new “Create your Widget” feature on Googlebook to build custom widgets by prompting Gemini. Gemini can also pull information from the web and connect with Google apps like Gmail and Calendar to build a single, personalized dashboard. For example, if



you’re planning a family reunion in Berlin, it can gather

your flight and hotel details, surface restaurant reservations,

and even add a countdown. The bigger story here may be

what Googlebook replaces. The unveiling of Googlebook

comes 15 years after Google introduced the Chromebook -- the affordable, browser-based laptop that became a fixture in schools and workplaces worldwide. The new Googlebooks will essentially succeed the Chromebook, although the company won't outright say so.

A Google spokesperson told TechCrunch in an email that the company plans to continue supporting current Chromebook users, with devices receiving updates through their existing support commitments. The company added that many Chromebooks will also be eligible to transition to the new experience but didn't share specifics on what this would look like.

Google isn't just refreshing its laptop lineup -- it's beginning a long transition away from ChromeOS, the platform it built its laptop presence on, and toward a new Android-based operating system with AI built in at the foundation. And with the biggest names in PC hardware already signed on, this is a platform play as much as a hardware one -- and a direct answer to Microsoft, which has been pushing its own AI-native Copilot+ PCs since 2024.

ENTERTAINMENT

Following her debut, Sara Ali Khan remembers her mother Amrita Singh's warning



Mumbai: In a recent interview, Sara Ali Khan, who is now promoting her movie *Pati Patni Aur Woh Do*, discussed the argument between success and failure. After her outstanding start, she remembered her mother Amrita Singh's priceless warning. She also discussed how she deals with both success and dis-

appointment in a challenging industry like filmmaking. In her first few movies, Sara left a lasting impression. But when her movies didn't do well at the box office, she immediately came under fire. "I know that I got a lot of love very early in my career, very, very early," Sara said, recalling her mother's instruction.

In fact, my mother used to say to me, "This is very scary," because it was a lot and happened overnight. Then followed two movies that were actually scarier and didn't show me that love." "So, I was like, 'Okay, what's happening?' But I've grown to see that if you do good and honest work, the audiences will

give you love for that," Sara continued. Sara also thinks it's important to shut out the noise and offer constructive criticism. "You simply keep working and hope for the best."

The noise doesn't bother you. "What if this is constructive criticism? Where do people have a point?" is something you must consider. All well, so perhaps this is real. Sara remarked, "Maybe I should be more conscious of my surroundings. Maybe I shouldn't just let my personality be so loud that people won't take me seriously." In 2018, Sara Ali Khan debuted alongside Sushant Singh Rajput in *Kedarnath*. The actor received scathing criticism after his following two films, *Love Aaj Kal* and *Coolie No. 1*, failed miserably at the box office. The film, which was directed by Mudassar Aziz,

is a spiritual follow-up to his 2019 film *Pati Patni Aur Woh*. Prajapati (Ayushmann), a man torn between three ladies (played by Sara, Rakul Preet Singh, and Wamiqa Gabbi), is the protagonist of the comedy of errors. Despite its title, *Pati Patni Aur Woh Do* is a family-friendly movie, and the 30-year-old expressed her excitement for it. Sara dismissed the allegations of adultery and invited the audience to see the movie as a communal experience. "You can watch it with your grandparents and kids. You don't need to close their ears or eyes."

They are able to see the entire movie. It's been a long time since I've felt like there is a community watching films in theaters that are wholesome and provide a shared experience." On May 15, the movie opens in theaters.

Mouni Roy Responds To Rumors Of Suraj Nambiar's Divorce



Mumbai: Since rumors of a split surfaced, Mouni Roy and Suraj Nambiar's four-year marriage has been the subject of intense public scrutiny. Mouni used an Instagram Story on Wednesday to subtly address the rumors. "Humbly requesting all the media houses to not publish false narratives and give us space and privacy." She included an emoji of folded hands and a "please" in her statement. Mouni's tweet was made in response to social media users noticing that the pair had unfollowed one another on Instagram, which sparked rumors of a divorce.

When Suraj seemed to have erased his Instagram profile and Mouni deleted photos of him from hers, the rumors got even more intense.

Mouni sent a birthday message for her closest friend and confidante, Roopali Kadyan, before responding to the continuous discussion. Many people have taken the opening line's half phrase, "Come ruin or rapture," as a mysterious message concerning the circumstances. On January 27, 2022, Mouni Roy tied the knot with Suraj Nambiar in Goa. The couple enjoyed both a traditional Malayali

and a Bengali wedding after a number of enjoyable rituals like haldi and sangeet. A pool party was held after the ceremony.

Bengaluru native Suraj Nambiar is an investment banker and businessman. Before he married Roy, he supposedly resided in Dubai. Before rumors of their breakup surfaced, Mouni and Suraj shared romantic photos on their individual Instagram profiles about everything from special occasions to date nights and trips.

Mouni Roy, a well-known figure in Indian television, has been in a number of series, including *Naagin*, *Devon Ke Dev...*, *Mahadev*, and *Kasturi*. She has also taken part in reality series such as *Zara Nachke Dikha*, *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa 7*, and *Nach Baliye 6*. Recently, she served as the host of *Temptation Island*. She has appeared in movies like *Made in China* and *Gold* in addition to *Brahmastra*.

Ajay Devgn remembers performing the scariest stunt of his life



Mumbai: One of the most iconic performances ever is Ajay Devgn's well-known "split" while standing on two bikes in *Phool Aur Kaante*. The Drishyam actor recently talked about doing it without any cables or computer-generated imagery. It was also his first stunt. "Standing on two bikes for *Phool Aur Kaante* was the first stunt of my life," Ajay Devgn told Va-

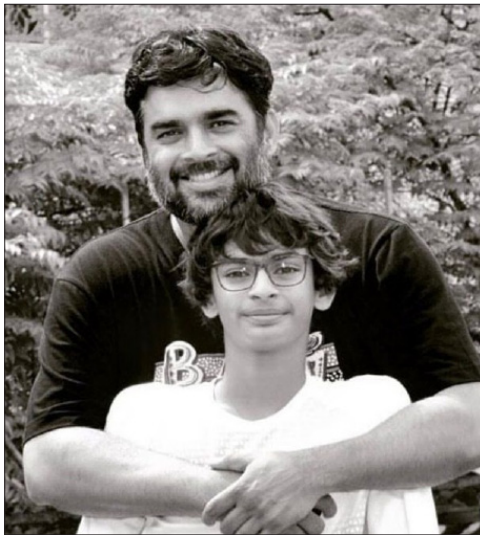
riety India. It was quite frightening at the time because there was no CGI, no cables, and the motorcycles needed to be coordinated."

He also stated, "I mean, it was not about doing a split; it was about the bikers also coordinating and riding in sync." Ajay Devgn also praised legendary actor Amrish Puri, with whom he co-starred in *Phool Aur Kaante*. "Aside from San-

ju (Sanjay Dutt), Salman (Khan), and everyone else, I would say that my first movie was with Amrish ji (the late actor Amrish Puri)," he stated.

He was truly a treasure. He was older than me and a very senior person." "I used to touch the feet of the only guy in the industry, but we were close friends. He would become angry with me if I told him anything, and then he would return to me and begin to laugh as well. Aside from all of my buddies, that bonding has always been fantastic," Ajay Devgn continued. Regarding his career, Ajay Devgn is working on an ensemble cast for Rohit Shetty's *Golmaal 5*. He also plans to release *Drishyam 3* in Hindi.

R Madhavan explains why he didn't give his son Vedaant any free time till he was fifteen



Mumbai: Despite growing up in a wealthy household, actor R Madhavan has frequently spoken instilling strong morals in his son Vedaant Madhavan. Madhavan, who married Sarita Birje in 1999, is the father of Vedaant, an

international swimmer who has represented India at several competitions. Madhavan discussed contemporary parenting, social pressure, and the parenting guideline that influenced his son's upbringing in a recent interview with Radhika Gupta for ACKO's 100 Year Life Project. Madhavan stated that appreciation and knowledge of privilege were two of the most important skills he wanted Vedaant to learn. "I made sure that Vedaant acknowledged the liftman, the guard, the drivers, you know, and not call them aayas and stuff like that. Maybe not as much as my friends, but definitely acknowledge them." Instead, call them didis.

And I made sure that my work was done if the watchman said, "You are a very polite child, he always says namaste to me." After residing in Canada for many years, Madhavan also revealed a parenting lesson that has stuck with him. He remembered living in a community where drug and alcohol abuse, as well as adolescent pregnancies, were prevalent among youth. He did, however, observe a certain family whose kids were grounded and disciplined in spite of their

surroundings. Many years later, I chance to question the woman of the family, 'How did you manage to do this?' She also gave me some advice, which I heeded to the letter, and it worked wonders for my son. "Don't give your child free time," she said. "You know, indulge him or her in whatever they want to do, as long as they're doing it with passion," she remarked. Make sure they don't have free time till they are 15 or 16 years old, even though their interests and level of dedication will fluctuate.

Make sure they transition from one task to the next as a habit. It might be enjoyable. I hope it's enjoyable.

The youngster will detest it, therefore it shouldn't be a chore," he remembered. Regarding his career, R Madhavan last appeared with Ranveer Singh, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal, Sara Arjun, and Rakesh Bedi in *Dhurandhar: The Revenge*. The initial movie debuted in theaters on December 5, 2025, while the latest version was released on March 19. On May 14, Netflix worldwide and JioHostar in India will release Part 2 of the espionage saga.

Raina Samay roasts The latest song by Varun Dhawan from Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai

Mumbai: Comedian Samay Raina is back, and in a big way, after enduring a turbulent year after his show *India's Got Latent* scandal. Samay has now taken a light-hearted jab at Varun Dhawan's new song *Wow* from his movie *Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai* after making fun of comedian Sunil Pal on *The Great Indian Kapil Show*. What's the drawback? In front of Varun Dhawan, he did it. Varun just posted a video of himself and Samay to his Instagram Story. In the video, Varun was seen promoting his song, which is sung by Kiran Bajwa and Harrry Sandhu. The song has gained a lot of popularity on social media, with many admirers dancing and singing along. "Aise nahi chalega gaana yaar (This will not work)" is Samay's

cheeky comment when he interrupts Varun while he is crooning his song in the video. In response, Varun asked, "Why? Songs like this, in my opinion, work. "Accha gaana banao, apne aap chalega yaar (Make a good song, it will work itself)," Samay said with his characteristic dry humor. "S**t yaar, mujhe laga chal hi jaata aise (I thought it would work)" Varun retorted. But after Samay made a sly comment, Varun too refused to let him go. "What an a**hole wow" is the caption he wrote after posting the video. Bollywood stars responded to the image. Gauhar Khan said, "Hahahaha I love Samay," in response to Karan Johar's laughing emoji comment. Janhvi Kapoor wrote, "Why u put this iron man design on ur chest?" in reference to Var-



un's gym outfit. The comedian avoided the public for a while after Ranveer Allahbadia's contentious remark caused Samay to cancel his well-liked YouTube program *India's Got Latent*.

In his stand-up comedy special "Still Alive," which he just uploaded to YouTube, he discussed his struggles dealing with the fallout from the scandal. The video has sur-

passed 60 million views on the platform and was widely praised by viewers. David Dhawan and Varun Dhawan will reconnect as father and son in *Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai*. The film is directed by David Dhawan, yet Varun is the main character. Pooja Hedge and Mrunal Thakur play major roles in the movie as well. On June 5, it will open in theaters.

Namashi Chakraborty Remembers Being "Shooed Out" at the Bengal Files event in Kolkata

Mumbai: May 15 will be very memorable for Namashi Chakraborty. One of his films, *The Bengal Files*, is eventually scheduled to open in West Bengal on May 15, 2026, following months of debate and excitement, while his next picture, *Aakhri Sawal*, is preparing for a national theatrical release on the same day. On September 5, 2025, *The Bengal Files* debuted in theaters throughout India; however, it was not yet available in West Bengal. The Vivek Agnihotri film is finally scheduled to open in theaters throughout Bengal on Friday, following the BJP's significant victory in the most recent state elections. Namashi talked about how emotional the event is for him during *Aakhri Sawal* promotions, recalling the reported opposition the team encountered last year. "I'm thrilled the movie is finally coming out. I recall that we were not even permitted to film the trailer for *The Bengal Files* when we traveled to West Bengal for its August premiere. We were dangerously close to being expelled from the event. At that moment, I realized that West Bengal's democracy was on the verge of collapse," Namashi remarked. The actor said, "But I am so glad that now the film is finally coming out and I hope people in West Bengal, not just Hindus but every person living in Bengal, watches the film because



the truth doesn't have a religion, the truth is just the truth." Namashi is also anticipating the release of *Aakhri Sawal*, which stars Amit Sadh, Neetu Chandra, and Sanjay Dutt in the key roles. Amit Sadh, who plays a journalist in the movie *Aakhri Sawal*, talked about sharing screen time with Sanjay Dutt during the same conversation. He also recalled an intense moment from the sets of the movie. Amit recalled a scene from the filming where Namashi's character and Sanjay Dutt's character got into a furious altercation. While carrying out the scene in front of Dutt, Namashi transformed into his full form and became incredibly noisy. Amit recalled how the actor became anxious as soon as the scene ended. "Cut bolte

hi usne haath jod liye aur sir, sir, sir karne laga (He started apologising to Sanjay Dutt, kept saying 'sir, sir, sir' after cut)," Amit added. Amit said that he could fully identify with the emotion since he had gone through a similar experience when playing opposite Amitabh Bachchan in *Sarkar*. He said, "I know exactly how he feels because I also got carried away in a scene when I was filming with Bachchan Saab in *Sarkar* and then realized Shahenshah himself was sitting in front of me." "We have all grown up watching his films. To share screen space with Sanju sir is a huge honor," Amit continued, describing his collaboration with Sanjay Dutt as an honor. *Aakhri Sawal* is presented by Nikhil Nanda and produced

by Nikhil Nanda and Sanjay Dutt under the direction of National Award-winning director Abhijeet Mohan Wang.

Puneet Nanda, Dr. Deepak Singh, Gaurav Dubey, and Ujjwal Anand are co-producers of the movie. The team is now traveling to Kolkata for a major press conference on May 14 in advance of the film's premiere, in response to the huge national excitement surrounding it. Mithun Chakraborty, the father of Namashi Chakraborty and a seasoned superstar, will be joining the ensemble for the special promotional event, adding to the excitement. It's interesting to note that while both Mithun and Namashi Chakraborty appeared in *The Bengal Files*, they did not share screen time.

The untitled comedy starring Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan is scheduled for release on December 4

Mumbai: Filmmaker Anees Bazmee is collaborating with actors Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan on an untitled comedy that will hit theaters on December 4, 2026.

According to a press release, the movie is a "big-screen family entertainer" and is produced by Shirish Reddy and Kuldeep Rathore in association with Sri Venkateswara Creations and Cape of Good Films. Alongside Vijay Raaz and Sudesh Lehri, Raashii Khanna is also featured.

The film's Kerala schedule



has just been completed by the producers.

Last week, Akshay Kumar also posted a photo of himself with Vidya Balan and Raashii Khanna on social media to announce the completion

of the Kerala schedule. "Keralam schedule wrapped," the caption said. Nothing compares to working in a lovely setting with nice colleagues. Many thanks to my amazing co-stars Vidya, Raashii, Cho-

ta Rajpal, and the entire team, as well as to our director Anees Bazmee for the insanity behind the camera! This one has been exceptional.

Kumar and Balan, who previously starred in the 2007 horror comedy *Bhool Bhulaiyaa*, *Heyy Babyy*, and *Mission Mangal*, are reunited in this movie. *Bhooth Bangla*, Kumar's most recent creation, came out in April. Alongside Saif Ali Khan, he will next appear in *Haiwaan*. Raja Shivaji starred Balan. Riteish Deshmukh is the director of the movie, which came out on May 1.

Akhilesh Yadav Regarding the Death of His Half-Brother Prateek Yadav

New Delhi, May 13: Akhilesh Yadav, the leader of the Samajwadi Party, expressed his “deep sadness” over the passing of his half-brother Prateek Yadav on Wednesday.

“The passing of Prateek Yadav is deeply saddening!” the former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh wrote in a Hindi X post. May God grant the departing soul serenity. “Humble homage”On Wednesday, 38-year-old Prateek Yadav passed away in Lucknow. At the Lucknow Civil Hospital, he was pronounced dead. Initial observations indicated that the body showed no obvious signs of injury. For a considerable amount of time, Prateek Yadav experienced lung issues. He was undergoing treatment for a pulmonary blood clot. His family promptly took him to the Civil Hospital when his condition deteriorated in the morning and he stopped responding.Yogi Adityanath, the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, expressed his condolences to the family, calling the “sudden demise” “extremely heartbreaking”.

The late Mulayam Singh Yadav, the founder of the Samajwadi Party, and his second wife Sadhna were the parents of Prateek, 38.A team of four medical professionals has been assem-

bled by the Chief Medical Officer of the Lucknow Civil Hospital to perform the post-mortem. This team procedure, which should take 30 minutes, will determine the cause of death. In order to determine the cause of death, a group of medical professionals at King George Medical University (KGMU) will also conduct a post-mortem examination. Drs. Mausami and Shivli, two specialists, will make up the team. They have been designated especially to answer any questions or concerns that might come up in the early phases of the examination.



An agency that operated night shelters in Delhi and paid salaries to fictitious workers is booked by the CBI

New Delhi, May 13: The Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), which runs night shelters in the nation’s capital, is accused of operating and managing them irregularly.

In 2023, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) opened a case. The shelter management authority (SMA), which was in charge of assigning workers, including supervisors, caretakers (for three shifts), sweepers, women security guards (for women’s shelters), and relievers for all staff, hired fictitious workers who never worked at shelters, falsified their attendance records, and credited their salaries to their accounts, according to a preliminary investigation into the matter. In its first information report (FIR), which was filed on April 27 and recently made public, the agency named Suhail Khan, president of Sofia Educational and Welfare Society—the

SMA awarded the work for managing the night shelters—two other private individuals, Amir and Sonu Kushwaha, and unidentified public servants. The federal government began looking into the discrepancies in May of last year as part of a preliminary inquiry (PE).The Delhi government oversees DUSIB, and in 2023 Sofia Educational and Welfare Society was awarded the contract to manage night shelters under Cluster 1 and 2.

At that time, Delhi was ruled by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). “An investigation found that some people were listed as workers (sweepers/caretakers) in different night shelters, and their enrollment was processed in the records, including ESIC benefit issuance.” It was discovered that their bank accounts were being credited with set monthly amounts, which were then taken out and given back in cash to the indi-

viduals in charge of the aforementioned society. It continues, “These people had never really worked in any night shelter, indicating that their identities were used only to siphon off government funds.”

According to the CBI, a number of people “were falsely shown as staff in night shelters and were paid salaries through bank accounts for the relevant period” and were either worked elsewhere or involved in other independent occupations. The FIR continues, “Verification of their professional engagements and mobile location data established that they were present at their actual workplaces or residences and not at any night shelter during the period for which attendance and salary were shown.” The CBI claimed that once the attendance records were submitted, the names of fictitious workers were added at the office level.Neither residents nor other staff ever

observed such individuals working at the night shelters. Numerous workers and inhabitants of the night shelters attested to the existence of these phony workers, demonstrating widespread record-keeping fraud and illegal salary disbursement, it continued. According to CBI, the Delhi government body’s appointed officials were expected to carry out inspections in accordance with regular operating protocols.

“However, despite their jurisdiction over the concerned shelters, no reports were submitted regarding the absence of bogus employees,” it stated.The CBI described it as a “well-planned conspiracy involving fraudulent documentation, misappropriation of government funds, and active connivance of individuals and public servants.”The copy will be amended as soon as DUSIB and SMA provide their comments, which are anticipated.

MS Dhoni is scheduled to go to Lucknow and is anticipated to play for CSK shortly



New Delhi: Due to a calf injury, MS Dhoni has not played in any of the Chennai Super Kings’ IPL 2026 games thus far. This has hindered the team’s efforts to qualify for the playoffs for the first time since 2023. The wicketkeeper-batter will travel with the guys in yellow to Lucknow to play the Lucknow Super Giants. Fans are eager to see the legendary Indian captain in action because Dhoni has been conspicuously absent from the sidelines

during many of CSK’s games, even at their home venue at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. If that doesn’t happen, they will at least be present at one of CSK’s games as they make a late push to qualify in the top four.CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan acknowledged that Dhoni’s ticket was purchased for a commercial aircraft to the Uttar Pradesh city, where CSK is getting ready to play LSG on Friday night. After a lackluster start to the season, CSK has won three straight games and has a chance to move into the top four of the league with a significant victory.According to the source, Dhoni is “anticipated” to play in at least one of CSK’s final three group stage matches, despite the fact that the squad in yellow is about to enter a phase of the season where every match would be viewed as a must-win. In addition to helping captain Ruturaj Gaikwad, who is slowly starting to find his voice after a start to the season that drew a lot of criticism, Dhoni’s late entry in the batting order will highlight the experience and strength at the lower

end of CSK’s batting unit as well as his background with the gloves and as a field marshal.Dhoni has participated in a few CSK training sessions, including one earlier this season at the Wankhede Stadium. But now, far into his second month of being unavailable for the club, he exacerbated the calf injury that was initially expected to keep him out of the first two weeks of the season. With three straight victories, CSK appears to have settled on an XI that brings them the most success across all bases, largely due to the energy of domestic youth with players like Kartik Sharma, Sarfaraz Khan, and Prashant Veer. What CSK may be a little afraid of is upsetting a winning combination. If Dhoni joins the starting lineup, it is anticipated that one of these players will have to miss out.Furthermore, Sanju Samson has been CSK’s man with the gloves on the field, but he will probably have to give them up to Dhoni because the 44-year-old offers his best value behind the stumps and with his eyes on the action.

With three games left in the IPL 2026 League Stage, the CSK have signed a new player

New Delhi: Macneil Hadley Noronha, an all-rounder from Karnataka, has reportedly been signed by the five-time champion Chennai Super Kings to replace the injured Ramakrishna Ghosh for the rest of the 2026 Indian Premier League. Ramakrishna Ghosh’s right foot fracture will keep him out for the remainder of the season. On May 2, during their home game against the Mumbai Indians—which was also his IPL debut—he sustained this injury. “CSK have written to the BCCI and await approval to finalise the signing, CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan confirmed,” according to a Cricbuzz article. ”

The 24-year-old Noronha had a great season for the Mangaluru Dragons during their Maharaja Trophy-winning 2025 campaign. He was a potent striker who scored 253 runs with a strike rate of 148.82 in 13 games. A season total of 19 sixes was also included in this. Noronha took 10 wickets at an economy of 7.44



while bowling off-spin during the campaign. Among these was a best of 2 for 25 versus Hubli Tigers in the final. He participated in three games after being called up to the Karnataka team for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. Ghosh made a big impression in the one game he participated in by dismissing Will Jacks with a brilliant diving catch.

But after stumbling in his fol-

low-through when bowling to Naman Dhir, he appeared to be having physical difficulties, which may have contributed to his injury.During the CSK vs. MI game in Chepauk, Ramakrishna Ghosh suffered a fracture to his right foot. He will not be participating in the 2026 IPL. Rambo, get better soon,” a statement from CSK read. Head coach Stephen Fleming expressed disappointment regarding a young player’s injury during the post-match press conference but praised his rapid development, noting his significant improvement in training and batting skills.

Ghosh’s absence compounds challenges for CSK, which has already faced multiple injuries, including to key players like Khaleel Ahmed and Ayush Mhatre. The team, already thin on pace options due to Nathan Ellis’s injury and Spencer Johnson’s delayed availability, is further strained by MS Dhoni’s ongoing calf strain as they navigate a difficult IPL 2026 season.

Following PM Modi’s appeal for fuel saving, state chief ministers reduce the convoy’s size



New Delhi, May 13: Several states ruled by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have announced plans to reduce fuel consumption amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia, following Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s decision to reduce the size of his convoy.According to people with knowledge of the situation, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered an immediate 50% reduction in his and his cabinet’s vehicle fleet. He has requested that public servants, MPs, MLAs, and ministers take

public transportation one day each week. In support of permitting “Work From Home” (WFH), he has requested that organizations with a significant workforce provide two days of WFH every week.

The CM added that 50% of internal meetings in the state secretariat and directorate had to be held remotely.CM Mohan Yadav of Madhya Pradesh has said that his convoy will have fewer vehicles, and he has asked the ministers to do the same.

Rekha Gupta, the chief minister of Delhi, also declared that fewer cars would be used for official busi-

ness.She stated in a post on X that, given the current state of the world, the PM has urged the people of the nation to save gasoline and diesel and turn energy conservation into a popular movement. A decision to restrict the number of vehicles for departmental work has been made in response to the Hon’ble Prime Minister’s significant appeal. Carpooling and public transportation would be given priority, and I, along with all of my Cabinet colleagues, Bharatiya Janata Party MLAs, public representatives, Delhi government officers, and other departments, will likewise use the bare minimum of vehicles as required,” she stated.CM Bhajan Lal Sharma of Rajasthan also ordered the reduction of convoys and the rationalization of security vehicles.

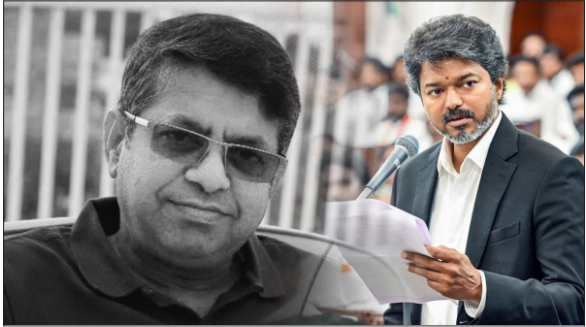
CM Devendra Fadnavis of Maharashtra has stated that ministers will have to get his permission before utilizing government planes and that non-essential air travel will be prohibited.According to a person with knowledge of the situation, Gujarat Governor Acharya Devrat has declared that he will travel within the state via trains and public transportation rather than helicopters and airplanes, and the state’s deputy chief minister, Harsh Sanghvi, has canceled his trip to the United States in response to PM Modi’s call for a decrease in foreign travel.

Following criticism, Vijay removes the astrologer as an officer on special duty

New Delhi, May 13: Tamil Nadu’s ruling Tamilaga Vetttri Kazhagam (TVK) has rescinded the appointment of astrologer Radhan Pandit Vetrivel as an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) following a significant trust vote win, which aims to solidify the government.

The appointment faced backlash from critics, including political rivals and ally Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, due to its implications in a secular governance context. TVK leader CT Nirmal Kumar characterized Vetrivel’s role as primarily a media spokesperson, contending that his profession was inconsequential to his duties.

Opposition figures, such as DMDK chief Premalatha Vijayakanth, strongly condemned the appoint-



ment, questioning its message to the youth. The Congress party expressed dissatisfaction, highlighting the inappropriateness of an astrologer occupying an official position. VCK general secretary D Ravikumar labeled the decision as incompatible with secular values, emphasizing the need for a scientific perspective in governance.

Although the BJP, a minor player in this election, publicly supported

the chief minister, TVK’s leader expressed disdain for the party, recognizing the ideological divide. The intertwining of astrology and politics in southern India has historical precedent, with notable figures like former chief minister J Jayalalithaa consulting with astrologers for major political decisions. However, their relationship soured following an inaccurate prediction regarding her legal troubles.

Following SRH’s humiliating 82-run loss, Pat Cummins received criticism from the BCCI

New Delhi: In the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, Sunrisers Hyderabad captain Pat Cummins had to deal with a personal low following a humbling defeat to the Gujarat Titans. During Tuesday’s IPL match against the Gujarat Titans, the Australian was punished for keeping a sluggish over rate. Consequently, Cummins was fined Rs 12 lakh by the IPL Governing Council. Maintaining high overrates is not a novel problem. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has actually reprimanded several IPL captains this season for over-rate-related violations thus far. The BCCI’s decision to impose an over-rate punishment in spite of the fact that the game ended in 34.5 overs is unexpected.With their pacers relentlessly attacking hard distances on a surface that provided substantial assistance throughout the chase, the Titans tore through SRH for just 86

while defending a modest-looking 168.In light of the differences in the two bowling performances, Cummins speculated that SRH might not have persisted long enough with the same strategy throughout GT’s innings. Yes, you glance at it all the time. They didn’t really allow us much to score, and once you kind of hit that back of the length, it seemed like a really challenging wicket. After the loss, Cummins remarked, “So, maybe in our bowling innings, you kind of, you learn from that, and maybe we could have held our lengths just a little bit longer.” Gujarat’s attack was praised by Cummins for perfectly carrying out their tactics on a difficult surface. “I think their bowling in the second innings was excellent.” Although it was a challenging wicket, I was rather pleased with it when we left at the beginning. Their bowlers bowled exceptionally well, and I believe they made



the most of it. Thus, perhaps attempt to find a method to break that spell, but, you know, they should be given some credit,” he remarked. “But overall, you know, I thought that, that’s as good as T20 bowling as you’re going to see from them,” the Australian captain added, characterizing the performance as elite-level T20 bowling.Cummins declined to overreact to a rare off-night from SRH’s typically potent batting lineup despite the collapse.

Hostels at law college cannot be reduced to only places to stay and board: SC

New Delhi, May 13: The Supreme Court expressed serious reservations regarding a 2025 Delhi High Court judgment stating that law students cannot be barred from exams due to attendance shortages. Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and Vijay Bishnoi agreed to review this ruling following a plea by the Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS), although they did not stay the high court’s verdict.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing NMIMS, argued that the ruling undermines attendance norms, suggesting it would lead to a decline in student engagement in law colleges. He highlighted concerns that such a perspective would transform institutions into mere boarding facilities rather than environments conducive to legal education.

The Supreme Court noted that the Delhi HC’s decision emerged from a backdrop



of a student’s suicide in 2016, which sparked debates over attendance regulations and student mental health. The high court recommended the Bar Council of India reassess mandatory attendance in light of the National Education Policy, 2020.Moreover, NMIMS contended that the Delhi HC ruling paved the way for numerous litigations by students seeking examination privileges despite failing to meet minimum attendance standards,

threatening academic discipline.

The college emphasized that classroom interactions are pivotal to legal education, particularly in integrated five-year programs that commence post-secondary school education. They referenced the BCI Rules on Legal Education, 2008, which stipulates a 70% attendance minimum, allowing limited exceptions.The assertion pointed to international norms in jurisdictions like the U.S., U.K., Australia, and Singapore, where mandatory attendance is considered crucial in professional legal training. The Supreme Court, during a prior meeting on May 7, had acknowledged the potential chaos stemming from the Delhi HC’s ruling, especially concerning National Law Universities, underscoring the critical nature of maintaining attendance requirements for preserving the integrity of legal education.

Southampton Reaches Playoff Final Amid Spying Controversy To Eye A Premier League Return



London: Southampton brushed off a spying controversy to advance past Middlesbrough after extra time in the Championship playoffs on Tuesday and get to within one win of a return to the Premier League. In a heated second leg that saw both coaches square up to each other at one point, Southampton rallied for a 2-1 victory at its home stadium at St. Mary’s and seal a win on aggregate by the same score. The decisive goal — scored by Shea Charles when his cross curled into the bottom corner — came

with four minutes left of extra time. The two games were played under a cloud, with Southampton having been charged by the English Football League with a breach of its regulations following accusations that unauthorized filming of Middlesbrough’s training took place last week. The EFL requested that an independent disciplinary commission undertake a hearing “at the earliest opportunity” but Southampton asked for more time to complete an internal review into the

issue, meaning any punishment would likely be meted out before the playoff final with Hull on May 23. That final is the richest one-off game in world soccer, with the winner assured a windfall of at least 200 million pounds (\$270 million) in future earnings via things like prize money and broadcast revenue in the Premier League.

Tensions between Southampton and Middlesbrough boiled over at the end of the first half when the respective coaches — Tonda Eckert and Kim Hellberg — got in each other’s faces on the touchline while being spoken to by the referee. After the first leg, which finished 0-0, Hellberg said he “couldn’t believe my eyes or ears” when he heard about the spying allegations and accused Southampton of trying to “cheat.” Following another first-half exchange — between Middlesbrough’s Luke Ayling and Southampton’s Taylor Harwood-Bellis — the BBC and Sky Sports reported that Ayling accused Harwood-Bellis of using discriminatory language. Southampton is seeking an immediate return to the Premier League after relegation last season. Before that, it was in the top flight from 2012-23. Hull was last in the Premier League in 2017.

Elina Svitolina Slams IOC For Relaxing Stance On Allowing Belarusian Athletes To Compete

New Delhi: Ukraine’s Elina Svitolina has strongly criticised the International Olympic Committee after it relaxed restrictions on Belarusian athletes competing in international events under their national flag. The Ukrainian tennis star said it was “painful” to see Belarus athletes being welcomed back while the war in Ukraine continues unabated. The IOC had initially recommended a ban on Russian and Belarusian athletes in 2022 following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, with Belarus serving as a staging ground for the offensive.

However, last week the IOC announced that it no longer recommended restrictions on Belarusian athletes and teams participating in events organised by international federations. The decision effectively clears the path for Belarus athletes to compete under their own flag and anthem ahead of the



Los Angeles 2028 Olympics. Svitolina, one of the most vocal Ukrainian athletes since the outbreak of the war, expressed disappointment over the timing of the move. Rockets are still going to Ukraine. Those two countries are still considered aggressors,” Svitolina told reporters at the Italian Open in Rome. “For us it’s very sad and very painful to see this even con-

sidered, they’re talking about it. It’s a very heavy topic. I have a lot to say. I think now isn’t the best time. I’m definitely not supporting the talks,” Svitolina added. Since 2022, Svitolina has consistently refused to shake hands with Russian and Belarusian players after matches in protest against the war. The decision has also sparked debate across the sporting world.

Belarusian World No.1 Aryna Sabalenka recently welcomed the prospect of athletes competing again under their national identity, saying she hoped tennis authorities would “give us our flag back.” Meanwhile, several sporting bodies remain unconvinced by the IOC’s latest stance. World Athletics has already rejected the IOC’s recommendation.

Asia’s Top Trap Shooter Zoravar Singh Has Been Dropped From India’s Asian Games Squad

New Delhi: India’s top trap shooter Zoravar Singh Sandhu, currently ranked No.1 in Asia and among the world’s top six, has been left out of India’s proposed shotgun contingent for this year’s Asian Games despite a string of strong international performances. This comes at a time when Indian shooting is balancing a rigid selection policy with growing expectations of medal success on the world stage. “The federation should reconsider this (selection) but whatever decision they take I have to accept. Being Asian No.1 and currently world No.6, the federation should consider this (achievement),” Zoravar told PTI. “I shot at the World Cup in Kazakhstan as a ‘zero’ shooter and I shot the maximum in the Indian contingent.” NRAI secretary-general Pawankumar Singh defended the decision, saying the federation would not deviate from the policy

laid down over a year ago. “It’s 99 per cent final that this is the shotgun team that will go to the Asian Games,” he said. “If we start changing names in the squad after seeing the faces of players, then there will be no difference left between shooting and the rest of the sports.” Zoravar’s omission stems largely from a dip in form during the National Championships and domestic selection trials, competitions he was required to attend despite an intensive international schedule leading into the World Championships and World Cup Finals. Zoravar Singh Sandhu, currently the top-ranked trap shooter in Asia and world No. 6, was excluded from India’s squad for the Asian Games 2026 due to a dip in form during domestic competitions. Despite his strong international record, including a recent World Championship bronze medal, his



performances at the National Championships and selection trials did not meet the criteria required by the national policy. The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) defended the decision, with secretary-general Pawankumar Singh stating that the federation would not deviate from its established selection policy to accommodate

specific individuals. The finalized men’s trap team for the games in Aichi-Nagoya will instead feature Kynan Chenai, Ahvar Rizvi, and Shapath Bhardwaj. Those performances proved costly even though he was ranked world No.4 barely a month ago and had posted some of the strongest international scores by any Indian trap shooter over the last

six months. The proposed men’s trap team for the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya from September 19 to October 4 includes Kynan Chenai, Ahvar Rizvi and Shapath Bhardwaj. At 47, Zoravar became only the third Indian trap shooter to win a medal at the World Championships when he secured bronze in Athens in October last year.

Ancelotti Bases Neymar’s World Cup Call On Fitness And Current Form, Not Sentiment

New Delhi: Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti said any decision on whether to include Neymar in his squad for the 2026 FIFA World Cup will be based purely on fitness and performance, insisting sentiment or outside pressure would play no role in the final call. Ancelotti will announce Brazil’s squad on Monday, with Neymar’s future in the national team once again dominating discussion across the country. The 34-year-old forward, Brazil’s all-time leading scorer, has struggled with injuries in recent years and endured an inconsistent return at Santos, leaving doubts over whether he can still meet the physical demands of top-level international football.

“When you have to choose, you have to consider many things,” Ancelotti told Reuters in an exclusive interview on Tuesday. Neymar is an important player for this country because of the talent he has always shown. But he has had problems and is working hard to recover. He has improved



a lot recently and is playing regularly. It is, obviously, not such an easy decision for me. We have to weigh up the pros and cons carefully.” Ancelotti spoke at the Brazilian Football Confederation headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, where the veteran Italian reflected on one of the most closely scrutinised selection decisions of his managerial career. The former Real Madrid boss remains the only coach to have won league titles in all of Europe’s top five leagues and has claimed five Champions League titles as a manager, in addition to two as a player. Yet the Neymar debate continues to divide Brazilian football.

While several teammates have publicly backed the forward’s inclusion, supporters remain uncertain about whether his body can still cope with the demands of elite football. “I know full well that Neymar is much loved, not only by the public but also by the players,” Ancelotti said. “This is also a factor, because we have to consider the atmosphere that will surround Neymar’s call-up. It’s not as if I’m going to drop a bombshell in the dressing room. He’s very well-liked, he’s very much loved. “I think it’s normal for the players to express their opinion. I’m grateful to everyone who has given me advice.

CSK Star Anshul Kamboj Meets His Lookalike From CM Vijay’s Recent Oath-Taking Ceremony

New Delhi: It’s not always that you meet your lookalike, that too after he made you viral during Chief Minister Vijay’s oath-taking ceremony. Anshul Kamboj was finally able to meet his doppelganger and the CSK star was all smiles meeting the police officer. As the spotlight remained firmly on the swearing-in ceremony of Tamil Nadu’s new Chief Minister, CSK fans found themselves distracted by an unexpected lookalike in the crowd. A police officer stationed near the stage quickly went viral on social media because of his uncanny resemblance to Chennai Super Kings pacer Anshul Kamboj, leaving fans convinced they had spotted the fast bowler at the event. The buzz around the “cop version” of Kamboj soon exploded online, and Ravichandran Ashwin added to the entertainment with one of his trademark humorous reactions aimed at his CSK teammate.

CSK themselves joined the joke shortly after, playfully clarifying that the real Anshul Kamboj was busy with the squad at Chepauk ahead of their clash against LSG later in the day. In the video, Kamboj first talked about his lookalike, admitting that there is a lot of resemblance between the two men. The CSK star said he would be



able to judge him better if the hat wasn’t there. “Actually, almost everyone has sent me this meme on my Instagram as well, so I was like, I was, I’m just telling them, no, I’m not. Everyone is just asking me what are you doing there, what are you doing there? I don’t know what. But actually he’s looking a bit like me, not fully. Maybe when he removes his cap, then I will get to see more,” said Kamboj. CSK revealed that Kamboj was actually able to meet the officer and both men shared a laugh and had a chat with him during the practice session. Kamboj has been one of CSK’s most consistent players this season with the ball, helping them massively during the playoff race. The swearing-in of C Joseph Vijay as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu was defined by a deliberate departure from established Dravidian political norms. Marking a historic shift as the first non-Dra-

vidian Chief Minister in 59 years, his ceremony utilized modern imagery and specific attire to signal a new “management-style” governance for the state. The most prominent symbol was Vijay’s choice of attire, swapping the traditional white-and-white shirt and veshti for a crisp white shirt, black trousers, and a dark blazer. This “common man” aesthetic was further emphasized by his selfie video with Rahul Gandhi and the public, which analysts say collapsed the traditional distance between leadership and the citizenry. Additionally, in a break from routine, Vijay signed official government files on a table placed directly on the oath stage immediately following his swearing-in. The Haryana pacer has picked 19 wickets in 11 matches at an average of 19.21 and sits on third spot in the purple cap race. CSK will face LSG in their next game on Friday, May 15. Anshul Kamboj met his

lookalike, a police officer on security detail, during a practice session after a video of the officer went viral during the oath-taking ceremony of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay. The Chennai Super Kings (CSK) fast bowler admitted there was a strong resemblance between them, though he joked he could judge better if the officer removed his hat. The meeting was facilitated by CSK, who shared a video of the encounter on social media showing both men chatting and sharing a laugh. The “policeman Kamboj” had initially trended on May 10, prompting veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin to jokingly tweet that the pacer should get a cab to the stadium for their match against Lucknow. The swearing-in of C Joseph Vijay as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu was defined by a deliberate departure from established Dravidian political norms. Marking a historic shift as the first non-Dravidian Chief Minister in 59 years, his ceremony utilized modern imagery and specific attire to signal a new “management-style” governance for the state. The most prominent symbol was Vijay’s choice of attire, swapping the traditional white-and-white shirt and veshti for a crisp white shirt, black trousers.

Hockey India Expands Level-1 Coaching Course To New Cities And Certifies Over 600 Coaches

New Delhi: Aiming to further fortify the domestic development ecosystem and raise technical standards at the grassroots, Hockey India has announced the upcoming schedule for the Hockey India Coaching Education Pathway Level ‘1’ Coaching Course - with new destinations set to add to the programme’s nationwide impact. The course will be conducted across multiple batches in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) and Haridwar (Uttarakhand) throughout May and June 2026. Registration for the courses opens on 13 May and ends on 17 May, according to a press release. Since its inception, the Hockey India Coaching Education Pathway courses held from 2019 to 2026 have formally certified over 600 coaches across the country, highlighting the massive impact of the federation’s structured coaching roadmap for a strong domestic pipeline of technical expertise. The framework of the programme has provided a simplified education structure to develop coaches from grassroots through to a high-performance and international level.

“Transitioning from a player to a coach is a distinct journey, and the Hockey India Coaching Education Pathway has been absolutely instrumental in that process,” said Rani, who also benefited from this programme and is an FIH Academy Level 3 Certified Coach. “Progressing through the formal levels gave me a much deeper and more structured understanding of modern coaching methodologies, tactical planning and athlete management.” For our domestic ecosystem, this framework is truly a game-changer. It ensures that coaches across the country speak the same technical language. In my role with the sub-junior team, I see firsthand how



applying these advanced international concepts at the developmental stage directly accelerates the growth of our young athletes and prepares them for the highest level,” she added. Speaking on the consistent growth of the coaching ecosystem, Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey said, “A robust homegrown coaching structure is the bedrock of any world-class sporting nation. Passing the milestone of over 600 certified coaches reflects our vision to make Indian hockey self-reliant and technically sound from the grassroots up. By equipping our domestic coaches with modern methodologies, we are directly ensuring that the next generation of young athletes receives the highest standard of mentorship right from their formative years.”

Hockey India Secretary General Bhola Nath Singh added, “The expansion of the Coaching Education Pathway into varied regions like Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand highlights our commitment to

reaching every corner of the country. We are particularly proud of the core focus on gender equality and the active transition of our international athletes into formal coaching roles. This structured framework ensures that the vast tactical knowledge of our most experienced individuals is effectively channelled back into the Indian hockey pipeline.” Pathway Structure and Course Progression The comprehensive roadmap is divided into seven distinct tiers: HI Level ‘Basic’, HI Level ‘1’, HI Level ‘2’, FIH Level 1, FIH Level 2, FIH Level 3, and FIH Academy High Performance. Communication & Hardware: Candidates must be able to understand and communicate in English. It is mandatory to carry a personal laptop, iPad or personal computer to complete all level assignments. Selection Process: Allocations will be made strictly on a first-come, first-served basis, incorporating the following core preferences: Elite Experience: Preference will be given.