

To take “Mizo ginger” worldwide, the center launched the Rs 189 crore Mizoram Ginger Mission

Aizawl, May 14: Mizoram has received a major boost to its agricultural sector with the launch of the Rs 189.79-crore Mizoram Ginger Mission, a Centre-backed initiative aimed at strengthening ginger cultivation, processing and global market access for farmers in the state.

The project was jointly launched virtually on May 13 by Union DoNER Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma. The launch event, held at the Chief Minister’s Office in Aizawl, was attended by Horticulture Minister C Lalsawivunga and senior government officials.

Implemented under the Ministry

of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER), the mission seeks to transform ginger farming in Mizoram through value addition, branding, processing infrastructure and export integration.

Addressing the programme, Scindia said Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision is to ensure that farmers become stakeholders across the entire agricultural value chain “from farm to fork.”

The Union minister highlighted that Mizo ginger contains 6-8 per cent oleoresin — significantly higher than the global average of around 3 per cent — but farmers currently receive only ₹8 to ₹15 per kilogram despite international market values crossing ₹500 per

kilogram.

Calling the initiative the “Mizo Ginger Movement,” Scindia said the mission is built around four pillars — convergence, value addition, branding and market integration.

The project will include one integrated processing hub, three spoke centres and more than 30 strategic interventions, while aiming to connect nearly 20,000 farming households into a unified value-chain ecosystem.

Scindia said the long-term goal is to position “Mizo Ginger” in Southeast Asian, Middle Eastern and European markets with traceability and international quality standards.



Chief Minister Lalduhoma said the project would focus on sustainable cultivation, food safety,

farm mechanisation, solarisation and post-harvest processing.

He noted that two ginger varieties from Mizoram — Thingpui and Thinglaidum — received Geographical Indication (GI) tags in 2021, further strengthening the state’s agricultural identity.

The Chief Minister also said recent chemical residue testing by Eurofins Analytical Services in Bengaluru confirmed that Mizoram ginger meets international quality standards. Ginger remains one of Mizoram’s flagship crops, and the Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) government currently provides minimum support prices to farmers for several key agricultural products.

According to CM, DoNER recognizes ginger as Mizoram’s USP

A i z a w l , M a y 14: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma has stated that the Ministry of DoNER had recognized Mizoram ginger as a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of the state.

In recognition of this distinction, the Ministry has approved the Rs.189.78 crore project for sustainable cultivation and value chain development, he informed. The Chief Minister further highlighted that ginger has been cultivated by the Mizos since ancient times and continues to be one of the most widely grown cash crops in the state. Mizoram ginger is known

for its superior quality, distinctive aroma, medicinal value, low fibre content, and rich oleoresin and essential oil content. Among the three main varieties cultivated in Mizoram, Thingpui and Thinglaidum received the Geographical Indication (GI) Tag in 2021. In 2025, chemical residue testing conducted by Eurofins Analytical Services, Bengaluru, confirmed that Mizoram ginger successfully met quality standards. He added that the recognition as a Unique Selling Proposition further strengthens the crop’s potential and identity. The Chief Minister was

speaking at the launch of the Mizoram Ginger Unique Selling Proposition (USP) – Sustainable Cultivation & Value Chain Development Project, to be implemented under the Ministry of DoNER. The scheme was inaugurated on Wednesday by Chief Minister Lalduhoma and Union Minister for DoNER, Jyotiraditya Scindia. The inauguration programme was held at ‘s Office of the Chief Minister, while Scindia joined virtually from New Delhi. It was attended by C. Lalsawivunga, Minister for Horticulture; Dr. K.C. Lalmalsawmzaupa, Adviser to

CM; Khilli Ram Meena, Chief Secretary; and senior officials of the Government of Mizoram. Ginger farmers from Champhai district also participated online. The project will focus on sustainable cultivation, quality control and food safety, farm mechanization and solarisation, and post-harvest management and processing. Other components will be implemented in convergence with schemes of various Ministries. The post-harvest management and processing component, in particular, will receive Gap Funding support from the NEC’s Focused Development

Component (FDC). Union Minister Scindia, in his address, said that strengthening farmers’ collective participation and livelihoods is one of the key priorities of the Prime Minister of India. As farmers’ development is central to the nation’s progress, the Government has been undertaking various initiatives to empower them. He stated that this project would be implemented in collaboration with different Ministries, farmers, societies, and the State Government, and that the unique and high-quality ginger of Mizoram would now be promoted more widely.

The Mizoram Women’s Organization denounces the trafficking case and calls for severe measures

Aizawl, May 14: Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), the apex women’s organisation in Mizoram, on Tuesday strongly condemned the alleged trafficking and sexual exploitation of Mizo women under the pretext of employment outside the state.

In a statement, the organisation said Lalnunsiami (30), a resident of New Diakawn in Kolasib district, and Mohammad (31) of Uttar Pradesh, who allegedly posed as her husband and operated the spa, were arrested by Mizoram Police in coordination with Uttarakhand Police on May 5. Describing the alleged abuse of Mizo women as “highly condemnable,” MHIP said it would continue to pursue the matter to ensure stringent punishment for those involved under the law.

The organisation also cautioned young women seeking employment outside the state to remain vigilant and urged parents to stay informed about their children’s workplaces and movements.

Appealing for collective vigilance, MHIP called upon the public, local communities, and churches to work together in protecting Mizo women from trafficking and exploitation networks. The case came to light after Mizoram Police and officials of the state Women and Child Development Department, in coordination with Uttara-

khand Police, rescued five Mizo women, including two minors, from an alleged sex trafficking racket operating under the guise of a spa business in Rudrapur, Uttarakhand.

Earlier, Mizoram Inspector General of Police (Headquarters) H. Ramthenglhiana had said that six persons, including the alleged mastermind and spa owner, were arrested in connection with the case. According to police, the trafficking racket surfaced after one of the survivors escaped and lodged an FIR at the All Women Police Station in Aizawl on May 1.

In her complaint, the survivor alleged that she and her friend were lured to work at Beauty Queen Salon and Spa in Rudrapur with promises of legitimate employment and a monthly salary of Rs 20,000.

She stated that they travelled to Uttarakhand in October last year after the spa owner arranged and financed their journey. However, upon reaching the establishment, they were allegedly forced into prostitution and informed that providing “extra services” to customers was mandatory in order to receive their salary.

The victim further alleged that the women were compelled to entertain between three and nine clients daily and were often forced to consume alcohol and intoxicating substances before

Christian organisations condemn killing of church leaders in Manipur

Imphal, May 14: Several Christian organisations in India and abroad on Thursday condemned the killing of three church leaders in Manipur’s Kangpokpi district, while the Kuki-Zo community began a two-day mourning period and 48-hour shutdown in protest against the incident. The shutdown, called by Kuki Inpi Manipur, started at midnight on May 13. Markets, schools, colleges and business establishments remained closed in many Kuki-Zo inhabited areas, while prayer meetings and condolence gatherings were organised across hill districts of the state. Preparations were also underway in Kangpokpi district for the arrival of the mortal remains of Rev.

Dr. V. Sithou, Pastor Kaigoulen Lhouvum and Pastor Paogoulen Sithou from the district hospital morgue to Brig. M. Thomas Ground. A public condolence programme has been scheduled there before the burial of the three church leaders on May 15. The killings have triggered strong reactions from church groups and Christian organisations. The Kuki Worship



Service, representing members of the Kuki Christian diaspora in the United Kingdom, condemned the killings and described the attack as an assault on peace and humanity. The organisation paid tribute to Rev. Dr. V. Sithou and described him as a respected church leader who had contributed to peace and reconciliation efforts. The UK-based organisation also urged authorities to ensure a transparent and fair investigation into the killings. In Manipur, the Manipur Baptist Convention strongly condemned the attack and said the incident had dealt a serious blow to peace and religious harmony in the state. The organisation demanded an impartial investigation and called for stronger security measures for civilians and religious leaders. The Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India also condemned the killings and appealed to all communities to maintain peace, reconciliation and restraint during the tense situation. Meanwhile, the Kuki Christian Church announced that offices under its administration would remain closed on May 14 as a mark of mourning and protest.

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal meets NGOs and community leaders in Mizoram’s Mamit district

Aizawl, May 14: Union Minister of Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal interacted with representatives of several non-governmental organisations and community leaders in Mizoram’s Mamit district and assured support from the Central Government for the welfare and development of the people. The interaction programme was held at the Tourist Lodge in Mamit where leaders of major civil society organisations took part in discussions with the Union Minister.

Representatives from organisations including MHIP, YMA, MUP, Village Council (VC) and MZP attended the meeting and placed before the Minister various issues concerning the district and its residents. During the interaction, the NGO representatives and community leaders raised concerns related to public welfare, local development and administrative challenges being faced in different parts of the district. The meeting also focused



on the role of community organisations in maintaining peace and supporting development activities in Mizoram. Addressing the gathering, Arjun Ram Meghwal said the Central Government remains committed to supporting the people of Mizoram and as-

sured that all possible assistance would be provided wherever needed.

He said resolving public problems and ensuring better governance remain among the top priorities of the government. The Union Minister also appreciated

the contribution of civil society organisations and local bodies in maintaining social harmony and helping government agencies in carrying out welfare and development programmes. “The role played by NGOs and community-based organisations is very

important in strengthening society and supporting development activities at the grassroots level,” he said during the interaction. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner of Mamit district Suvigya S. Chandra and Superintendent of Police Manny Bhushan Singh. Both officials assured the participants that the district administration and police department are committed to addressing public grievances in a prompt and effective manner. They also said efforts are being made to ensure smooth coordination between the administration and local organisations for the benefit of the public. The interaction meeting was seen as an important step towards strengthening communication between the government and civil society groups in the district. Community leaders present at the programme welcomed the opportunity to directly interact with the Union Minister and share their concerns and suggestions related to the development of the region.

Tripura has sufficient fuel, public transport to be strengthened

Agartala, May 14: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha today, May 14 informed that the state has available stock of fuel and expressed hope that the country will come out of the present situation soon. He also informed that the state government would strengthen the public transportation system. While speaking with the media, the Chief Minister said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already instructed everyone not to purchase unnecessary gold and fuel, and to use fuel in a very limited amount. “We are also following it, and the Tripura government has directed 50% of Group C and Group D employees to work from home so that fuel can be saved. PM Modi has said that everyone has to think about this. Whenever PM Modi directs something, he does it thoughtfully. We have also seen that he urged many such measures during Covid. When I was coming here to attend a programme, I found very few vehicles on the road. The general public is also thinking in the same way why use fuel unnecessarily with vehicles? In this way, we can save fuel for the future,” he said. He informed that whatever PM Modi has said, he himself is also following it. “After returning from Guwahati yesterday, I had a conversation with the DGP and Chief Secretary, and today we implemented it so that workflow can continue and no concern is created regarding the issue. PM Modi said that as we are constrained in importing fuel from other countries, we must take some steps. Not only the government, but today I have also seen that common people are trying to use fewer vehicles here in Agartala. During Covid also, he had urged similar measures, and we are working in the same direction. I am sure that we will come out of such a situation, and we will try to strengthen the public transportation system. We have available stock of fuel and there is no direction for rationing,” he added.

Lalnilawma inaugurates District Panchayat Resource Centre



Aizawl, May 14: Mizoram Rural Development and Administration Minister Lalnilawma on Wednesday inaugurated the District Panchayat Resource Centre (DPRC) at Lawngtlai in south Mizoram, describing the facility as a significant initiative to strengthen Village Councils and grassroots governance in the district.

Adviser to the Chief Minister and Lawngtlai East MLA Dr. Lorrain Lalpeklana Chinzhah attended the programme as the guest of honour. Addressing the gathering, Lalnilawma

said the DPRC would provide much needed support to Village Councils, especially those from remote areas, by offering accommodation and other basic amenities. He urged stakeholders to take proper care of the facility and use it responsibly.

The Minister said the centre would function as a key training facility for Village Council members, enabling them to improve their administrative capabilities and contribute more effectively to the progress of both society and the state. He also stated that the

government is exploring the possibility of constructing a guest house in Aizawl for Village Councils from different parts of Mizoram. Calling for closer coordination among Village Councils, Lalnilawma encouraged members to work with dedication for the welfare of their communities. He also stressed the importance of cleanliness and proper waste management, urging local councils to take active responsibility for maintaining their surroundings. The Minister further advised Village Councils to identify ways to generate their own resources and carry out their duties with honesty and commitment. Speaking at the event, Dr. Chinzhah described the inauguration of the DPRC as an important development for Lawngtlai district. He urged Village Councils to make full use of the new facility and continue serving people sincerely beyond political considerations. Executive Engineer Er. Lalrinmawia, while presenting the technical report, said the DPRC was constructed under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan scheme at a cost of Rs2 crore.

Devajit Lon Saikia reappointed as Advocate General of the state

Guwahati, May 14: The Assam government has reappointed senior advocate Devajit Lon Saikia as the Advocate General of the state for another five-year term, marking one of the first key decisions taken by the newly formed Himanta Biswa Sarma 2.0 government. The decision was announced by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma during a media interaction following the first cabinet meeting held a day after the swearing-in ceremony. Before becoming Advocate General in 2021, Saikia had earlier served as the acting Advocate General in 2017 and also held the post of Senior Additional Advocate General, building extensive experience within Assam's legal framework. Saikia had resigned from the post on May 6 following the completion of the previous government's tenure, in keeping with constitutional convention. His resignation came shortly after the declaration of the Assam Assembly election results, which saw the BJP-led National Demo-

cratic Alliance (NDA) secure a decisive victory. Appointed as Advocate General in 2021, Saikia became the youngest person to hold the constitutional post in Assam at the age of 52 years and one month. During his tenure, he played a prominent role as the state government's chief legal advisor and represented Assam in several significant constitutional and legal matters. Apart from his legal career, Saikia is also a well-known figure in Indian cricket administration. A former first-class cricketer and ex-Secretary of the Assam Cricket Association, he currently serves as the Honorary Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) after succeeding Jay Shah, who moved to the International Cricket Council (ICC). With the appointment, Saikia became the first person from Northeast India to hold the position of BCCI Secretary. He also represents the Indian cricket board as a Board Director on the ICC board.

First official agarwood export to Gulf marks major trade milestone

Guwahati, May 14: Assam has achieved a landmark breakthrough in its agro-forest sector with the first legally sanctioned export of agarwood chips to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, signalling the beginning of a major export opportunity for the state's aromatic products industry. The inaugural consignment, valued at approximately Rs 2.35 crore, included 100 kg of agarwood chips destined for Saudi Arabia and 12 kg for Dubai, UAE. The shipment was dispatched on Wednesday from the cargo terminal of Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati after obtaining all mandatory regulatory approvals. The consignment was officially flagged off by Dr. Jehirul Islam, Founder Chairman of MJI Group and Chairman of the All Assam Agarwood Planters and Traders Association. The shipment marked the first official consignment of agarwood (agar) chips exported to Saudi Arabia and Dubai under the Assam Agarwood Promotion Policy, 2020. The export received statutory clearances, including permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and a restricted export licence issued by the Directorate General



of Foreign Trade (DGFT). Describing the development as a historic achievement for Assam's indigenous agarwood industry, Dr. Islam said the milestone was the result of years of research, policy advocacy, plantation expansion, farmer engagement and compliance with international trade standards. Agarwood, popularly known as oud, is among the world's most prized aromatic raw materials and is widely used in luxury perfumes, incense, cosmetics and traditional fragrance products across the Gulf region, Europe and Southeast Asia. Assam-grown agarwood is particularly valued in international markets for its strong aroma, superior quality and high oil content.

Commercial vehicles allowed on Umiam bridge bypass with new restrictions

Shillong, May 14: The East Khasi Hills district administration has announced that commercial vehicles operating along the Umiam-Shillong route will be allowed to use the newly constructed Umiam bridge bypass from May 14 onwards, a day after its official inauguration on May 13. According to the order issued by the Deputy Commissioner's office in the East Khasi Hills district, the bypass has been opened to facilitate the movement of heavy trucks and night super buses entering Shillong from the Ri-Bhoi side. However, significant limits have been established on the timing and type of vehicles that can travel the highway. According to authorities, commercial vehicles, including night buses, would be allowed to use the bypass only between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. every day. Articulated vehicles are prohibited from utilizing the road, while rigid vehicles with up to three axles and a maximum



gross weight of 28.5 tonnes will be authorized. The administration has also mandated that all night super buses park at the Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) in Mawiong. Such buses will not be permitted to park at the Shillong Recreation Ground Trust area, Polo, the Shillong Municipal Board parking

lot at Dhankheti, along the Itshyrwat-New Shillong road, Shillong-Jowai road or any other spot within the city limits. According to officials, the limits are aimed at controlling traffic flow and reduce congestion within Shillong while also allowing goods carriers and long-distance buses to enter the

bypass corridor more easily. The Deputy Commissioner has directed the police, transportation authorities, and other relevant departments to ensure proper implementation of the restrictions and to station adequate traffic personnel at important intersections around the clock.

Man killed, wife injured in second ambush, hours Kangpokpi attack

Imphal, May 14: A man was killed and his wife injured in a second suspected militant ambush within hours of an earlier attack that claimed three lives and left four others injured across two districts of Manipur, officials said on Thursday. The latest incident took place around 6:30 pm on Wednesday when unidentified gunmen opened fire on a vehicle carrying Wilson Thanga and his wife near Joujangtek and Nungsai villages in Noney district while they were returning home from Imphal.

Thanga, a resident of Dolang village in Noney district, died on the spot, while his wife sustained injuries and was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment. Officials said the deceased belonged to the Naga community. The attack came just hours after three leaders of the Thadou Baptist Association were killed in a separate ambush in Kangpokpi district earlier on Wednesday. Noney and Kangpokpi districts share a border. Security forces have launched cordon and search operations in the area to trace those involved in the latest attack. No militant group has claimed responsibility for either incident so far. According to a Manipur Police morning bulletin issued on Thursday, unidentified gunmen opened unprovoked fire on two vehicles travelling near Saheibung village under New Keithelmanbi Police Station in Kangpokpi district on May 13. The firing killed three civilians from the Thadou community and injured four others. The police also stated that security forces are continuing search operations and area domina-



tion exercises in fringe and vulnerable areas across the state. Authorities further said the movement of 221 vehicles carrying essential commodities along National Highway-37 was ensured under security cover. Strict security arrangements have been put in place in vulnerable areas, while security convoys are being provided along sensitive stretches to facilitate safe movement of vehicles. A total of 113 nakas and checkpoints have been set up across hill and valley districts in Manipur, the police added.

Govt to launch alternative farming to end illegal poppy cultivation

Imphal, May 14: The Manipur Government has announced that alternative farming schemes aimed at providing sustainable livelihood opportunities and discouraging illegal cultivation are currently in the final stages of processing in Kangpokpi district. Additionally, he informed the meeting that proposals related to alternative farming schemes are in the final stages of processing, aimed at providing sustainable livelihood opportunities and discouraging illegal cultivation in the district. This was stated by the District Collector and Chairperson of NCORD, Mahesh Chaudhari, IAS, during a NCORD committee meeting held on Wednesday at the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's office in Kangpokpi. Chaudhari briefed the attendees on the actions undertaken by the district administration and allied agencies to combat drug abuse, trafficking, and the consumption of tobacco and alcohol in the district. Kangpokpi district has been identified as a major hub for illicit poppy cultivation in Manipur, reporting the largest area under illegal cultivation in the state during the 2023-24 period, with approximately 4,322 acres (17.49 sq km).

Security forces, including the Manipur Police, Assam Rifles, CRPF, and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB),



have intensified their "War on Drugs" campaign through frequent destruction drives. Based on reports from early 2025 to May 2026, while thousands of acres of illegal poppy cultivation have been destroyed in Kangpokpi district, the number of arrested individuals (cultivators) remains relatively low compared to the scale of destruction, as many often flee before raids. During the meeting, the Chairperson reiterated that the primary objective of NCORD is to strengthen coordinated efforts against substance abuse and illegal trafficking. He reviewed reports submitted by the State Police, BSF, CRPF, and other concerned departments regarding their ongoing initiatives and future action plans aimed at

curbing drug-related activities and reducing substance abuse in the district. He also commended the efforts of the District Police, CRPF, BSF, and other security forces for their dedicated service and urged them to maintain strict vigilance. The Chairperson further requested the CEO (SH-ADC) and the Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) to conduct regular inspections and closely monitor areas around schools to ensure that no tobacco or related products are sold in their vicinity. The central forces also requested the Chairperson's assistance in tracking and destroying illegal plantations in hilly areas through the use of chemical-spraying drones, to which he assured full cooperation and necessary action.

BJP's Himanta Biswa Sarma takes oath as Assam CM for second consecutive term

Guwahati, May 14: Himanta Biswa Sarma was sworn in as Assam chief minister for a second consecutive term on Tuesday, marking the formation of the NDA government in the state for the third straight time. Four from NDA – Ramewar Teli, Ajanta Neog (both from BJP), AGP president Atul Bora and

Bodoland People's Front (BPF) leader Charan Boro – took oath as ministers. Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office to Sarma and the four legislators at a grand ceremony held at the Veterinary Ground in Khanapara, Guwahati. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit

Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Chief Ministers of 22 NDA-ruled states and Union Territories, BJP national president Nitin Nabin, ambassadors of some countries, industrialists, and religious leaders attended the swearing-in ceremony. Sarma's mother and other family members were also

present. Ahead of his swearing-in, Sarma posted on X, "May the blessings of Maa Kamakhya and Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev illuminate the lives of everyone in Assam and open new pathways to peace, progress and prosperity. Assam will scale new heights of development in the coming days with their blessings."

Nagaland CM, church bodies condemn killing of church leaders

Joint Christian Forum (NJCF)

Dimapur, May 14: Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC), and the Nagaland Joint Christian Forum (NJCF) have strongly condemned the brutal killing of three church leaders and injury to five others in an ambush in Manipur's Kangpokpi district on Wednesday morning. In a statement, Rio said such barbaric and senseless violence against innocent lives is unacceptable and has no place in any civilised society. Expressing deep sorrow over the incident, he conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, the church community, and the people of Manipur. He also prayed for strength and comfort for all those affected by the tragedy. The NBCC con-



demned this act of violence, saying that taking human life is a violation of God's law and an assault on the image of God in which every person is made. It said this heinous act is an attack on the faith community and a flagrant disregard for the sanctity of human life. Stating that such

violence is a grave transgression that impacts "all of us", the NBCC called upon the relevant authorities to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation to apprehend those responsible and to ensure justice. Condemning the killing, the NJCF described the incident as "shocking"

and "sorrowful". It appealed to all communities to shun violence and work toward peace and reconciliation. The forum condoled the deaths of the church workers and said they had been faithfully labouring for peace and reconciliation in the conflict-torn land of Manipur.

Manipur Congress blames BJP governments over continuing violence after twin ambush attacks

Imphal, May 14: The Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee on Thursday strongly condemned two separate ambush attacks in Manipur that left four people dead and seven others injured, alleging that the BJP governments at the Centre and in the state had failed to restore peace in the violence-hit region. Addressing a press conference at Congress Bhavan in Imphal, Congress Legislature Party leader and former Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh described the killing of innocent civilians by armed militants as “highly condemnable.” Ibobi Singh said Manipur had remained affected by conflict for more than three years and alleged that

both the state and central governments had failed to resolve the crisis or establish lasting peace in the state.“Instead, more people continue to die. The way the government is handling the law-and-order situation in Manipur is completely unconstitutional,” he said during the press conference.The senior Congress leader further alleged that the Centre appeared to be giving more importance to “electoral politics and winning elections” than addressing the continuing crisis in Manipur. The remarks came a day after unidentified armed militants ambushed two vehicles carrying members of the Thadou Baptist Associ-



ation (TBA) in Kangpokpi district on May 13, killing three church leaders and injuring five others.The attack reportedly took place

between Kotzim and Kotlen villages when the victims were returning from Churachandpur after attending a TBA conference.

The deceased were identified as Rev. Dr. V. Sithou, Pastor Kaigoulun Lhouvum and Pastor Paogoulun Sithlou. The incident drew

strong condemnation from church organisations and civil society groups from Manipur and other parts of the Northeast.In another incident later in the evening, one person from the Chiru Naga community was killed while two others were injured after suspected militants allegedly opened fire on a Bolero vehicle between Nungsai and Joujangtek along the Khoupum-Bishnupur road under Khoupum Police Station in Noney district. According to reports, the attack occurred around 6:20 pm. The victim reportedly died on the spot, while the injured, including the victim’s wife and the driver, were taken to Khoupum for treatment.

BJP targets Rahul Gandhi over ‘undisclosed’ foreign visits, Oman trip

New Delhi, May 14: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has criticized Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his foreign visits, claiming he has made 54 trips abroad in 22 years, six of which are “undisclosed.” BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra demanded clarity on Gandhi’s recent visit to Oman, which he alleges is unreported, despite circulating photographs. The BJP argues that these undisclosed trips may breach protocols established for protected individuals, as noted by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). Patra highlighted concerns over permissions from the Union home ministry for these visits, particularly questioning the hosts and financial disclosures related to the trips. They also raised discrepancies between Gandhi’s declared income of approximately ₹11 crore and his foreign travel expenditures estimated at ₹60 crore. Specific examples include ₹4.5 crore spent on a South East Asia tour in 2015, vastly exceeding his declared income for that year, as well as significant costs linked to trips to the UAE, Vietnam, and Italy. The Congress party has not yet responded to these allegations.

Nagaland CM, church bodies condemn killing of church leaders in Manipur ambush

Kohima, May 14: Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, Deputy Chief Minister Yanthungo Patton and several church organisations have strongly condemned the killing of three church leaders in an ambush by suspected militants in Manipur’s Kangpokpi district.Reacting to the attack, Rio described the killings as “barbaric and

senseless violence” that had no place in a civilised society. He expressed deep sorrow over the incident and conveyed condolences to the bereaved families, the church community and the people of Manipur. Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton termed the attack on unarmed church leaders and innocent citizens “deeply

disturbing” and unacceptable. He also expressed concern for those injured in the incident and prayed for their speedy recovery. Patton urged authorities to conduct a fair and timely investigation to ensure those responsible are brought to justice and appealed to all communities to maintain peace and harmonyThe Nagaland Bap-

tist Church Council (NBCC) also strongly condemned the ambush on members of the Thadou Baptist Association, in which three church leaders were killed and five others grievously injured. The council termed the attack a violation of God’s law and an assault on the sanctity of human life. Meanwhile, the Nation-

al Council of Churches in India (NCCI) expressed shock over the attack on pastors and church workers returning to Kangpokpi from Churachandpur after attending the United Baptist Convention Assembly. The organisation called for an immediate, impartial and transparent investigation into the incident.



Delhi woman’s horror in moving bus; conductor, driver held

New Delhi, May 14: A 30-year-old woman was allegedly abducted and gang-raped inside a moving sleeper bus in northwest Delhi’s Rani Bagh area late Monday night, police officers aware of the investigation said on Thursday adding that the two accused have been arrested. Police said the woman, who works at a factory in Mangolpuri and lives with her family in Pitampura, was returning home after work when the incident took place near the B-block bus stand in Saraswati Vihar area. According to the woman’s complaint, she had travelled part of the route in an e-rickshaw before continuing on foot. A sleeper bus stopped near the bus stand. The survivor told police that when she asked a man standing near the bus about the time, he gestured towards her to come closer after which he pulled her inside the bus. The woman alleged that two men sexually assaulted her inside the moving bus while it travelled for several kilometres towards Nangloi. Police said the bus eventually stopped near Nangloi Metro station, where the woman was abandoned by the accused. The woman contact-

ed police after which they reached the spot. Police said the survivor underwent medical examination at Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital and a first information report (FIR) under charges of gang rape and relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 was registered. Investigators have seized the Bihar-registered sleeper bus and are examining CCTV footage along its route. Forensic experts were also called to collect evidence from inside the vehicle, officers said. A police officer said the bus had curtains covering the windows, making it difficult for outsiders to see inside. The accused identified as driver Umesh and conductor Ramendra have been arrested and sent to judicial custody on Tuesday, police said.

Arunachal BJP leader criticises bandh culture, supports stronger ILP enforcement

Itanagar, May 14: Senior BJP leader Likha Maaj has termed bandh culture a “curse for development” while extending support to the demand for strict implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system raised by the ST Bachao Andolan Committee in Arunachal Pradesh.In a statement issued on May 14, Maaj said the demand for proper enforcement of the ILP system was genuine and important for protecting the rights and interests of the indigenous people of the state. However, he criticised the committee’s decision to call a 36-hour bandh at short notice.The BJP leader said shutdowns and bandh calls create difficulties for ordinary people and negatively affect daily life, especially for daily wage



earners and small business owners who depend on regular work for income. He also pointed out that bandh culture had already been declared illegal by the Supreme Court and said such protests often cause unnecessary hardship to the

public.While supporting the concerns raised over ILP implementation, Maaj questioned the demand seeking the resignation of Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu. He alleged that the inclusion of such a demand suggest-

ed there could be political motives behind the agitation. According to Maaj, the Home Department is the main authority responsible for matters related to the implementation and regulation of the Inner Line

Permit system in the state. The BJP leader also highlighted what he described as the developmental work carried out by the BJP government in Arunachal Pradesh over the last 10 years under the leadership of Chief Minister Pema Khandu. He said the government remained committed to protecting indigenous communities and assured that strict action would be taken against illegal immigrants staying in the state.Maaj further stated that the BJP government would continue efforts towards digitalisation of the ILP system in line with the provisions of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act of 1873, which provides special safeguards for the indigenous population of Arunachal Pradesh.

Meghalaya party condemns Manipur church leader attack, demands swift justice action

Shillong, May 14: The United Democratic Party (UDP) in Meghalaya expressed its deepest anguished and unequivocal condemnation of Wednesday’s killing of three Pastors – Rev. Vumthang Sithlou, TBAI President, Rev. Kaigoulun Lhouvum, TBAI Finance Secretary and Pastor Paogoulun Sithlou in Kangpokpi district of Manipur. In a statement issued on Thursday, UDP general secretary Titosstar Well Chyne termed the attack as a “barbaric act against not only on innocent men of God, but also the very fabric of humanity, religious freedom and the constitutional values of India”. “Pastors who serve communities with peace, compassion, and selfless dedication should never become targets of violence. We condemn in the strongest terms this cowardly and inhumane act. There can be no justification in political, ethic, or religion for the murder of unarmed religious leaders,” Chyne stated. “We demand immediate action from the Government of Manipur and the Union Government to apprehend the perpetrators and ensure swift justice. The rule of law must prevail over lawlessness. We stand in solidarity with the families of the deceased pastors, the Church in Manipur, and the Christian community across the Northeast. We share your grief and pray for comfort and strength during this dark hour,”



the UDP leader said. Appealing for peace and restraint from all communities in Manipur, he said, “Violence begets more violence. The cycle must end and we urge civil society, Church bodies and community leaders to work together to restore trust and harmony.” “We call upon the National Human Rights Commission for Minorities to take suo motu cognizance of this incident and ensure protection of religious minorities and clergy in conflict zones. The Northeast has always been a land of diverse faith living in harmony. Attempts to divide us through bloodshed and fear must be defeated by our collective commitment to peace, justice and fraternity. The UDP urges the Centre to treat this matter with the urgency it deserves. Justice delayed is

justice denied,” he stated. The UDP’s call for urgent action comes at a time when Manipur continues to grapple with ethnic tensions and sporadic violence. Analysts argue that the targeting of religious leaders represents a dangerous escalation, as pastors often serve as mediators and peacebuilders within their communities. Their loss, therefore, is not only a personal tragedy but also a blow to ongoing efforts at reconciliation. Community leaders across the Northeast have echoed the UDP’s demand for accountability, stressing that the safety of clergy and minority groups must be prioritized in conflict-affected regions. Several Church organizations have already begun mobilizing support networks for the families of the victims, while

also pressing authorities to strengthen security measures. The incident has also reignited debate over the role of the Union Government in ensuring stability in Manipur. Critics argue that delayed responses to violence have emboldened perpetrators, while supporters of stronger intervention insist that swift arrests and prosecutions are essential to restore public confidence. For the UDP, the tragedy underscores the need for collective vigilance against forces that seek to divide communities along religious or ethnic lines. By demanding justice and appealing for peace, the party has positioned itself as a voice of moral conscience in the region’s turbulent political landscape. As investigations proceed, the families of Rev. Sithlou, Rev. Lhouvum, and Pastor Paogoulun Sithlou continue to mourn their loss. Their deaths serve as a stark reminder of the fragility of peace in Manipur and the urgent need for dialogue, reconciliation, and justice. The UDP’s call for urgent action comes at a time when Manipur continues to grapple with ethnic tensions and sporadic violence. Analysts argue that the targeting of religious leaders represents a dangerous escalation, as pastors often serve as mediators and peacebuilders within their communities. Their loss, therefore, is not only a personal tragedy but also a blow to ongoing efforts at reconciliation.

Conrad lauds police handling sensitive situations

Shillong, May 14: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Thursday commended the state police force for its professionalism, discipline and restraint displayed amidst challenges faced in maintaining peace in sensitive situations in the state. Congratulating the police leadership, the Chief Minister said, “I would like to congratulate our Director General of Police, Idashisha Nongrang, and her entire team for their dedication, leadership, and commitment in ensuring that law and order is maintained across the state.” Referring to the recent tensions in Lapangam in West Jaintia Hills, Sangma noted that the police played a crucial role in ensuring peace and stability on the ground while the government continued dialogue with stakeholders and counterparts in Assam on the interstate boundary issue. Expressing his appreciation to all police personnel, he added, “It is because of your hard work, commitment, courage, and sacrifice that our state remains safe, and our people are able to go about their daily lives with confidence and security.

Indian-flagged ship hit near Oman, MEA calls missile attack ‘unacceptable’

New Delhi, May 14: The Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday raised objection to attack on an Indian-flagged ship off the coast of Oman on Wednesday, May 13, and called it ‘unacceptable’. The MEA said in a statement that it “deplored” the continuous attacks on commercial shipping.“The attack on an Indian-flagged ship off the coast of Oman yesterday is unacceptable and we deplore the fact that commercial shipping and civilian mariners continue to be targeted,” it said in a statement. The statement, issued by MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, also said that the Indian crew on board the ship was safe and expressed gratitude to the Omani authorities for rescuing them. “India reiterates that targeting commercial shipping and endangering innocent civilian crew members, or otherwise impeding freedom of navigation and commerce, should be avoided,” the statement added.However, the statement did not clarify who carried out the attack. It happened amid heightened tensions in and around the international waters of the Strait of Hormuz as the United States and Iran fail to reach a deal to end their war, which is on a temporary halt for now. The attack on the Indian-flagged ship came as Iran’s foreign minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in New Delhi to participate in a meeting of BRICS foreign ministers scheduled for Thursday, April 14, and Friday, April 15. While addressing BRICS foreign ministers’ meeting in Delhi, Araghchi said that Iran views BRICS as a symbol of emergence of a new world order.“Over the past year, I have had the honour of attending two BRICS summits to express the Iranian government’s belief that this mechanism symbolises the emergence of a new world order, one in which the global South is one of the main architects of the world’s future. What was once an ambitious ideal has become a reality, but it is a fragile one. Declining imperialist powers are seeking to turn back the clock and are reacting with desperation and aggression as they seek to downgrade.” Speaking about Iran’s confrontation with Western powers, he said that it was a part of a larger fight against “Western hegemony,” asserting that Tehran’s actions were tied to the interests of BRICS countries. “This is of fundamental importance to the BRICS community because the battle in which Iran has stood is in defence of all members and in defence of the new world we are building. Our brave soldiers have sacrificed their lives to confront Western hegemony and the immunity that America thinks it enjoys”, he said.”

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Unlocking the Northeast: Tourism as a Gateway to Growth

India’s North Eastern region — encompassing eight states of extraordinary diversity — remains one of the country’s most underexplored tourism frontiers. Endowed with living root bridges, centuries-old monasteries, vibrant tribal festivals, and a mosaic of over 200 distinct ethnic communities, the region offers an experience unmatched anywhere in the subcontinent.

Yet it continues to languish in the margins of mainstream tourism, starved of adequate infrastructure, connectivity, and promotional visibility. The government must step in decisively. A coordinated national campaign — spotlighting the region’s Ahom legacy in Assam, the hornbill traditions of Nagaland, the Buddhist heritage of Sikkim and Arunachal, and the weaving cultures of Manipur and Mizoram — could reshape the region’s global image. Beyond promotion, investment in road and air connectivity, homestay networks, and heritage conservation is non-negotiable. Tourism, when ethically developed, is not merely an economic lever; it is a bridge between communities and a shield for endangered traditions.

For a region long burdened by the narrative of conflict and remoteness, well-channelled tourism offers a powerful counter-story — one of resilience, richness, and relevance. The Northeast does not need pity tourism. It needs policy-backed, heritage-anchored promotion that tells its story on its own magnificent terms.

The benefits of digitization are being undermined by disjointed trading systems

Data travels with goods in the current global trading economy. Invoices, financial records, inspection reports, regulatory approvals, and logistical updates accompany each shipment. This information has to go via several institutions before a product gets to its destination. Trade is often slowed down most by delays in data transfer rather than commodities. In Bangladesh as well, the connection between data and logistics is growing in significance. The nation has made significant strides in digitization over the last ten years.

Customs declarations, financial transactions, and port operations are just a few of the procedures that are now managed electronically. These modifications have increased efficiency, decreased manual handling, and enhanced transparency. However, digitization by itself does not ensure seamless commerce. Despite being digital, systems frequently lack coherence. Customs, banks, port authorities, shipping brokers, and regulators are just a few of the organizations that use their own digital platforms, each with a distinct function. Because of this, companies frequently have to provide the same information to several authorities. This leads to a distinct type of inefficiency. Paper is no longer the issue; fragmentation is. In the maritime industry, this problem is especially per-

tinent. The idea of a Maritime Single Window (MSW) is promoted globally by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The concept is straightforward: all pertinent agencies should get a single submission of information about a ship’s arrival or departure. In actuality, though, this calls for systems to be interconnected and capable of seamlessly exchanging data. Experience from other nations demonstrates that digitizing systems is just the beginning. Digital platforms can still function independently without adequate coordination and data sharing, which limits the advantages they offer. Even little information flow delays can have far-reaching effects for Bangladesh’s export-oriented economy. Businesses frequently handle several processes with comparable datasets. Even though digitization has decreased paperwork, delays, duplication, and uncertainty can still result from a lack of system coordination. Enhancing information transmission between institutions may become just as crucial as upgrading physical infrastructure as international purchasers place a higher priority on speed and dependability.

This is the point at which appropriate digitalization becomes essential. It requires integrating systems into a cohesive ecosystem, going beyond simply putting procedures online.

The capacity of many systems to securely and effectively share information is at the heart of this. To put it simply, it entails inputting data only once and using it wherever necessary. Bangladesh has already made some progress in this area.

The increasing connection between Bangladesh Customs and Bangladesh Bank, which links customs declarations with foreign exchange monitoring, shows the importance of system integration and reflects an awareness that increased data connectivity can enhance efficiency, transparency, and compliance. Many of these initiatives, nonetheless, continue to rely on specific agreements between institutions. While such approaches can support initial cooperation, they have clear limitations. Each new connection requires separate discussions, approvals, and technical adjustments. As more systems are added, this process becomes slow and difficult to manage. Over time, fragmented solutions risk recreating the very inefficiencies that digitisation was meant to reduce.

Around the world, countries are therefore moving towards more structured approaches to connecting systems. Instead of building links case by case, they are developing common frameworks that allow different platforms to communicate more easily from the start.

For example, Estonia has built a secure system that allows government agencies to share data while maintaining control over their own databases. In trade, the “single window” approach follows a similar principle: businesses submit information once, and relevant authorities can access it as needed. These examples highlight an important lesson: connected systems are more effective than isolated ones. This offers Bangladesh a significant policy opportunity. Creating a national framework for data exchange could facilitate the integration of current technologies and improve the speed, predictability, and dependability of trade procedures.

This change may be supported by ongoing policy reforms. The government can enhance cooperation between financial institutions, customs, and other trade-related agencies by incorporating procedures for safe data interchange. This would improve compliance, expedite procedures, and cut down on duplication. In general, it would contribute to the development of a more robust digital basis for trade facilitation. However, such a strategy would require robust cybersecurity and data protection protections. Crucially, centralized data storage is not necessary for this. While allowing safe and uniform data sharing, various organizations can maintain control over their

own systems. Such a change could have major advantages. Businesses would benefit from quicker processing times, fewer duplicate filings, and reduced compliance expenses. It would enhance cooperation, promote better risk management, and increase data consistency for government entities.

It would help the economy by facilitating quicker and more reliable trade flows. It’s also critical to acknowledge that this is an institutional problem in addition to a technical one. Public authorities may be reluctant to share information, even when doing so could increase efficiency, if there are no clear guidelines for doing so. Public institutions are governed by established legislative obligations. A clear structure can offer the assurance and clarity required to facilitate productive teamwork.

Through digitization, Bangladesh has already established a solid foundation. Making ensuring these digital systems can cooperate is the next stage. The capacity to connect systems is becoming more and more important as global trade grows faster, more data-driven, and more standardized. The full value of digital investments can be realized by nations who follow this path, while those that don’t run the risk of losing ground in terms of productivity and competitiveness.

Investment agencies should be merged, but first the surrounding system needs to be fixed

According to reports, the government has become more cautious when it comes to combining Bangladesh’s investment agencies. A phased plan has replaced the early impulse to bring multiple organizations together under one roof: begin with the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) and the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), then decide what to do with the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA), Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA), Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), and the Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA). This is just the beginning, even though it’s a better place to start. It makes sense that the reform drive was first sparked by discontent. There are too many doors, too many approval pathways, and too many conflicting views of who is accountable, as anyone who has sat across from a perplexed investor will attest to. For the permits under their jurisdiction, BIDA and BEZA have developed one-stop services. Though uncertainty frequently persists, this is a true improvement. Sectoral licenses, power, land, and the environment continue to span several agencies. The nation ultimately bears the cost when decisions are delayed due to repetitive paperwork or uneven incentives. Therefore, while the idea underlying the intended merger is sound, combining by itself is not the

answer. Organizing institutions under a single canopy does not always eliminate confusion; rather, it just causes confusion to move from outside the building to inside. There are six distinct offices: BIDA, PPPA, BEZA, BEPZA, BSCIC, and BHTPA. They have distinct legal requirements, resources, capacities, and cultural backgrounds. BIDA encourages and makes investment easier. Public-private partnership projects requiring long-term contract discipline, risk allocation, and financial modeling are structured by PPPA. Economic and export processing zones are overseen by BEZA and BEPZA. BSCIC has a history in the small business sector. Investment in technology is the main objective of BHTPA. Consequently, a tech company, a PPP concessionaire, and a factory investor do not require the same service. Therefore, institutional reason rather than political convenience is the best argument for a phased merger. PPP project development is not standard investor servicing, even though BIDA and PPPA may be ideal early partners. The nation might lose a role it truly needs if that specialized expertise is diluted within a general agency. BEPZA, which is frequently regarded as one of the more successful organizations in Bangladesh’s investment environment, should be treated with the same caution. It is not appropriate to disassemble a working system just because a new organogram appears more or-



ganized. Investor pipelines, land data, incentive recommendations, and decision-maker access are all altered by a merger. Internal opposition should not be written off as a sort of turf protection when change rearranges these branches of power. Scholar M. Lynne

Markus noted that people frequently oppose the redistribution of power that accompanies change rather than the change itself. Duplication is protected by certain objections. Some identify actual operational risks. Serious reform needs to make a dis-

inction. Five questions must be answered clearly before any nameplates are changed. What should be centralized first? Zone management and PPP structuring require protected units, yet investor admission, aftercare, and national advertising might work

well on a shared platform. Secondly, who is in charge in the end? The new body turns into a forwarding desk if it only gathers complaints and relies on the previous agencies to make judgments. Third, what is the plan for integrating data? Investors shouldn’t be asked for information that the government already has. Fourth, how will knowledge be maintained? It is not appropriate for specialists to work as general administrators. Lastly, how will success be assessed? Clearly not through agency mergers, but rather through quicker approvals, fewer redundant documentation, and more predictable judgments. Having worked in Bangladesh’s investment sector, I have observed that investors do not evaluate change based on grandiose declarations. Whether their issue is resolved without being handed from desk to desk is how they evaluate it. Therefore, Bangladesh ought to take this change seriously. In our investment world, fragmentation has persisted for far too long. However, we must distinguish between capability and consolidation. Although a phased merger makes sense, phasing is not a strategy in and of itself. Regardless of how it is implemented, having a single investment umbrella is insufficient; what will ultimately determine whether this change will improve our investment climate or just rearrange the surrounding bureaucracy is having an accountable framework to back it.

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Single Window (MSW) is promoted globally by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The concept is straightforward: all pertinent agencies should get a single submission of information about a ship’s arrival or departure. In actuality, though, this calls for systems to be interconnected and capable of seamlessly exchanging data. Experience from other nations demonstrates that digitizing systems is just the beginning. Digital platforms can still function independently without adequate coordination and data sharing, which limits the advantages they offer. Even little information flow delays can have far-reaching effects for Bangladesh’s export-oriented economy. Businesses frequently handle several processes with comparable datasets. Even though digitization has decreased paperwork, delays, duplication, and uncertainty can still result from a lack of system coordination. Enhancing information transmission between institutions may become just as crucial as upgrading physical infrastructure as international purchasers place a higher priority on speed and dependability. This is the point at which appropriate digitalization becomes essential. It requires integrating systems into a cohesive ecosystem, going beyond simply putting procedures online. The capacity of many systems to securely and effectively share information is at the heart of this. To put it

simply, it entails inputting data only once and using it wherever necessary. Bangladesh has already made some progress in this area. The increasing connection between Bangladesh Customs and Bangladesh Bank, which links customs declarations with foreign exchange monitoring, shows the importance of system integration and reflects an awareness that increased data connectivity can enhance efficiency, transparency, and compliance. Many of these initiatives, nonetheless, continue to rely on specific agreements between institutions. While such approaches can support initial cooperation, they have clear limitations. Each new connection requires separate discussions, approvals, and technical adjustments. As more systems are added, this process becomes slow and difficult to manage. Over time, fragmented solutions risk recreating the very inefficiencies that digitisation was meant to reduce. Around the world, countries are therefore moving towards more structured approaches to connecting systems. Instead of building links case by case, they are developing common frameworks that allow different platforms to communicate more easily from the start. For example, Estonia has built a secure system that allows government agencies to share data while maintaining control over their own databases. In trade, the “single window” approach follows a similar principle: business-

es submit information once, and relevant authorities can access it as needed. These examples highlight an important lesson: connected systems are more effective than isolated ones. This offers Bangladesh a significant policy opportunity. Creating a national framework for data exchange could facilitate the integration of current technologies and improve the speed, predictability, and dependability of trade procedures. This change may be supported by ongoing policy reforms. The government can enhance cooperation between financial institutions, customs, and other trade-related agencies by incorporating procedures for safe data interchange. This would improve compliance, expedite procedures, and cut down on duplication. In general, it would contribute to the development of a more robust digital basis for trade facilitation. However, such a strategy would require robust cybersecurity and data protection protections. Crucially, centralized data storage is not necessary for this. While allowing safe and uniform data sharing, various organizations can maintain control over their own systems. Such a change could have major advantages. Businesses would benefit from quicker processing times, fewer duplicate filings, and reduced compliance expenses. It would enhance cooperation, promote better risk management, and increase data consistency for government entities.

Kotak Mahindra Bank to acquire up stake in AU Small Finance Bank

New Delhi: Kotak Mahindra Bank has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to acquire an aggregate holding of up to 9.99% in AU Small Finance Bank, the lender said in an exchange filing on Wednesday

AU Small Financer bank said in its filing, “AU Small Finance Bank has received RBI’s letter dated May 6, according its approval to Kotak Mahindra Bank (along with its subsidiaries, the funds/schemes managed by KM-BL’s subsidiaries, collective referred as “Kota Mahindra Group”) to acquire ‘aggregate holding’ of up to 9.99% of the paid-up share capital or voting rights in AU SFB.

Why RBI approval was mandatory? According to RBI norms, any individual or company planning to acquire 5% or more stake or voting rights in a private bank must first seek RBI approval. Investors with 5% or higher shareholding are also classified as “major shareholders” and must annually confirm their “fit and proper” status, including



financial integrity and regulatory compliance. The move helps RBI monitor ownership and maintain stability and good governance in the banking sector. The share price of AU Small Finance Bank is trading flat in the intraday session today, up 0.83% from the previous close. The stock has surged 13.94% in the past six months. On a year-to-date

(YTD) basis, AU Small Finance Bank’s share price has risen 3.45% so far this year. The share price of Kotak Mahindra Bank has gained 1.17% in the intraday session from the previous close. The stock has fallen 8.86% in the past six months. On a year-to-date (YTD) basis, Kotak Mahindra Bank’s share price has fell 14.28% so far this year.

Rupee falls 20 paise to low of 95.86 against US

New Delhi: The rupee opened on a weak note and depreciated 20 paise to a record low of 95.86 against the US dollar in early trade on Thursday, weighed down by elevated crude prices and concerns over the West Asia crisis.The rupee has now weakened by more than 6 per cent against the US dollar since the West Asia conflict began, making it Asia’s worst-performing currency so far in 2026.In a major move aimed at protecting foreign exchange reserves, India raised import duties on gold and silver from 6 per cent to 15 per cent, but traders said the rupee’s path will be shaped less by gold and more by crude’s trajectory and the West Asia situation.At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.74, then fell further to a record low of 95.86 against the US dollar, registering a fall of 20 paise from its previous close. Adding to the uncertainty, geopolitical headlines continue to swing market sentiment almost every few hours, Pabari said“US President Donald Trump stated that he does not expect China’s help

in resolving the Iran conflict, while peace negotiations between Washington and Tehran remain on hold as both sides continue to disagree on key conditions,” he added. Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday said that 2026 will be “historic, landmark year” for China-US relations as he welcomed US President Donald Trump at the Great Hall of the People for talks with him.The leaders of the world’s two largest economies are scheduled to have a few rounds of alks on Thursday and Friday.

The rupee on Wednesday slipped to an all-time low of 95.80 against the US dollar, and settled at 95.66 near its record closing low level.“From jewellery showrooms to fuel stations, every imported commodity is now carrying a heavier price tag — and the rupee is feeling the weight of it,” CR Forex Advisors MD – Amit Pabari said.

The visit by President Trump comes amid growing economic and geopolitical uncertainties arising from conflicts in the West East and the subsequent global energy shock that has taken a toll, particularly in Asia.

India bans sugar exports till to boost domestic curb prices

New Delhi: India on Wednesday banned sugar exports till September 30, 2026, in a move aimed at boosting domestic availability and keeping prices in check amid inflation concerns and global uncertainty linked to the West Asia conflict. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification dated May 13 that the export policy for raw, white and refined sugar has been changed from “Restricted” to “Prohibited” with immediate effect.“The export policy of Sugar (Raw Sugar, White Sugar and Refined Sugar)...is amended from ‘Restricted’ to ‘Prohibited’ with immediate effect till September 30, 2026, or until further orders, whichever is earlier,” the DGFT said.The ban will not apply to exports to the European Union and the United States under the CXL and Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) arrangements, which



allow shipments of specified sugar quantities at reduced or zero customs duty.The order also excludes exports under the advance authorisation scheme, government-to-gov-

ernment deals, and consignments already in the physical export pipeline.For the 2025-26 sugar marketing year (October-September), the Food Ministry had initially per-

mitted exports of 15 lakh tonnes and later opened an additional 5 lakh tonnes quota, of which only 87,587 tonnes were approved. In total, nearly 16 lakh tonnes of exports had been cleared.The government and sugar mills had projected outbound shipments of 7.5-8 lakh tonnes during the current marketing year.According to the Indian Sugar and Bio-energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA), India’s sugar production rose 7.32 per cent to 27.52 million tonnes till April in the 2025-26 season, driven by higher output in Maharashtra and Karnataka.IIFL Capital Services is one of the key capital market players in the Indian financial services space. IIFL Capital offers broking services, wealth management, financial products distribution, institutional broking,research and investment banking services.

Early trading saw the Sensex rise 450 points on upbeat Asian counterparts

New Delhi: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty climbed in early trade on Thursday, driven by buying in banking shares and positive cues from Asian markets amid optimism surrounding the ongoing US-China Summit.The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 450.51 points, or 0.60 per cent, to 75,059.49 in early trade.The 50-share NSE Nifty advanced 169.95, or 0.73 per cent, to 23,582.55.Among the Sensex constituents, Adani Ports, Trent, Asian Paints, NTPC, Sun Pharmaceuticals, UltraTech Cement, Bharti Airtel, Larsen & Toubro, ITC, Tata Steel, ICICI Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were the major gainers.

On the other hand, HCL Technologies, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services and Tech Mahindra were trading in the red territory.Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) sold equities worth Rs 4,703.15 crore on



Wednesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) purchased stocks for Rs 5,869.05 crore, according to exchange data.US markets ended mostly higher in overnight deals on Wednesday. ”Global equities advanced following a large-

ly upbeat session on Wall Street, as investors overlooked elevated Producer Price Index (PPI) data and continued buying in technology and communication stocks,” Aakash Shah, Technical Research Analyst at Choice Equity Brok-

ing Private Ltd, said.Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday said that 2026 will be “historic, landmark year” for China-US relations as he welcomed US President Donald Trump at the Great Hall of People for talks with him.The leaders of the world’s two largest economies are scheduled to have a few rounds of talks on Thursday and Friday.The visit by President Trump comes amid growing economic and geopolitical uncertainties arising from conflicts in the West East and the subsequent global energy shock that has taken a toll, particularly in Asia.Xi and Trump are expected to discuss the war in Iran, trade, technology and Taiwan, among other points of contention, during the visit.On Wednesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose 49.74 points to settle at 74,608.98.

Board recommends Rs 229 final payout and Q4 profit performance

New Delhi: Tyre maker MRF is in focus after announcing a large final dividend for shareholders along with its Q4FY26. The company’s board, after its meeting on May 7, recommended a final dividend of Rs 229 per equity share of face value Rs 10 each for the financial year ended March 31, 2026.The dividend proposal, however, is still subject to shareholder approval at the company’s upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM). The company is yet to announce the record date for determining eligible shareholders who will receive the dividend payout.

The announcement comes at a time when investors are closely tracking dividend-paying companies amid the ongoing earnings season. For MRF shareholders, the latest payout has pushed the company’s total dividend for FY26 to Rs 235 per share. Earlier during FY26, MRF had already declared two interim dividends of Rs 3 per share each. With the newly announced final dividend of Rs 229 per share, the total div-

idend payout for the financial year now stands at Rs 235 per share, or 2,350% on the face value of Rs 10 each. The company said the record date for the dividend payment will be announced later.For investors, the record date becomes important because only shareholders holding the stock before that cut-off date become eligible to receive the dividend.Q4FY26 numbers

The dividend announcement came alongside a Q4FY26 performance from the tyre manufacturer.MRF reported a consolidated profit after tax of Rs 702 crore for the quarter ended March 2026, compared to Rs 510 crore in the same period last year. This marks a rise of nearly 37% year-on-year. However, the company managed to improve profitability due to stronger revenue growth and better operating performance. The stock rose over 2% to touch around Rs 1,33,950 during the trading session.Revenue from operations during the quarter rose to Rs 8,044 crore from Rs 7,074 crore a year ago, re-

flecting growth of around 14%.The company’s earnings per share (EPS) also increased sharply to Rs 1,655.80 during the quarter compared with Rs 1,203.68 in the same quarter last year. On a standalone basis, net profit came in at Rs 680 crore compared to Rs 498 crore a year ago. Meanwhile, Earnings Before Interest,

Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBIT-DA) rose over 21% year-on-year to Rs 1,305 crore. EBITDA margin improved to 16.2% from 15.2% in the year-ago quarter.Expenses rise, but profitability improvesLike several manufacturing companies, MRF also saw higher expenses during the quarter.

Total expenses increased around 12% year-on-year to Rs 7,157 crore. Raw material costs, which remain the biggest expense for tyre companies, rose to Rs 4,945 crore from Rs 4,680 crore a year ago.Employee expenses and other operating costs also moved higher during the quarter.

Craftsman Automation shares zoom 13% to record high

New Delhi: Shares of Craftsman Automation Ltd recorded a strong uptick in Thursday’s trade to hit their all-time high level. The stock jumped 12.82 per cent to Rs 8,775.15 after the company reported a robust set of earnings for the fourth quarter of FY26.During the quarter under review, Craftsman’s consolidated net profit increased 74.39 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 116.42 crore from Rs 66.76 crore in the corresponding period last year. Revenue from operations grew 27.27 per cent to Rs 2,226.40 crore in Q4 FY26 compared to Rs 1,749.25 crore in the year-ago period. Adjusted Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation

and Amortisation (EBIT-DA) for the quarter rose 47 per cent YoY to Rs 358 crore from Rs 243 crore. Alongside the earnings announcement, the company’s Board recommended a final dividend of Rs 11.25 per equity share.“We wish to inform that the Board of Directors of the Company at their meeting held on Thursday, the 7th May, 2026 has, inter alia, approved and recommended a final dividend of Rs. 11.25/- per equity share of Rs.5/- each (225%) for the financial year ended 31st March, 2026, subject to the approval of shareholders at the 40th Annual General Meeting (AGM),” it stated. ”In this regard, pursuant to Regulation 42 of the



Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements), Regulations, 2015, the Register of Members of the Company will be closed from Friday, 17th July, 2026 to Thurs-

day, 23rd July, 2026 (both days inclusive) and the record date for the purpose of determining the eligibility of the equity shareholders for the dividend will be Thursday, 16th July, 2026,” Craftsman added.

Further hike prices’ to mitigate Middle impact Q4 profit increases by 38%



New Delhi: “The Company’s performance was aided by the launch of new SKUs in various categories like Truck, Passenger, Two-Wheelers etc. Besides being one of the largest OE suppliers of Tyres to ICE vehicles, the Company has become the most preferred supplier of Tyres to Electric Vehicles. MRF tyres are increasingly being fitted on vehicles exported by OEMs to many countries across the globe,” the company said in its release

Tyre maker, MRF reported a 38% rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 702.25 crore in Q4FY26 from Rs 510.5 crore reported in Q4FY25.Consolidated revenue from operations in the Q4FY26 stood at Rs 8,044.22 crore, as against Rs 7,074.82 crore in the Q4FY25Total expenses in the quarter under review increased to Rs 7,267.51 crore, compared to Rs 6,531.04 crore in the same period a year ago, the company said.MRF crossed Rs 30,000 crore sales milestone

MRF said it delivered a healthy operating performance during FY26 and crossed the Rs 30,000 crore sales milestone for the first time. MRF Q4FY26 net profit rises 38% to Rs 702.25 crore, announces Rs 229 dividend per share. Know all details about the financial results.MRF said demand remained buoyant during the fourth quarter due to the reduction in GST rates,

which supported growth in both replacement and OEM sales. “In order to cater to future

demand for tyres across segments in the Replacement market, OEMs and Export, we are also expanding capacity across Plants.”MRF has recommended a final dividend of Rs 229 per share of face value Rs 10 each for FY26. The dividend is subject to shareholders’ approval at the upcoming AGM.MRF said that the Middle East war has severely impacted the cost of input materials and it will hike prices further to mitigate these cost pressures.

“The ‘Company has taken price increases and cost management measures to mitigate the impact of higher raw material costs and will take further hikes. Further, the forecast of a sub normal monsoon may adversely impact demand.

In view of the unpredictable economic conditions and cost pressures on margins, it is difficult to anticipate the expected impact on growth and the Company is in the process of evaluating the same,”

MRF said in its release. The company had already paid two interim dividends of Rs 3 per share each during the year. With this, the total dividend for FY26 stands at Rs 235 per share.For the entire FY26, consolidated net profit increased to Rs 2,426.1 crore from Rs 1,873.29 crore in FY25. Consolidated revenue from operations in FY26 stood at Rs 31,149.01 crore as against Rs 28,153 crore in the preceding financial year, the company said.

Tensions arise in the Netanyahu-Trump alliance “They have screwed each other pretty badly”



Iran: In a video statement this week, Benjamin Netanyahu broke an unusually extended quiet over the Iran dispute by stating that he had “full co-ordination” with Donald Trump, with whom he spoke “almost daily.”The assertion that all was well in the US-Israeli relationship came after weeks of domestic press reports that Israel was no longer consulted over the Iran dispute, and much less regarding peace negotiations mediated by Pakistan. The public and independent press are so skeptical of Netanyahu’s reliability that when he made a video message, observers immediately speculated that the situation may be worse than they had anticipated. Dahlia Scheindlin, an American-Israeli political strategist and pollster, stated, “He is doing so much talking about how great the relationship is that it makes me rather concerned about how much tension there is.” “I wouldn’t be shocked, since the war is obviously failing miserably from every angle in relation to the initial objectives.”The prime minister of Israel and the president of the United States have long been seen as mirror reflections of one another. With little respect for previous conventions or limitations, they have both invented populist strategies to control domestic politics by undermining the constitutional foundations of the very systems that brought them to power. It will be extremely difficult for either of them to separate themselves from the memory of the disastrous US-Israeli attack on Iran on February 28, which brought the Gulf to a stop.For decades, Netanyahu tried to convince a series of US presidents to fight alongside Israel against the Islamic Republic. When it came to weakening the multilateral nuclear agreement with Iran in 2015, which had been Barack Obama’s most notable foreign policy accomplishment, he went to previously unheard-of lengths for a foreign leader meddling in US internal affairs. In 2018, Iran increased its nuclear program and amassed a stockpile of highly enriched uranium enough for a dozen nuclear weapons after Netanyahu persuaded Trump to back out of the agreement. Additionally, in February of this year, Netanyahu played a crucial role in persuading Trump that war was the only way to defeat the danger and that it could be won with ease, according to significant reporting in the US press.The Israeli leader was already pushing at an open door by that point. Nicolás Maduro, the president of Venezuela, was abducted by US soldiers during a surprise attack on Caracas the previous month. This was an incredible coup. “Netanyahu, being the conman that he is, used Venezuela as an example,” Alon Pinkas, a

former Israeli diplomat, said. “He said to him: ‘Look what you did in Venezuela. It was painless. It was effortless. It was beautiful. You changed the regime.’“Then he begins bombarding Trump with intelligence data showing that Iran had expanded its missile production and its missile-launching capabilities, and still has 450kg of highly enriched uranium,” Pinkas said.With the help of the Mossad director, David Barnea, Netanyahu portrayed the Tehran regime as an overripe fruit ready to drop from the branch.“He told Trump: ‘The Iranian economy is in shambles. The people are on the precipice of revolt. The Revolutionary Guards are losing control. Life in Iran is intolerable. This is our time,’” Pinkas said. “‘What we could do together is bring down the regime ... think that together, jointly, we can win the war in three, four days.’”According to multiple reports, US intelligence and military officials stressed the risk that Iran could attack US allies in the Gulf and close the strait of Hormuz. But Netanyahu – and US administration hawks including the defence secretary, Pete Hegseth – prevailed, arguing that Iran’s Revolutionary Guards were overrated and would not have the strength to hit back.They were proved wrong on every count. The Iranian people did not rise up, the regime did not fall, the Kurds did not attack from the north-west and the Revolutionary Guards were able to inflict withering damage on US bases and Gulf monarchies, close the Hormuz strait and trigger a global economic crisis.“Some 30 days into the war, by the end of March there were signs that Trump was very disappointed with Netanyahu,” Pinkas said.

The president stopped mentioning Israel and Netanyahu in his relentlessly upbeat public statements about the war. When US negotiators started talking to their Iranian counterparts and Pakistani mediators in the run up to a ceasefire announcement on 8 April, Israel was left out of the loop. Israeli officials complained to the press that they had to use their intelligence assets to try to find out what was going on.There are varying accounts of what is on the table in the peace talks, but there has been no mention of Iran’s missile arsenal or its use of regional proxies, both of which are Israeli priorities.When Trump did mention Netanyahu, it was mostly to tell him off. After Israel bombed Iran’s South Pars gasfield, for example, Trump said he had told Netanyahu “not to do that.”“On occasion, he’ll do something, and if I don’t like it ... we’re not doing that any more,” the president said.When the ceasefire was agreed, Trump initially sided with Netanya-

hu’s interpretation that Lebanon was excluded and then, with the truce in jeopardy, swiftly reversed himself and made Israel follow suit. “Israel will not be bombing Lebanon any longer. They are PROHIBITED from doing so by the U.S.A. Enough is enough!!!” he said in a social media post on 17 April, in an unprecedented public rebuke to Netanyahu.Since this nadir, Israeli government officials have been briefing reporters that the ceasefire cannot last and that a return to hostilities was inevitable. Last weekend, there was a flurry of reporting in Israeli newspapers that intensive US-Israeli military coordination had resumed at their earlier tempo, in anticipation of further joint strikes.Those strikes have yet to materialise, however, and the Trump administration has sought to downplay the significance of recent exchanges of fire around the strait of Hormuz.Daniel Shapiro, a former US ambassador to Israel, said Trump is already looking beyond Iran to his next major challenge: a 14 May trip to China and a critical meeting with President Xi Jinping.“President Trump is going to want to have this war more or less behind him by the time he goes to Beijing,” Shapiro said. “Otherwise, he will be in the position of a supplicant seeking Xi Jinping’s help to get them to convince Iran to accept his terms or to make concessions they haven’t made. And that’s a very weak position to be in when he would rather focus on getting some of the Chinese-US economic relations on a more stable ground.”From prior experience in the Gaza and Lebanon conflicts, Netanyahu can draw some confidence that even if he is forced to accept a temporary peace deal that runs counter to his own interests, Trump’s attention will inevitably be diverted elsewhere, and Israel’s hands will be freed again.“If Trump reaches a deal, the Israelis will have to accept it for the time being, and then perhaps they will revisit it to ‘mow the grass’, as they say, on the missile programme or on the nuclear programme at some later time,” Shapiro said.Netanyahu also knows there are limits to the extent Trump can free himself from their geopolitical embrace. As Trump’s former national security adviser, John Bolton, points out, Netanyahu can always make waves in US politics.

“I think Trump’s jealous of Netanyahu because Netanyahu is one of the few people who can generate more press than he does,” Bolton said, pointing out that despite Trump’s imposition of a ceasefire, “he’s still giving Netanyahu a pretty free hand in Lebanon.”Pinkas, who served as adviser to prime ministers Ehud Barak and Shimon Peres, argues that strategic failure in the Iran war will also prove to be too powerful a glue for Trump to dissolve quickly.“The problem Trump has is that if he lashes out at Netanyahu, if he expresses his disillusionment or desperation, he basically admits he was led into this war,” Pinkas said, adding that the conflict looks certain to hurt both men at the ballot box.Netanyahu must hold an election by October, which by current polling would finally end his premiership. The elections in the US are congressional, but they could still render Trump a lame duck, at least in domestic politics.“This affects Netanyahu politically and this affects Trump politically,” Pinkas said. “In other words, they have screwed each other pretty badly.”

According to Rubio, the US is expecting Iran’s reaction about ceasefire efforts

Washington: Iran has accused the US of violating the increasingly precarious truce that was proclaimed last month, and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has stated that Washington is anticipating a response from Iran on Friday on its ideas for an interim agreement to halt the crisis in the Middle East. The violence in and around the disputed strait of Hormuz has escalated to its highest level since the start of the unofficial truce in recent days. Following Donald Trump’s declaration of a new navy operation to open the critical canal, which was quickly halted, there was an increase in violence.According to the US military, two tankers flying the Iranian flag attempted

to breach the US blockade of Iran’s ports on Friday, but US Marines shot on them and damaged them. Despite the conflicts, diplomatic attempts are still ongoing. Pakistan’s mediators have given Iran a short memorandum that the US claims might serve as the foundation for a stronger truce that would permit fresh negotiations. Trump told reporters at the White House on Friday night that he anticipated hearing back from Iran shortly. He added, “I’m supposed to get a letter tonight.” “We’ll find out soon enough,” he said in response to a question about whether Iran was purposefully delaying the negotiations. Rubio stated, “We’re expecting a response from them to

day at some point,” while in Rome. I sincerely hope that this is a serious offer. It is hoped that it would initiate a genuine bargaining process. There have been wild swings from hope to despair in recent days, as the US and Iran test each other’s resilience and will, seeking leverage in talks through belligerent rhetoric, defiance and sporadic violence.Abbas Araghchi, Iran’s foreign minister, accused the US of breaking the ceasefire, posting on X on Friday: “Every time a diplomatic solution is on the table, the U.S. opts for a reckless military adventure.” Araghchi also boasted that Iran’s ballistic missile stocks and launcher capacity had not only been repaired and restocked during

the pause in hostilities, but expanded.Control of the strait and the threat to restart attacks on nearby countries’ oil and other infrastructure in the Gulf are the two main cards Iran can play in negotiations. The US has blockaded Iran, stopping all Iran-linked shipping trying to leave the Gulf, to put pressure on Tehran.The elimination of Iran’s missile armoury and production facilities were repeatedly stated as a key objective by US officials early in the war. Their restriction is also likely be a demand during any negotiations.An Iranian official said on Friday that US attacks overnight in and near the strait of Hormuz struck an Iranian cargo vessel, wounding 10 sailors, with five others missing.

General Motors will settle for selling drivers’ location and data for \$12.75 million



Washington: Rob Bonta, the state’s attorney general, said on Friday that General Motors (GM) has agreed to pay \$12.75 million to settle allegations that it unlawfully sold the location and driving data of hundreds of thousands of Californians to two data brokers.

This, according to him, followed “numerous statements reassuring drivers that it would not do so” from the Detroit-based carmaker.According to a statement from Bonta, “General Motors sold the data of California drivers without their knowledge or consent.” “This treasure trove of information included precise and personal location data that could

identify Californians’ daily routines and movements.” The \$12.75 million settlement is for civil fines and is contingent upon court approval. Additionally, the state is limiting GM’s use of consumer-driving data and prohibiting its sale to any data broker for five years.All kinds of private information, such as where individuals live, work, attend school, or attend church, might be discovered if a car’s exact position is known. Customers may find it almost hard to limit the dissemination of such data once it enters the data broker sector. “Modern cars are rolling data-collection machines,” said Brooke Jenkins, San

Francisco’s district attorney. “Californians must have confidence that they know what data is being collected, how it is being used and what their opt-out rights are. Those duties fall on the automobile companies.”

Carmakers have been increasingly scrutinized in recent years over their ability to access driver data and share it with insurance companies and data brokers. The New York Times investigated GM and other automakers in 2024, looking into how consumers’ driving behavior was shared with insurers. The news outlet found that some companies raised their rates based on this

data.California first started investigating GM and other car manufacturers in 2023. The inquiry was done in conjunction with several district attorneys across the state, including Jenkins, and the California privacy protection agency.The lawmakers found that from 2020 to 2024, GM had sold the names, contact information, geolocation data and driving-behavior data of hundreds of thousands of Californians to the data brokers Verisk Analytics and LexisNexis Risk Solutions.

The company collected the data through its On-Star technology, which is its in-vehicle security subscription service. GM reportedly made approximately \$20m from these sales.Bonta said California drivers would not see increased insurance premiums from GM’s sales because insurers were prohibited from using driving data to set their rates in the state. But Bonta added that GM misled consumers for saying in its privacy policy that it would not sell driving or location data, and then handed it over to data brokers anyway without consumers’ consent.

Following the SNP triumph, John Swinney calls on Starmer to treat Scotland with “greater respect”

London: After winning the Holyrood elections by a wide margin, John Swinney, the head of the Scottish National party, has urged Keir Starmer to treat the Scottish government with “greater respect.”After winning 58 of Holyrood’s 129 seats, the Scottish National party was able to earn a record fifth term in government on Friday.At 1.10 a.m. on Saturday, 16 hours after the counting started, Highlands Council finally completed their regional list count, leaving Labour and Reform UK deadlocked on 17 seats apiece in a dramatic end to the day’s counting. This puts the Scottish parliament in an unusual situation of having two parties in joint second place, further humiliating Labour, which is now experiencing its worst performance since devolution in 1999. Swinney will now probably be questioned by both Labour and Reform at the first minister’s question on Thursdays.Holyrood now has a pro-independence majority thanks to a record 15 seats won by the Scottish Greens, but Swinney was unable to secure the SNP majority he said would be necessary to call a second independence referendum.Swinney stated in interviews that it is now the responsibility of the UK government to approach the Scottish government as partners rather than adversaries, but he also signaled that he no longer intends to actively pursue that referendum proposition. “My message to Downing Street tonight is very, very clear,” he told the BBC. “They have got a lot of listening to do, to the fact that Labour have been hammered here in Scotland, and an SNP government, after 19 years in office, has just been emphatically returned to office. Scotland needs respect as a consequence of that election outcome.”That caution on independence will reflect the fact that the SNP’s national share of the vote, at 38.3%, was its lowest since 2007, suggesting voters had drifted away. Swinney’s party lost six constituency seats, chiefly to the Liberal Democrats, which enjoyed a surge of support in the Highlands.The SNP’s support also fell in nearly every constituency, with only two exceptions. At the same time, national turnout fell to 53.1%, the lowest of the last three Holyrood elections. With all the seats declared, the Scottish Conservatives were left in fifth with 12 seats, and the Liberal Democrats close behind on 10.Swinney first declared victory after the Scottish Labour leader, Anas Sarwar, conceded early Friday afternoon his party had comprehensively lost, after admitting Labour had failed to counter the “national dissatisfaction” with Keir Starmer. Speaking to the media in Glasgow after only seven of Holyrood’s 129 seats had been declared, Sarwar said: “We made an argument for change and, ultimately, it’s an argument we lost.”He said he stood by his demands in February for Starmer to quit as UK Labour leader and prime minister. “My party is hurting today and it’s my job to hold



it together,” he said. “We will continue to fight for the change we believe Scotland so desperately needs.”The tragedy of this election campaign is that despite all the arguments we wanted to make about the health service, the future of our schools, about tackling homelessness, sadly that’s not what the election became about. It became about a national mood, and a national dissatisfaction.”Despite spending a record amount on its campaign, Labour sources said they had been punished by a disillusioned electorate, with voters deserting the party or staying at home in protest at Starmer’s policies on welfare changes, his response to Israel’s war in Gaza and his engagement with Reform’s anti-immigration agenda. In the biggest shock of the day, the Scottish Greens won their first Scottish constituency seat when their former co-leader Lorna Slater won Edinburgh Central, unseating the cabinet secretary for culture and external affairs, Angus Robertson, formerly the SNP’s Westminster leader.In a humiliating defeat that presaged a Green surge in other areas, Robertson was consigned to third place, with Scottish Labour in second, handing Slater a 4,582-vote majority. Many voters were critical of Robertson’s meeting last year with Israel’s ambassador, but boundary changes also brought in a significant student vote, previously in Edinburgh Southern, and professionals who had abandoned Labour.That was soon followed by a second constituency win for the Greens, when Holly Bruce defeated the SNP minister Kaukab Stewart in Glasgow Southside, the seat until recently held by the former first minister Nicola Sturgeon. With this Scottish parliament election count being held on a Friday for the first time, the Liberal Democrats won the first of Holyrood’s 129 seats to be declared, holding Orkney with a record 70% vote share.Liam McArthur, who has held Orkney for the Lib Dems since 2007, is seen as a contender to become Holyrood’s next presiding officer. He thanked his rival candidates for showing “you can have a political contest without knocking seven bells out of each other.” That was the first swathe of Lib Dem victories over the SNP, unseating SNP MSPs in the Highlands seats of Caithness, Sutherland and Ross and Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, the

newly created seat of Edinburgh Northern and Strathkelvin and Bearsden north of Glasgow.Yet, in the first surprise result of the day, the SNP had won the former Lib Dem stronghold of Shetland for the first time. The Lib Dems had held the seat for 27 years. On a very difficult day for Scottish Labour, it enjoyed a shock victory in the Western Isles, with its popular candidate, Donald MacKinnon, narrowly defeating the former SNP minister Alasdair Allan, who had held the seat for the SNP since 2007, by just 154 votes.The Tories had convincing fought off Reform in the south of Scotland, retaining all its constituency seats in Dumfriesshire and the Scottish Borders.Reform UKhad its strongest showing by coming close to winning Banffshire and Buchan Coast, where there was majority support for leave in the 2016 EU referendum. Karen Adam held it for the SNP by just 264 votes over Reform, with the SNP share falling by 10 percentage points. The unpredictability was underscored by low turnouts in numerous constituencies.Although some boundaries have changed, in several Glasgow seats with higher-than-average levels of deprivation, the turnout was as low as 43%. In the 2021 Holyrood election, turnout in comparable constituencies was in the low 50s.

In Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley south of Glasgow, the SNP won with 40% of the vote but its share of the vote fell by 13 percentage points. It held Dundee City West with 49.1% but recorded a 12.5-point fall in support. In both seats, Labour’s vote slightly improved. The SNP held Dundee City East, too, with 48.8%, but its vote fell by 10.4 points. In the first wave of results Reform did well in Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley in western Scotland, coming second behind the SNP with a 24.1% vote share. It had never contested that seat before, and its second place appeared to be largely at the expense of the Tories; their vote share fell by 17.9 points to just 12.7%.Turnout in Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley was down by 10.7 points on 2021, to 48.7%. In Edinburgh, Scotland’s wealthiest city, the turnout in the Scottish Greens’ target seat of Edinburgh Central was 54.7%. While subject to boundary changes, turnout in the comparable seat in 2021 was 62.5%.

Adolescence appears to last far longer than once thought

Society has tended to describe adulthood as starting at around 18 to 21. And most people may appear fully adult by then. But such looks can be deceiving. The brain won't reach its adult form until more than a decade after that, a new study finds. At a minimum, its data offer a new interpretation of what it means to be an adolescent.

These data are part of a much larger analysis of when and how often the brain undergoes major changes. The findings appeared November 25, 2025, in *Nature Communications*.

When thinking about the defining feature of adolescence, many people focus on body changes in preparation for adulthood. What isn't visible from the outside, though, are the many rewiring changes underway in our brains. The new study investigated these. And its findings show that the brain doesn't attain its adult architecture until much later than scientists had realized — around age 32.

Neuroscientists Alexa Mousley and Duncan Astle led the research. Both work at the University of Cambridge in England. Their team studied brain scans from more than 4,000 people. They ranged in age from birth to 90. These scans had originally been collected as part of other studies. In poring over those scans, the researchers identified when and how brain connections changed. Such brain-connectivity changes — rewiring of the neural circuits — occur across our lifespan. They reflect “changes in the way brain regions communicate with each other,” says Lucina Uddin. And, she notes, the timing of the changes seems to “accompany major life-stage transitions.” These tended to occur around ages 9, 32, 66 and 83. A cognitive neuroscientist at the University of California, Los Angeles, Uddin did not take part in the new work. But she does find it “a very exciting study.” The human brain contains some 86 billion neurons. These nerve cells “talk” to one another, sharing information. Each neuron has a long arm, or axon, that reaches out toward other neurons. Insulating cells wrap around the axons. These help neural signals travel faster. Because the insulating cells are fatty, they look white, so we call them the brain's white matter. The neurons' cell bodies make up



the brain's gray matter. The number of neurons in the brain doesn't change much over our lifespan. But how the cells connect to each other does. Unused connections get “pruned” or wither away. At the same time, new ones form and useful ones grow stronger. Axons that send frequent signals can get more insulation — a thicker jacket of white matter. Although scientists knew these kinds of changes happen, it wasn't clear if there were particular times for when they take place, at least after early adolescence. The new study finds there are. Five eras — or “epochs” — of brain development emerged from the analysis. Each spanned a time during which the brain reorganizes in specific ways. The first epoch runs from birth until around age 9. The next phase — adolescence — kicks off then and continues to around age 32. Two more epochs, adulthood and early aging, ended around 66 and 83, after which the late-aging phase kicked off. Those last two epochs were a bit of a surprise. Scientists had largely expected that after early adulthood, the brain's structure stayed roughly unchanged. A baby's brain has lots of connections. Not all are useful. So the body prunes away many of these as a child grows. During this time, more insulation wraps around axons to strengthen links that do prove useful.

Around age 9, adolescence starts. Brains now begin to change in ways that help different regions communicate.

“Neural efficiency is, as you might imagine, well connected by short paths,” Mousley explained in a statement issued by the University of Cambridge. And, she adds, “the adolescent era is the only one in which this efficiency is increasing.” Those increases continue on into our early 30s — much longer than scientists had realized. Brain connections largely stabilize between ages 32 and 66. Then, as people grow older, they begin to lose white matter, and their brains lose efficiency. This happens in the so-called early aging (through age 83) and late aging eras.

Understanding that the brain doesn't change steadily over one's life can be helpful, Astle said in the Cambridge University statement. How the brain is wired may be linked to a number of mental health and other conditions. “Differences in brain wiring predict difficulties with attention, language, memory and a whole host of different behaviors,” Astle said. So the new findings “will help us identify when and how its wiring is vulnerable to disruption.”

The study “is a new and refreshing way to think about [brain] organization,” says Richard Cytoptic. He's a neuroscientist at George Washington University in Wash-



ington, D.C. The new data, he says, confirm that “we change in leaps and bounds, rather than step by step.” It also means that the end of adolescence remains difficult to determine. And, he adds, it leaves open the question of how white matter matures as we age.

So what does this mean for teens?

Researchers, politicians, media and others “have been talking about how people reach adulthood later than they used to,” says Hillary Schwab. This cognitive neuroscientist works at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln.

While the Cambridge study “is important,” she says, “it only looks at one part of the brain, called white matter.” What it doesn't do, she cautions, is “explain how thinking or behavior changes” over time. As such, it's the first of many steps needed to better understand how connections

inside the brain affect thinking and feeling over our lifespan. Concludes Schwab, when it comes to how the brain functions, there's still much to learn.

adolescence: A transitional stage of physical and psychological development that begins at the onset of puberty, typically between the ages of 11 and 13, and ends with adulthood. People undergoing this transition are known as adolescents.

adolescent: Someone in that transitional stage of physical and psychological development that begins at the onset of puberty, typically between the ages of 11 and 13, and ends with adulthood.

axon: The long, tail-like extension of a neuron that conducts electrical signals away from the cell.

behavior: The way something (often a person or other organism) conducts itself or acts towards others.

brain scan: A technique to view structures inside the brain, typically with X-rays or a magnetic resonance imaging (or MRI) machine. With MRI technology — especially the type known as functional MRI (or fMRI) — the activity of different brain regions can be viewed during an event, such as viewing pictures, computing sums or listening to music.

circuit: A network that transmits electrical signals. In the body, nerve cells create circuits that relay electrical signals to the brain. In electronics, wires typically route those signals to activate some mechanical, computational or other function.

cognitive: A term that relates to mental activities, such as thinking, learning, remembering and solving puzzles.

development: (in biology) The growth of an organism from conception through adulthood, often undergoing changes in chemistry, size and sometimes even shape.

epoch: A span of time over which some dramatic changes have occurred.

function: The specific role some structure or device plays. (in math) A relationship between two or more variables in which one variable (the dependent one) is exactly determined by the value of the other variables.

gray matter: One of two main types of tissue found in the brain and spinal cord. It consists mainly of nerve cell

bodies.

host: (in biology and medicine) The organism (or environment) in which some other thing resides. Humans may be a temporary host for food-poisoning germs or other infective agents.

information: (as opposed to data) Facts provided or trends learned about something or

mature: (adj.) Connoting an adult individual or full-grown and fully developed (non-juvenile) form of something. (verb) To develop toward — or into — a more complex and full-grown form of something, be it a living thing, a technology or an idea.

mental health: A term for someone's emotional, psychological and social well-being. It refers to how people behave on their own and how they interact with others. It includes how people make choices, handle stress and manage fear or anxiety. Poor mental health can be triggered by disease or might reflect a short-term response to life's challenges. It can occur in people of any age, from babies to the elderly.

nerve: A long, delicate fiber that transmits signals across the body of an animal. An animal's backbone contains many nerves, some of which control the movement of its legs or fins, and some of which convey sensations such as hot, cold or pain.

neuron: The main cell type of the nervous system — the brain, spinal column and nerves. These specialized cells transmit information by producing, receiving and conducting electrical signals. Neurons also can transmit signals to other cells with chemical messengers.

neuroscientist: Someone who studies the structure or function of the brain and other parts of the nervous system.

society: An integrated group of people or animals that generally cooperate and support one another for the greater good of them all.

transition: The boundary where one thing (paragraphs, ecosystems, life stage, state of matter) changes or converts into another. Some transitions are sharp or abrupt. Others slowly or gradually morph from one condition or environment to another.

white matter: One of the two main tissue types found in the brain and spinal cord. It consists mainly of bundles of nerve fibers.

Prehistoric ‘sea’ monster also lurked in rivers, data show

Mosasaurs — a fearsome group of ancient predators — once ruled the seas. Now researchers have turned up a 66-million-year fossil tooth from one. And the big surprise: It came from a site that wasn't part of the ocean. As such, this tooth is rewriting the aquatic reptile's history. Some mosasaurs ruled the rivers, it suggests. The tooth came from a genus known as *Prognathodontini* (Prog-NAH-thow-don-TEE-nee). These enormous animals could span up to 11 meters (36 feet) — or about the length of a telephone pole. The lizard-like creatures showed up during the Late Cretaceous, some 100 million years ago. Then, like nearly all of their dinosaur cousins, mosasaurs went extinct when a massive asteroid hit Earth 66 million years ago. Ancient dinos roamed the land. Mosasaurs prowled the water. More closely related to lizards and snakes than dinos, these giants had shark-like tails and paddle-shaped fins. These helped them glide through water to surprise their prey.

With powerful jaws, this lurking predator “could bite through big turtles, fishes and reptiles [including dinosaurs]. It was terrifying,” says Melanie During. She works at Uppsala University in Sweden. A paleontologist, she uses fossils to learn about ancient life.

In 2022, a team from the North Dakota Geological Society was

digging for fossils in a former river floodplain. The North Dakota site is known as the Hell Creek Formation.

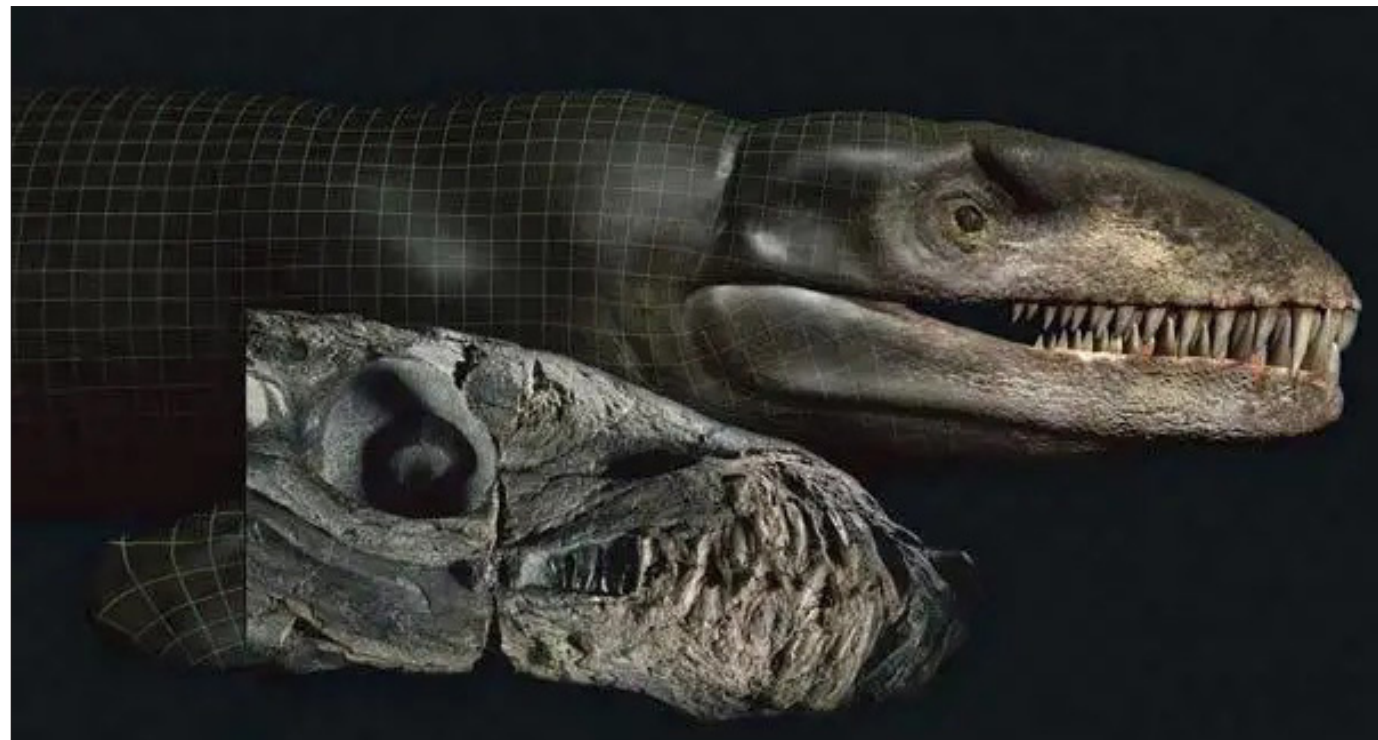
In one football-shaped piece of rock, the team found three fossils: a *Tyrannosaurus rex* tooth, an ancient crocodile jawbone — and a mosasaur tooth.

That last one was unexpected. What was a sea reptile doing with a croc and a dinosaur? “We were already surprised when a mosasaur tooth was in Hell Creek. We tried everything to prove that the tooth was from a marine reptile,” says During. But that's not what the evidence showed.

Before giving up, the team compared the new fossils to ones at Vrije University Amsterdam, in the Netherlands. Here, they turned to a chemical technique called isotope analysis. Isotopes are atoms of the same element that have different numbers of neutrons. Isotope patterns can reveal parts of an animal's life history, such as where it lived and what it ate.

Because all fossils at Hell Creek were 66 million years old, the researchers could compare them. They focused on isotopes of three elements: oxygen, strontium and carbon.

Oxygen isotopes pointed to what type of water the mosasaur lived in. Living in salt water, a mosasaur would have built up more of a heavier oxygen isotope. Yet the oxygen in the Hell Creek



mosasaur tooth had more lighter isotopes than expected. Strontium and carbon isotopes showed a similar pattern.

The results point to the tooth's owner having lived and died in freshwater. It was not merely a sea denizen that washed into a river.

Such data suggest scientists will have to reconsider what they know about mosasaur lifestyles, the researchers say. They shared their new findings in *BMC Zoology* on December 12, 2025. “It's a remarkable example of a

species apparently adapting to a habitat,” says Barry Albright. He's a paleontologist at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville who didn't work on the study. “It was entirely unexpected,” he says. “The reptiles were long considered to be exclusively marine.”

Nicholas Longrich works at the University of Bath in England. “In the sea, [mosasaurs] evolve a range of jaw shapes and tooth shapes, body forms and sizes,” this paleontologist says. “But now, we're seeing them occupy other

habitats,” he says. “It indicates they were diverse and thriving before the asteroid struck,” killing off much of Earth's life 66 million years ago.

Diverse predators at the top of the food web imply diverse prey, Longrich points out. So what drew mosasaurs into rivers? Here's one idea. During the Late Cretaceous, shallow tropical seas covered Earth. One of them — the Western Interior Seaway — split in half what is now North America. The rich ecosystems of this sea were

full of fish and other prey for mosasaurs to eat. Later, as the continent uplifted, the sea underwent major changes.

One change was that its salt levels fell. Seaway mosasaurs might have adapted enough to be able to venture into freshwater. That could have included the river channels at Hell Creek.

“It's possible that mosasaurs were following prey upriver,” says Femke Holwerda. She's a mosasaur expert at Utrecht University in the Netherlands.

Mosasaurs had been hardly the only ocean predators. They had rivals for food. Adapting to life in a river may have helped the Hell Creek mosasaurs occupy a new ecological role. Here, they might have competed less for food, Albright thinks. It wouldn't be the first time aquatic life left the ocean. Amazon river dolphins adapted to live in murky rivers. Other ancient marine reptiles have been found in riverbeds, too.

“There is no reason why mosasaurs would have been constrained to only marine environments,” says Kiersten Formoso. A vertebrate paleobiologist, she works at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J.

“It would be interesting to see more mosasaur fossils,” says Formoso. “Was this just a curious mosasaur?” she asks. Perhaps a pioneer for its species?

To gather more data, During's team hopes to return to Hell Creek. Finding the skeleton of this mosasaur would be like winning the jackpot. By finding the entire body, “we could see how it adapted,” says During.

Indeed, Longrich says, mosasaur bones in the area might have been misidentified before — or even ignored. After all, researchers weren't looking for them in riverbeds. “I can't help but wonder if there are [somewhere, unidentified freshwater mosasaur] teeth and bones sitting in museum drawers.”

Aly Goni Responds to Trolls Making Fun of Alia Bhatt in a Viral Red Carpet Video from Cannes 2026



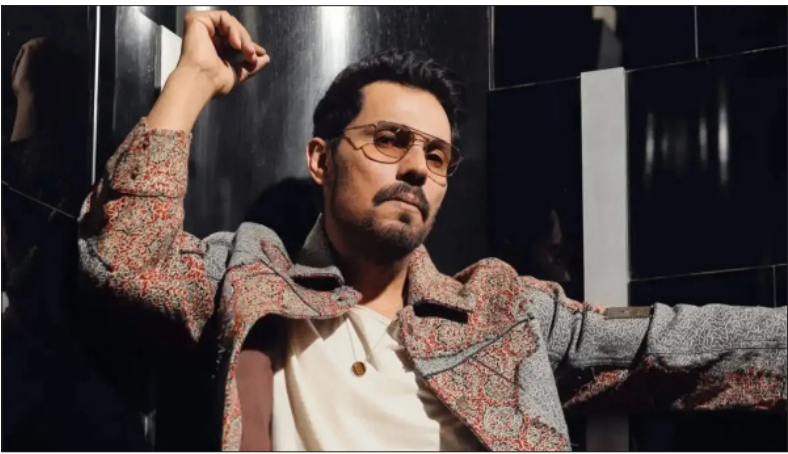
Mumbai: After Alia Bhatt was the target of internet harassment due to a widely shared video from the 2026 Cannes Film Festival, actor Aly Goni spoke out in favor of the actress. Alia was seen laughing, waving, blowing kisses, and posing boldly on the Cannes red carpet in the widely shared video. Social media users, however, said that instead of taking her

photos, the photographers seemed to be concentrating on other celebrities; some referred to the incident as “embarrassing.” In response to the criticism, Aly Goni vigorously supported the actor and posted a video about the incident on his Instagram Story. He called out the criticism and commended Alia for her diligence and for representing In-

dia at a global event such as Cannes. Aly said, “It’s sad when our own people try to pull down someone who has worked so hard to put India on the global stage.” He also praised Alia’s accomplishments and the reputation she has developed over the years, pointing out that while representing India with pride at the 2026 Cannes Film Festival, she has attained

a status that many only dream of.” Instead of mocking and trolling, we should celebrate and support those who make India shine internationally,” Aly continued, urging more support and less criticism. “We rise higher when we uplift our own, not when we try to demean them,” he wrote as he wrapped up his post, making a strong statement against internet trolling. After her highly anticipated 2025 debut, Alia Bhatt is making her second appearance at Cannes. There will be a large Indian representation in both regional theaters and several businesses at this year’s Cannes Film Festival. Aishwarya Rai Bachchan will return as a worldwide spokesperson for L’Oreal Paris alongside Alia, according to ANI. The event will also feature actors Tara Sutaria, Mouni Roy, and Pooja Batra, as well as filmmaker Karan Johar. The international event will be held in France from May 12 to May 23.

Film set leaks, according to Randeep Hooda, are “tragic” yet frequently intentional



Mumbai: No matter how hard the producers try to conceal the appearance of the main performers or facts from the sets, a number of Indian movies and television programs become victims of social media leaks. Recently, looks and scenes from movies like King and Ramayana have been released on social media. During production, Randeep Hooda’s upcoming series, Inspector Avinash Season 2, had a similar problem. Randeep stated in a recent interview with Times Now that he thinks a lot of these leaks are done on purpose and referred to them as a “great PR peg.” Neeraj Pathak, the director of Inspector Avinash,

acknowledged that social media leaks during production are the most “tragic” event in a creator’s life. He clarified that these kinds of leaks are distressing because storytellers spend years crafting narratives and creating the appearances of performers. “The magic and surprise that we want to create gets spoiled, and that feels very disappointing,” he continued. We do make an effort to manage it. When performers like Randeep Hooda put so much effort into their appearances, as he did for both this project and Swatantra Veer Savarkar, a pre-leaked footage spoils the surprise. That is really depressing, and we make every effort to prevent

it. However, a leak is a leak. The people who run it profit from it. It’s never easy. “I have a sneaky suspicion that some of it is done on purpose, and it is a great PR peg,” Randeep added, elaborating on his belief that many leaks are intentional. I think a lot of it is intentional. Although it is unfortunate, many individuals take advantage of it and turn it into a commotion. Inspector Avinash Season 2 will open a darker chapter three years after the previous season gained popularity among viewers. The first season, which was based on actual events from Uttar Pradesh in the late 1990s, featured supercop Avinash Mishra as he oversaw operations against criminal groups and illicit arms traffickers. Avinash’s son is connected to a murder case in the second season trailer. He is soon suspended from duty after being betrayed by the very system he previously worked for. The show centers on his battle to defend his family while establishing his innocence. Alongside Urvashi Rautela, Amit Sial, Abhimanyu Singh, Rajneesh Duggal, Shalin Bhanot, and Freddy Daruwala, Randeep Hooda plays the title role in the show. On May 15, the show will debut on JioHotstar.

Usha Uthup Responds To The Widespread Allegation That She Celebrated Mamata Banerjee’s Loss

Mumbai: After Mamata Banerjee’s party, the Trinamool Congress, lost the West Bengal Assembly Election earlier this month, veteran singer Usha Uthup responded to a viral thread claiming that she had recently performed her 25-year-old famous single Didi, which was inspired by Algerian musician Khaled’s hit of the same name. According to the widely shared thread, Usha Uthup relocated to Mumbai during the TMC administration since the previous Bengal government “cut money was allegedly demanded from her.” Usha Uthup dismissed all the accusations, stating that the circulating video is outdated. She added that she never relocated to Mumbai from Kolkata. On Instagram, Usha Uthup posted an announcement. “Dear friends and music lovers... There has been a post on Twitter and WhatsApp that has been going around. I just wanted to say: Please do not neces-



sarily embroil me in controversies that I have nothing to do with.” 1. I’ve been performing this song for almost 25 years. 2. I moved to Mumbai but never left Kolkata. I am definitely present. She further explained her position in the picture’s title, saying, “There has been a post circulating on Twitter, Insta and WhatsApp regarding me, and I would like to clarify that several statements made in that post are incor-

rect and misleading.” The song in question is a Bengali song that was inspired by an Arabic melody and written many years ago. For more than 20 years, I have only performed it as a musical interpretation. “I would like to make it clear that I have been a resident of Kolkata since 1976 and have never left the city before moving to Mumbai. I have always loved Kolkata and its people, and I still work and reside

here. “The interpretations, comments, and narratives being circulated in that post are entirely not mine, and I do not associate myself with or take any onus for them in any manner.” Please don’t needlessly involve me in disputes that have nothing to do with me.” An X user posted a video of Usha Uthup performing the song Didi on stage, writing: “Usha Uthup had fun by singing ‘Didi Go’ in celebration of Didi departing

Bengal. It should be recalled that she allegedly received cut money for her performances during the TMC administration, which caused her to get distressed and relocate to Mumbai. She’s back now.” This version of Didi, which honors the spirit of Kolkata, the City of Joy, has the renowned voice of Usha Uthup, who was inspired by the original song by Algerian singer and musician Khaled. Over the years, the famous Didi has been replayed in a number of languages, most recently in Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar: The Revenge. In her native Bhowanipore, Suwendu Adhikari of the BJP defeated Mamata Banerjee by 15,000 votes in the 2026 Assembly Election. With 207 seats out of 294 constituencies, the BJP became victorious. On May 9, Suwendu Adhikari of the BJP took the oath of office as the first Chief Minister from the saffron party, ending the 15-year rule of the Trinamool Congress.

Namit Malhotra is not concerned about Ramayana because of Adipurush’s fate



Mumbai: The epic opus Ramayana, which is scheduled to enter theaters later this year, is being prepared by director Nitesh Tiwari. Producer Namit Malhotra talked candidly about the film’s expectations and his concerns regarding audience reactions when the film’s makers welcomed YouTubers and artists to the sets to mingle with the cast and crew before to its release. The two-part movie Ramayana is said to be the most costly Indian production ever. According to reports, the two segments’ combined total cost could reach ₹4000 crore (\$500 million), making it one of the priciest movies ever made. Ramayana comes after Adipurush, an unsuccessful attempt to adapt the epic. The 2023 film Om Raut was a commercial and critical flop, losing more than ₹250 crore at the movie office and receiving harsh condemna-

tion from both reviewers and viewers. Namit honestly said, “I always feel that the value lies in what we can do best,” in response to YouTuber Suraj Kumar’s question about whether he was concerned about Adipurush’s fate. What other people do is beyond our control. People who perform better than us will come after us. Some of our predecessors were unable to succeed. These fluctuations are typical. Prabhas played Lord Rama, Kriti Sanon played Sita, and Saif Ali Khan played Ravana in Om Raut’s film Adipurush. The movie was the most costly Indian movie at the time, with a reported budget of around ₹550 crore. Adipurush, however, struggled at the box office and barely made ₹300 crore after a huge opening day. The movie’s portrayal of mythological figures and obscene dialogue also drew criticism. Namit went on to say that he and his group were dedicated to providing the public with an excellent Ramayan adaptation. Whether it’s me, the director, the actor, or anyone else, we are all committed to giving it our all. We’ve worked so hard at that. If you enjoy it, great; if not, we will fold our hands and apologize. There’s nothing more we can do,” he stated. Ranbir Kapoor plays Lord Rama in the Ramayana, while Sai Pallavi plays Sita, Yash plays Ravana, Sunny Deol plays Lord Hanuman, and Ravie Dubey plays Lakshman. The final portion is scheduled to be released in theaters on Diwali 2027, while the first part will be released in theaters prior to Diwali 2026.

Tabu, 54, criticizes the ageism that women encounter in film

Mumbai: Tabu most recently acted with Akshay Kumar and Wamiqa Gabbi in Priyadarshan’s Bhooth Bangla. The actor recently discussed the long-standing discussions about ageism and the pressure women experience in the movie business. In an interview with Harper’s Bazaar India, Tabu was open about how a woman’s age is usually brought up instead of her contributions to the film industry. “People are more concerned about your age than

you are yourself,” she remarked. As if you don’t have a mirror at home, they want to show it to you. “The person answering that question hasn’t aged overnight,” she went on. Every day, we encounter it. It’s not like someone wakes up at 20 and turns 45 the next day.” In addition, the actress disclosed that early on, she was frequently told not to have an opinion about making a movie. “Date issues” were frequently used as an excuse for not finishing a job. Give

the excuse of dates and leave without providing a valid cause for not making a movie. I didn’t comprehend that. I don’t like a script if I don’t like it. “And I said so,” Tabu continued. King 100, Nagarjuna Akkineni’s 100th movie, is presently being filmed by Tabu. This reunion takes place over thirty years after they previously produced blockbusters like Ninne Pelladatha. Her most recent appearance was in Bhooth Bangla, directed by Priyadarshan.

Ayushmaan Sethi, the son of Archana Puran Singh, describes how he fell victim to an online RS. 84,000 fraud

Mumbai: Ayushmaan Sethi, the younger son of Archana Puran Singh, has revealed that he was defrauded of ₹84,000 via the internet. In his brother Aaryamann Sethi’s most recent YouTube vlog, the actor-YouTuber talked about the incident. Archana was also reminded of her recent trip to Dubai, where she fell victim to an online scam. After spending the night filming, Ayushmaan appeared exhausted as he entered the room during the vlog. But he went on to say that he had an interview with Rohit Shetty. “I have to leave for another set. I will be interviewing Rohit Shetty, sir. When Aaryamann asked more questions, Ayushmaan disclosed that he had lost ₹84,000 in an online fraud and that Rohit Shetty



would be interviewing him as part of Mumbai’s Cyber Crime branch awareness campaign. “I got scammed, and that became big news because the Cyber Crime branch wants to do an awareness campaign in which I will be one of the interviews,” he stated. Last year, I fell victim to fraud.

Ayushmaan clarified that he received the money from his credit card company rather than the scammers, who were never apprehended, and that he never got the money back directly from them. Aaryamann interrupted and claimed that he actually “didn’t get scammed” because he received all of his money back. “They stole ₹84K from his credit card on PlayStation Network,” stated Aaryamann. There was a hack on the PlayStation Network,” Ayushmaan said, “I reported the fraud with the credit card company and they returned the money to me.” During the discussion, Archana mentioned that she had also been defrauded of ₹30,000 when visiting Dubai. When Archana and her fami-

ly visited Dubai in July of last year, they made an internet reservation for an indoor skydiving session. Nevertheless, they were informed they had no reservation when they arrived at the location. They quickly realized that they had purchased their passes through a fraudulent website. “We have been scammed because the website wasn’t real,” she stated in her last vlog. Did we just fall victim to a scam in Dubai? “Enjoy, whoever has conned us,” Parmeet Sethi sarcastically said, clearly upset. Regarding her career, Archana most recently appeared in the Netflix film Toaster, starring Rajkummar Rao and Sanya Malhotra. She also appeared in the most recent season of The Great Indian Kapil Show.

According to Saif Ali Khan, Omkara persuaded Bollywood people who would not have believed me

Mumbai: Many spectators and journalists are reminded of Saif Ali Khan’s first encounter with the country, Omkara, as he returns to the heartland with his cop drama Kartavya. Saif’s portrayal of mobster Langda Tyagi in Vishal Bhardwaj’s groundbreaking Shakespearean adaption is regarded as his best performance. The actor claimed in a recent interview that the performance helped him dispel pub-

lic and industry skepticism. Omkara, which brought the tragedy of Othello to the political backwoods of Uttar Pradesh, was released in July 2006 and is considered by many to be one of the best Shakespearean adaptations in Hindi film. Saif’s Langda Tyagi was modeled on the Shakespearean villain Iago, and Ajay Devgn portrayed the title part. Konkona Sen Sharma, Vivek Oberoi, and Kareena Kapoor

were also featured in the movie. Saif expressed gratitude to Vishal Bhardwaj for believing in him to play the part. “Everyone was skeptical, but he helped me with the dialogues and was really nice and encouraging. I completed a lot of homework. People asked me, “Why don’t you rehearse in the heartland?” while I was on vacation in the Maldives. I learned all these lines while reading this

screenplay under an umbrella in the Maldives, and I continued to practice. Then I returned,” he said. Saif won the Filmfare Award for Best Supporting Actor for his performance. The actor claimed that the performance and the response helped him get recognition in the profession, and he is still benefiting from it now. “I will always be grateful to the movie for all that it has done for me. Many filmmakers who would

otherwise believe that I am incapable of doing it have been able to express a certain variety through it. “Okay, if he’s done that, then he can do this,” they said. I enjoy portraying characters like this (in Kartavya), which is quite different from my personality and a little more solid and anchored than Omkara. However, it is the entire purpose of acting. Therefore, it’s good to be able to express yourself with

your own accent and body language without trying to persuade others that you are unique,” Saif continued. Under the name Red Chillies Entertainment, Gauri Khan is the producer and Pulkit of Bhakshak fame is the director of Kartavya. Sanjay Mishra, Saurabh Dwivedi, Zakir Hussain, Manish Chaudhari, and Rasika Dugal are present in the movie. On Friday, May 15, it will make its Netflix debut.

The BRICS Summit will be dominated by the Iran War and oil as foreign ministers arrive in Delhi



New Delhi, May 14: The Middle East conflict and associated fuel crisis are expected to be the main topic of discussion when foreign ministers from the BRICS group of countries, which includes Iran and Russia, meet in India on Thursday. The two-day meeting of foreign ministers from the expanded bloc, which now includes Iran and the United Arab Emirates—nations at odds over the confrontation started by the United States and Israel on February 28—is being hosted by India, which is this year’s BRICS chair.Speaking to reporters, Randhir Jaiswal of India’s foreign ministry stated that discussions will center on “global and regional issues of mutual interest.”

Iran’s embassy in India reported that Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Arahghi landed in New Delhi late on Wednesday.Sergey

Lavrov, the foreign minister of Russia, is also present. On Wednesday night, he arrived in New Delhi and met his Indian colleague, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.”Trade and investment, energy and connectivity” and “global and multilateral issues” were among the topics of discussion, according to a statement from Jaishankar. “Our political cooperation is even more valuable in an uncertain and volatile global environment,” Jaisankar said. India and other nations that import energy are under further strain as a result of the ongoing volatility in the oil and gas markets caused by disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf shipping routes. India’s economy, which is largely dependent on imports of fertilizer and petroleum from the Middle East, has been further strained

by the Iranian crisis, which has also raised doubts about New Delhi’s prospects for growth. BRICS was established in 2009 as a platform for significant emerging economies looking to increase their influence in Western-dominated institutions.Originally made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, the organization has since grown as its members have worked to increase the bloc’s political and economic clout on a worldwide scale. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Indonesia, and the United Arab Emirates are now included, however it’s still unclear if officials from every member nation will be there.Later this year, India will host a leaders’ conference, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet with the foreign ministers, according to the foreign ministry. It was unclear whether a joint statement would be issued at the conclusion of the meeting due to severe disagreements among several members, especially those regarding the Middle East conflict and criticism of Western powers.As things develop, we’ll keep you informed,” said Randhir Jaiswal, a spokesman for the Ministry of External Affairs.

While giving Vaibhav Sooryavanshi his due, Kagiso Rabada refuses to give up

New Delhi: In his brief tenure at the top of the game, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has ignited the world of cricket. He has already won some significant hardware thanks to a century in this year’s U19 World Cup final, a few IPL hundreds, and the complete contempt of the world’s bowling elite. Sooryavanshi’s bat swing, his enormous power, and his youthful determination to pursue the greatest in the world have all been discussed extensively. Sooryavanshi has sized up and sent cricket hall of fame-caliber players like Josh Hazlewood, Jasprit Bumrah, and most recently Kagiso Rabada into the stands. After meeting Sooryavanshi in Jaipur this weekend, South African fast-man Rabada thought about what makes Sooryavanshi such a unique talent. Having seen it firsthand, Rabada was slogged away for a few sixes despite being in some of his best T20 bowling form.He is currently fearless and has incredibly quick hands. “There isn’t a trace of fear in his body, and



that’s how it usually is when you’re young.” Rabada told . “It really fascinates me. It’s wonderful to see that cricket is a vibrant sport in the IPL. While Rabada might find it fascinating to witness such batting from a 15-year-old, some of his fast-bowling peers, most notably his teammate Mohammed Siraj of the Gujarat Titans, might use a different adjective. In Jaipur, Siraj defeated Sooryavanshi, dismissing him for 36(16) and roaring with joy.After bowling Sooryavanshi with a furious yorker in the previous match, New Zealander Kyle Jamieson got right into the teenager’s grill. Siraj was not the first fast bowler to truly enjoy defeating Sooryavanshi.

”Who else is going to generate such headlines? Regarding facing Sooryavanshi, Rabada stated, “What I think is that he is just another batter, and I try to get the better of him.” As a fierce competitor who has engaged in some intense battles with players like Virat Kohli and David Warner, Rabada is undoubtedly aware that some wickets are more valuable than others.”It’s a little flair, an X-factor player, someone who draws attention to the game.” The Protean, who is having his finest IPL season since earning the Purple Cap in 2020 when Sooryavanshi was just 9 years old, said, “Fast hands and no fear, that’s one hell of a combination.”

CSK suffers a serious setback as the IPL 2026 play-offs competition intensifies

New Delhi: Chennai Super Kings suffer a severe setback. With three games remaining, they have not yet qualified for the Indian Premier League play-offs, so the news that a crucial player of their team is returning home due to injury concerns cannot be encouraging.CSK needs to win at least two of their next three games because they haven’t appeared to be a very convincing team

this season either. Over the following three games, they will face two formidable opponents: Gujarat Titans and Sunrisers Hyderabad. Therefore, Jamie Overton returning to England to have his right thigh treated by medical professionals could not have been worse news for them. Overton has collected 14 wickets in 10 games for CSK this season. With an

economy rate of 8.89, he has been somewhat pricey, but he has taken wickets most of the time.He was the one who used his bowling to turn things around for his team in CSK’s most recent game against Lucknow Super Giants a few days ago. In one over, he removed LSG skipper Rishabh Pant and in-form Josh Inglis. These two wickets kept LSG at least 20 runs short, which

Spiritual Virat Kohli is motivated by his dedication to his craft rather than his need for recognition

New Delhi: If you’ve ever wondered what motivates Virat Kohli to play in the Indian Premier League (IPL), it’s neither his high salary or recognition from Royal Challengers Bengaluru.It’s his love and enthusiasm for the game, of course, but it’s also his integrity in his work. He keeps scoring runs because of this. In a 193-run chase against Kolkata Knight Riders at Raipur last night, he struck his maiden century of the 2026 Indian Premier League, and his 105 not out proved to be the game-winning total. The reigning champions have now taken a step toward the playoffs. He retired from T20Is over two years ago. That occurred just minutes after India’s victory in the West Indies T20 World Cup final. After that, he retired from Tests last year. He plans to compete in the next World Cup on the African continent in 2027, although ODI is the only format in which he is currently active as an international cricket player.Playing in the IPL is not really Kohli’s business. After winning the league the previous season, he might decide to leave. He is not doing it for financial gain either, as he is among the wealthiest cricket players worldwide. The fact that this IPL season is Kohli’s most successful in terms of strike



rate will pleasantly surprise some readers. His strike rate is 165.5 following his effort last night. His strike rate peaked in 2024 at 154.70. For this reason, they advise aspiring cricket players to practice as much as they can. Don’t take any short cuts. Focus on your fundamentals, and those that do so forge unique, unique paths for themselves. No matter how carefree he feels before an innings, Kohli will deliver in some way because of his unwavering work ethic. Early-formed good habits never go away. His intellect knows what is correct and how to make the casual attitude fleeting thanks to years of intensive training.There is also another reason as

well. He is aware that he won’t be getting many extremely competitive matchups anytime soon. He now only participates in ODIs and a little domestic cricket. The latter is fine, but it doesn’t match the caliber of international cricket or even the Indian Premier League. Therefore, domestic cricket cannot be a particularly effective way to prepare for ODIs. Then, domestic cricket is limited to a few months. Thus, the importance of the IPL increases. Kohli is aware that he needs good opposition and fast bowlers to maintain his rhythm. That’s why he finds the IPL to be so significant.It wouldn’t be incorrect to argue that

Kohli has turned into a workhorse in recent years, quietly going about his business without looking for attention. Kohli has become more reserved and spiritual after his negative experiences with the BCCI, which resulted in him losing or giving up captaincy in all forms. Then, Rajat Patidar took over as captain of the RCB last year. There haven’t been as many opportunities for him to talk subsequently, but he is Kohli, so he can find a way if he wants to. Therefore, the only possible explanation is that he simply wants to concentrate on his cricket rather than praise or criticism. There were some parts that weren’t exactly positive about him because he had entered the KKR game on the back of two ducks. He is a candidate for the Orange Cap with 484 runs at 53.78. Last year, RCB won their first IPL trophy after 17 seasons, with Kohli scoring 657 runs at a rate of 54.75 in 15 games. It appears that he is not satisfied with a single trophy based on the way he has continued where he left off. Unbelievably, Kohli will become even more dangerous for other sides as the play-offs draw near. He is incredibly passionate, loving, and honest.

A 7,500-page chargesheet was filed in the Red Fort explosion that claimed 11 lives

New Delhi, May 14: In relation to the explosion that occurred at Red Fort in Delhi on November 10, 2025, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has submitted a massive 7,500-page chargesheet against ten suspects. Eleven people were killed, numerous others were injured, and extensive damage was wrought in the nation’s capital by the potent Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) explosion.Ten people connected to Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH), a recognized branch of Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), are named in the chargesheet that was presented to the NIA special court at Patiala House Courts on Thursday. ”All the accused were associated with Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH), a terror outfit linked to Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS),” a top NIA officer stated. The chargesheet was filed in accordance with several laws of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Explosive Substances Act, Arms Act, and Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act before



the NIA Special Court at Patiala House in New Delhi. Dr. Umer Un Nabi, a Pulwama resident and former assistant professor at Al-Falah University in Faridabad, was the primary accused in the case and perished in the explosion. His identification was confirmed by investigators using DNA fingerprinting. Aamir Rashid Mir, Jasir Bilal Wani, Dr. Muzamil Shaheel, Dr. Adeel Ahmed Rather, Dr. Shaheen Saeed, Mufti Irfan Ahmad Wagay, Soyab, Dr. Bilal Naseer Malla, and Yasir Ahmad Dar are among the nine more defendants. The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, the Explosive Substances Act, the Arms Act, and the Prevention of Damage to Public

Property Act all list them. The accused were a part of a bigger extremist conspiracy motivated by AQIS ideology, according to the National Investigation Agency’s (NIA) investigation. Evidence that several of the accused, including medical professionals, were radicalized and actively involved in recreating the AGuH network was discovered by the NIA throughout the investigation. It has come to light during the NIA raid that members reorganized the terror group under the name “AGuH Interim” during a covert meeting in Srinagar in 2022 following an unsuccessful effort to enter Afghanistan via Turkey. According to reports, the group started a campaign called “Operation Heavenly

Hind” with the intention of toppling the Indian government and imposing Sharia law. According to the NIA, the accused gathered weapons and explosives, recruited members, and disseminated extremist propaganda. The inquiry also showed that Triacetone Triperoxide (TATP), a highly volatile explosive purportedly produced by the accused after obtaining materials covertly and carrying out numerous tests, was utilized in the explosion. The central agency also found that the module had tested multiple types of IEDs, including drone-mounted and rocket-based explosive devices. According to the NIA, the inquiry relied heavily on forensic evidence, DNA profiling, voice analysis, and materials retrieved from Delhi, Faridabad, and Jammu & Kashmir. The chargesheet is supported by more than 200 confiscated material exhibits, more than 395 documents, and 588 witness statements. Eleven persons have been taken into custody thus far, and attempts are still being made to find others who are still at large.

If the Middle East crisis continues, the center may raise fuel prices

New Delhi, May 14: According to Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra, if the Middle East situation lasts longer, the government may have to raise the price of gasoline and diesel. Malhotra emphasized that the administration has been relatively economically responsible and on the path of fiscal consolidation while speaking at a conference in Switzerland on Tuesday.Energy costs have increased due to the disruption of oil and gas supply caused by the crisis in the Middle East and the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.Malhotra stated that India is heavily reliant on energy and fertilizer imports and that the present disruptions are starting to affect the country. The governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) stated that it is “matter of time that the government will actually pass on some of these price increases” if the crisis persists for an extended length of time.Despite the Middle East turmoil that began on February 28, the government has not raised the retail prices of gasoline and diesel. Among other austerity measures, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged cutting back on fuel and edible oil usage in order to conserve foreign currencies.The rupee is currently trading below 95 against the US dollar after experiencing a sharp decline in value.

Two suspects, Kalpana and Surrender, were captured from Mathura in Uttar Pradesh following an unrelenting pursuit that lasted around 36 hours, according to the officer.According to police, they were found with Rs 4 lakh in cash and the victim’s purse, which contained the stolen cards. Police discovered during questioning that Kalpana and Surrender were divorced, had met on Instagram, and were married at a temple in November 2025. According to investigators, the two then planned to target the senior chartered accountant and included two other suspects in the crime.To find the remaining suspects, police later carried out ongoing raids and technical monitoring. ”Raids were conducted in Dhani Sanchla village in Fatehabad district of Haryana and both on run accused were apprehended on May 11,” the officer stated.The remaining stolen money, gold jewelry, including two gold chains, and other items were found in their possession, according to the police. The victim’s car, money, jewelry, pocketbook, stolen documents, and an air gun that was reportedly used in the crime have all been found by the police.

1,000 rupees or six months in prison Penalties: Bengal's New Animal Slaughter Regulations

New Delhi, May 14: No animal, including cows, bulls, buffaloes, and calves, may be killed without a fitness certificate from a government veterinary surgeon and authorized local officials, according to a recent announcement by the BJP government in West Bengal.Strict guidelines for slaughter are outlined in the decree, along with age restrictions, approved facilities, and sanctions for infractions. According to the notification, unless a certificate certifies the animal is fit for slaughter, no one may kill any animal, including bulls, bullocks, cows, calves, male and female buffalo, buffalo calves, and castrated buffalo. The certificate must attest to the fact that the animal is over 14 years old and either permanently disabled by age, injury, deformity, or an incurable disease, or that it is no longer useful for employment or breeding. A government veterinary surgeon and the chairman of a municipality or the Sabhapati of a Panchayat Samiti must jointly provide the certification, with written justification. The impacted party has 15 days to file an appeal with the state government if a certificate is denied. According to the notification, only municipal slaughterhouses or other establishments designated by the local government may kill animals that have been cleared for slaughter. Additionally, it forbids slaughter in any public, open area. According to the decision, no one may stop personnel designated by the municipal chairman, panchayat sabhapati, or veterinary surgeon from inspecting any property in order to enforce the regulations.Any infraction may result in a fine of up to Rs 1,000, six months in jail, or both. Every offense is categorized as cognizable. Following the recent Assembly elections, which saw Suwendu Adhikari defeat Mamata Banerjee in her stronghold of Bhabanipur by 15,105 votes, the new regulations were implemented.

Four Army personnel were arrested when a 72-year-old CA was abducted and robbed

New Delhi, May 14: Four persons were detained on Wednesday for allegedly robbing, kidnapping, and honey-trapping a 72-year-old chartered accountant from his home in the Sainik Farms neighborhood of south Delhi, including a serving Army member, according to police.After failing to extract Rs 50 lakh from the old man, the accused allegedly attacked him, stole money, jewelry, and documents from his home, kidnapped him in his own automobile, and abandoned him close to the Delhi-Mumbai Highway in Haryana.The suspects were named by the police as Surrender (31), who lives in Fatehabad, Haryana; Kalpana Kumari (40), who lives in Kalkaji, Delhi; and Kuldeep and Sushil, who both live in the Fatehabad district. Surrender is an active member of the Army, according to the police. Police noted that although he was assigned to Mathura, he had not reported there.According to police, Kalpana, who was acquainted with the victim, allegedly planned a honey-trap scheme to target him.Investigators claim that on the evening of May 2, the victim was by himself at his Sainik Farms home and thought Kalpana had arrived as scheduled.But according to the

statement, her accomplices allegedly went inside the house with her, overpowered the old guy, beat him, used tape to confine him, and stole money, jewelry, and crucial documents. According to police, the accused stole Rs 5 lakh from an almirah, Rs 8,000–10,000 from a drawer, a handbag with cash, three gold rings, an Aadhaar card, a credit card, and a driver’s licence. It stated that after forcing him inside his car, the accused drove for over one to one and a half hours in the direction of Meerut.”During the journey, they demanded Rs 50 lakh ransom from the victim and forced him to contact one of his acquaintances to arrange Rs 15 lakh on the pretext of an accident,” a police official said in the statement.The culprit left him and the car beside the Delhi-Mumbai Highway beneath the Firozpur Jhirka police station area in Haryana and escaped after the victim failed to arrange the money. Afterwards, the victim was able to get to a nearby dhaba and reported the incident to the authorities.On May 3, the Neb Sarai police station got a PCR call about the kidnapping. As a result, a case was filed under the applicable BNS provisions for abduction, robbery, assault, and criminal conspiracy.

Italian Open Match Halted As Inter Milan’s Fireworks Smoke Engulfs Rome Arena



Patumwan: The Italian Open quarter-final between Italy’s Luciano Darderi and Spain’s Rafael Jodar witnessed extraordinary scenes on Wednesday night after smoke from football celebrations interrupted play at Rome’s Foro Italico. The unusual stoppage occurred when thick smoke from fireworks and flares drifted into the tennis arena from the nearby Stadio Olimpico, where Inter Milan fans were celebrating their 2-0 Coppa Italia fi-

nal victory over Lazio. The smoke rapidly spread across the court, forcing officials to temporarily suspend the match. At the time of the interruption, Jodar was leading 6-5 in the first set. Visibility around the stadium worsened significantly, making it difficult for both players to track the ball properly. The smoky conditions also disrupted the tournament’s electronic line-calling system, leading to a delay of nearly 20 minutes as

organisers waited for the air to clear and recalibrated the technology. Broadcast footage showed the court engulfed in haze while confused spectators tried to understand the situation. Since the Foro Italico is located only a short distance away from the Stadio Olimpico, the football celebrations effectively spilled into the tennis venue, creating an atmosphere more suited to a football night than a Masters 1000 event. The delay further complicated an already disrupted schedule in Rome. Persistent rain earlier in the day had pushed back multiple matches by more than two hours, meaning the Darderi-Jodar contest only began close to 11 pm local time. Following the smoke delay and a lengthy battle on court, the match eventually finished after 2 am, capping off a chaotic and memorable night at the Italian Open. Despite the extraordinary interruption, the match itself turned into a thrilling contest lasting more than three hours. Darderi eventually defeated Jodar 7-6(5), 5-7, 6-0 to reach the first Masters 1000 semi-final of his career. After play resumed following the smoke delay,

Virat Kohli Ends His Duck Streak With Animated Celebration in RCB vs KKR

Raipur: Virat Kohli finally had a reason to smile again in IPL 2026, and Raipur absolutely loved the moment. After heading into Royal Challengers Bengaluru’s crucial clash against Kolkata Knight Riders with back-to-back ducks, Kohli broke the streak in dramatic fashion and celebrated his first run like a huge weight had just come off his shoulders. The RCB opener punched the air, laughed at himself and soaked in the roar from the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium after avoiding what would have been an unwanted hat-trick of ducks. Celebrate every run like Virat Kohli Updates <https://t.co/X27WecY-jzZ#TATAIPL> | #KhelBindaas | #RCBvKKR | @imVkohli pic.twitter.com/r23XtyBdNV— IndianPremierLeague (@IPL) May 13, 2026

The veteran batter started the season in superb rhythm and quickly became one of RCB’s most reliable performers. Before the KKR clash, Kohli had scored 379 runs in 11 matches and



stitched together nine consecutive double-digit scores while anchoring several important wins for Bengaluru. But the conversation around his form suddenly shifted after the Lucknow Super Giants game. Since then, Kohli had registered back-to-back ducks while facing just three deliveries combined

across those innings. For a batter whose consistency is usually unmatched in the IPL, the brief slump naturally became a major talking point heading into the KKR fixture. Against Kolkata though, Kohli wasted little time putting an end to the chatter. Opening alongside Jacob Bethell in a tricky chase of 193, Kohli.

Virat Kohli Hits Ninth IPL Century And Admits His Career Will Finish One Day



New York: Virat Kohli said his love of cricket keeps him going but admitted his career “is going to finish one day” after ending a mini slump in form with a match-winning IPL century. Regarded as one of the most accomplished batsmen of his generation, the 37-year-old Kohli is a hero to hundreds of millions of Indian fans. “Cricket is absolutely something that I truly love,” he said. “I just give my heart and soul out there on the field, whether I’m fielding or batting, because it’s going to finish one day.” Kohli bounced back from two consecutive ducks to hit an unbeaten 105 and lead defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru to a crucial win on Wednesday. He scored his ninth hundred

in the Indian Premier League -- but first this season -- as Bengaluru chased down 193 with five balls to spare against Kolkata Knight Riders. Kohli also became the fastest player to 14,000 runs in T20 cricket. He achieved the feat in 409 innings, bettering Chris Gayle’s 423. Kohli, who has retired from Tests and T20 internationals, guided Bengaluru to their maiden title on the 18th attempt last year. “I just love batting, even after all this. That is my core feeling,” Kohli said on Wednesday after being named player of the match. “What an honour to be playing at this level, what an honour to be competing with the very best in the world still,” he added. “This is all I’ve done, all my life.” Kohli is third on the batting charts in

this IPL season with 484 runs including three fifties and one ton, at an average of 53.77 in 12 matches. Kohli’s 60-ball knock was laced with 11 fours and three sixes, as he equalled Jos Buttler’s record of three IPL centuries in successful chases. Called “King Kohli” for his prolific run-scoring, the opener got off the mark with a single in the first over of the chase, punching the air in mock celebration after his successive ducks. He raised his fifty in 32 balls, and then his first hundred of the season. “I want to make the most of every day that I’m on the field, and just enjoy myself, and have a lot of fun,” he said. Kohli said he enjoys being tested. “I look forward to a pressure situation, look forward.

Hockey India Appoints Frederic Soye As Junior Men’s Coach Replacing PR Sreejesh

New Delhi: India on Thursday appointed Frenchman and former France and Spain coach Frederic Soye as the chief coach of the national junior men’s hockey team, replacing two-time Olympic medallist PR Sreejesh. Sreejesh, a former star goalkeeper, was removed from his role just after 17 months following the expiry of his contract after guiding India to a bronze medal finish at last year’s FIH Junior World Cup in Chennai and Madurai. In a strongly-worded social media post, Sreejesh vented out his frustration, saying his tenure was brought to an end despite winning five medals in as many tournaments during his stint, but Hockey India argued that the decision was taken considering long-term vision of building a sustainable high-performance ecosystem aligned with India’s ambitions for hosting the 2036 Olympic Games. One of the most accomplished coaches in European hockey, Soye brings over three decades of elite coaching experience, including 15 years as an international player for France and over 15 years as a head coach at the highest level. Soye, who enjoyed an illustrious playing career with France from 1995 to 2010, earning 196 international caps and scoring an impressive 195 goals for the team, coached the national men’s hockey teams of both France and Spain. He has coaching experience at three Olympic Games, having guided Spain at the Rio 2016



and Tokyo 2020 Olympics before leading France at the Paris 2024 Olympics. During his tenure with Spain, he guided the team to a silver medal at the 2019 European Championships, while also steering them to quarterfinal finishes at the Rio and Tokyo Olympics. A proven developer of young talent, Soye coached France to a historic silver medal at the FIH Junior Men’s World Cup in Delhi in 2013 and most recently guided the French U-18 men’s team to a silver medal at the 2025 European Championships. He additionally served as the High-Performance Director of the French Hockey Federation from 2021 to 2024, overseeing the country’s broader high-performance and athlete development structure. His coaching resume also includes participation in two FIH Men’s Hockey World Cups (2018, 2023) and six European Championships (2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023), underlining his

extensive experience at the elite international level. At the domestic level, Soye guided Lille MHC to French Indoor and Outdoor Championship titles in 2012, along with EuroHockey Trophy Indoor and Outdoor titles in the same year. Widely regarded for his expertise in high-performance systems, athlete development, and penalty corner strategy, Soye has consistently built teams with strong tactical structure and competitive consistency across all levels. Welcoming Soye to Indian hockey, Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey said, “We warmly welcome Frederic Soye to the Hockey India family. We believe his experience and skill set will greatly benefit Indian hockey as we continue to work towards a bigger long-term vision for the 2036 Olympics. Our focus is not only on immediate results but also on building a deep talent pool and a coaching structure that remains aligned from sub-junior to

senior level.” Hockey India’s long-term strategy also places significant emphasis on developing Indian coaches alongside international experts. To ensure knowledge transfer and continuity, Indian coaches have been integrated across the senior, junior, and sub-junior national camps, with designated Indian coaches working closely alongside the respective head coaches at every level. “As it is an open tournament, wrestlers who are registered with the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) and willing to compete, cannot be stopped. Besides, the tournament holds importance as it makes wrestlers eligible for the selection trials scheduled to pick the teams for upcoming World Championships and Commonwealth Championships,” an official at the venue told this daily on the condition of anonymity. Initially, 600-plus freestyle wrestlers registered for the event but after verification 596 were allowed to compete. “It’s a huge number as every bout takes 6 minutes (two periods of three minutes each) including 30 seconds break in between,” said the official. A total of 668 bouts were held in almost 24 hours to decide the medallists (1 gold, 1 silver and two bronze) in each of the ten weight categories. It is unlikely to change in the men’s Greco-Roman competition scheduled on Monday as around 450 wrestlers have registered for the event, which also will be held in 10 weight categories.

Disastrous IPL Captains Face Sacking

New Delhi: Three IPL captains are in the line of fire due to campaigns that have been nothing short of disastrous and they could end up losing their jobs when the season winds up later this month, sources tracking developments in various franchises have indicated. Axar Patel, Ajinkya Rahane and Rishabh Pant have captained for two successive seasons and failed miserably in their bid to take their respective teams into the playoffs. Only Lucknow Super Giants are officially eliminated, making Pant the biggest fall guy of back-to-back poor seasons. But for all practical purposes, Kolkata Knight Riders led by Rahane and Delhi Capitals helmed by Axar are also unlikely to be around during the business end of the high-profile league. Axar’s numbers as captain and player make for poor reading. He has scored only 100 runs in nine innings at a strike-rate of 112.50, with 56 coming in one innings and the remaining 44 aggregated across eight knocks despite batting mostly in the top-five.

Thailand Open 2026: Sindhu, Satwik-Chirag, And Lakshya Sen Storm Into The Quarterfinals



Patumwan: Three seeded Indian entries, including Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty (1), PV Sindhu (6), and Lakshya Sen (7), advanced to the quarterfinals of the Thailand Open on Thursday. Satwik-Chirag defeated their Malaysian opponents, Goonting Bryan Jeremy and Haikal Muhammad, 21-12, 21-19, while Sindhu won 21-13, 21-15 against Denmark’s Amalie Schulz, and Lakshya registered a commanding 21-12, 21-13 win over China’s Zhu Xuan Chen to seal their places in the last eight, as per a release. The World Tour

Finals 2025 bronze medal-winning pair of Satwik and Chirag outplayed their Malaysian opponents in straight games in 44 minutes to set up a quarterfinal clash against Japanese sixth seeds Takumi Nomura and Yuichi Shimogami. Sindhu dominated Schulz in identical games, winning 21-13, 21-15 in 28 minutes. The Indian star scored seven consecutive points in both games, from 9-6 to 15-6 in the first and from 9-7 to 15-7 in the second, to advance. A tantalising challenge awaits Sindhu in the quarterfinals

as she faces World No. 3 Akane Yamaguchi of Japan, where the Indian holds a 15-12 head-to-head advantage. In men’s singles, Sen registered a comfortable victory over Chen in straight games. Lakshya will next face second seed Kunlavut Vitidsarn in the quarterfinals, with the Thai shuttler holding a 7-4 head-to-head advantage over the Indian. In the other draws, Kidambi Srikanth and Devika Sihag exited the tournament, while Malvika Bansod will play her Round of 16 match against Chen Yufei later today.

Messi Brace Powers Inter Miami to a Five Three Victory Over FC Cincinnati

Cincinnati: A brace from Lionel Messi helped Inter Miami secure a 5-3 win over FC Cincinnati on Wednesday, reaching the second spot on the table. With this win, Messi’s men have extended their away winning streak to seven. They are placed second in the Major League Soccer (MLS) with seven wins, two losses and four draws, giving them 25 points. They are still two points behind table-toppers Nashville, who have 27 points after 12 games. It is the third time this season that Messi has made at least three contributions during a match, including an assist. He has scored 12 goals so far and is placed second among leading goal-scorers, as per ESPN. It is his 21st multi-goal game in MLS, extending his record for most such matches since his club debut in 2023. Messi started off with a goal in the 24th minute, but a penalty conversion from Kevin Denkey (41st minute) and Pavel Bucha (49th minute) pushed Inter Miami on the back foot. However, in the 55th minute, Messi levelled the scores. Evander brought Cincinnati to a lead once again in the 64th minute. However, goals from substitute Mateo Silvetti (79th minute) and German Berterame (84th minute) helped Inter Miami make a comeback. Messi seemed to have got a hat-trick in the 89th minute, but his shot went off the post and deflected off Celentano, but at the end of the match, it was adjudged to



be an own goal on the part of FC Cincinnati, giving Inter Miami a 5-3 win. As per Goal.com, it is the first time in 64 games since Pat Noonan became coach in 2023 that Cincinnati lost the match when it held the lead after 75 minutes. “Speaking about Leo is truly striking, first because of the person he is, and second because of the player you see on the pitch,” Inter Miami coach Guillermo Hoyos said after the match as quoted by ESPN. Jithin MS had given the Highlanders the lead on the stroke of half-time, while Andy Rodriguez doubled the advantage from the penalty spot, before Inter Kashi staged a spirited comeback through Sergio Llamas and Mohammed Asif, according to a release. The result sees NorthEast United FC move up to 10th in the standings with

10 points from 11 matches, while Inter Kashi remain from 10 outings. His awareness led to PSG’s goal three minutes into the return leg and put Bayern on the back foot immediately, when many observers expected PSG to struggle early on. Kvaratskhelia even started the move that led to PSG’s goal. Catching Bayern’s midfield napping by dropping deep, he then released Fabian Ruiz with a brilliant flick with the outside of his right foot. He then spun around to collect Ruiz’s excellent first-time pass before sprinting down the left and picking out Dembélé with a fine pass across the penalty area. Dembélé shot powerfully into the roof of the net for his seventh goal of the competition. Bayern had some spells of possession but never recovered.