

Mizoram CM Attends Silver Jubilee Of Samaritan Blind School In Aizawl

Aizawl, May 06: The Silver Jubilee of the Samaritan Association for the Blind's Special Blind School was celebrated on Wednesday at M. Suaka Hall, Durtlang Presbyterian Church, with Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma as Chief Guest and PWD Minister and local MLA Vanlalhlana as Guest of Honour.Digital News Platform

In his address, the Chief Minister praised the students for their perseverance in pursuing education despite physical challenges, describing their determination as a source of inspiration. He emphasized the importance of mental well-being, remarking that a healthy mind can turn difficulties into opportunities. Lalduhoma noted that while many in Mizoram may not fully recognize the school's significance, for visually impaired children its value is immeasurable. He recalled that before the school's establishment, Mizoram had no institution dedicated

to educating the visually impaired. The Samaritan Association for the Blind worked persistently to create the school, securing government support and offering hope to children who had previously been deprived of proper education. Over the years, many successful individuals have emerged from its classrooms.

The Chief Minister highlighted government initiatives, including granting Adhoc status, attaching teachers, and considering provincialization of the middle section. He suggested that adopting a Public-Private Partnership model could further strengthen the institution. He also announced ₹50 lakh earmarked for constructing a separate girls' hostel, as boys and girls are currently housed in the same building. He encouraged students and school authorities to communicate their needs directly to the government, assuring continued support.Lalduhoma congratulated the students for their

resilience, stressed the importance of digital literacy, and reminded them that they are created with purpose and calling. He expressed confidence that they too would succeed, just as many alumni have before them.News Content Syndication During the programme, R.K. Vanlalringa, Executive Secretary of the Samaritan Association for the Blind, presented a report. The Association was established in 1990, and the Special Blind School began in May 2001 with 16 students. Since then, it has consistently maintained around 30 students annually, with this year's enrolment reaching 35, including children from Tripura, Manipur, Assam, and Myanmar. The school offers education from Primary to High School

level and has achieved a 100% pass rate in HSLC examinations for 17 consecutive years.

Twenty-two alumni are now employed in government service. The government continues to support the school with textbooks and teachers, while students benefit from sponsorships by individuals, organizations,

and churches. Lalduhoma himself sponsors three students. Expressing gratitude to the Samaritan Association for the Blind, the Chief Minister lauded the institution for bringing recognition to Mizoram beyond the state and assured that the government would extend every possible support to sustain its mission.



Kaziranga received 4,68,147 visitors in 2025-26

Kazirang, May 06: Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve has recorded its highest-ever tourist footfall in the financial year 2025-26, reaffirming its position as one of India's premier wildlife destinations.

Director Sonali Ghosh said the Park received a total of 4,68,147 visitors, which included 30,474 foreign tourists.

This marks a significant rise in global interest, with foreigners accounting for 4.5 per cent of the total footfall.

The surge reflects a steady upward trend over the last decade, with visitors nearly quadrupling in 10 years. From just over 1.55 lakh tourists in 2016-17, Kaziranga has seen consistent growth while bouncing back strongly after the pandemic years and setting new benchmarks in the current fiscal.

Ghosh said the momentum has continued into the new season as well. "In April 2026 alone, the Park recorded 49,322 visitors including 2,116 foreign nationals indicating sustained enthusiasm among travellers," she said.

Kaziranga's growing prominence on the global tourism map has been bolstered by a series of high-profile visits. King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck visited the Park in recent years. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also paid a visit on March 9, 2024.

This was the first visit by a Prime Minister since the declaration of Kaziranga as a National Park in 1974.

17% of Winning Candidates in Assam Have Criminal Cases: ADR Report

Guwahati, May 06: A report released by the Association for Democratic Reforms has revealed that 17 per cent of winning candidates in the recent Assam Assembly elections have declared criminal cases against themselves, highlighting the continuing presence of candidates with legal backgrounds in the electoral process.

According to the report, which is based on self-affidavits submitted by candidates, 21 out of 126 winning candidates have disclosed criminal cases, while 19 of them, accounting for 15 per cent, face serious criminal charges. Among the serious cases, three winning candidates have declared cases related to attempt to murder under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code, along with provisions under the Arms Act.

The findings indicate a slight improvement compared to the 2021 Assembly elections, when 34 MLAs, or 27 per cent, had declared criminal cases, including 28 legislators facing serious charges. Despite the decline in numbers, the report underscores that the issue remains a matter of concern in the state's political landscape.

The report also points to cases related to crimes against women, with around 7 per cent of the winning candidates having declared such charges. A party-wise analysis reveals variations among political parties, with some parties reporting a higher proportion of candidates with criminal backgrounds than others.

In addition to criminal records, the ADR report highlights a significant increase in the wealth of winning can-

didates. The average assets of MLAs have risen to ₹8.82 crore, nearly doubling from ₹4.59 crore recorded in the 2021 elections.

A large majority of the winning candidates, 107 out of 126, have declared assets exceeding ₹1 crore, classifying them as crorepatis.

The report further indicates that the trend of affluent candidates dominating electoral outcomes continues, raising broader questions about the role of money and background in the democratic process.

While the decline in the proportion of candidates with criminal cases may be seen as a positive shift, the persistence of such candidates in significant numbers suggests that electoral reforms and greater scrutiny remain necessary.

Tripura: New Chapter Begins in TTAADC as Runiel Debbarma Takes Oath as CEM

Agartala, May 06: A new phase in the administrative functioning of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council commenced on Wednesday with the swearing-in of new leadership at the Council Bhawan in Khumlung. Runiel Debbarma assumed office as the Chief Executive Member (CEM), while Chandra Kumar Jamatia was sworn in as an Executive Member (EM).Digital News Platform

Speaking to reporters after the ceremony, Runiel Debbarma said that ensuring holistic development of the ADC areas would be



the foremost priority of the new administration. He assured that he would carry out the responsibilities entrusted to him with sincerity, dedication, and integrity, emphasizing that the welfare of the Tiprasa community remains at the core of their governance agenda. The newly sworn-in CEM highlighted that despite financial constraints, several developmental

initiatives have been undertaken across ADC areas over the past five years. However, he acknowledged that multiple challenges still persist and need to be addressed. Underscoring the need for greater financial support, Debbarma stated that enhanced funding is crucial for resolving existing issues. He added that he would appeal to both the Central Government and Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha for additional financial assistance to accelerate development in the region.

Special scheme grants aid to slain Manipur cop's family



Imphal, May 06: The family of a Manipur police constable who lost his life on duty last year has been provided financial aid of Rs 1 crore under the scheme of Police Salary Package in accordance with the MoU signed between Manipur Police and State Bank of India in October 2024.

Constable Soibam Sanjit Singh died in July 2025 while performing his duties at Sagoltongha in Imphal West.

A formal handing over of a cheque for Rs 1 crore was held on Tuesday at the office of the Superintendent of Police, Imphal West in the presence of L. Kailun, Additional Director General of Police (law and order) and other senior officers of the police department. Kh. Okendra Singh, Regional Manager, SBI Imphal, presented the cheque.

"Singh served Manipur Police with sincerity, dedication and unwavering commitment to the public. His untimely demise is a profound loss to the Police Department and to the public. Manipur Police expresses its sincere gratitude to the State Bank of India for extending timely support and standing in solidarity with the family of the deceased personnel," the state police force said in a statement.

"The Department also reiterates its commitment to the welfare of all police personnel and their families, recognizing the invaluable sacrifices made in the line of duty," it said.

90th anniversary of AIR celebrated in Aizawl

Aizawl, May 06: As part of the celebrations marking the 90th anniversary of All India Radio (AIR), All India Radio Aizawl organized a Musical Concert at Central YMA Hall, Tuikhuahtlang, on Tuesday. The event was graced by B. Lalchhanzova, Minister of IPRP&S as the Chief Guest.

Lalchhanzova, in his address, congratulated AIR on its 90th anniversary and stated that the institution has played a vital role in preserving Mizo culture and language, making it an important guardian of Mizo identity. He observed that in today's world, many indigenous cultures are gradually disappearing and emphasized the need to make concerted efforts to safeguard unique cultural practices and traditions. He further remarked that AIR has significantly contributed to the promotion of Mizo literature and music, instilling pride in one's heritage, and imparting



positive values to society.

DR Lalropuia, Director of AIR Aizawl and Cluster Head, in his welcome address highlighted the origin and evolution of All India Radio. He stated that even before India attained independence, AIR had already been serving as a key medium of communication for the masses. Beyond being merely a news broadcaster, it has functioned as a crucial link between the

government and the people, contributing to national development. He noted that AIR continues to hold an important role in the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Established on June 8, 1936, with its Headquarters at New Delhi, AIR presently operates 230 stations across the country, including AIR Aizawl. As part of the 90th anniversary observance, AIR Aizawl will organize a Walkathon on May 8, 2026.

The main commemorative event will be held on June 8, 2026 at Vanapa Hall, with Lalduhoma, Chief Minister of Mizoram as the Chief Guest.During the event, Top Grade Artist Vanhlupuii and four 'A' Grade Artists - Lalthanthangi Pachuau, Siampuii Sailo, C. Vansanga, and Rualthankhuma Chhakchhuak were honoured with commemorative mementos in recognition of their contributions. The function featured an engaging musical session with performances.AIR Aizawl is also celebrating its 60th year, for which various programmes are being organized. These celebrations are being conducted not only in Aizawl but across different clusters. Chief Guest Lalchhanzova presented mementos to the Top Grade and 'A' Grade Artists. The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Biakchungunga, Additional Director (Programme) / Head of Programme, AIR Aizawl.

AGP's Bora calls for complete Accord implementation

Guwahati, May 06: Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) president and Bokakhat MLA-elect Atul Bora has reaffirmed the party's commitment to the implementation of the Assam Accord, saying several important responsibilities linked to the Accord now rest with the Central government. Speaking after the declaration of the Assam Assembly election results, Bora said the Assam government has already taken several steps connected to the Accord, but major matters such as border sealing, protection of indigenous people and implementation of Clause 6 recommendations fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs. He said the AGP remains committed to ensuring that all provisions of the Accord are implemented properly and in their true spirit.

Chief Minister of Assam steps down, hands resignation to Governor to enable govt formation

Guwahati, May 06: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday submitted his resignation to Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya at Lok Bhavan in Guwahati, paving the way for the formation of a new government following the NDA's decisive victory in the Assembly elections.

Notably, Sarma's move is in line with constitutional procedure, enabling the process of government formation to begin. The Governor accepted the resignation and requested Sarma to continue as the caretaker Chief Minister till the new government assumes office.

Along with the Chief Minister, the Council of Ministers also submitted their resignation letters to the Governor.The resignations came after the formal submission of election results to the Governor



by the Chief Electoral Officer earlier in the day.

Assam Chief Electoral Officer, Anurag Goel, accompanied by representatives of the Election Commission of India, had submitted the list of newly elected Members of the Assam Legislative Assembly to

the Governor for the due constitution of the new Assam Legislative Assembly.The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) had secured a third consecutive term in Assam, winning 102 seats in the 126-member Assembly. The Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as the dominant

force with 82 seats, while its allies — Asom Gana Parishad and Bodoland Peoples Front — won 10 seats each.Sarma, who was the chief ministerial face of the ruling alliance, is expected to be re-elected as the leader of the BJP legislature party.

ACF Opposes HPC Recommendations on APFRA Rules, Raises Concerns Over Social Harmony

Itanagar, May 06: The Arunachal Christian Forum (ACF) has expressed strong dissent over the recommendations made by the high-power committee (HPC) regarding the framing of rules for the implementation of the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act (APFRA), 1978.

In a representation submitted to HPC chairman Justice Brojendra Prasad Katakey, ACF chief adviser and HPC member Tarh Miri stated that proceeding with the framing of rules without addressing serious objections has created deep apprehension.

Miri said that, as a representative of the Christian community, he had urged during the committee's first meeting to recommend repealing the Act, describing it as fundamentally flawed, constitutionally questionable, and socially divisive.

"I had urged that instead of moving towards implementation, the committee should consider recommending repeal of the Act in the larger interest of justice and social harmony. However, I regret that this core concern has not been reflected in the committee's recommen-

dations," he said.

He further stated that implementing the Act could disrupt long-standing peace and communal harmony, create mistrust and division among communities that have coexisted with mutual respect, lead to avoidable social unrest and instability, and undermine the spirit of brotherhood and coexistence.

"Arunachal Pradesh has been a beacon of peaceful coexistence among diverse communities and faiths. Any attempt to regulate matters of personal belief and conscience through legal enforcement is likely to disturb this delicate balance," Miri added.

He also highlighted that the Act raises serious concerns regarding fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of India, particularly freedom of religion, conscience, and belief.

The ACF adviser urged the HPC to reconsider its recommendations in the interest of peace, unity, and stability in the state.

The report, along with draft rules for APFRA, 1978 (2026), is expected to be submitted to the government in the first week of May or at a later date.

Petrol bombs lobbed at Cong candidate's house

Guwahati, Apr 06: Unidentified persons have allegedly lobbed petrol bombs at a Congress candidate's house in Assam's Diphu, police said on Tuesday.

None of the six petrol bombs lobbed at the house of the party's Bokajan nominee, Raton Engti, on Monday night exploded, ensuring there was no damage, they said.

Engti lost to BJP's Surjya Rongphar by a margin of over 17,000 votes. Unidentified persons allegedly hurled petrol bombs at the residence of a Congress candidate in Assam's Diphu, police said on May 5, in an incident that has raised concerns over election-related tensions in the region. "Engti and his family members were inside the house when the incident happened. As the explosives did not go off, the people inside did not hear any sound," a police officer said. Engti spotted the bombs in the morning and informed the police, who seized those and launched an investigation into the incident, the officer added.

Himanta Biswa Sarma predicts that PM Modi would attend Assam oath-taking ceremony

Guwahati, Apr 06: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to attend the Assam oath-taking ceremony. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Modi was unable to attend the swearing-in ceremony last time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "The BJP and our workers would want him to come this time. If he comes, we cannot fix the date. He will come at his convenience. That is why I think we will need two to three more days for discussions on the oath-taking ceremony," Sarma said. The BJP on Tuesday appointed party leader Jagat Prakash Nadda as the central ob-



server for the election of the Assam BJP Legislature Party leader. Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has been appointed as the central co-observer for the

process. Assam BJP president Dilip Saikia said the duo would take part in meetings of the BJP Legislature Party and NDA Legislature Party for the election of their leaders. The BJP went into the Assam elections projecting Sarma as the next Chief Minister. During the poll campaign, Union Home Minister Amit Shah appealed to people to make Sarma Chief Minister again so that "infiltrators" could be driven out of the country. The BJP-led NDA swept the Assam polls, winning 102 of the 126 seats. The BJP alone secured a majority with 82 seats. Allies Asom Gana Parishad

and Bodoland People's Front won 10 seats each.

Opposition parties won 24 seats — 19 by the Congress, two by its ally Rajior Dal, two by Maulana Badruddin Ajmal's All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), and one by the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC). Of the 24 winning Opposition candidates, 22 are Muslims — 18 from the Congress, two from AIUDF, and one each from Rajior Dal and AITC. The two Hindu Opposition winners are Rajior Dal president Akhil Gogoi and Congress's Joy Prakash Das.

Manik Saha instructs authorities to uphold peace order and improve public services

Agartala, Apr 06: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha today, May 5 said that this present government is the people's government, so the departments should always be vigilant and active in solving the problems of the people. CM Saha laid special emphasis on the state's traffic system and maintenance of law and order. Chief Minister Manik Saha said this after he chaired a review meeting held at the Secretariat today to review the progress of various public welfare projects undertaken in the interest of the common people of the state and administrative activities. District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police of 8 districts of the state were present virtually in this Task Monitoring System (TMS) meeting organized at Mahakaran Conference Hall No. 2. In today's review meeting, CM Saha laid special emphasis on the state's traffic system and maintenance of law and order. He said that effective steps should be taken quickly

to resolve traffic congestion in various district headquarters of the state, including Agartala city, and also directed the concerned authorities to ensure that the weight of heavy vehicles is correctly maintained and that traffic electronic signals are always operational. In addition, transport officials were instructed to quickly complete the construction of new motor stands in the state. Taking a strong stand in the fight to make the state drug-free, the Chief Minister said that the police administration should always be active in ensuring that drugs do not enter through the railways in any way. Dr. Saha also directed the security and related administration to strictly monitor nursing homes, rehabilitation homes, and sub-registry offices to ensure they are completely free from corruption and function properly. The Chief Minister took a detailed look at the situation in Dhalai district to improve the quality of the public health and education systems.

A BJP MLA from Manipur is accused of hitting a railway engineer

Guwahati, Apr 06: An MLA of the ruling BJP in Manipur has been accused of slapping and abusing an engineer of the Northern Eastern Frontier Railways (NEFR) posted in Imphal on Monday evening. In connection with the incident, the engineer lodged a complaint with the police, requesting them to register a case against the MLA. Tupil-Imphal railway line were in progress Monday evening. According to the victim, assistant executive engineer Vikash Kumar Meena of the NEFR, the incident occurred when BJP MLA Sorokhaibam Rajen from Lamshang Assembly constituency of Imphal West district came to inspect the sites where the infrastructure development works are in progress. Talking to the reporters today, the engineer said that the unfortunate incident occurred at Salam Khunou locality where construction of a road under-bridge was in progress. He said that after receiving a call for a joint inspection of

the sites where the infrastructure development for the railways were under progress, he along with his sub-ordinate staff went to a site where construction of a road under-bridge at Salam Khunou. It will also discourage the officers directly engaging in the developmental projects to station in the state which will in turn hinder the development of the state. While the concerned MLA made no statement regarding the incident so far, local residents denied the allegation made against the local MLA. Vice-president Soraism Anganghal of Awang Khunou Ipuhou Puthiba Development Committee said that no such incident occurred while warning the engineer to withdraw the complaint he lodged to the police within five days. Talking to the reporters, the vice-president alleged that the construction of the road under-bridge remained incomplete for a long time, causing inconvenience to the residents of the area. When they

reached the site, an executive engineer of the state public health engineering department (PHED) and an assistant engineer were already there. But, the sub-divisional officer (SDO) of the area was not found there. While he was talking with the officials of the PHED, MLA S Rajen arrived and he also gave his due respect to the MLA as per protocols. However, before initiating any talk, the MLA slapped him (the engineer) while scolding him. The security escort personnel of the MLA also detained him, Vikash Kumar Meena alleged. The MLA scolded him for not doing the developmental works properly without giving a chance to explain the progress of the works, the engineer added. He described the MLA's action as unfortunate and added that if a people's representative behaves like this, officials engaged in the implementation of the developmental works in the state might feel insecure.

Growing wealth: ADR study charts Assam MLAs' evolving profiles

Assam Fewer criminal cases

Guwahati, Apr 06: A recent report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) highlights clear trends among the 126 newly elected MLAs in Assam following the 2026 assembly elections. It shows that only 17% (21 legislators) have declared criminal cases, marking a significant drop from 27% (34 MLAs) in 2021. Similarly, the number of MLAs facing serious charges has decreased to 15% (19 legislators), compared to 22% five years earlier.

In the BJP's 82 seats, only seven winners (9%) have declared criminal cases. The Congress shows a higher proportion, with nine out of 19 MLAs (47%) facing such cases. The AIUDF has two MLAs with cases, while the Trinamool Congress has one. In contrast, the Bodoland People's Front stands out for its clean record, with all 10 of its MLAs free from any criminal charges. And both AIUDF winners, Trinamool's sole victor, one Rajior Dal MLA, and one from Asom Gana Parishad. Key worries in-



clude three attempt-to-murder cases and two linked to crimes against women.

The financial profile of legislators, however, shows a sharp rise. As many as 85% (107 MLAs) are crorepatris, a significant jump from 67% in 2021. Their combined assets amount to Rs1,112 crore, with

the average wealth per MLA reaching Rs8.82 crore nearly double the earlier figure of Rs4.59 crore.

The BJP leads in the number of crorepati legislators, with 90% of its winners falling into this category, followed by the Bodoland People's Front at 80% and the Congress at 74%. All MLAs from the

— An ADR report on Assam's 2026 Assembly winners shows fewer MLAs declaring criminal cases and a sharp rise in wealth. The affidavits reveal wide party-wise contrasts and a legislature dominated by crorepati lawmakers.

AIUDF, Trinamool Congress, and Rajior Dal have declared assets exceeding ₹1 crore.

In terms of average wealth, AIUDF tops the list with Rs117.77 crore, followed by the Bodoland People's Front at Rs9.92 crore, BJP at Rs7.50 crore, Congress at Rs6.51 crore, Asom Gana Parishad at Rs2.81 crore, and Rajior Dal at Rs1.54 crore. Among individuals, AIUDF leader Mohammed Badruddin Ajmal is the wealthiest, with assets exceeding Rs226 crore. He is followed by Bodoland People's Front's Sewli Mohilary with ₹63 crore, and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma with Rs35 crore. Based on sworn affidavits, the ADR report highlights the evolving socio-economic profile of Assam's legislators amid closely contested elections

Biplab Deb calls TMC 'Gone Case', reaffirms BJP strength



Agartala, Apr 05: Former Tripura Chief Minister and current Lok Sabha MP from West Tripura, Biplab Kumar Deb, on Tuesday said that the All India Trinamool Congress has no future, shortly after arriving in the state amid celebrations by Bharatiya Janata Party supporters over the party's performance in West Bengal. Deb, who served as election co-in-charge for West Bengal, received a grand welcome from party workers at Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport in Agartala. Speaking to reporters, he questioned the TMC's prospects in the northeastern region and asserted that the BJP continues to maintain a strong organisational base. Calling the party's efforts to expand in Tripura ineffective, Deb remarked that the TMC is "a gone case." He further said that the BJP's performance in West Bengal has boosted the morale of party workers across different states and will strengthen the organisation. He ad-

ded that the BJP will continue to expand its base in Tripura through grassroots outreach and development driven initiatives. Supporters gathered at the airport and various parts of the city, waving flags and raising slogans, while police personnel were deployed to manage the crowds and regulate traffic. Although Deb did not outline specific organisational strategies, he maintained that the BJP remains firmly positioned in Tripura. He also pointed to past election results, stating that voters in the state have consistently supported the party. In recent years, the TMC has attempted to build its presence in Tripura by participating in civic elections and conducting outreach programmes, but it has yet to achieve notable electoral success. Later in the day, Deb visited the Tripura Sundari Temple in Udaipur to offer prayers. He was accompanied by state minister Sushanta Chowdhury.

Gauripur emerges as Congress stronghold



Guwahati, Apr 06: The Indian National Congress (INC) registered its biggest victory margin in the Assam Assembly elections from Gauripur, where Abdus Sobhan Ali Sarkar won by 1,19,097 votes. The margin was the highest secured by the party in the 2026 Assembly polls and established Gauripur as Congress' strongest seat in the state in this election cycle. Among other major victories for the party, Jaleswar recorded a winning margin of 1,09,688 votes, followed by Samaguri with 1,08,310 votes. Algapur-Katlicherra also witnessed a significant Congress victory with a margin of 1,05,448 votes.

While these constituencies also crossed the one-lakh mark, their victory margins

remained notably lower than that of Gauripur. The party also registered sizeable victory margins in constituencies such as Chenga (87,349), Karimganj South (86,632) and Chamaria (78,696).

In contrast, constituencies such as Nowboicha and Karimganj North witnessed relatively closer contests, with margins of 23,751 and 26,003 votes respectively.

Despite posting commanding victory margins in several constituencies, the Congress secured only 19 seats in the 126-member Assam Assembly, underlining the gap between its isolated strongholds and overall electoral performance across the state.

NDA storms to third straight Assam term with 102 seats as Himanta retains power by with record mandate

Guwahati, Apr 06: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday secured a commanding sixth consecutive win from the Jalukbari constituency, retaining the seat by a massive margin of 89,434 votes and reinforcing his personal electoral dominance even as the ruling National Democratic Alliance stormed to power in the state for a third straight term with a two-thirds majority.

The NDA secured a record 102 of the 126 assembly seats, its strongest-ever performance in Assam, with the BJP winning 82 of the 90 seats it contested and emerging with a clear majority on its own for the first time in the state's electoral history. Its allies also delivered steady gains, with the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and Bodoland People's Front (BPF) winning 10 seats each, helping consolidate the alliance's statewide sweep.

The Opposition, led by the Congress, suffered one of its weakest showings in recent memory, managing just 19 seats despite contesting 99. The AIUDF and Akhil Gogoi-led Rajior Dal won two seats each, while the Trinamool Congress secured one. Several smaller regional partners, including the AJP, CPI(M) and APHLC, failed to open their account. The verdict also carried significant political reversals for the Congress, with state president Gaurav Gogoi losing the high-profile Jorhat seat to BJP's Hitendranath



Goswami by 23,181 votes. Other prominent Opposition leaders, including Debabrata Saikia, Lurinjoyti Saikia and Ripun Bora, also lost, underscoring the scale of the NDA wave.

Within the ruling camp, several senior BJP leaders and ministers retained their seats comfortably, including Ajanta Neog, Ranaj Pegu, Pijush Hazarika, Ashok Singhal, Kaushik Rai, Prashanta Phukan, Krishnendu Paul and Bimal Borah. Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daima-

ry defeated former BTC chief Pramod Boro in Tamulpur, while AGP ministers Atul Bora and Keshav Mahanta held their constituencies, alongside first-time winner Tapan Das.

The BPF also maintained its influence in the Bodoland Territorial Region, with cabinet minister Charan Boro, Maneswar Brahma, Paniram Brahma, Thaneswar Basumatary, Rihon Daimary and BTC chief Hagrama Mohilary's wife Sewli Mohilary among the winners.

Kolkata's Tripura Bhavan under Fire for Deteriorating Conditions

Agartala, May 6: Fresh concerns have emerged over the worsening condition of Tripura Bhavan in Kolkata, a key government accommodation facility used by people from Tripura—especially patients and their attendants seeking medical care.Digital News Platform

Visitors report that the building has been steadily deteriorating, with its current state drawing comparisons to a near-abandoned structure, reflecting years of neglect and poor maintenance. Once regarded as a vital support system for Tripura residents in Kolkata, the Bhavan is now facing strong criticism for failing to maintain even basic standards.



Among the major complaints is the condition of the canteen. Guests allege that the food quality is extremely poor, leading to nearly 80 percent of meals being wasted. With no alternative eateries nearby, patients and their families are compelled to rely on the in-house facility. Some have suggested that slightly higher prices could

improve food quality, but no action appears to have been taken. Questions have also been raised about staffing, with claims that many employees are not from Tripura, despite the Bhavan being a state-run establishment. This has triggered concerns about accountability and a lack of connection to the institution.

Grenade and Bomb Attacks Rock Residential Areas in Imphal, Spark Public Outrage

Imphal, May 06: In two separate incidents, unidentified miscreants carried out explosive attacks on residential properties in Imphal, triggering panic and strong condemnation from local residents.

In the first incident, a hand grenade was lobbed into the residential compound of Dr. Salam Arbin Singh (65) at Langjing Achouba Maning Leikai in Imphal West district at around 8 pm on May 4. The attackers also fired a gunshot at the gate before fleeing the scene.

CCTV footage showed that the assailants arrived in a car and hurled the grenade from inside the vehicle.

The incident sparked widespread resentment, with local Meira Paibi groups staging a sit-in protest at Langjing Achouba. The protest, jointly organised by the Langjing Achouba Apunba Club and Meira Paibi groups, condemned the attack, stating that such acts create fear and disrupt normal life. The Meira Paibis also urged those responsible to come forward and clarify the matter.

In another incident the same night, unidentified miscreants hurled a bomb at the gate of a residence at Iroisemba Mamang Leikai around 10 pm, causing damage to property but no injuries.

The house belongs to Khumbongmayum Chaoba (52), a contractor associated with the IFCD and a prospective candidate for the 2027 Manipur Legislative Assembly election from Uripok constituency. The explosion damaged a portion of the gate and boundary wall, with debris scattered around.

Police from Lamphel Police Station rushed to the scene and carried out a preliminary investigation. CCTV footage from nearby areas indicated that two masked individuals arrived on a Pulsar motorcycle, carried out the attack, and fled immediately.

Recounting the incident, Chaoba said the explosion occurred while his family members were inside the house preparing for the night. Hearing a loud blast, they rushed outside and saw flames and smoke at the gate. He expressed



concern that the attack took place in a populated area frequently used by the public.

Condemning the act, he urged that such incidents should not be repeated and stressed that any grievances should be addressed through peaceful means.

UNC Warns of 'Undeclared War' in Southern Nagalim, Urges United Response

Kohima, May 06: The United Naga Council (UNC) has issued a serious warning over the worsening security situation in Southern Nagalim, alleging sustained armed aggression against Naga villages and calling for urgent collective action to protect ancestral land and identity.

In an appeal to the President of the All Tribe Hohos of Nagaland, the UNC stated that the Naga people are facing what it described as an “undeclared war” across Naga-inhabited areas of Manipur, particularly in Ukhrul, Chandel, Tamenglong and the undivided Senapati districts.

The council recalled that when ethnic violence broke out between Meitei and Kuki communities on May 3, 2023, Nagas maintained neutrality and extended humanitarian assistance to displaced persons from both sides.

Naga villages, it said, had opened their homes as safe havens, providing shelter, food, medicine and relief without discrimination during the peak of the crisis.

However, the UNC alleged that the current situation marks a sharp reversal, claiming that several Naga villages are now facing targeted attacks from armed cadres operating under the Suspension

of Operations (SoO) agreement.

Tracing the escalation to an arson incident at Litan on February 8, 2026, the council said repeated firing incidents have since occurred from neighbouring Kuki villages into Naga ancestral areas. Villages such as Sakarphung, Litan, Thoyee, Sinakeithei and Ringui were cited as facing continued threats and attacks, with Sinakeithei reportedly bearing the brunt of the violence.

The UNC described the situation not merely as a law-and-order issue but as a challenge to Naga historical identity and territorial rights.

It warned that attempts to distort Naga

history and weaken claims over ancestral land could have long-term political consequences.

“Our ancestral domains are the covenant of our forefathers,” the council said, adding that any loss of land would mean a loss of the Naga nation’s future.

Calling for unity, the UNC urged tribal hohos across Nagaland to rise above divisions, stressing that an attack on any Naga village should be treated as an attack on the entire Naga community.

It also appealed for documentation of incidents, awareness campaigns, and mobilisation through churches and community institutions to raise the is-

sue at regional and international forums.

Warning of broader consequences, the council said failure to act collectively could allow the conflict to spread further. “If the fire at our doorstep today is ignored, it may reach every Naga doorstep tomorrow,” it cautioned.

The UNC also appealed to the international community, human rights organisations and indigenous forums to monitor developments in Southern Nagalim, alleging displacement of indigenous populations and questioning the effectiveness of existing ceasefire arrangements.

Apang seeks Khandu's resignation over CBI probe

Itanagar, May 06: Former chief minister Gegong Apang has demanded that Chief Minister Pema Khandu immediately resign in light of the Supreme Court-ordered CBI preliminary enquiry against him.

The enquiry pertains to allegations that PWD contracts worth Rs 1,270 crore were awarded to his family members over a span of 10 years.Apang said that the resignation of the chief minister is necessary to ensure a free and fair investigation. He stated that it is unethical and politically immoral for a person to continue as chief minister while facing a court-ordered enquiry into serious allegations of corruption and nepotism.“A CBI enquiry cannot be expected to be free and fair when the sitting chief minister belongs to the ruling party at the Centre and the CBI functions under the executive control of the Union home minister. If Pema Khandu does not resign and the preliminary enquiry gives him a clean chit, it will raise doubts about the fairness of the investigation,” Apang said.

NSF alleges 109 illegal appointments in Nagaland

Kohima, May 06: The Naga Students' Federation (NSF) has alleged that 109 appointments were made illegally in different government departments in Nagaland without following proper recruitment procedures under the Nagaland Public Service Commission (NPSC) and the Nagaland Staff Selection Board (NSSB). The federation warned the state government that it may launch democratic agitation if satisfactory action is not taken on the matter. Addressing a press conference at the NSF office at Solidarity Park in Kohima, NSF president Mteisuding Her-aang said the federation had detected alleged backdoor appointments in 16 government departments. He said the appointments were made without open advertisement and outside the established recruitment process.

CM calls for robust systems to ensure on-time delivery

Agartala, May 06: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Tuesday underscored the importance of timely implementation of projects through robust monitoring mechanisms, enhanced accountability, and transparent governance.

Chairing a meeting on the Task Monitoring System at the State Secretariat in Agartala in the presence of senior officials, the Chief Minister issued a stern directive to

all departments to remain vigilant and active.“The present government is a people’s government, so the departments should always be vigilant and active in solving the problems of the people,” he said.Saha emphasised that the primary metric of success for the current government is the swift resolution of citizen grievances and the seamless execution of infrastructure and health initiatives.

District Magistrates (DMs) and Superintendents of Police (SPs) from all eight districts of Tripura attended the meeting virtually where-in progress of public welfare projects and administrative efficiency were reviewed by the Chief Minister.

He further laid special emphasis on the state’s traffic system and maintenance of law and order.

“Effective steps should be taken quickly to re-

solve traffic congestion in various district headquarters of the state, including Agartala city,” the Chief Minister said, directing the concerned authorities to ensure that the weight of heavy vehicles is correctly maintained and that traffic electronic signals are always operational.

In addition, transport officials were instructed to quickly complete the construction of new motor stands in the state.

Taking a strong stand in the fight to make the state drug-free, the Chief Minister said that the police administration should always be active in ensuring that drugs do not enter through the railways in any way.He also directed the security and related administration to strictly monitor nursing homes, rehabilitation homes, and sub-registry offices to ensure they are completely free from corruption and function properly.

GIS solution to tackle soil erosion in NE highlighted by Nagaland University research

Kohima, May 06: A Nagaland University study has called for a scientific approach using geospatial technology to mitigate the impacts of soil erosion in the North-Eastern hilly region of India.

The researchers emphasise that such an approach not only helps control erosion but also supports long-term environmental sustainability, improves agricultural productivity, and enhances water availability.

Soil erosion is emerging as a serious environmental and ecological issue in the eastern Himalayan region, affecting agricultural productivity, water resources, and overall ecological balance.

The problem is further aggravated

by factors such as steep slopes, high rainfall, deforestation, unscientific land use practices, and increasing human interventions including shifting cultivation, mining and infrastructure development.

The study focuses on the Siji watershed, a part of the Gai River Basin in Assam, which represents one of the most erosion-prone regions in the Northeast.

Using the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) integrated with GIS-based modelling, the research assesses soil erosion and sediment transport by analysing key factors such as rainfall intensity, soil characteristics, slope, land use patterns, and conservation practices.

The findings were published in Discover Geoscience, a peer-reviewed journal that publishes research on monitoring, assessment, and management of environmental quality, brought out by the prestigious Springer Nature.

The research paper was co-authored by Prof. M. S. Rawat, Department of Geography, School of Sciences, Nagaland University, along with his Research Scholar Tulumoni Gogoi and Dr. Pradeep Kumar Rawat, Consultant Professor, Asian International University, Manipur.

The findings show that areas with dense forest cover and gentle slopes experience minimal erosion, while regions with steep slopes, crop-

lands, barren land, and human disturbances such as road construction and mining are at significantly higher risk. In some cases, erosion rates were found to be extremely high, indicating serious threats to land stability and local ecosystems.

Elaborating on how this study proposes addressing these challenges, Prof. M. S. Rawat, Department of Geography, Nagaland University, said, “We recommend an Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) approach. This includes developing sustainable land use plans and implementing mechanical and biological measures such as contouring, terracing, and vegetation cover to reduce soil loss and improve water management.”

Governor lauds role of security forces in Manipur

Imphal, May 06: Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla graced the Investiture Ceremony for the Governor’s Unit Citation 2026 in Imphal on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Bhalla appreciated the role of security forces while operating under demanding conditions and maintaining law and order in the state.

He said they stood firm as pillars of strength during the time of crisis.

Bhalla paid tributes to the dedication, courage and exemplary service of the armed forces for working tirelessly to uphold peace and stability.

He presented the Governor’s Citations to outstanding units of the Army, Assam Rifles, CRPF, BSF, BRTF and the Manipur district police in recognition of their service.



The event was attended by Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh, Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho, and senior Ministers.

Awardees included: 19 Garhwal Rifles; 17, 38 & 40 Assam Rifles; 2 Mahar Regiment; 25 BRTF; Kakching, Senapati & Churachandpur District Police; 10 BSF; and 143 CRPF.

NVG Condemns Fresh Clash in Ukhrul Alleges Bias by Security Forces

Ukhrul, May 06: The Naga Village Guard (NVG), Eastern Command, Naga Hills, has strongly condemned another armed confrontation in the Ringui Horei Hills, accusing Kuki militant groups operating under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement of repeated attacks and raising concerns over what it termed the “failure and bias” of Indian security forces.

In a statement issued by its Media Cell, the NVG said its volunteers came under fire at around 5:00 am on May 4 while monitoring the Horei Hills area under

Ringui village in Ukhrul district. It alleged that armed Kuki SoO cadres, along with suspected narco-terrorist elements, had established fortified bunkers within what it described as Naga ancestral land.

Calling it the second such attack in less than a week, the NVG termed the situation “deeply alarming,” accusing militant groups of openly occupying contested areas and targeting village defence volunteers.

The organisation also questioned how these armed groups could reoccupy the same area

shortly after a combing operation by Indian security forces on April 30, during which NVG volunteers were reportedly asked to vacate their positions. It claimed that dismantling local shelters during the operation left volunteers exposed and vulnerable to subsequent attacks.

“This pattern raises serious questions about the role and impartiality of the security forces deployed to maintain peace,” the statement said, alleging a breach of trust by agencies responsible for civilian protection.

Further, the NVG alleged that

militant groups were openly collecting illegal taxes from vehicles along National Highway 202 at Shangkai, even in daylight. Despite movement under security escort, travellers were reportedly threatened and forced to pay, while security personnel allegedly failed to intervene.

Describing the situation as unacceptable, the NVG demanded immediate action to stop extortion activities and restore public confidence among commuters.

It warned that continued inaction could compel local defence volunteers to take independent

steps to safeguard their communities.

The statement also reiterated its demand for the Government of India to review and revoke the SoO agreement with Kuki armed groups, alleging repeated violations of ceasefire ground rules and continued aggression against civilian areas.

“We have endured enough intimidation and attacks on our people,” the NVG said, adding that its volunteers remain committed to defending local communities and protecting ancestral land.

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The Importance of Community Spaces

Community spaces such as parks, libraries, clubs, and local gathering areas play an important role in strengthening social bonds. However, rapid urbanisation and changing lifestyles are reducing the presence and use of such spaces.As interactions become increasingly digital, opportunities for face-to-face engagement decline. This weakens community relationships and contributes to feelings of isolation.Shared spaces are essential not just for recreation, but also for fostering trust, cooperation, and belonging within neighbourhoods.Investing in community spaces is an investment in social well-being. Strong communities are built through connection and shared experiences.

Restore NHRC's functionality



For years, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has remained ineffective and powerless, issuing muted statements in response to even the worst human rights violations in the country. With the promulgation of the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance in 2025, there was hope that the new commission would be much more powerful, and bring the state and its security forces to account. That hope became uncertain when the ordinance was repealed and the faulty National Human Rights Commission Act, 2009 was reinstated during the first session of the 13th parliament. This move by the BNP government not only made the commission defunct—with the commissioners appointed under the ordinance during the interim government's tenure now unofficially dismissed—but also raised concerns about the possibility of investigations of human rights violations by state agencies themselves. As pointed out by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Dr Alice Edwards, in an interview with The Daily Star, under this law, the NHRC cannot “investigate disciplined forces.” As a result, state-sanctioned human rights abuses could continue to occur with impunity. It is largely because of such constraints that the NHRC has never earned the UN-accredited Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions A-status, unlike some of our neighbours. It has consistently failed in terms of displaying political, operational, and financial independence. When the government can influence the selection process of its commissioners, as is the case under the existing 2009 act, institutional independence is inevitably compromised. Revival of the old law thus enhances the risk of partisan appoint-

ments. Besides, the 2025 ordinance ensured full financial autonomy for the organisation. Without this, effective functioning in terms of both investigation and compensation becomes difficult, as experienced by past commissions. The government justified the repeal and reinstatement saying there were flaws in the 2025 ordinance. But it has failed to answer why the ordinance could not be amended and improved instead of being repealed and replaced by a weaker, older law. The law minister, in an interview with this daily last month, said that a new law would be enacted after further scrutiny and verification. Alice Edwards also mentioned similar commitments she had received from the government. However, what remains uncertain is whether a future human rights commission law or an amendment to the 2009 act will ensure full operational and financial independence of the NHRC. Our concerns mirror those of the special rapporteur. The uncertainty surrounding legislation also raises concerns about accountability for any abuses committed during this legal vacuum. The NHRC was non-functional for 15 months after the fall of the Awami League regime in 2024, as political appointees of the time left their posts. The interim government appointed five commissioners on February 5, 2026. But in less than three months, they too had to leave, although without official notice. In the meantime, according to a Human Rights Support Society report, there have been 39 custodial deaths in the first three months of this year. A defunct NHRC cannot investigate these or any other human rights abuses. Therefore, we urge the government to quickly present a law ensuring the NHRC's independence and restoring its functionality.

The demise of Corbynism must teach the Greens the proper lessons

For more than a decade, Britain's acrimonious politics has included a fundamental but often misunderstood battle. Sometimes it is fought out in the open and sometimes more in the shadows. Its protagonists extend far beyond Westminster, into the media, big business, the civil service, activist movements and important but neglected parts of the electorate. And despite how long the battle has been going on, it's still hard to say which side will prevail. On one side are millions of left-leaning Britons – many of them young – whose economic prospects are worsening, whose anxieties about the climate crisis are rising, whose horror at Israel and the US's wars is absolute, and whose alienation from the compromises of conventional Labour politics is deep. This is the large minority of the electorate attracted by Jeremy Corbyn's attempt to radicalise Labour between 2015 and 2019, and now increasingly drawn to Zack Polanski's left-wing, populist reshaping of the Greens. For both leaders, the ultimate, hugely ambitious aim was or is to create a much more equal, environmentally sustainable country with a much more ethical foreign policy. Yet fundamentally opposed to this project is another coalition of interests, including the rightwing media, the right of the Labour party, the Conservative party, corporate lobbyists, defenders of Israel and the Anglo-American “special relationship”, and supposedly realistic centrists from

the opinion pages of the Financial Times to the deep-state recesses of Whitehall. Protecting Britain's status quo, by any means necessary, against the disruptive plans of the left has been one of this loose and adaptable establishment's main priorities for decades, arguably for centuries. And it has rarely been defeated in this struggle. Thus, Corbyn's leadership was steadily undermined by claims that he was a dangerous extremist who threatened national security and economic prosperity and tolerated antisemitism, terrorism and Muslim sectarianism. A life-long anti-racist, peace campaigner and assiduously inclusive constituency MP ended up being seen by too many voters as a promoter of division and prejudice. Polanski is, in some ways, a very different leader: younger, less set in his ways and a better communicator. The Greens are less weighed down than the Labour left by negative perceptions. Yet it's striking that only about eight months into his leadership, Polanski's party is already accused of many of the same political crimes as Corbyn's Labour. “The Green party is mad, bad and dangerous,” warned the Spectator recently. The rightwing magazine cited the party's “outlandish proposals ... endemic antisemitism ... cynical focus on Palestine in order to attract students and voters who don't speak English ... [and] profound economic illiteracy”. In this context, Polanski's controversial initial response to the

attacks in Golders Green in north London, and his party's alleged slowness to deal with a small number of its candidates for this week's elections who are accused of making antisemitic comments, risk creating the worst crisis of his young leadership. Despite having apologised for sharing a social media post criticising the police operation in Golders Green, and despite himself being a victim of antisemitism – serious enough, he said on Sunday, to have led to recent arrests – Polanski is accused by Labour of being “not fit to lead any political party”. It echoes the charge made repeatedly against Corbyn, that he was “not fit to be prime minister”. New data from More in Common shows that Polanski's approval rating has fallen sharply.The fact that the Greens are attracting many ex-Corbynistas – from thousands of former Labour voters and members to quite well-known figures such as the activist Michael Chessum, the economist James Meadway and Labour's ex-general secretary Jennie Formby – could, theoretically, make avoiding a repeat of Corbynism's demise easier. Such veterans gained a painful understanding of the forces that any British leftwing party is up against – and how, and how not, to combat them. Alternatively, the Corbyn-Polanski connection and the current antisemitism controversy could mean the Greens lose their useful previous image as the herbivores of British politics, ideologically ambiguous enough to appeal to

both urban radicals and rural conservatives. Although the Greens don't suffer from the entrenched factionalism that so hampered Corbyn's leadership, such as the enmity towards the left from much of Labour's bureaucracy and parliamentary party, a few longstanding Green members are beginning to grumble about their party being taken over by “militants”. Such fears, justified or not, have been weaponised by rightwing journalists for as long as reforming British parties have existed. Polanski himself, a former Liberal Democrat who once heckled Corbyn in public, is now a critical admirer of his Labour tenure, and also a keen student of the rise and fall of other influential British leftwingers, such as Tony Benn. One of the lessons Polanski has learned from Benn is that would-be reformers of our hierarchical economy and society should always challenge, politely but firmly, the conservative assumptions behind the mainstream media's questions about the difficulty and desirability of transforming the country. Pushing back in this way, without sounding too argumentative or over-elaborate, requires pithiness, awareness of your audience and public confidence. Polanski has those qualities, but a lot more Green candidates will need them, too, if the party is to turn its poll momentum into meaningful electoral success. The Greens will also need to be better than Corbyn's party at the politics of attack. While he was

damagingly caricatured by the right as on the side of Russia, he failed to highlight the Tories' then reliance on Russian donors. Today, the Greens need to draw the political conversation away from their own flaws and misjudgments, and back to the social, economic and environmental crises caused by the capitalism with which most of the other parties are entwined. Polanski and his strategists could also learn from the failure of Corbyn's Labour to build enough alliances. With chaotic results likely in this week's elections, the Greens may get a chance to run many more councils – if they are able to share power with other progressive politicians. After the next general election, such alliances may be the only way to keep Reform out of national office. Polanski has said cautiously positive things about relative Labour radicals such as Andy Burnham. But actually collaborating with a wounded, diminished Labour, which many Greens have recently abandoned, would be a great psychological and political challenge for both parties.Yet unless Polanski's party finds ways to outperform and outlast Labour under Corbyn – which, for all its flaws, was a highly significant and often vibrant project – the frustrated millions of British leftists may be stuck on the margins of our politics for decades more. Meanwhile, the other large and angry minority, on the right, represented by Reform, may get their chance.

TVK challenges DMK's dominance on Tamil Nadu in the BJP's Bengal blitz



The electoral verdicts announced on May 4 have effectively recalibrated the gravitational centre of Indian politics, signalling a watershed moment that transcends mere regime change. Most notably, the political fortress of West Bengal has witnessed a seismic shift as the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC), which had maintained a tenacious grip on power since its historic 2011 victory, was finally dislodged by a resurgent Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). After three consecutive terms, the charismatic but increasingly embattled Mamata Banerjee was ousted in a campaign that capitalised on a mounting tide of anti-incumbency. This transition marks the end of an era in eastern India, where the BJP has successfully managed to bridge the gap between being a formidable opposition and becoming the primary governing force. The result in Bengal suggests that the electorate's patience with localised governance issues, ranging from systemic corruption allegations to the persistent shadow of political violence, eventually reached a breaking point that no amount of populist rhetoric could salvage.

This upheaval in the East was mirrored by a stunning political debut in the South, where the cinematic mass appeal of Vijay and his newly formed Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) managed to upend the established order of Tamil Nadu politics. In a result that sent shockwaves through the Dravidian heartland, the well-entrenched administration of M.K. Stalin and the DMK was unseated by this nascent political force. The TVK's victory is particularly significant as it indicates a fatigue with the traditional DMK-AIADMK binary that has defined the state for decades. While the DMK had relied on its deep-rooted organizational machinery and the legacy of the Dravidian movement, the combination of Vijay's articulate messaging and a series of mis-governance and corruption charges against the incumbent government proved to be a decisive catalyst for change. This emergence of a powerful third force underscores a shift in how southern identities are being mobilised, suggesting that, while the regional narrative remains paramount, the messengers are no longer guaranteed a lifetime of loyalty based on historical pedigree alone. From a national perspective, these results confirm the enduring existence of a double-track political landscape within the Indian Union. There remains a distinct dichotomy between the nationalistic perspective that predominates across the Northern and Western belts and the fiercely regionalist narra-

tives that continue to sway the Southern electorate. In the North, the BJP's brand of politics often finds a harmonious resonance with overarching themes of national identity and centralised governance. Conversely, the South remains a theatre where linguistic pride, regional autonomy, and specific local grievances form the primary lexicon of the voter. This cultural and political decoupling suggests that any party harbouring ambitions for pan-Indian dominance must master two entirely different dialects of power—one that speaks to the collective national psyche and another that honours the hyper-local sensitivities of the peninsula. In contrast to the volatility seen in Bengal and Tamil Nadu, Assam provided a narrative of continuity and administrative consolidation. The BJP successfully retained power in the gateway to the Northeast, a testament to the party's steady growth and dominance in the region since 2016. Under the leadership of Himanta Biswa Sarma, the party has

managed a sophisticated fusion of identity politics with a robust governance model. Sarma's administration has been characterised by the aggressive execution of welfare schemes and large-scale infrastructure projects that have tangibly improved the daily lives of the citizenry. Furthermore, Sarma has tactfully calibrated sensitive regional issues such as migration and citizenship, allowing the party to consolidate support across diverse communities while maintaining its core ideological base. This blend of administrative visibility and sharp political messaging has transformed Assam into a model for how the BJP intends to govern outside its traditional Hindi-heartland bastions.However, the story in West Bengal remains far more complex than a simple ideological conversion to the right. The ouster of the TMC was less an endorsement of a specific national ideology and more a direct indictment of Mamata Banerjee's style of functioning. The accumulated grievances of

the Bengali electorate—fuelled by perceptions of institutional decay and administrative high-handedness—found expression in a two-phase voting process that favoured change over continuity. While the BJP has managed to occupy the space vacated by the TMC, the long-term durability of this shift remains to be seen. The challenge for the new administration will be to move beyond the politics of protest and deliver a governance model that respects Bengal's unique intellectual and cultural heritage while addressing the economic stagnation that has plagued the state for years.The Southern results, despite the TVK's breakthrough, largely adhered to the historical Dravidian script, which refers to the political tradition in Tamil Nadu of resisting the BJP's expansionist efforts. In Kerala, the political pendulum swung back toward the United Democratic Front (UDF), which displaced the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in keeping with the state's traditional pattern

of alternating power. These outcomes highlight the persistence of strong regional political cultures and linguistic identities that have effectively kept the BJP at the periphery of the southern peninsula. Despite the BJP's best organizational efforts and a marginally growing vote share in specific pockets, the party has yet to find a key that unlocks the southern door. The broader implication is a fragmented political landscape, with the BJP's immense strength in the North and West contrasting sharply with its limited presence in the South, where regional parties and new local icons continue to maintain their position. The May 4 verdict serves as a powerful reminder that the Indian voter is not a monolithic entity and cannot be taken for granted by any political establishment. The different aspects of identity—like caste, religion, language, and local development needs—create a complex voting landscape where public dissatisfaction can quickly change even the strongest political situations. The fall of long-standing stalwarts like Mamata Banerjee and M.K. Stalin illustrates that even the most formidable regional bastions are vulnerable when governance fails to meet the rising aspirations of a discerning public. As the country looks toward the next general elections, these results will have far-reaching implications, forcing national parties to rethink their strategies for the South and regional parties to guard against the rot of complacency. Indian politics continues to be a vibrant, unpredictable, and fiercely contested arena where the only constant is the sovereign will of the people.

Is the IPO party over 60% ‘pop’ on debut; 2 in 3 sink below offer price within months

Mumbai: The primary market buzz has cooled down significantly, but how are the recently listed companies faring? At the very first glance, India’s primary market projects strength, with the majority of its initial public offerings (IPOs) delivering positive listing-day returns. Alas, a closer look at post-listing performance reveals a different picture altogether. Early gains dry out quickly, and long-term investors are left with major losses. “It is unfair to expect all IPOs to not just give a positive return on the listing day but also to continue to trade above the issue price for the rest of their entire life cycle,” said Pranav Haldea, Managing Director at PRIME Database Group. “After a company gets listed, it becomes like any of the other 2000+ listed companies whose share price moves on the basis of the company’s performance, how the sector is doing and how the broader market and economy are performing.” The contrast between listing-day performance and current returns points to a growing disconnection between IPO demand and long-term value creation. The valuation trap: Why debut gains dry up



quicklyA deeper look at the distribution of returns reinforces this trend. The downside is quite significant. Several IPOs have corrected 30- 60% from their listing or issue prices, pulling down overall performance. This indicates that while the upside on debut is often modest and short-lived, the downside risk for investors who stay invested can be significantly larger. At the same time, the data suggest that listing gains have only a moderate relationship with future performance. While some stocks that list strongly may continue to perform, a large number fail to hold on to those

gains. This inconsistency weakens the case for using listing-day performance as a benchmark for business strength or future returns. “It’s equity ultimately, and there is no guaranteed return like in fixed income. Some of them may give a stupendous return, some may give an average return, and some will not give any return or even negative returns,” he added. Around 34% of these IPOs are currently trading above their issue price only, indicating that almost two-thirds have dropped below their listing price over time. The median return is approximately -14%, suggesting that a

typical investor who held stocks beyond listing day is sitting on a loss. The average return, at around -6.85%, further underlines that the underperformance is not limited to a few outliers but is spread across the primary markets. From green to red: Decoding return slump among new listings Recent data from the PRIME Database showed that almost 60% of companies listed at a premium to their issue price since January 2025, supporting the idea that IPOs are still profitable, at least in the short-term. These listing-day spikes have been caused by a multitude of factors, including high subscription numbers, strong grey market premiums, and liquidity-driven participation. But if you dig deeper, the story is a little different. As of April 30, 2026, 67 out of 115 IPOs between January 2025 and March 2026 (approximately 58.2%) were trading at a negative gain relative to their offer price. Out of the 115 IPOs with listing data, 71 recorded a positive listing gain (where the listing day close price was higher than the offer price). This represents a success rate of approximately 61.7%, which means 6 in 10 IPOs popped.

Ambit’s defensive pivot: ITC, Godrej among 4 FMCG picks for June quarter outperformance

Mumbai: Consumer staples could see a stronger June quarter as pricing power returns, volume growth improves and defensive sectors draw fresh institutional interest amid a softer earnings cycle. Ambit Capital turns tactically positive on FMCG stocks, arguing that the June quarter has historically been the sector’s strongest stretch and that slowing earnings momentum elsewhere could push money back into defensive names. Nifty earnings growth is cooling after several quarters of strong expansion, foreign institutional investors continue to pull money out of Indian equities, and market valuations remain elevated. Against that backdrop, Ambit believes staples are positioned to outperform on a relative basis despite margin pressure. The brokerage’s preferred names include ITC, Godrej Consumer Products, Britannia Industries and Marico. It also retains an ‘Overweight’ stance on the sector in its model portfolio. Ambit Capital on FMCG: why the June quarter matters Between 2011 and 2025, the sector posts positive returns in 87% of second quarters, with median returns of 8.9%, according to the report. Ambit says the case for

FMCG strengthens further because the market is entering what it describes as a “slowdown environment” in its growth-rate cycle framework. According to Ambit, FMCG sales growth could rise to 9-10% from 6-7% earlier, helped by price increases of 3-12% across categories to offset inflation in key raw materials. The report also points to improving volume growth after disruptions linked to GST-led channel transitions ease. Ambit’s core argument rests on seasonality. Since 2000, FMCG stocks deliver average returns of about 5% in the second quarter of the calendar year, with median returns at roughly 7.1%. During the same period, the Nifty FMCG index outperforms the broader Nifty around 60% of the time in the April-to-June quarter. Historically, quality-focused portfolios tend to outperform in such periods, and FMCG accounts for nearly 30% weight in the Nifty 200 Quality 30 index. Over the previous phases of rising market concentration between 2010-13 and 2017-20, FMCG ranks among the top three performing sectors relative to the NSE500 index, the brokerage notes.

Five reasons why Indian markets’ “Bengal Win” excitement faded Oil boom and rupee crash

Mumbai: After briefly cheering election results on May 4, the Indian domestic indices seem to have lost momentum today (May 5). In today’s trading session, rising global risks, a falling rupee, and expensive crude oil have together weighed on the overall market sentiment. The Sensex has swung around 600 points intraday and is now trading near 76,950 levels. The Nifty too has come under pressure, falling nearly 200 points intraday and hovering around 24,000. The Indian rupee has slipped to a record low of around 95.40 against the US dollar. A falling rupee makes imports more expensive, especially commodities like crude oil. Global uncertainty returns to centre stage The domestic factors like elections had briefly lifted sentiment but glob-



al concerns are a key factor to watch. For instance, the ongoing tension in West Asia, especially around key trade routes like the Strait of Hormuz, are creating uncertainty. Apart from this, the rising US bond yields are also making global markets more volatile. This is indirectly affecting

Indian equities. Banking and heavy-weight stocks drag indices Apart from this, another reason behind the fall in the market is also being driven by heavyweights, particularly in the banking and financial space. The Nifty Bank index has dropped nearly 1%, losing over 400

points and trading around 54,400. Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said, “The sentimental boost provided by the BJP’s electoral victory in W Bengal will not last. The market trend will be guided by the developments in West Asia particularly in the Strait of Hormuz. The resumption of hostilities in the Hormuz region and Brent crude again spiking to around \$113 are headwinds for the market. Also the US-10-year bond yield rising to 4.44% and rupee sliding to 95.23 level are unfavourable from the FPI flows perspective. Yesterday’s cash market buy by the FIIs is unlikely to be the beginning of a trend. In the near-term the market will respond to Q4 results and management commentary.”

L&T shares plunge 3% Nomura big downgrade Target cut on valuation, execution risks

Mumbai: The Larsen & Toubro share price plunged more than 3% intra-day. The stock was among the key losers on the Nifty 50. International brokerage house Nomura downgrade it to ‘Neutral’ from ‘Buy’ rating due to disappointing quarterly results, decelerating long-term growth targets, and valuation concerns. Also, it slashed the target price to Rs 3,940 from Rs 4,510, implying a downside of almost 3%. L&T’s Q4 FY26 performance was weaker than expectations, with revenue and EBITDA coming in 4% below Nomura’s estimates. This was driven by execution challenges in domestic water projects due to funding constraints and supply disruptions in West Asia. L&T: Ambitious order inflow guidance amidst headwinds The company’s “Lakshya 2031” five-year plan represents a notable deceleration compared to the previous period (FY21-26). Specifically, the target for order inflow CAGR has dropped to 10-12% (down from 20%), and revenue growth is expected to moderate to 12-15% (down from 16%). Nomura finds this deceleration concerning despite L&T’s substantial order backlog. Nomura views L&T’s FY27 order inflow guidance of 10-12% as overly ambitious. The brokerage house pointed out that the overall tender pipeline is actually down 6%



year-over-year. Further, rising commodity prices are expected to cause significant delays as public authorities reassess bids that exceed their original cost estimates. Nomura cut its FY27-28 earnings estimates by 8%. This revision considers the execution disruptions caused by the West Asia crisis and cost headwinds. A significant risk is that many of L&T’s

international contracts do not include price-variation clauses, leaving them vulnerable to inflation. The stock is trading at high multiples of 32x FY27 core EPS, which Nomura believes offers “lesser comfort” given near-term uncertainty. Target in FY26 and is projected to remain in the 16-17% range through 2031.

Bad government statistics can cost the economy billions

New Delhi: THE LIFE of American government bean counters is tough, and not just at cocktail parties. Now they have a hard time persuading people to talk to them at work, too. A decade ago nearly nine in ten Americans, when asked, agreed to fill out the Current Population Survey, which is administered to about 60,000 households each month and asks about, among other things, employment. Today fewer than seven in ten do so. For the Consumer Ex-

penditure Survey, which tries to capture 3,700 households monthly, the response rate has collapsed from nearly 70% to 40%. The Union Cabinet on Tuesday cleared the last two semiconductor units under the first phase of the government’s semiconductor mission, with an investment of ₹3,936 crore. The projects will be funded under the ₹76,000 crore outlay earmarked for the India Semiconductor Mission 1.0, introduced in 2022. The government is positioning

the larger of the two facilities—Dholera-based Crystal Matrix project—within a broader shift in display technologies from LCD to next-generation MicroLED. For decades, With LCD now considered a mature technology, the focus has moved to MicroLED, where India is seeking to build an early presence. LCD manufacturing was dominated by Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, before China scaled up investments and took global leadership, said Vaishnav.

BSE’s F&O turnover crosses NSE for the first time in April

Mumbai: For the first time, the futures and options (F&O) market share of BSE has surpassed that of its unlisted peer, National Stock Exchange (NSE), in April. The listed bourse’s share in notional F&O turnover rose to 55.4% in April from 43.6% in March, while NSE’s share declined to 44.6% from 56.4%. BSE’s average daily turnover (ADT) in the F&O segment grew nearly 20% month-on-month to ₹269.07 lakh crore in April. In contrast, NSE’s ADT fell about 26% to ₹216 lakh crore.

In the options segment, NSE’s total premium turnover declined 28% month-on-month to ₹12.9 lakh crore, while BSE reported a modest 5.6% increase to ₹6.63 lakh crore. Additionally, NSE’s average daily premium turnover dropped 35% to ₹61,417 crore, whereas BSE’s remained largely flat at ₹33,150 crore. Despite this shift, NSE continues to dominate the overall options market, holding a 66% share in options premium turnover compared with BSE’s 34%. “BSE’s lower transaction charges incentivised a shift from NSE,” said Vipin Kumar, assistant vice-president of equity research and head of technical and derivatives at Globe Capital Market. On futures contracts, NSE charges 0.00183% (₹1.83 per ₹1 lakh), while BSE levies no fee. In options, NSE charges 0.0355% (₹ 36 per ₹ 1 lakh) compared with BSE’s 0.005% (₹ 5 per ₹ 1 lakh) on stock options.

Kumar added that shifting the expiry day from Tuesday to Thursday worked to



BSE’s advantage. “This, along with the market regulator’s decision to limit exchanges to one weekly expiry, helped BSE gain a strong foothold in the F&O segment,” he said. April also saw a divergence in trading volumes. F&O volumes on NSE fell 22% from March, while BSE recorded a 26% increase. After declining around 10% in March, benchmark indices recovered nearly 6% in April, supported by continued domestic inflows amid improved valuations. The Nifty 50 price-to-earnings ratio rose to about 21x from around 19x in March, though it remained below the five-year average of 23x. In February, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed raising STT on equity derivatives to curb speculative trading. The STT on futures was increased to 0.05% from 0.01%, while that on options premium and exercise was raised to 0.15% from 0.1% and 0.125%, respectively.

4 Largecap Stocks Where DIIs Increased Stake in Q4

Mumbai: For years, Indian investors have seen markets react sharply to every foreign institutional investor (FII) inflow and outflow, with global sentiment often deciding the market’s direction. But early 2026 brought a noticeable change. Even as FIIs pulled out large amounts of capital, domestic institutional investors (DIIs) stepped in. Large-cap stocks have been among the biggest beneficiaries of this trend. With strong business models, established market positions, and the ability to influence entire industries, these companies remain a preferred choice for institutional investors. In this article, we will look at large-cap stocks bought by DIIs in Q4. The company is in the business of online marketing, information technology consulting, and support services. It’s an online marketplace that offers end-to-end insurance and credit solutions to consumers. It operates financial services portfolios, which include Policybazaar, Paisabazaar, and Pensionbazaar. This increased interest can be attributed to the company’s strong Q3 FY26 performance. PB Fintech’s revenue from operations grew 37% year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 17.7 bn, compared to Rs 12.9 bn in the same quarter last year. The company also reported a sharp 165% rise in net profit to Rs 1.9 bn in the December quarter of FY26, supported by strong growth in new health and life insurance policies. 3 Undervalued Pharma Stocks to Add to Your 2026



Watchlist Overall premium growth stood at 45% during the quarter. In comparison, the Gurugram-based online insurance marketplace had reported a net profit of Rs 0.7 bn in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year. Going forward, the company plans to strengthen its healthcare ecosystem through PB Health by leveraging advanced AI technologies to improve healthcare accessibility and bridge critical gaps in the sector At the same time, it’s driving growth through PB Partners, its agent aggregator platform, which supports independent sellers of insurance and other financial products, helping expand its reach across India. #2 Vishal Mega Mart Next on the list is Vishal Mega Mart. Vishal Mega Mart is a hypermarket chain catering to middle and lower-middle-income groups in India. It offers a wide range

of products, including apparel, general merchandise, and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). The company has both in-house brands and other brands across all its product categories. In the March 2026 quarter, the company witnessed a notable increase in DII holdings, which rose to 32.38% from 25.47% in the December 2025 quarter, reflecting a rise of 6.91 percentage points. This increased institutional interest comes as Vishal Mega Mart continues to aggressively expand its footprint across India, especially in underserved markets. During the nine months ended December 2025, the company added 80 new stores, taking its total store count to 771. Out of these, 383 stores are located in Tier III cities, 188 in Tier II cities, and 200 in Tier I cities, highlighting its strong focus on serving middle and lower-middle-income consumers.

A British crew member is in critical need of medical attention due to a possible hantavirus outbreak on a cruise ship

Africa : Following a possible hantavirus outbreak on a luxury cruise liner in the Atlantic Ocean, a British crew member required immediate medical attention, while a UK guest remained in critical but stable condition. The MV Hondius, which sailed from southern Argentina in March with 149 passengers from 23 nations, has resulted in three fatalities, and on Monday, medical personnel were rushing to extract two more. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that it was looking into a possible outbreak late on Sunday, which sparked the situation. A number of illnesses forced the staff and passengers to segregate themselves on board, leaving the luxury cruise ship stranded off the coast of Cape Verde. The WHO reported on Monday that seven cases of hantavirus, a disease mainly seen in rodents, were either confirmed or suspected while the ship carrying predominantly British, American, and Spanish passengers was being held off the coast of West Africa. “As of May 4, 2026, seven cases (two laboratory confirmed cases of hantavirus and five suspected cases) have been identified, including three deaths, one critically ill patient, and three individuals reporting mild symptoms,” the WHO stated. The unusual disease was blamed by the UN health agency for the deaths of three individuals, including a German national and a married Dutch couple, as well as for the illness of at least three other passengers on the ship and the hospitalization of a 69-year-old British tourist in South Africa. Two employees, one British and one Dutch, continued to exhibit “acute respiratory symptoms,” one light and one severe, and needed immediate medical attention, the cruise operator said in a statement on Monday. No ultimate disembarkation location has been decided upon, however the ship may instead continue to Las Palmas or Tenerife. The most challenging aspect, according to a US travel writer on the ship on Monday, was wondering what would happen to the passengers. In a video that was shared on social media, Jake Rosmarin stated, fighting back tears, “We’re not just headlines: we are people.” “People who have lives, families, and people at home who are waiting for us.” The difficult part is that there is a lot of uncertainty. The cruise ship operator Oceanwide Expeditions said the first passenger, a Dutch national, had died on 11 April and that the cause of death had not been determined onboard. “On 24 April, this passenger was disembarked on St Helena, with his wife accompanying the repatriation,” it said in a statement. Days later, the company



said it had been informed that a woman, also a Dutch national, had become unwell and later died. Officials in South Africa said the woman, 69, collapsed at an airport in the country as she was trying to return to the Netherlands. She later died at a nearby hospital. On 27 April, another person on the MV Hondius, a British national, became seriously ill and had to be evacuated to South Africa. He remains in intensive care in Johannesburg, where he is in critical but stable condition. “A variant of hantavirus has been identified in this patient,” the company said. Another passenger, a German national, died on 2 May. It noted that hantavirus infections, which are usually spread by infected rodents’ urine or faeces and can lead to severe respiratory illness and death, had not been confirmed in the two crew members. “The exact cause and any possible connection are being investigated.” Oceanwide Expeditions said almost 150 people of 23 nationalities, including four Australians, had been on board the ship. While it did not specify which cruise the

passengers were on, the company’s website suggests it offers 33-night or 43-night “Atlantic Odyssey” cruises on the 107-metre-long (351ft) Hondius. Departing from Argentina, the tours travel through Antarctica and stop off at some of the world’s most remote islands. The ship is currently anchored off the coast of Cape Verde, with passengers informed of what happened. “Strict precautionary measures are in process onboard, including isolation measures, hygiene protocols and medical monitoring,” said Oceanwide Expeditions. The vessel had asked to dock at a port in Cape Verde but on Monday health authorities in the country said they would not authorise its docking “with the aim of protecting national public health”. Instead they said they were in contact with authorities in the Netherlands and the UK about the Dutch-flagged ship. “This coordination has enabled a swift, safe and technically appropriate response, ensuring the clinical monitoring of patients and the preparation of all necessary precautionary measures, including a possible medical evacuation by air via air ambulance for

patients under observation,” they added. Oceanwide Expeditions said it was considering sailing to Spain’s Canary Islands, potentially Las Palmas or Tenerife, where further medical screening and handling could take place. The company said it was working with Dutch authorities to organise the repatriation of the two crew members. “The body of the deceased individual is also planned to be included in this repatriation, along with a guest closely associated with the deceased,” it said, noting that the accompanying guest was “not symptomatic”. It said the repatriation relied on several authorities working together. “This repatriation depends on many factors, including the authorisation and support of local Cape Verdean health authorities for the transfer of individuals requiring medical attention from MV Hondius.” The Netherlands’ National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), which is assisting with the situation, said the source of the infection remained unclear. “You could imagine, for example, that rats on board the ship transmitted the virus,” a spokesperson told Reuters. “But another possibility is that during a stop somewhere in South America, people were infected, for instance via mice, and became ill that way. That all still needs to be investigated.” On Monday, the WHO said the risk to the wider public remained low and that there was no need for panic or travel restrictions.

“To date, one case of hantavirus infection has been laboratory confirmed, and there are five additional suspected cases,” it said in an earlier statement on Sunday. South Africa’s National Institute for Communicable Diseases was carrying out contact tracing in and around Johannesburg in order to assess whether people had been exposed to the infected passengers. The UK’s Foreign Office said it was closely monitoring reports of the suspected outbreak. “We are in touch with the cruise company and local authorities,” it said. While it is rare, hantavirus infections can spread between people, according to the WHO.

The family of viruses made headlines last year after the actor Gene Hackman’s wife, Betsy Arakawa, died following a hantavirus infection in New Mexico. In 2019, a hantavirus outbreak in southern Argentina killed at least nine people. As officials raced to halt the spread of the disease, a judge ordered dozens of residents of a remote town to stay in their homes for 30 days, according to the Associated Press.

If Iran attacks US ships, Trump threatens to destroy it “off the face of the earth”



Iran: If Iran assaults US ships attempting to reestablish a route through the Strait of Hormuz, Donald Trump has promised to “blown off the face of the earth.” The Gulf is once again on the verge of full-scale conflict as a result of the US’s operation on Monday to assist hundreds

of ships and their crews. Tehran attempted to reiterate its blockade of the strait, a crucial conduit for international trade. Iran refuted the US military’s claims that it had destroyed six Iranian small boats and intercepted Iranian drones and cruise missiles. There are still more than 800

ships and almost 20,000 crew members stuck in the area. Trump said that Iranian officials had been “far more malleable” in recent negotiations and referred to the ongoing US naval campaign as “one of the greatest military maneuvers ever done” in an interview with Fox News on Monday. “We have more weapons and ammunition at a much higher grade than we had before,” he said to Fox News, addressing worries about American weapons stockpiles. “Our equipment is the greatest. We have items everywhere in the world. These bases are located all around the world. They are all fully equipped. All of that stuff is useful, and we will utilize it if necessary,” he continued. Trump’s threats against Iran echo remarks he made in April, when he

warned that a “whole civilization will die” if Tehran failed to comply with his demands over the strait of Hormuz – comments that drew widespread domestic and international backlash. His comments call into question the fragile, Pakistan-brokered ceasefire that halted hostilities last month, but failed to open up the strait of Hormuz, through which about a fifth of international oil supplies usually travel.

Earlier on Monday, Iran’s military central command warned that it would strike any US naval vessel approaching the strait, and claimed to have struck a US frigate in the area with two missiles. Meanwhile, US Central Command on Monday said that US forces had redirected 50 commercial vessels amid the ongoing blockade.

The UK’s strategy to address the jet fuel deficit depends on a Nigerian refinery that is alleged to have fired union members



Africa: Amid a lack of jet fuel, a refinery in Nigeria that is alleged to have fired employees for joining a union has become crucial to the UK government’s efforts to salvage the summer break. Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander stated over the weekend that increasing gasoline imports from the United States and West Africa is one way to address the Strait of Hormuz situation. Dangote in Lagos, which began manufacturing aviation fuel in January 2024, is the primary refinery on Africa’s west coast that exports fuel to the UK for commercial aircraft. The massive Nigerian facility imported over 130,000 tonnes of jet fuel into the UK in March, according to market data firm Kpler. Unions have accused the refinery, which is owned by Aliko Dangote, the richest man in Africa, of being a “plantation of exploitation.” The corporation was accused of firing employees when they joined the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) union last fall, forcing the Nigerian government to mediate a disagreement. More than 800 Nigerian workers were allegedly sacked for voluntarily joining the union, and some of them were replaced by foreigners, primarily from India. The corporation refuted this, claiming that a limited reorganization had targeted a few employees who were interfering with operations and jeopardizing the facility’s stability. Dangote insisted that the corporation did not prevent union involvement and that over 3,000 Nigerians were still working. During the conflict, PENGASSAN’s branches instructed oil companies to immediately stop delivering gas and crude oil to the refinery. “We have it on good authority that Dangote refinery pays one of the lowest wages in the oil and gas sector in Nigeria today and treats its staff members beneath acceptable stan-

dards,” the Nigerian Labour Congress stated, accusing Dangote of having a “consistent record of union-busting, exploitative labor practices.” The government stepped in and confirmed the right to union membership, adding in a statement that it had been agreed that the “management of Dangote Group shall immediately begin the process of redeploying the disengaged staff to other companies within the Dangote Group, with no loss of pay.” An internal company memo was reportedly sent last week confirming that affected staff were being recalled. A spokesperson for Dangote Industries said the workers had been reabsorbed into the company in different sectors within the firm, including salt, sugar and cement, and denied that they had been dismissed for union membership. He said: “We have free association and we respect it.

“Unions can use any foul language to appeal to the masses that their rogue [leadership] claim to protect. Such buzzwords attract headlines and try to mask their ineptitude. We don’t have problems with unions. “The picture is clear today. The same unions are extolling our industrialisation strategy and expressing positive sentiments over our vision for rescuing the country from perennial fuel shortage, long queues at the fuel stations, wasteful man-hours, substandard and dirty fuel imports.” Fossil fuels from the Gulf have effectively been at a standstill since 28 February, after the de facto closure of the strait of Hormuz shipping channel, through which a fifth of the world’s oil and gas flows. British refineries have already been asked to maximise jet fuel supply as part of government contingency planning, amid growing fears that planes will be grounded this summer. There are four remaining refineries in the UK, after closures at Grangemouth and Lindsey

in 2025: Fawley in Hampshire, owned by ExxonMobil; Humber in Lincolnshire, owned by Phillips 66; Valero’s Pembroke refinery near Milford Haven; and Essar’s Stanlow site in Cheshire. Speaking over the weekend, the transport secretary conceded that the output from these refineries would not be sufficient and that other sources were being sought, but that she was confident that it would be a normal summer for the majority of holidaymakers. Alexander said: “We’re importing a lot more jet fuel from the US. We have also asked the refineries here to maximise production. We’ve got fuel for refineries that produce jet fuel here, we’ve got more oil, jet fuel coming from refineries on the west coast of Africa as well.” Matt Stanley, the head of market engagement at Kpler, said Dangote was producing aviation fuel to its maximum capacity after recent internal problems. He said: “In March, [the UK] bought 130,000 tonnes. There is 60,000 tonnes that is on the way now and should arrive [on Tuesday]. The main import hub for ... Heathrow is in the Isle of Grain. “With jet fuel, you will pay what you have to pay. I think the winners, if you like, those who will pick up market share, will be the US refineries, for sure, and Dangote. You go to whoever has got the barrels. It’s less about pricing, it’s about volume, and they just want to keep the wheels turning.” A government spokesperson said: “Since the closure of the strait of Hormuz, the government has been monitoring UK jet fuels stocks and working with airlines, airports, and fuel suppliers on the situation. “UK airlines are clear that they are not currently seeing a shortage of jet fuel. Aviation fuel is typically bought in advance and airports and their suppliers keep stocks of bunkered fuel to support their resilience.”

Mortgage holders suffer as the Reserve Bank raises the official cash rate to 4.35%

Australia: The Reserve Bank has raised interest rates for the third time in a row in an effort to curb rising inflationary pressures brought on by rising fuel prices, even as it cautioned that the Iranian conflict would deal a severe damage to the economy.

The widely anticipated move to raise the cash rate from 4.1% to 4.35% coincided with the central bank’s dismal new predictions, which indicated worsening growth and rising cost-of-living pressures. The consequences of the US-Israeli assault on Iran will cut economic growth in 2026 by half a percentage point compared to pre-conflict projections in February, with yearly growth falling to 1.3% this year. The oil supply shock’s stagflationary effect manifests as a higher inflation peak, with consumer price increase reaching 4.8% in the year ending in the June quarter as opposed to a prewar forecast of 4.2%. The RBA board cautioned that a wide range of local businesses are likely to raise prices, thus inflation is likely to remain high even if the Iran war ends quickly. The board stated in a statement that “there are early signs that many firms experiencing cost pressures are looking to raise prices of their goods and services.” The board had already hiked rates twice in 2026, but on Tuesday said finance was still “readily available



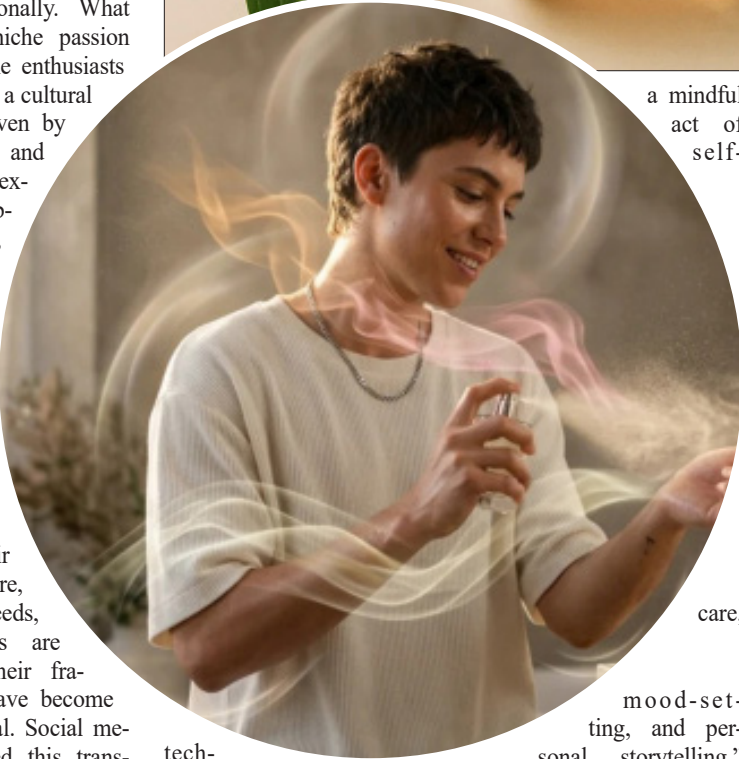
to both households and businesses.” “In light of these considerations, the board assessed that inflation is likely to remain above target for some time,” it said. Just one board member voted to leave rates on hold, with the other eight voting for the increase. A week out from what the treasurer, Jim Chalmers, is simultaneously calling his most ambitious and responsible budget yet, the RBA’s decision will deliver a blow to the more than 3 million mortgaged households. The RBA’s outlook suggested Australians would suffer another year of falling living standards, as prices rise faster than pay packets. Under the RBA’s relatively optimistic “baseline” scenario, which assumes a

relatively rapid end to the Middle East conflict, the hit to growth will not translate into substantially higher unemployment in the near term, with the jobless rate expected to be at a relatively low 4.3% by the end of this year. The RBA also explored two “adverse” scenarios involving a more extended conflict that leaves oil prices higher for longer. Under the more extreme version, unemployment was forecast to push above 5% as the economy slows more sharply. Even under this more pessimistic scenario, however, the country escapes recession, according to the forecasts, although the RBA said it did not attempt to model what would happen were Australia to run short of fuel.

The Layering Generation: Young Indians Are Mixing Perfumes Like laylists

Scent layering has emerged as one of the most exciting beauty shifts among young Indians, redefining how they experience and express fragrance. Instead of sticking to a single, fixed perfume, Gen Z and young millennials are now blending two or more scents to create personalised “fragrance playlists” that match their moods, schedules, and identities.College students lean into it as an easy form of experimentation, something fresh for morning classes, and something deeper for evenings out, while young professionals use it to craft a signature aroma that helps them stand out socially and even professionally. What began as a niche passion among perfume enthusiasts has grown into a cultural movement driven by individuality and creative self-expression. Abdullah Ajmal, CEO Ajmal Group, says, “This shift is part of a larger pattern of hyper-personalisation embraced by India’s youth. Just as their music, skincare, shopping feeds, and aesthetics are customised, their fragrances too have become deeply personal. Social media has fuelled this transformation, with influencers breaking down the art of fragrance cocktails through reels and tutorials.” Layering has gone from a specialist’s trick to a mainstream beauty ritual because it gives depth, improves longevity, which is especially important in India’s warm and humid climate, and ensures that no two people smell alike. It allows young Indians to build a scent that feels as unique as their personality, something that a single commercial perfume cannot entirely achieve.

The appeal also lies in how practical and economical the



technique is. Lighter perfumes that are popular in India tend to fade quickly, but when they are paired with richer notes like amber, vanilla, or woody accords, the overall scent lingers far longer. This approach also offers a cost-effective alternative to luxury niche fragrances. Instead of buying an expensive new perfume, people are reinventing the ones they already own by layering complementary scents.Abdullah Ajmal says, “Much like curating a skincare routine or picking a playlist, choosing a scent combination becomes

While the magic of layering comes from experimentation, young Indians often gravitate towards combinations that feel intuitive and culturally resonant. Vanilla adds warmth to nearly anything it touches, citrus and floral blends create the perfect summer-friendly brightness, woods help florals last through long days, musks polish fruity notes into something soft and contemporary, and spices paired with amber create the kind of evening richness that feels festive and distinctly Indian. Even aquatic fragrances long-time favourites for their fresh-

ness, are being elevated with gentle woody bases to add character and staying power. Abdullah Ajmal shares, “As the trend accelerates, fragrance brands are evolving too. Many Indian and international labels are launching layering-friendly collections designed to be mixed and matched with ease. These modular perfumes, often accompanied by pairing suggestions, have made the practice accessible to beginners and popular as gifting options.” The rise of such collections signals a broader shift: perfumes are no longer seen as fixed luxury items but as creative tools meant to be played with. For a generation that values customisation over convention, this fluid, mix-and-match approach feels natural.In the end, the rise of scent layering reflects a deeper cultural transformation. Young Indians are no longer passive consumers of fragrance; they are active creators of their aromatic identity. Layering gives them a quiet yet powerful form of expression, one that is invisible to the eye but deeply memorable to the senses. Much like the playlists that soundtrack their lives, their scent blends and ever-evolving. What started as a beauty trend has become a ritual of creativity, individuality, and modern Indian identity.

Do You Really Need A Separate Winter Skincare Routine?

As winter approaches, complaints of dry, itchy, and dull skin become increasingly common. Cold winds, low humidity, and indoor heating all work against the skin’s natural moisture barrier, leaving it feeling tight and uncomfortable. But does this mean you need to overhaul your skincare routine entirely? Dermatologists say not quite, what’s needed are thoughtful seasonal adjustments, not a complete reset.

According to Dr Swapna Kunduru, Senior Consultant Dermatologist and Trichologist, CARE Hospitals, winter skincare is about compensating for increased moisture loss. During colder months, the skin loses hydration faster, which can lead to dryness, cracked lips, and even rashes. Continuing with lightweight summer products often isn’t enough. She advises switching to a mild cleanser and prioritising moisturisation. “The most important step in winter is using a richer cream or lotion that keeps the skin soft for longer,” she explains, adding that applying moisturiser immediately after bathing helps lock in moisture. One of the most common misconceptions, Dr. Kunduru points out, is skipping sunscreen in winter. UV rays remain active year-round and can still cause pigmentation, tanning, and premature ageing, even on colder or cloudy days. She also cautions against very hot showers, which can further strip the skin of its natural oils.

Echoing this balanced approach,

Dr. Adithi Jain, Consultant Dermatologist, CK Birla Hospitals, emphasises that the core pillars of skincare cleansing, moisturising, sun protection, and targeted treatments remain unchanged across seasons. What does change is the texture, formulation, and frequency of use. In winter, cold air and indoor heating weaken the skin barrier, increasing water loss even in people with oily or combination skin.

Dr Jain recommends gentler, non-foaming cleansers and advises avoiding products containing ingredients like neem extracts, glycolic acid derivatives, or strong vitamin C formulations during winter, as these can exacerbate dryness. Moisturisers should be richer and include barrier-repairing ingredients such as ceramides, glycerin, hyaluronic acid, and natural oils like jojoba or shea butter. Over-cleansing, excessive exfoliation, and hot showers, she warns, can worsen irritation. She also highlights a lesser-known factor: blue light from screens. “Sunscreen is often neglected in winter, but UV rays and even blue light from mobile phones and laptops, contribute to premature ageing,” she notes, recommending daily sunscreen use even indoors. Lip and hand care, she adds, deserve special attention, as thinner skin in these areas loses moisture faster in winter.

From a clinical perspective, Dr Nirupama Parwanda, Dermatologist and Founder, Zolie Skin Clinic, explains

that winter brings physiological changes in the skin. Low humidity, cold winds, and indoor heating not only dry out the skin but also weaken its protective barrier, increasing the likelihood of eczema, dermatitis, and psoriasis flare-ups. Her winter recommendations focus on both restoring and protecting this barrier. Dr. Parwanda suggests replacing foaming cleansers with gentle, non-foaming alternatives that preserve natural oils. Moisturisers rich in ceramides and humectants such as hyaluronic acid, glycerin, or urea help draw water into the skin and keep it there. For very dry or sensitive skin, thicker creams or barrier-repair ointments used at night can be particularly effective. Hydrating serums with hyaluronic acid or peptides may also help reduce winter-related sensitivity. Like the other experts, she stresses the importance of daily sunscreen use, noting that UV, visible, and infrared light continue to contribute to pigmentation and photoageing in winter.

The consensus is clear: winter skincare doesn’t require an entirely new routine. Instead, it calls for mindful tweaks, gentler cleansing, richer moisturisation, consistent sun protection, and extra care for vulnerable areas like lips and hands. Listening to your skin and adapting to seasonal needs is far more effective than piling on products. With the right adjustments, healthy, comfortable skin is achievable all winter long.



‘Putting on a brave face’: why royal fashion has never been more arresting

As Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor was taken into police custody last week, his brother King Charles made a “surprise” appearance on the front row at the opening of London fashion week. Styled in one of his staple jaunty ties, clashing pocket handkerchief and British-made suit, it sent the message loud and clear: this was business as usual.That message persisted when, at the Baftas at the weekend, the Prince and Princess of Wales showed a united front in coordinated burgundy velvet (“Pantone diplomacy”, as the New York Times put it). Catherine’s blush Gucci gown showed not just solidarity in hue but also, arguably, signalled her ethics in a week when the royal family’s came under fire: she’d worn the dress before, on a previous outing. “The king’s whole look – with his British bespoke tailored suit – might be construed as putting on a brave face, and keeping calm and carrying on during yet another existential crisis,” says Justine Picardie, former editor-in-chief of Harper’s Bazaar UK and author of a new book, Fashioning the Crown: A Story of Power, Conflict and Couture. “For Catherine, it is another expression of her taking a sustainable approach, and showing restraint, rather than excess.”The house of Windsor has long wielded fashion as a weapon during times of crisis, says Picardie, pointing out the “similar tactics used after the crisis of the abdication in 1936, when Queen Elizabeth (the Queen Mother) was dressed by Norman Hartnell in an idealised vision of traditional Englishness, to counteract

the hard chic of the pro-Nazi Duke and Duchess of Windsor.” “Clothes are used to express power and many other things – emotion, vulnerability, grief, birth, death, loss ... whether it’s a wedding dress or at a funeral.” But what Picardie, who previously documented the hidden histories of Chanel and Dior, hadn’t been aware of until researching this book was “dress diplomacy”.On tours and official occasions, the royal family often deploys fashion as a tool of soft power. Take the Princess of Wales attending a state reception in New Zealand wearing a black Jenny Packham dress embellished with silver fern leaves – a New Zealand national emblem. At a Commonwealth Day service at Westminster Abbey last year she wore head-to-toe unsuited Canadian red, and she never misses a chance to wear clover-green when visiting Ireland. Princess Diana chose a dress dotted with red circles, in visual symmetry with the Japanese flag, while on tour in the country in 1986. In Saudi Arabia, she wore a dress emblazoned with gold falcons, an emblem of the nation. Picardie’s book notes examples from Queen Elizabeth II’s playbook too. From hats bedecked dramatically with ostrich plumes for official visits to South Africa to her wartime, make do and mend-inspired habit of wearing outfits multiple times, Elizabeth grasped “the sartorial art of royalty, and the ways in which visual iconography could safeguard the sovereign”.In later years, Elizabeth II’s outfit choices, which moved from pastels to primary colours, were widely scrutinised for covert polit-



ical messaging. When she wore a blue and yellow hat for the state opening of parliament in 2017, with Brexit at the top of the agenda, some argued it was reminiscent of the EU flag. Although the palace denied there was any message, Picardie says “for somebody who’s been trained in the art of sartorial codes, it is plausible that she knew”. Royal watchers also ruminated over the meaning of the queen’s brooches, most memorably when she selected to wear one given to her by the Obamas during a Trump state visit to the UK. The laboured thought processes behind such dressing decisions is all the more plausible given the queen was clearly much more at ease in very

different attire. Picardie met her several times – as her second husband, Philip Astor, was Prince Philip’s godson – including at Balmoral, where she seemed very much at home wearing “traditional Scottish country clothes – a tartan skirt, a tweed jacket”. On one occasion, Picardie plucked up the courage to asked her about Hardy Amies, one of her favoured designers, who was rumoured to have had a role as a senior intelligence officer during the second world war. The queen responded: “Of course, it was excellent cover for a spy, to be a couturier.” Picardie was astonished: “In general, she was so enigmatic, so discreet, so guarded ... it was very interesting that it took that sub-

ject for her to slightly open up, which is a combination of war,jeopardy and the man she chose to design for her.”Royal dressing can be overtly political, too: Picardie notes an example from 1947 when, in the aftermath of the second world war, then prime minister Clement Attlee expressed his concern over whether the silk for Princess Elizabeth’s wedding dress had been produced by Japanese or Italian silk worms. A year ago, Kensington Palace announced the Princess of Wales would no longer release details of her wardrobe, as she wanted the focus to be on her chosen causes rather than clothes. But she recently worked with Johnstons of Elgin to design a tartan-like fabric, showing her

support for British textiles and design – so whether she releases details of what she is wearing or not, there is meaning behind her choices.Picardie says Catherine is still “the most valuable ambassador for British fashion” and praises her focus on recycled outfits and sustainability. “Last year, at the state banquet at Windsor Castle for Trump, she wore a gold Phillipa Lepley lace gown. A female designer, British dressmaker, British textiles – that was absolutely spot on.” On a visit earlier this month to a textile mill in Wales that produces blankets and throws, she wore a vintage Welsh wool coat. For more evidence that royal dressing is as an important tool rather than an after thought, there are the Duchess of Sussex’s comments about the liberation she felt once freed from its limitations. Now, of course, Meghan “can wear whatever she wants, because she’s not a working royal”, says Picardie. Since leaving behind her official role – she and Prince Harry kept their titles – the duchess has spoken of the inauthenticity she felt having to adhere to royal protocol and being forced to wear “nude pantyhose”.As for Mountbatten-Windsor, aside from losing his title and military role, “it is the ultimate stripping off to have his uniform taken away”, says Picardie, leaving him with the sports casual off-duty look he’s seen wearing in his appearances in Epstein’s photo album.From those who remain in the house of Windsor, at a time when it is perhaps hanging by a thread, expect further coded messages through clothing.

ENTERTAINMENT

Vidya Balan and Irrfan Khan’s movie According to the director, The Last Tenant’s footage was nearly discarded



Mumbai: The renowned actor Irrfan Khan went suddenly six years ago, but this year on April 30, his fans were treated to a unique surprise when his new movie, The Last Tenant, was made available on YouTube. The picture, which co-starred Vidya Balan and was shot 26 years ago, was their only on-screen collaboration, and the public is enjoying it. The film’s director, Saarthak R. Dasgupta, claims that it has “mixed emotions.” Saarthak R Dasgupta claims he had no idea what he was doing when he made the movie during all of their early years in the business. “There were two betas with all these rushes back then, and you didn’t have digital backups.” One beta was lost and I never found it, while the other was worthless due to fungus. He says, “So, I forgot about the film all this time,” until he discovered an unlabeled VHS tape two weeks ago while moving. “I thought it would probably be my wedding video

and who would find a VHS player in today’s time to play that.” I was going to toss it, but then I thought, “Maybe, let me just check what’s there, and out comes this film.” Saarthak was hesitant to release the movie because the video quality was subpar and it had been 26 years. We anticipated the sixth anniversary of Irrfan’s passing, so I felt compelled to honor him. After 26 years, I discovered this movie, which might have been a sign. I made the decision to schedule it for that same day. Because of how quickly things changed, I didn’t even talk to Vidya before,” he says. However, Vidya Balan was ecstatic to find The Last Tenant. “I sent Vidya a note when it was released, and she was thrilled. I found out that they had previously been in a movie together, but they didn’t share the screen. Thus, this was the only movie in which the two renowned actors appeared together. Thus, this is

unique for her as well. Vidya has only appeared in the television series Hum Paanch before to filming the movie in 1999 and 2000. However, Saarthak didn’t find her that way. She only appeared in a bank commercial where she portrayed a soldier’s wife because I never watched television. I was captivated as the camera gradually moved toward her incredibly expressive face. He says, “I didn’t know who she was; I just thought this girl was so gorgeous that I wanted to approach her, and eventually I did.” Even after the movie, Saarthak remained friendly with Irrfan Khan, although he regrets not being able to collaborate with him once more. We continued to discuss working together once more, but he grew too large for me to pay for or go on dates with. He is happy with the response The Last Tenant is getting, he adds. “I hoped that someday we’ll work together again, but he passed away.” The kind of fandom he still has truly surprises me. He still has an unprecedented level of adoration, and the reaction has been insane. According to Saarthak, he messaged Sutapa Sikdar, Irrfan’s wife, regarding the movie, but he hasn’t heard back yet. He continues to hope to release an improved version of his movie in the future. “I’m still searching for the Beta and attempting to extract film from the fungus. However, the other Beta is still missing. He concludes, “Maybe someday I’ll get it and I’ll probably have a better version of it in a better quality.”

Ektaa Kapoor supports Akshay Kumar for making four movies annually



Mumbai: The success of Bhooth Bangla is being enjoyed by producer Ektaa Kapoor. With Akshay Kumar in the lead role, the horror-comedy has been doing well at the box office. On Wednesday, Ektaa thanked Akshay on Instagram for believing in her and commended his commitment to acting. She praised his prodigious work ethic and compared him to actors like Jeetendra and Dharmendra. Ektaa posted a photo of Akshay conversing with her fa-

ther, veteran actor Jeetendra, along with a lengthy message. She began, “The time has come for me to say my thank yous... This photo of Dad and Akshay Sir serves as a clear reminder of the power of discipline. Every time I speak with Akshay Sir, I feel like I’m speaking to my father since they are so similar.It’s amazing how disciplined they are and how much they appreciate and believe the producer’s convictions. ”These two men

are the reason our industry’s commerce is alive and why producers still have some agency,” she went on. One stratum of the industry is only maintained by occasionally working on a few films with renowned directors. Actors who work consistently are necessary for an industry to flourish and give every producer an opportunity. Seldom is the sheer trade these two guys have contributed valued. Therefore, if someone asks, “Why does Akshay

Kumar do four films a year?” they should realize that this industry flourished because of the Dharmendras, Jeetendras, and Akshays. ”There is employment creation in volume. They bring that to the table! I am grateful to Akshay Sir for providing every producer, regardless of size, with an opportunity to showcase their skills! “I love you, Guruji! Akshaykumar,” she said in closing. After working on films like Hera Pheri (2000), Garam Masala (2005), Bhagam Bhag (2006), Bhool Bhulaiyaa (2007), De Dana Dan (2009), and Khatta Meetha (2010), Priyadarshan is back with Akshay in Bhooth Bangla. In addition to Wamiqa Gabbi, Tabu, Mithila Palkar, Rajpal Yadav, and Jisshu Sengupta, the movie debuted to favorable reviews. Globally, the movie has made around ₹230 crore. Produced by Kumar, Shobha Kapoor, and Ektaa, Bhooth Bangla is distributed by Balaji Motion Pictures, a branch of Balaji Telefilms Ltd., in collaboration with Cape of Good Films.

Nora Fatehi and Rakesh Bedi collaborate on a dance song

Mumbai: For his outstanding performance in Dhurandhar The Revenge, Rakesh Bedi has been getting a lot of accolades. His performance as Jameel Jamali in Aditya Dhar’s spy thriller resonated with viewers and became a definite favorite. He also appeared in several commercials following the movie’s release. The seasoned actor is now getting ready to show off his dancing skills. He revealed on Instagram that he and Nora Fatehi have been filming a dance song. They discussed their experiences working together and gave each other a sneak peek from the set. “Today I am shooting with one of the biggest stars of India,” he said at the start of his Instagram video. Fantastic dancer, actor, and biggest sensation. “None other than Nora Fatehi!” Nora then shows up next to Rakesh and greets him. “Hi sir, we are so excited to have you with us,” she says. “You are killing it, Sir!” was Nora’s response to Rakesh’s statement that he was thrilled to work with her. “I did my best to be as good as you and to compete with you!” “Aap ka dance bohot achcha hain, aapne bohot achcha kiya (You dance really well and you did so good),” Nora continued. I can’t wait for everyone to hear the song and witness your moves!” “Kitna jhoot bolti hain ye (How much she lies)” is a great joke from Rakesh. “Nahi sach sach bol rahi hoon (I am saying the truth),” Nora said after bursting out laughing. It has a great atmosphere, and I’m saying Sir killed it. To believe this song, you must see it. We can’t wait for you all to see it. I think this song will be played at every wedding! Rakesh concurred, and their conversation came to an end. Rakesh played Pakistani politician Jameel Jamali in Dhurandhar, and his character journey in the follow-up resonated strongly with viewers. Fans even turned his famous remark, “Baccha hai tu mera (You are my kid),” into memes after several of his scenes went viral on social media. At the movie office, Aditya Dhar’s two-part spy action thriller set records. Released in December of last year, the first portion went on to become a global hit, earning ₹1300 crore. On March 19, 2026, the second half was made available. It turned out to be much more successful than its predecessor.

OTT will begin streaming Sonakshi Sinha and Jyotika’s legal drama on this date



Mumbai: The world premiere of Prime Video’s upcoming Prime Original courtroom thriller System, a high-stakes drama that explores the intricate relationship between justice and power, is scheduled for May 22.The movie, which was announced on May 6, is produced by Pammi Baweja, Harman Baweja, and Smitha Baliga under the auspices of Baweja Studios and is directed by Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari.The technology will only be available in Hindi on Prime Video in India and over 240 other nations and territories. System, marketed as a compelling courtroom thriller, delves into a world of luxury and entitlement, where justice is

frequently decided by facing hard facts rather than mere verdicts.The narrative centers on Sonakshi Sinha’s character, Neha Rajvansh, a public prosecutor who forges an odd bond with Jyotika’s character, Sarika Rawat, a courtroom stenographer.Despite facing strong opponents, the two women, who come from quite different socioeconomic backgrounds, band together to reveal hidden injustices.Along with an ensemble cast that includes Preeti Agarwal, Adinath Kothare, Aashriya Mishra, Gaurav Pandey, and Sayandeep Gupta, Ashutosh Gowariker plays a significant role in the movie. ”System is a powerful and thrilling drama that ex-

plores themes of ambition, justice, and ethics,” stated Nikhil Madhok, Director and Head of Originals at Prime Video India, in reference to the production. System, which is directed by Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari and supported by Baweja Studios, will take you by surprise at every turn, making for an engaging watch. When the film debuts on Prime Video on May 22, we think it will have a significant impact on viewers worldwide because to the powerful performances of Sonakshi Sinha and Jyotika. ”System is a compelling legal drama that brings together two strong-willed women from different worlds, bound by their own ideas of justice,” said producer Harman Baweja. Sonakshi Sinha, Jyotika, and Ashutosh Gowariker’s stirring performances bring the film to life, reflecting our common goal of delivering poignant, cinematic tales. We are excited to work with Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari and Prime Video on this film, which has allowed us to authentically and expansively bring this story to life. We are excited to present this genre-bending tale to Indian and international audiences.” System, written by Harman Baweja, Arun Sukumar, Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, Tasneem Lokhandwala, and Akshat Ghildial, promises a multi-layered story that blends social criticism and courtroom drama.

Riteish Deshmukh’s film continues to make above rs. 44 crore

Mumbai: Riteish Deshmukh starred in the highly awaited historical drama Raja Shivaji, which debuted in theaters on May 1. Driven by enormous pre-release buzz, the movie debuted to record-breaking figures and went on to record the largest opening ever for a Marathi film, establishing a new standard for the industry. However, because to conflicting evaluations, collections have since declined. Here is the most recent box office result for the movie. According to Sacnilk’s most recent update, Raja Shivaji was able to maintain its momentum and keep steady at the box office on Tuesday. On Tuesday, it brought in ₹4.90 crore. Compared to Monday’s haul of ₹5.60 crore, this is a minor decline. On its first day of release, the movie brought in ₹11.35 crore. The movie gained some traction over the weekend, earning ₹10.55 crore on Saturday and ₹12 crore on Sunday.As a result, India’s total gross and net collections to far are ₹52.68 crore and ₹44.40 crore, respectively.



ly, Hindi and Marathi versions of Raja Shivaji are now available in theaters. Let’s examine the movie’s performance throughout all of its shows. The Hindi and Marathi versions of the movie brought in ₹1.55 and ₹3.35 crore, respectively. Abhishek Bachchan, Genelia Deshmukh, Sanjay Dutt, Mahesh Manjrekar, Sachin Khedekar, Bhagyashree, Fardeen Khan, Jiten-dra Joshi, and Amole Gupte are among the other actors in Raja Shivaji. Rahyl, the son of Riteish and Genelia, also makes his acting debut in the movie. Jyoti Deshpande and Genelia Deshmukh are the film’s producers. In it, Riteish and Genelia play Saibai and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Theatergoers have respond-

ed enthusiastically to Salman Khan’s special appearance. In a video message, Deshmukh thanked viewers for their support and urged them to maintain the cinema experience amid the popularity of the movie. “Namaskar!” he said in Marathi. The movie Raja Shivaji, which is based on the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, has been released. You have seen this movie firsthand and have responded so well to it. You have my sincere gratitude, as does the entire Raja Shivaji team. I have just one thing to ask for. I am aware of how you feel. A lot of you are creating videos in theaters and uploading them to the internet. Please refrain from posting videos.

Salim Khan is gradually getting better after being admitted to the hospital



Mumbai: Salim Khan, a seasoned screenwriter, recently experienced a brain hemorrhage that caused him to spend a month in the hospital, raising grave fears about his health. The father of superstar Salman Khan seems to be on the road to recovery now that he is back home, as seen by a recent photo that shows his steady improvement.On Wednesday, trade expert Komal Nahta posted a photo of himself with Salim Khan and provided an update on his health on X, the platform that was once known as Twitter. He is seen sitting on a beige sofa in a living room with Komal and one of Komal’s pals in the photo, which looks to have been taken inside Salim Khan’s house. Salim Khan is seated in the center, wearing white

sandals, light pants, and a colorful checkered shirt. toward the meantime, Komal and his companion can be seen bending slightly toward his direction.Komal commented, “It was a pleasure to meet Salim Khan Saab yesterday at his house with friend Raja Shetiya.””The veteran writer is recovering slowly but surely after his 28-day hospitalization in February-March,” he wrote. I am grateful to Dr. Sandeep Chopra for facilitating this encounter. Salim Khan joined his son Salman Khan in welcoming and waving to fans a few days before to the image and health update. Salman and his father went out onto their balcony on March’s Eid to meet fans who had gathered outside his home. Additionally, it was Salim Khan’s first public

appearance following his release from the hospital after a month-long hospitalization. Salim Khan was observed in a wheelchair at the time. On February 17, the 90-year-old veteran writer was admitted to the hospital due to a brain hemorrhage. His family doctor hurried him to the hospital, where he was hospitalized to the intensive care unit and put on a ventilator. The renowned writer was kept under medical supervision following a minor surgery. In addition to his family, he was visited at the hospital by a number of actors, including Shilpa Shetty, Aamir Khan, Sanjay Dutt, and his buddy Javed Akhtar. According to hospital officials at the time, neurosurgeon Nitin Dange had performed a surgery known as DSA on him. Digital Subtraction Angiography, or DSA for short, is a diagnostic technique used to detect cerebrovascular conditions like brain aneurysms, acute blood artery blockages (strokes), fistulas (AVFs), and arteriovenous malformations (AVMs).His son Arbaaz Khan had reported that his father was doing well a few days before to his discharge. On March 17, the seasoned author was released.

Amid criticism for the VFX error, Ektaa Kapoor refers to the Naagin 7 editor as the greatest in the nation



Mumbai: Producer Ektaa Kapoor decided to stick by her crew instead of shifting the blame when a glaring visual effects error in Naagin 7 caused criticism on the internet. In response to criticism that an uncut blue-screen picture had been broadcast, Ektaa publicly defended her longtime editor, complimenting his work and referring to him as “the best in the country.” ”Meet Vicky ji, inke

blue screen ke charche pure Bombay main hain abhi (His blue screen is being talked about all over Bombay right now),” Ektaa wrote in a video she posted of herself sitting with her longtime editor Vicky. I can replace my partner, but I can’t get rid of Vicky Ji. Even if I produce 50 shows, Vicky ji will be involved in every one of them. This is true even if I just produce 50 episodes.

He is the nation’s greatest editor. This man is the greatest in the industry; please apologize. You are wonderful, Vicky ji. Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu or Naagin For twenty years, this man has edited all of our shows. ”Directors and writers change, but for us, there’s only one man who does all of our work, Vicky ji,” she continued. There is just one editor, even if we have fifty shows. Isl-

ye shayad zayada kaam de diya. We probably gave him additional work since Inko puri raat hum awake rakhte hain. We kept him up all night. He is the greatest. The editor was spotted wiping his emotions after being moved by Ektaa’s remarks. It all started when a number of social media users posted a screenshot from a Naagin 7 episode that showed Priyanka Chahar Choudhary standing at the far left and a visible blue screen in the background. The scene was supposed to be an action sequence in which Ahana, her character, defeats her adversaries. The apparent “blunder” sparked a lot of backlash, with people accusing the creators of not working hard enough to produce the show. Priyanka Chahar Choudhary plays the lead in the seventh installment of Ektaa’s Naagin franchise, with Namik Paul and Kanika Mann playing supporting roles. Even while the show got off to a great start, its usage of AI soon drew criticism. You may watch it on Jio-Hotstar right now.

Shashi Shekhar Vempati, the former head of Prasar Bharati, is the new chair of the CBFC

New Delhi, May 06: Shashi Shekhar Vempati, a former CEO of Prasar Bharati, has been named the Central Board of Film Certification's (CBFC) new chair.

According to a government press release, Vempati will take office on Wednesday and serve a three-year term.

Vempati will take over for lyricist and advertising expert Prasoon Joshi, who was been named head of Prasar Bharati by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB).

Joshi, who has served as CBFC chairman since August 2017, assumed leadership of Prasar Bharati earlier this week after former chairman Navneet Kumar Sehgal resigned in December 2025, leaving the position empty for almost five months. Shri Shashi Shekhar Vempati has a wealth of



media, television, and public communication experience. His hiring is anticipated to improve the CBFC's operations even further, the press release stated on Wednesday. Vempati's nomination follows his resignation from the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) board, where he had been a director since 2024. Under the Cinematograph Act, the CBFC approves movies for public screening in India and operates under the MIB. The

board reviews movies before they are released and grants age-based certificates and other approvals needed for showing in theaters. Shri Shashi Shekhar Vempati has a wealth of media, television, and public communication experience. His hiring is anticipated to improve the CBFC's operations even further, the press release stated on Wednesday. Vempati's nomination follows his resignation from the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC)

board, where he had been a director since 2024. Under the Cinematograph Act, the CBFC approves movies for public screening in India and operates under the MIB. The board reviews movies before they are released and grants age-based certificates and other approvals needed for showing in theaters. Vempati, who graduated from the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, was Prasar Bharati's CEO from 2017 until 2022.

He managed a number of digital projects for Doordarshan and All India Radio during his time there. Additionally, Vempati is a co-founder of AI4India.org, a project aimed at democratizing access to AI and advancing inclusive growth in India. Vempati worked in technology and product-related positions at Infosys for more than 15 years prior to joining Prasar Bharati.

Why Women Voters Supported the BJP Rather Than Mamata Banerjee, Bengal's Daughter



New Delhi, May 06: In the 2026 assembly elections, it was unclear which treasure the ladies of West Bengal would trust: "Lakshmi" or "Annapura." The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) defeated the reigning Trinamool Congress (TMC), which has been in power since 2011. The party focused on empowering women through various welfare schemes, such as 'Kanyashree', 'Rupashree', and 'Lakshmir Bhandar', which were pivotal during past elections. In the 2021 elections, TMC's strategy of branding Mamata as the "daughter of Bengal" proved effective, securing approximately 50% of the women's vote while the BJP obtained 35%. Follow-

ing this election victory, the TMC enhanced the 'Lakshmir Bhandar' scheme, increasing the monthly financial assistance to Rs 1,500 for the general category and Rs 1,700 for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes ahead of the 2026 elections. In response, the BJP announced its 'Annapura Bhandar' scheme, promising Rs 3,000 monthly assistance for women, which aimed to penetrate TMC's stronghold on women's votes. This included welfare promises targeting women's safety, such as free travel on state-run buses, a 33% reservation for women in government jobs, and the establishment of a women-only "Durga Surokha Squad" for patrols. The BJP's campaign also addressed incidents related to women's safety, like the unrest in Sandeshkhali and the heinous rape and murder

of a doctor at RG Kar Medical College, which outraged many and mobilized women for street protests. Moreover, the BJP pledged significant assistance for women's health and nutrition, including financial support for pregnant women, free vaccinations, breast cancer screenings, and working women's hostels. To resonate with voters, the party fielded candidates like Ratna Debnath, the mother of the RG Kar rape-murder victim, and Rekha Patra, a torture victim of a TMC leader, both of whom campaigned actively on issues of women's safety and security. Debnath defeated TMC's Tirthankar Ghosh, while Patra won against Ananda Sarkar in Basirhat. Allegations of corruption and misgovernance against the TMC have also been a factor in voters' shift towards the BJP.

Congress consents to back Vijay's TVK in Tennessee: State chief Girish Chodankar



New Delhi, May 06: Girish Chodankar, the head of the state's All India Congress Committee (AICC), stated on Wednesday that the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and the Congress Legislative Party had agreed to back the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) in forming the government. According to Chodankar, TVK president C Joseph Vijay has formally asked the Congress to back the formation of a government in Tamil Nadu. "A secular, progressive, welfare-oriented government that upholds constitutional values has received a very clear, strong, and overwhelming vote from the people of Tamil Nadu. He said in the party statement on Wednesday, "They have selected the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam led by C Joseph Vijay to form the next government." "The Indian National Congress is the foundation political party of secular, progressive, and welfare politics in India. Respecting, upholding, and assisting the people of Tamil Nadu in fulfilling their

mandate is our constitutional obligation. As a result, the Congress Legislative Party and the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee have chosen to fully back the TVK in forming the government, according to Chodankar. He declared that the Congress party's support would be "conditional" on the TVK excluding from this alliance any "communal forces" that reject the Indian Constitution. He went on to say that in the years and decades to come, the TVK and Tamil Nadu Congress alliance would work to restore Tamil Nadu's Kamaraj era, with a strong commitment to the social justice ideas of rationalist leader Periyar and the constitutional ideals of B R Ambedkar. "This alliance was founded on mutual respect, appreciation, and shared responsibility between the two parties; it is not only for the formation of this government but also for future elections to the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, which are local body organizations," he stated. He declared, "Vijay and Congress Leader Rahul Gandhi jointly pledge to respect this historic verdict of the people of Tamil Nadu for a secular and progressive government and to fulfill the dreams and promises of the people—especially the youth of Tamil Nadu."

"Three-term MLA S Rajesh Kumar has been unanimously elected as the Leader of the Congress Legislative Party in Tamil Nadu by the newly elected MLAs at their meeting held on May 5," Chodankar stated in another development. Congress President Mallakharju Kharge has also endorsed the decision.

Hearts are warmed by CSK's comeback story, but they might miss the playoffs once more



New Delhi: The Chennai Super Kings practically picked up where they left off in the previous season. After losing their first three games in the IPL 2025, CSK finished with the wooden spoon for the first time in their history and languished at the bottom of the standings. Concerns about bowling and a slew of injuries, including one to MS Dhoni, were among the main reasons that brought up the larger question of whether CSK could really succeed without Dhoni. Over the following twenty-five days, Chennai's destiny shifted. Riding on Sanju Samson's return to form, which included

a century, they won two straight at home. On Tuesday, they defeated the Delhi Capitals away from home after completing a double against the Mumbai Indians.

Chennai has won five of their last seven games, moving them up from 10th to sixth in the standings and raising concerns over whether CSK could qualify for the playoffs for the first time since winning the championship in 2023. Chennai has just two fewer points than second-place Royal Challengers Bengaluru and three fewer than table-toppers Punjab Kings, despite the fact that both teams still have

a game to play, with ten points from as many games. Additionally, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Rajasthan Royals, and Gujarat Titans, who are ranked third, fourth, and fifth, respectively, are two points ahead of them. They even outperform Gujarat in terms of net run rate. Under Ruturaj Gaikwad, Chennai has yet to make it to the playoffs. They placed tenth in 2025 and fifth in 2024. However, they may still miss out on a postseason position as things are. Chennai will start as favorites against the 10th-place team in two of their final four games, which are against the struggling Lucknow Super Giants over the next ten days. However, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Gujarat Titans, two teams in form, will face them in their final two games. The matchup with SRH will take place at home, but Chennai has lost two of their last five games in Chepauk this season. Only victories in the final four games will allow Gaikwad to breathe a sigh of relief, as Chennai will need at least 16 points to secure a postseason berth. Given how closely contested the season has been, even one loss may dash their aspirations. Gaikwad will benefit from more than simply their place on the table, regardless of what the

outcomes may indicate over the next weeks. Chennai have discovered a capable finisher in Kartik Sharma, who struck undefeated 54 and 41 in the last two games—both victories—in a season in which Dhoni has not yet appeared and his comeback is still unknown. The squad had faith in their bench strength despite a string of injuries, notably that of Ayush Mhatre, who was their only productive batter early in the season before being sidelined.

The depth has held up, whether it was through the addition of Sarfaraz Khan as an Impact Player in the middle order or Gaikwad coming up as an opener. In the midst of Shivam Dube's diminishing returns, Dewald Brevis also made a timely comeback from injury to support the middle order, and Jamie Overton has been a notable player for Chennai this season with both bat and ball. Not to be overlooked is Samson, "the backbone" of the Chennai lineup, who has amassed 402 runs in ten games, including two hundreds in addition to scores of 48 and 87. Lastly, Akeal Hosein, another dependable foreign spin option, has already claimed seven wickets in five games at an economy rate of just 7.24.

Bengal Poll Officer Disavows Mamata Banerjee's Allegations of Election Manipulation



New Delhi, May 06: State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Manoj Kumar Agarwal offered a robust point-by-point rebuttal on Tuesday, citing a lack of proof and official complaints, in response to a series of grave accusations made by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee concerning the integrity of the recent election results. Concerns about Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) manipulation were voiced by the Chief Minister. Agarwal responded by emphasizing that it is impossible to look into vague claims. In a recent statement, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) addressed claims made by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee regarding her alleged manhandling at a counting center during the assembly elections. The

CEO, Manoj Kumar Agarwal, stated that surveillance footage and internal reports contradict Banerjee's assertions, emphasizing that the CCTV cameras remained operational throughout the counting process and that no formal complaints or FIRs were lodged pertaining to the incident. He asserted, "Such things never happen with any candidate," explaining that any occurrence of misconduct would typically lead to an official complaint.

The dialogue also highlighted the distinct roles within the electoral framework, as Agarwal clarified that the Returning Officer (RO) oversees the counting under the guidance of the District Electoral Officer (DEO), distancing the CEO's office from direct involvement. Furthermore, Agarwal confirmed that

preparations for a repelling in Falta were underway, with measures in place to prevent any irregularities, such as the alleged use of tape or perfume on voting machines.

Following the election results, where the BJP secured a significant victory, Banerjee rejected the outcome, claiming, "I did not lose" and asserting that the Election Commission was complicit in orchestrating her party's defeat. She expressed her intent to remain politically active and fortify alliances, maintaining that there were attempts to undermine the Trinamool Congress through electoral manipulation.

Banerjee criticized the Chief Election Commissioner, labeling them as the "villain" of the election and accused the BJP of engaging in unethical practices to sway the electoral process in their favor. She highlighted instances of systematic harassment and manipulation, including the removal of voter names from the rolls, indicating a larger conspiracy involving federal government figures. As the political landscape evolves, the BJP prepares to establish its first government in West Bengal, while Banerjee prepares to challenge the results and recount the perceived injustices faced by her party during the elections.

Another compliment for Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's debut in India



New Delhi: After the 2026 Indian Premier League, will Vaibhav Sooryavanshi make his senior India debut? Many people are interested in and passionate about this issue. Ian Bishop, a well-known analyst and former West Indies fast bowler, is one of the people who believe Sooryavanshi is prepared to advance to international cricket. With no hesitation, Bishop chose Sooryavanshi to start with Shubman Gill in an alternate India T20I team. It's interesting to note that Bishop chose Sooryavanshi over Yashasvi Jaiswal, a colleague for the Rajasthan Royals (RR). "I'm selecting three of my openers for the squad. As much as possible, I desire a left-right match-up. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is the left-hander. Speaking on ESPNcricinfo, Bishop stated, "I think he's ready to take another step." Sooryavanshi

is reportedly in the running to be chosen by the BCCI for India's June tour to Ireland. In his alternate India T20I squad, Bishop selected Shubman Gill and Sooryavanshi to start, with Prabhsimran Singh serving as the backup. Bishop selected Shreyas Iyer and Rajat Patidar and Devdutt Padikkal of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the middle order. Additionally, he chose Dhruv Jurel over the struggling Jitesh Sharma to be the wicket-keeper. Nitish Kumar Reddy and Krunal Pandya were chosen by Bishop as the all-rounders. It's interesting to note that Bishop chose 35-year-old seasoned leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal as the front-line spinner instead of Ravi Bishnoi.

Chahal hasn't played internationally in almost three years. Lastly, Bishop included four pacers—Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohsin Khan, Prince Yadav, and Prasidh Krishna—in his alternate India T20I team. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Devdutt Padikkal, Shreyas Iyer, Rajat Patidar, Dhruv Jurel, Nitish Reddy, Krunal Pandya, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohsin Khan, Yuzvendra Chahal, Prabhsimran Singh, Prince Yadav, Prasidh Krishna, and Shubman Gill.

The government approves two Gujarat units and clears the first phase of the semicon mission

New Delhi, May 06: With an investment of ₹3,936 crore, the Union Cabinet approved the final two semiconductor units under the first phase of the government's semiconductor mission on Tuesday. The projects will be financed by the ₹76,000 crore allocated for the 2022-introduced India Semiconductor Mission 1.0. During the cabinet briefing, IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw declared that both facilities would be established in Gujarat.

According to Vaishnaw, the government has finished the first round of ISM 1.0 projects with these clearances, bringing the total to 12 units and overall investments of ₹1.65 lakh crore. As previously reported by HT, the government is currently getting ready to launch the next phase, ISM 2.0, which is anticipated to cost more than ₹1 lakh crore. The biggest of the two facilities, the Crystal Matrix project in Dholera, is being positioned by the government as part of a larger transition from LCD to next-generation MicroLED display technologies. Before China increased investments and assumed worldwide supremacy, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan dominated LCD production for decades, according to Vaishnaw. Now that LCD is seen as a mature technology, the emphasis has shifted to MicroLED, where India is aiming to establish an early foothold. The ₹3,068



crore Crystal Matrix plant would produce advanced packaging (ATMP) and gallium nitride (GaN) wafers used in Mini and MicroLED displays. Large video walls, AR/VR systems, studio production, and specialized defense and medical displays are just a few of the uses for these parts. The project is a component of India's effort to join a market that is still developing internationally, with companies like Sony and Samsung at the forefront. The MicroLED market might expand at a 50% CAGR, according to an IT ministry official, but domestic demand is now constrained by the high pricing. They stated that as production increases, MicroLED costs are anticipated to decrease, much like solar electricity, where prices dropped dramatically from roughly ₹10 to ₹2 per unit. The 60-acre facility is anticipated to produce 24,000 sets of RGB GaN wafers and 72,000 square meters of display panels per year, creating roughly 1,600 direct jobs. The compound semiconductor

production plant is anticipated to be finished in about three years, while the ATMP unit is scheduled to be operating within eighteen months. With an investment of ₹868 crore, the second project, approved for Suchi Semicon Pvt. Ltd. in Surat, entails establishing an OSAT (outsourced semiconductor assembly and test) facility that will produce semiconductor packaging components like wire-bond packages and lead frames. Air conditioners, televisions, and cell phones are just a few examples of the commonplace electronics and industrial uses for these parts.

The Surat factory will be able to produce 360 million transistor outline (TO-263) packages and 673 million small outline integrated circuits (SOIC) annually. It is anticipated that it will directly employ about 630 people. It is anticipated that manufacturing in this unit would start in eight to ten months. A total of ₹1.65 lakh crore has been invested in the ISM thus far. According to Vaishnaw, two units—Micron and Kaynes—started commercial production earlier this year, and all of their manufacturing capacity has already been reserved. People all over the world wondered if India would be able to manufacture semiconductors. The argument has now been resolved. We've reached the learning curve," he continued.

SPORTS

PTPA Says French Open Prize Money Dispute Highlights Urgent Need For Tennis Reforms

PTPA Warns Systemic Flaws Demand Major Reforms

New Delhi: The Professional Tennis Players Association said the row over French Open prize money shows why it is challenging the way tennis is run and warned that, without structural reform, the sport will remain trapped in repeated disputes and incremental change. Leading players, including Aryna Sabalenka, have pushed French Open organisers for a bigger share of the revenues, with the tournament’s prize purse of 61.7 million euros (\$72.32 million) still trailing the other three Grand Slams despite a 9.5% increase for 2026. In a statement this week, players expressed their “deep disappointment” and said a boycott was possible if the gap with the Australian Open, the US Open and Wimbledon was not closed. We commend and fully support the players for stepping up and fighting for what they deserve: a fair share of the revenues they help create,” the PTPA said in a statement to Reuters. “There are deep structural changes desperately needed in tennis.” The gap in prize mon-



ey remains clear across the majors. The Australian Open offered an increased prize pool of A\$111.5 million (\$80.61 million) in January, while the US Open paid out \$90 million and Wimbledon 53.5 million pounds (\$72.55 million) in 2025. Reuters has sought comment from French Open organisers. The tournament begins on May 24. The French Open said last month it had committed to supporting the qualifying tournament and the early rounds of the main draw with larger increases,

saying those players needed the money most to finance their seasons. Grand Slams operate under financial models different from the ATP and WTA Tours, with prize money set independently rather than through a centralised system. Sabalenka said players put the spotlight on the sport’s biggest tournaments and backed calls for a 22% allocation, in line with what the ATP and WTA offer at combined 1000-level events. “I feel like the show is on us,” the four-time Grand Slam cham-

pion said in Rome ahead of this week’s Italian Open. “I feel like without us there wouldn’t be a tournament and there wouldn’t be that entertainment. We definitely deserve to be paid more.” While the latest stand-off has been led by the sport’s biggest names, players lower down the rankings have long said prize money structures affect their ability to cover travel, coaching and medical costs across an 11-month calendar. Players also said this week that their welfare proposals had gone unanswered and that there had been no meaningful progress towards fair representation in Grand Slam decision-making. The PTPA said those complaints reflected issues already under legal scrutiny in a class-action lawsuit filed last year. The organisation was co-founded in 2020 by Novak Djokovic and Vasek Pospisil, with the stated aim of being the voice of the players and a catalyst for change. Tennis is falling behind other global sports on every meaningful metric because of its structure,” the PTPA said.

Vinesh Phogat Warned After Missing Test



New Delhi: The notice will not affect her chances of taking part in the 2026 Senior Open Ranking Tournament that is scheduled to be held in Nandini Nagar, Gonda, from May 10 to 12 as it is only the first warning. The notice comes days after she came out in the open as one of the six victims who had lodged a sexual harassment complaint against former BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. In a social media post on Sunday, Vinesh also raised concerns about the neutrality of the referees during the competition. In the letter dated May 5, the testing agency said the doping control officer could not locate her during the designated testing window on December 18, 2025. The letter also acknowledged her reply and stated that as an elected member of the Legislative Assembly, she was in Chandigarh for the House proceedings and travelled from Bengaluru to attend the winter session. Athletes who are part of the registered testing pool have to routinely update their whereabouts in the system, where they have to submit information regarding their whereabouts with specific date and time for the next three months. If the whereabouts change, the athlete has to update the information on ADAMS. The ITA ruled that she failed to update information regarding her whereabouts in time. “In light of the above, the ITA finds that you were unable to establish that no negligent behaviour on your part caused or contributed to your failure to update your whereabouts filings and be available and accessible for testing. Therefore, the ITA has decided to record this miss test,” reads the letter. The ITA said the unsuccessful attempt occurred on December 18, 2025, when a Doping Control Officer (DCO) could not locate Vinesh during her designated 60-minute testing window.

Ashwin Expresses Uncertainty Regarding Dhoni Making A Return For IPL 2026 Season



New Delhi: Former India and Chennai Super Kings spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has cast serious doubt over MS Dhoni returning for CSK in IPL 2026, suggesting the franchise legend may only feature for a farewell appearance if the side falls out of playoff contention. Dhoni has not played a single game this season because of a calf strain, while Chennai have slowly rediscovered form in his absence. CSK strengthened their playoff hopes on May 5 with a comfortable win over Delhi Capitals in

New Delhi, continuing a strong run even without Dhoni in the playing XI. Speaking on his YouTube channel after the match, Ashwin admitted that Chennai’s current balance makes it difficult for the former captain to walk straight back into the side. If MS Dhoni comes, then the combination will be changed. It becomes very difficult, so I think there are very slim chances [of making a comeback],” Ashwin said. “If they lose two of their next three games, then he might get a farewell game in Chennai.”

The timing of Ashwin’s comments makes the conversation even more interesting. For the first time in a while, CSK actually look settled without constantly waiting around for Dhoni’s availability update. Dhoni has not played a single match in IPL 2026 so far after suffering a calf strain before the start of the season. While CSK have repeatedly maintained that the former skipper could return at some stage, the 39-year-old has largely stayed away from matchdays despite training occasionally in the nets. In the early phase of the season, Chennai looked badly short on balance without him. But over the last few games, things have slowly started clicking. The batting has found rhythm, the bowling attack looks more settled, and players like Sanju Samson have stepped up massively during the middle phase of the campaign.

KSCA Denies Ticket Racket Links While Pledging Full Investigation Support

Bengaluru: The Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) on Wednesday firmly distanced itself from the ongoing probe into alleged black-market ticket sales linked to Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) matches in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, stating that it has no role in the distribution or sale of tickets to the public. In an official statement, KSCA spokesperson Vinay Mruthunjaya addressed media reports suggesting that entities under investigation for procuring tickets and reselling them at inflated prices may have links to the association.

Rejecting such claims, KSCA said it is “neither the ticketing agency nor the selling authority” for RCB games, adding that ticket sales “are undertaken exclusively through authorised channels of the franchise and its designated ticketing partners.” Clarifying its limited role, the association noted it only receives a “limited allocation of tickets,” which are distributed strictly to cricket-playing clubs, permanent members, and certain statutory or government authorities. It underscored that “KSCA does not sell tickets to the general public.” Addressing speculation around the accused, KSCA stated unequivocally that “the entities presently under investigation have no direct or indirect association with KSCA,” while also confirming that “the individuals involved... are not the members of KSCA.” The



association assured that it will “extend its full co-operation to the investigating authorities” and urged officials to “conduct a comprehensive inquiry, identify the offenders, and take appropriate action in accordance with law.” Under the leadership of B K Venkatesh Prasad, KSCA reiterated its commitment to maintaining “the highest standards of integrity” while continuing to promote and develop cricket across Karnataka. Earlier today, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced that the final of IPL 2026, which was set to be held at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, will be hosted by Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on May 31. The IPL statement said, “Bengaluru was originally designated to host the Final. However, owing to certain requirements from the local as-

sociation and authorities that were beyond the scope of BCCI’s established guidelines and protocols, the venue has been shifted and reassigned.” “KSCA President and legendary Indian cricketer Venkatesh Prasad was personally in touch with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in this regard and had also formally conveyed KSCA’s preparedness, willingness, and keen interest in hosting the IPL Playoffs at the iconic M. Chinnaswamy Stadium,” the statement read. “The IPL matches conducted in Bengaluru during the current season were widely appreciated for their smooth execution, crowd management, operational efficiency, and overall spectator experience, reaffirming KSCA’s capability to successfully host marquee fixtures of such scale and importance.”

Ahmedabad Secures IPL 2026 Final Hosting Rights as Bengaluru Is Officially Overlooked

New Delhi: The Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 final is heading to Ahmedabad, with the Narendra Modi Stadium set to host the title clash on May 31 despite defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru originally being in line to stage the summit clash.

The decision comes after a mix of operational concerns and political noise surrounding ticket allocation in Bengaluru. While the BCCI officially cited “operational and logistical considerations” for shifting the playoffs across multiple venues, sources have indicated that the recent controversy involving complimentary IPL tickets for Karnataka MLAs also played a role behind the scenes. The move means Bengaluru will miss out on hosting not just the final, but any playoff game altogether, despite the long-standing IPL convention where the defending champions get hosting rights for the title clash. The BCCI confirmed on Tuesday that Qualifier 1 will be played in Dharamshala, while both the Eliminator and Qualifier 2 will take place in New Chandigarh before the tournament concludes in Ahmedabad. Interestingly, this comes less than a year after Bengaluru’s handling of RCB’s title celebrations came under scrutiny following the crowd-management chaos outside the Chinnaswamy Stadium that led to multiple deaths. Now, the city’s latest IPL ticket controversy appears to have added another layer to the conversation. Officially, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said the



playoffs were being shifted across venues due to “operational and logistical considerations.” Owing to certain operational and logistical considerations, the TATA IPL 2026 Playoffs will be conducted across three venues this season as a special case. Bengaluru was originally designated to host the Final. However, owing to certain requirements from the local association and authorities that were beyond the scope of BCCI’s established guidelines and protocols, the venue has been shifted and reassigned,” the board said in its statement. But the noise around Bengaluru had already been building for weeks. Earlier this season, Congress MLA Vijayanand Kashappanavar publicly demanded complimentary IPL tickets for elected representatives, arguing

that MLAs were “VIPs” and should not have to stand in queues like regular fans. The issue soon snowballed politically, forcing Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to step in. A compromise was eventually reached, with MLAs, MLCs and MPs being allotted three complimentary tickets each for matches at the Chinnaswamy Stadium. Qualifier 1 will be played in Dharamshala on May 26, followed by the Eliminator in New Chandigarh on May 27. The same venue will then host Qualifier 2 on May 29, before the final is played at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on May 31. As per IPL rules, the top two teams at the end of the league stage will face off in Qualifier 1, with the winner advancing directly to the final. The loser will get another chance in Qualifier 2.

Indian Golf Union Names Three Member Indian Women’s Squad For 2026 Queen Sirikit Cup

New Delhi: The Indian Golf Union (IGU), the National Sports Federation recognised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) and International Golf Federation (IGF), will send a three-member Indian team to compete in the prestigious Queen Sirikit Cup next month at the Sentul Highlands Golf Club in Bogor, Indonesia.

According to a press release from IGU, the event is scheduled from May 12 to 15, 2026. Organised by the Asia-Pacific Golf Confederation (APGC) in association with The R&A (world golf rules governing body), a total of 15 countries, including defending champions South Korea, will be competing in the tournament - Australia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines,



Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The team will be led by 2025 Ladies Order of Merit champion Guntas Kaur Sandhu, who has been consistent in 2026 as well. The Chandigarh golfer has six wins under her belt and 17 top-10 finishes from 20 starts in the 2025-26 IGU season. She recently won the Ladies and Combined A&B category titles of the IGU West Bengal Ladies & Junior Girls Championship in April. The other members of the team are Haryana’s

Ceerat Kang and Keya Badugu of Delhi. Vandana Aggarwal will be accompanying the team as manager. Guntas expressed her excitement about competing in the prestigious tournament and said, “Representing the country is a huge honour. The Queen Sirikit Cup is a prestigious team event in amateur golf. It is a major event in my career as it gives me international exposure and the opportunity to compete with the best players, work harder, stay focused and enhance my game.

IGU has been extremely supportive in helping me improve my game.” The Queen Sirikit Cup, officially known as the Amateur Ladies Asia-Pacific Invitational Golf Team Championship and named after Thailand’s erstwhile queen, was inaugurated in 1979, and India has competed in this tournament ever since the inaugural edition that featured nine nations. In 2023, Avani Prashanth won the individual title in the Queen Sirikit Cup, ending a 43-year title drought. Avani Prashanth’s victory in 2023 is a big source of inspiration for me. Watching an Indian golfer achieve success at international stage gives me motivation and the belief that I can do it too,” the 15-year-old said. Played over 54 holes, the event is made up of teams of three players, with the best two daily scores being counted.

Yuvraj Singh Trolls Abhishek And Gill After Getting Special Gift From Pant



New Delhi: Yuvraj Singh took to social media to thank Rishabh Pant for his birthday present, but the former India cricketer also used the moment to take a playful dig at his other students for not making similar gestures. On Instagram, Yuvraj showed off the gift he received from the Lucknow Super Giants captain, a premium golf club from one of the top brands that can cost a fortune. It also carried a message from Pant that read, “Dear Yuvi paaji, thank you for your support and guidance. See you on the golf course. Love RP.” Yuvraj made sure to thank Pant for the thought-

ful gesture, but he also cheekily called out some of the other players he has mentored and who are currently part of the IPL setup. That list included Abhishek Sharma, Shubman Gill, Prabhsimran Singh, Naman Dhir, Abdul Samad and Priyansh Arya, with Yuvraj jokingly telling them to “have some shame” for not matching Pant’s gesture. The legendary all-rounder continues to play a key role in Indian cricket even after retirement. Following a glittering career, Yuvraj has shifted his focus towards mentoring and helping shape some of the country’s most exciting batting talent

in the shortest format. Several of those names include the players he jokingly called out on social media. Over the past few years, Yuvraj has quietly built a strong reputation as a mentor, working closely with the likes of Shubman Gill, Abhishek Sharma and Prabhsimran Singh. He has also spent time with players such as Sanju Samson, helping of India’s most explosive batters refine their white-ball game. His influence has become increasingly visible in India’s T20 setup, where several players he has worked with have gone on to become T20 World Cup triumph in 2026.