

Meghalaya: JNC demands probe into Supplementary Nutrition lapses in East Jaiñtia Hills

Shillong, July 06: The Jaiñtia National Council (JNC), Khliehriat Circle, on Monday submitted a formal complaint to the Deputy Commissioner of East Jaiñtia Hills, alleging serious lapses in the implementation of the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) across the district. Led by Working President Diamon Bareh, the delegation claimed that beneficiaries, including children below six years of age and pregnant and lactating women, are not receiving nutritional support in accordance with government guidelines.

Led by Working President Diamon Bareh, the delegation claimed that beneficiaries—including



children below six years of age and pregnant and lactating women—are not re-

ceiving nutritional support in accordance with government guidelines. The JNC

argued that such irregularities undermine the very purpose of the SNP, which

is designed to improve maternal and child health outcomes in vulnerable communities. The complaint highlighted reports from villages where food supplies were either delayed, insufficient, or not distributed at all, raising concerns about accountability and monitoring mechanisms. The JNC urged the district administration to conduct a comprehensive probe into the alleged lapses and take corrective measures to ensure transparency in the delivery system. Bareh stressed that the issue is not merely administrative but directly impacts the health and well-being of marginalized families, particularly in remote areas where access to nutrition

is already limited. He added that the council would continue to monitor the situation and press for immediate redressal. Officials in the Deputy Commissioner's office acknowledged receipt of the complaint and assured that the matter would be examined. They emphasized that the administration remains committed to ensuring that all welfare schemes, including the SNP, reach intended beneficiaries without discrimination or delay. Observers note that the JNC's intervention reflects growing civil society vigilance in Meghalaya, where grassroots organizations are increasingly holding authorities accountable for lapses in welfare delivery.

Dikhari river shifts course, Jonai village devastated



Guwahati, Jul 06: The devastation caused by the recent floods continues to haunt Madhupur village in Assam's Dhemaji district, where hundreds of residents remain displaced after the Dikhari River changed its course, destroying homes, farmland and public infrastructure. Located under the Jonai Assembly constituency, the village witnessed extensive damage when the river, originating in neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh, carved a new channel through the settlement during the floods. The altered course effectively split Madhupur into two, leaving large areas buried under mud, sand and debris.

Residential houses, agricultural fields and a local school were among the worst affected. Vast stretches of cultivable land have been rendered unusable, dealing a severe blow to the predominantly agrarian community.

Residents said many families lost their homes, livestock and standing crops, leaving them without a stable source of income or shelter. "We have lost everything. Our house, belongings and farmland have all been destroyed. We are now living in a temporary shelter built on raised bamboo platforms and surviving on the relief provided by the government," a villager said. Another resident said the Dikhari River had flowed on the opposite side of the village before the

floods but altered its course, bringing the river dangerously close to residential areas.

"The river never flowed through this part of the village earlier. After changing its course, it swept away houses and cattle. Electricity has also remained disrupted as power poles and transmission lines were damaged," the resident said. Although floodwaters have receded, the humanitarian crisis persists. Many affected families continue to stay in makeshift shelters as restoration work progresses slowly. Villagers have urged the authorities to accelerate rehabilitation measures and provide adequate support to help them rebuild their lives. Although floodwaters have receded, the humanitarian crisis persists. Many affected families continue to stay in makeshift shelters as restoration work progresses slowly. Villagers have urged the authorities to accelerate rehabilitation measures and provide adequate support to help them rebuild their lives. Officials from the district administration have acknowledged the scale of destruction and assured that relief and rehabilitation efforts are underway. They noted that restoring cultivable land, rebuilding damaged infrastructure, and providing long-term housing solutions will require sustained intervention and coordination between state and central agencies.

Arunachal CM, Deputy CM wish Dalai Lama on birthday

Itanagar, Jul 06: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu and Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on Monday, July 6, extended greetings to 14th Dalai Lama on the occasion of his 91st birthday, lauding his lifelong message of peace, compassion and harmony.

In a post on social media, Khandu wished the Tibetan spiritual leader good health, a long life and continued strength to guide the world through his enduring message of peace, compassion and harmony. "Warm birthday greetings to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. May His Holiness be blessed with good health, long life and continued strength to guide the world with his timeless message of peace, compassion and harmony," the Chief Minister said. Deputy Chief

Minister Chowna Mein also conveyed his greetings, describing the Dalai Lama as a global symbol of peace, compassion, wisdom and harmony. "My heartfelt greetings to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama on his birthday. A global symbol of peace, compassion, wisdom, and harmony. His Holiness has inspired generations with his message of kindness, non-violence, and human values," Mein said, wishing him good health, a long life and continued strength to guide humanity towards peace and mutual understanding.

Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Minister Ojing Tasing also extended his greetings, describing the Dalai Lama as a global beacon of compassion, wisdom and peace.

CM-led delegation meets HM, seeks safeguards for charities

Shillong, Jul 06: Amidst growing concerns in Meghalaya over proposed amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), particularly a clause that would empower a designated authority to take over or dispose of assets—including buildings, schools, hospitals and land—created with foreign contributions in cases where an organisation's registration is cancelled or not renewed, a delegation led by Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Sunday and conveyed these apprehensions. The key apprehension centres on Section 16A(5) of the amended FCRA. Church bodies and civil society groups fear that if an organisation's registration is cancelled or



not renewed, authorities could take control of buildings, schools, hospitals, land and other assets built with foreign funds. These institutions have for decades run schools, colleges, hospitals and welfare programmes that serve thousands of students and patients every year, especially in

rural and remote areas where government infrastructure is limited. During the meeting, the delegation highlighted how the proposed changes could disrupt the functioning of religious, educational and charitable institutions that have long complemented government efforts in educa-

tion, healthcare and community development. Sangma emphasised that any regulatory changes must take into account Meghalaya's unique circumstances and ensure that genuine institutions engaged in public service can continue their work without undue disruption.

BRICS Heads of Anti-Drug Agencies Meeting begins in Guwahati

Guwahati, Jul 06: The BRICS Heads of Anti-Drug Agencies Meeting began in Guwahati today. Delegates from BRICS member countries are participating in the two-day meeting organised by the Narcotics Control Bureau under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Addressing the inaugural session, Director General of the Narcotics Control Bureau, Anurag Garg, who is heading the Indian delegation, said the expansion of BRICS has strengthened the grouping's capacity to address global challenges, including drug trafficking and substance abuse.

He emphasised that modern drug trafficking networks operate across borders through darknet platforms, synthetic drugs, new psychoactive substances, and maritime routes, making enhanced international cooperation essential. He proposed the establishment of a dedicated BRICS Virtual Working Group for regular



intelligence sharing, analysis of trafficking trends, and coordination of joint law enforcement efforts. The Indian delegation also highlighted India's zero-tolerance policy against narcotics and its commitment to both stringent enforcement and rehabilitation measures.

The Indian delegation reiterated India's zero-tolerance policy against narcotics, emphasizing a dual approach of stringent enforcement and rehabilitation measures. Offi-

cials noted that India has been actively pursuing both supply-side interventions—such as enhanced border surveillance and interdiction—and demand-side strategies, including awareness campaigns and treatment facilities for addicts. Delegates from other BRICS nations welcomed India's proposal, acknowledging that the global drug trade is increasingly sophisticated and interconnected, requiring innovative solutions and shared responsibility.

Mizoram government seeks Centre's support for ginger, bamboo processing units

Aizawl, Jul 06: The Mizoram government has sought the Centre's support for establishing large-scale ginger and bamboo processing units and strengthening industrial infrastructure to unlock the state's economic potential. The request was made by Mizoram's Commerce and Industries Minister, F. Rodingliana, during the Board of Trade meeting held in New Delhi on Friday. The meeting was chaired by Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada.

According to an official statement, Rodingliana urged the Centre to facilitate the setting up of modern ginger processing facilities and improve marketing infrastructure for the state's flagship crop. Highlighting Mizoram's high ginger production, he said the state has the potential to



emerge as the "Ginger Capital of India" with adequate value-addition and market support. The minister also appealed for central assistance in promoting the utilisation of Mizoram's rich bamboo

resources by expanding their use in the textile and paper industries through dedicated processing facilities. Drawing attention to the strategic importance of connectivity, Rodingliana informed the meeting

that the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) is nearing completion. He urged the Centre to prepare a roadmap that would enable Mizoram to fully leverage the project to expand trade

with other Indian states and neighbouring countries.

He further requested the establishment of a Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development and Facilitation Office (MSME-DFO) in Mizoram, noting that entrepreneurs in the state currently have to depend on the office in Agartala for MSME-related services. Commerce and Industries Secretary Dr. H. Lianzela accompanied the minister at the Board of Trade meeting. He further requested the establishment of a Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development and Facilitation Office (MSME-DFO) in Mizoram, noting that entrepreneurs in the state currently depend on the office in Agartala for MSME-related services. Setting up a dedicated office in Mizoram, he argued, would provide local entrepreneurs with easier access to schemes, training, and financial support.

Manipur CM expresses confidence in error-free final electoral roll

Imphal, Jul 06: Manipur Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh on Monday expressed confidence that the state's final electoral roll, to be prepared after the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), would be accurate, inclusive and free of errors. His remarks came a day after the Election Commission published the

draft electoral rolls, which retained 19.34 lakh voters while excluding 1,58,677 names following the completion of the enumeration phase of the revision exercise. According to the election schedule, the final electoral roll will be published on September 6.

According to the draft roll, the electorate compris-

es 9,40,466 male voters, 9,93,660 female voters and 294 third-gender voters. The revision process also led to the identification of 43,000 deceased voters, accounting for 2.06 per cent of the electorate.

Another 1,08,283 names, or 5.17 per cent, were categorised as shifted, absent or falling under other

specified categories, while 7,394 electors (0.35 per cent) were found to have multiple registrations.

The statewide exercise was carried out across all 16 districts with the involvement of 60 Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), 84 Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs), 317 Booth Lev-



el Officer Supervisors and 2,956 Booth Level Officers (BLOs), according to

a statement issued by the CEO's office.

The Election Commission also reported greater political participation during the revision, with 10 recognised political parties taking part in the process. The Commission has also invited citizens who attain the age of 18 on or before July 1, 2026, to apply for

inclusion in the electoral roll by submitting Form 6. It has opened the claims and objections process from July 5 to August 4, allowing individuals whose names do not appear in the draft rolls to seek inclusion or raise objections.

During this period, voters can apply for inclusion, correction or deletion

of entries through Booth Level Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, the Voters Service Portal or the ECINET mobile application. Election authorities will dispose of all claims and objections by September 2, following which the final electoral roll is scheduled to be published on September 6.

Assam to host Heads of Anti-Drug Agencies

Guwahati, July 06: India is set to host the BRICS Heads of Anti-Drug Agencies Meeting in Assam’s Guwahati on July 6-7. The discussion will focus on three key priority areas, including combating synthetic drugs and precursor diversion, strengthening intelligence sharing and operational coordination, and capacity building and institutional cooperation.

The meeting, hosted by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, will bring together the Heads of Anti-Drug Agencies and senior officials from BRICS member countries to strengthen institutional continuity and foster deeper operational cooperation among the grouping’s drug control agencies, according to the statement released by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

During the two-day meeting, officials of the BRICS member countries will deliberate on the drug situation in their respective countries and participate in six thematic sessions based on pressing and emerging global challenges. These sessions will focus on leveraging digital technology for real-time drug interdiction, neutralising drug trafficking over darknet, tackling emerging new psychoactive substances (NPS), reinforcing global supply chains against precursor diversion and chemical leakage, special initiatives for drug demand reduction and related measures and strengthening institutional mechanisms.

The meeting will culminate with the adoption of a joint declaration. “The global drug trafficking landscape has evolved significantly, with the proliferation of synthetic drugs, New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), darknet-enabled trafficking and cryptocurrency-based financial flows posing complex transnational challenges. At the same time, advances in interdiction technologies, data analytics, and financial intelligence present significant opportunities for enhanced international cooperation and co-ordinated enforcement action,” the Ministry of Home Affairs said in a statement. “India envisions this meeting as a pivotal step in transforming BRICS cooperation from dialogue-centric engagement to structured and

action-oriented collaboration, with a focus on strengthening operational coordination, intelligence sharing, capacity building, and collective responses to emerging drug-related threats,” it added.

The meeting offers India an opportunity to showcase its decisive efforts to combat the drug menace, as the abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances poses a serious threat to public safety and health and the future of the nation’s youth. In the past few years, India has significantly strengthened its fight against drug trafficking and substance abuse.

The Indian government has been taking stringent action against illicit drug trafficking and the organised criminal networks. In addition, it has been placing equal emphasis on awareness generation, community participation and treatment for those affected by addiction, according to the statement.

While adopting a whole-of-government and network-centric approach, India has recently released the Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026–2029) to further strengthen institutional capacity in the fight against drugs.

“As chair, New Delhi will seek to strengthen cooperation through information sharing on clandestine laboratories and emerging synthetic drug trends, enhanced monitoring of precursor chemicals and pharmaceuticals, intelligence exchange, sharing of best practices, joint training programmes and expert exchanges,” the Ministry of Home Affairs said in a statement.

India’s BRICS Chairship is guided by the theme “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability”, reflecting a people-centric and humanity-first approach articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 2025 Rio Summit.

BRICS comprises 11 major emerging markets and developing countries of the world – Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, United Arab Emirates. It is a useful platform for discussing and cooperating on contemporary issues having global as well as regional importance, and issues of global political and economic governance.

Guwahati man arrested

Guwahati, July 06: A 39-year-old man was arrested with a cache of arms and ammunition in Guwahati during an investigation into an extortion case, police said on Sunday. The arrest was made by a team of the Pragjyotishpur police station after an FIR was lodged on July 2, Guwahati Police said in a series of social media posts. The 39-year-old accused allegedly threatened, assaulted and wrongfully confined the victim before extorting Rs 3 lakh and detaining his car, police said. During a raid at the accused’s residence at Chapaidong in the Bonda area, police arrested him, recovered the victim’s car and found an empty cartridge, corroborating the allegation that a warning shot had been fired during the incident, they said. The search also led to the seizure of a large cache of arms and ammunition, including a pistol, three rifles, over 360 live rounds of ammunition, 80 empty cartridges, three mobile phones and an arms licence. Preliminary investiga-



tion revealed that the accused and the victim were former business associates, police said. The victim was allegedly threatened, assaulted, forced to sign documents and coerced into transferring Rs 3 lakh online, they said. Police said the accused is a history-sheeter with four criminal cases registered against him in Assam. The authenticity of the arms licence is being verified, while investigators are also probing possible links to illegal procurement of firearms, they said.

Flood situation in Assam has improved, with only Dhemaji still experiencing the effects

Guwahati, July 06: The flood situation in Assam continued to improve on Sunday with only one district, Dhemaji, remaining affected, while no major river was flowing above the danger level, according to the latest report issued by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

The daily flood bulletin said that 3,917 people across 15 villages in two revenue circles of Dhemaji district continue to be affected by the deluge. The worst-hit areas fall under the Jonai and Sissiborgaon revenue circles. A total of two relief camps are currently operational in the district, sheltering 165 inmates, including 42 men, 64 women and 51 children. Eight pregnant or lactating mothers are also staying in the camps, while no person with disability has been

reported among the inmates.

A senior government official said that around 70 hectares of crop area remain submerged, while 14,014 animals have been affected by the floods. However, no livestock has been washed away. Floodwaters have also damaged 91 houses, including 13 that were fully damaged and 78 that suffered partial damage. There were no reports of flood-related deaths or missing persons during the reporting period. Likewise, no rescue operations involving boats or helicopters were carried out, reflecting the gradual improvement in the overall flood situation.

Officials said that no river in the state was flowing above either the danger level or the highest flood level as of Sun-

Kiphire Launches District Anti-Ragging Committee

Kohima, July 06: Kiphire officials formed a 17-member committee to stamp out ragging. Deputy Commissioner Tino Chang chairs the new District Level Anti Ragging Monitoring Committee. The District Education Officer serves as member secretary. This group brings together police, judges, and educators. They follow strict guidelines set by the University Grants Commission and the

Nagaland government. The team oversees every college in the district. They demand that schools set up internal squads and clear reporting channels.

The committee tracks complaints, counseling efforts, and disciplinary actions. They coordinate between the cops and school heads to stop incidents before they start. Officials must now send regular status updates to the gov-

ernment. According to the official DIPR report, the committee will “monitor and review anti ragging measures in all higher educational institutions of the district.” Everyone needs to stay informed. The panel tracks awareness programs for staff, parents, and students. Failure to comply brings consequences. The secretary manages the meetings and reports back to the chairman.

The Chief Minister to discuss the state’s issues regarding the Foreign Contribution Regulation Meghalaya met with Amit Shah

Shillong, July 06: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Sunday called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah, expressing concerns over key provisions of the proposed Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) Amendment Bill.

Sangma, accompanied by senior representatives of the Presbyterian Church of India (PCI), the North East India Christian Council (NE-ICC), the Catholic Church (Archdiocese of Shillong), the Garo Baptist Convention and the North East India Christian Council met Shah in New Delhi.

During the meeting, the delegation



apprised the Union Home Minister of the concerns of the State regarding certain provisions of the FCRA, including the proposed amendments to the law, and their bearing on the

functioning of religious, educational, charitable and social welfare institutions in Meghalaya.

“These institutions run a large number of schools, colleges, hos-

pitals and community service programmes that serve people across the State, particularly in rural and remote areas,” a statement from the Chief Minister’s Office said.

The Chief Minister highlighted the significant role these institutions play in the social and educational life of the State, and urged the Union government to take into account the unique circumstances of Meghalaya while addressing matters relating to the FCRA. Sangma sought the consideration of the Union Government in ensuring that genuine institutions engaged in public service are able to continue their work without disruption.

Tripura CM woos intl investors

Agartala, July 06: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday asserted that investors and entrepreneurs are keen to invest in the northeastern state, taking advantage of an industry-friendly atmosphere that ensures an improved law and order situation, availability of raw materials and simplified policies. He also said DoNER Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia will join the two-day business conclave, scheduled for July 9 and 10. Around 500 business leaders, including foreign investors, are expected to participate in the ‘Destination Tripura: Business Conclave -2026’, aimed at attracting investments for industries in the northeastern state, Saha told reporters here. The business summit will be held at Badharghat international fair ground in West Tripura. “Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia will attend the mega business conclave along with other senior officials of the Union government,” he said. The state had attracted an investment of Rs 8,000 crore, out of Rs 30,000 crore of business propos-



als made in the last business summit. “The investors and entrepreneurs are keen to join the business conclave and invest in the northeastern state, taking advantage of an industry-friendly atmosphere – be it law and order or availability of raw materials or simplified government policies,” he said. If investment continues to come, employment opportunities and gross state domestic product will increase automatically, which will pave the way for an all-round development process in the frontier state, Saha

said. Earlier in the day, the chief minister held a meeting with the senior officials, including Chief Secretary JK Sinha.

DGP Anurag Dhankar, to review the preparedness for the mega event. Officials of several departments gave presentations on the investment prospects in their respective fields. Over the past two months, the Industries and Commerce Department organised various business promotion-related events outside Tripura to make the conclave a grand success.

ATMA Shama tor conducts agricultural

Dimpur, July 06: Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) Shamator carried out a series of agricultural activities across Chhessore block to promote improved farming practices and enhance productivity.

The programmes included field demonstrations on the application of organic manure, bush management, banana bunch management, integrated pest management (IPM), and the cultivation of sweet corn, capsicum and zucchini. Capacity building sessions on mushroom cultivation and coffee production were also conducted in Huker and Chhessore villages. Farm Schools on banana and coffee were inaugurated in the two villages (FIGs) were formed and seed money distributed to support collective agricultural activities and improve livelihoods.

Over 37,000 left out in draft voter list

Gangtok, July 06: More than 37,000 people have been left out of the draft electoral rolls published in Sikkim on Sunday following the completion of the enumeration phase under the Special Intensive Revision of the voters’ list in the state.

The office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said that of the 4,71,018 registered electors in the state as on May 20, as many as 4,33,294 enumeration forms were collected and digitised.

The enumeration phase under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls was held between May 30 and June 28.

The house-to-house verification drive, carried out by booth-level officers (BLOs), found that 37,724 people had either died, permanently shifted, enrolled at multiple locations, or remained untraceable, the CEO’s office said.

The CEO clarified that the final status of such electors will be decided only after scrutiny by the electoral registration officers (EROs) and assistant EROs.

“The enumeration phase has been completed successfully with active public participation and coordinated efforts by election officials and political party representatives.

“The revision process remains transparent, and no elector’s name will be deleted without due process, including notice and a reasoned order. Citizens whose names have been omitted from the draft roll will have the opportunity to seek inclusion during the claims and objections period,” the CEO said.

Following the publication of the draft electoral roll, the claims and objections window will remain open until August 4, allowing eligible voters to apply for inclusion or raise objections. The CEO’s office said booth-wise lists of electors reported as deceased, shifted, duplicated or untraceable have been shared with booth-level agents of political parties, and will be displayed at ERO offices and uploaded on official websites, alongside the draft electoral rolls to ensure transparency.

Four individuals were apprehended in Manipur with 238.6 kilograms of ganja, and two vehicles were confiscated

Guwahati, July 06: In one of the major anti-narcotic operations in recent time, a joint team of anti-narcotics team seized around 238.6 kg of contraband Ganja in Manipur’s Imphal East district, officials said on Sunday. The seizure of the large quantity of contraband Ganja was made during the operation conducted by a combined team of the Anti-Narcotic Task Force (ANTF), Imphal East district acting on reliable information, the police said. Four persons were also arrested in the operation conducted at different locations under Lamlai police station in Imphal East district on Saturday (June 4), the police said. The police identified the four arrested individuals as Ngangbam

Dinesh (18) son of Ngangbam Suresh Singh of Leishangthem in Thoubal district, Phuritshabam Yaiphaba Meitei (18) son of Ph Laingam Meitei of Keibi Heikak Leikai in Imphal East district, Oinam Abung Meetei (42) son of late Ibobi Meetei of Pungdongbam Makha Leikai of Imphal East, Matamei W Shimray son of WS Lengyo of Tuinam-A-II (Awungang) village in Ukhrul district. The targeted anti-narcotics operation was conducted at Chingarel Tejpur under Lamlai police station in Imphal East district after obtaining due authorization from the competent authority. During the operation, the joint team intercepted a Mahindra Bolero Pickup which matched with the source infor-

mation at Chingarel Tejpur. When the vehicle was signaled to stop, the occupant attempted to flee but was detained after a brief chase. On spot verification, the occupant identified himself as Matamei W Shimray. A thorough search of the vehicle resulted in the recovery of 16 packets containing suspected Ganja weighing around 209.7 kg (gross weight including packaging).

The contraband was seized and the person was arrested in accordance with the prescribed legal procedure, the police said.

During spot sustained interrogation, the detainee disclosed the identities of the intended recipients of the consignment.

Based on the disclosure made by the detainee, the joint team on alert at the same spot detained two individuals coming on a TVS Apache RTR 160 motorcycle. Made by the detained persons, the joint team raided a house at Pungdongbam Makha Leikai under the same Lamlai police station which led to the detection of 28.9 kg more Ganja. The owner of the house, later identified as Oinam Abung Meetei, was also detained, the police said. All four detained persons along with the seized contraband item and vehicles were handed over to Lamlai police station for registration of the case and further investigation, the source added.

55 Pigs Culled in Nagaon Following African Swine Fever (ASF) Outbreak

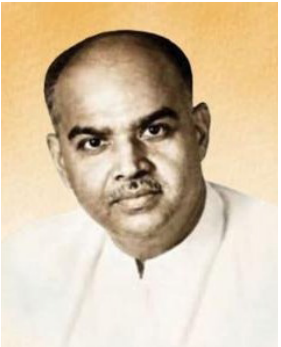
Nagaon, July 06: Following the confirmation of instances of deadly African Swine Fever (ASF) today, the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department killed 55 pigs at a farm in Puranigudam Haluwagaon village. District veterinary doctors confirmed the presence of the deadly virus in roughly 55 pigs on Arbinda Saikia's farm in Haluwagaon village. The outbreak has resulted in a significant increase in swine fever cases in Nagaon district. Following the identification of deadly African swine flu in domestic pigs, the district government has implemented Section 163

of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita in the area. The administration has designated a 1-km radius around Haluwagaon hamlet as the "infected zone" and a 10-km radius as the "surveillance zone." District Commissioner Devashish Sarma has issued an order banning the sale and transportation of pigs, pork, and pork products within a 10-kilometer radius of Haluwagaon village, effective immediately. Following the DC's instruction, officers from the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department arrived in Haluwagaon village today and culled 55 pigs infected with swine disease as a



precautionary measure. To prevent the disease from spreading further, authorities have advised area pig farmers to remain vigilant and report any signs as soon as possible.

PM Modi Pays Tribute To Syama Prasad Mookerjee



New Delhi, July 06: Syama Prasad Mookerjee committed his life to India's unity and growth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote in a blog commemorating his 125th birth anniversary. His life is a "timeless example of courage" and unshakable dedication to Maa Bharti, he said. Mookerjee was the founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the ideological forerunner of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and he died fighting for Jammu and Kashmir's full integration with India. He was born into an affluent family, but his conscience drove him to a life of sacrifice and national service, according to the prime minister. He was certain that he could not be a mute spectator to his times' instability, whether it was opposing colonialism, communalism, humanitarian issues, or something else, he noted. According to PM Modi, Mookerjee's public life was defined by the idea of India's unity. He stayed firm during Partition to ensure that West Bengal remained an integral part of India. A few years later, that belief led him to Jammu & Kashmir. Prison did not dissuade him, and solitude did not shrink him. "His life came to an abrupt end in detention, far from the countless people whose cause he had taken up," he wrote on his blog. In the most fitting tribute, the prime minister reminded that his government repealed Articles 370 and 35(A), revoking Jammu and Kashmir's special status in 2019. PM Modi also highlighted how, as the youngest vice chancellor at Calcutta University, he improved library infrastructure, boosted research, and encouraged the study of artifacts at the university. His decision to form the Jana Sangh was driven by the need for an alternative voice for India's progress while staying attached to the cultural roots, the PM added. Mookerjee, India's first industry minister, saw industry as a way to restore dignity, opportunity, and confidence to a newly independent nation, citing his involvement in pioneering ventures such as the Damodar Valley Corporation and the Sindri Fertilizer Plant. PM Modi stated that Mookerjee was vocally opposed to Jawaharlal Nehru's First Amendment, and his criticism of the Congress was vindicated when an emergency was declared in 1975.

Dispur police arrested a man with a large stash of suspected stolen property

Guwahati, July 06: Dispur Police apprehended a man after discovering a huge amount of suspected stolen stuff and burglary tools during an intelligence-led operation in the city. The accused was identified as Hemanta Kalita

(22), a Kailashpur inhabitant. He was caught after officers allegedly discovered many stolen items in his possession. During the operation, police discovered and seized five bicycles, 35 helmets, one Realme phone, nine key-

pad phones, two weighing machines, and a variety of tools, including four hammers, three screwdrivers, three open spanners, three pairs of scissors, 12 lighters, two pliers, and three hacksaw blades.

Ram Temple Trust Holds Crucial Meeting Today Amid Theft Row

New Delhi, July 06: The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust is set to convene on Monday, focusing on the resignations of general secretary Champat Rai and trustee Anil Mishra amid ongoing investigations into donation embezzlement. This meeting will take place at Mani Ram Chhawani, marking the first gathering since theft allegations emerged. Trust treasurer Govind Dev Giri has requested attendance from all regular and ex-officio members, including notable officials from the Union Home Ministry and the Ayodhya District. Trust president Nritya Gopal Das is expected to attend after being discharged from the hospital, while senior trustee K Parasaran plans to join via video conferencing. Key agenda items include deliberating on the resignations linked to the embezzlement case, and if accepted, the formation of a new administrative structure may be proposed. An overview of interim findings from the Special Investigation Team (SIT) examining the matter will also likely be presented, alongside consideration of a management framework for the Ram temple. Financial documents, including an income and expenditure statement for the fiscal year 2025-26, will be reviewed for approval. Furthermore, the discussion will include the appointment of a chief executive officer to oversee temple management. Currently, the Trust, now lacking a vice president due to recent resignations and the death of trustee Bimlendra Mohan Pratap Mishra, continues to operate amid two active investigations.

Three dead in Pune landslides, massive traffic congestion on the Mumbai-Pune highway

New Delhi, July 06: Relentless rainfall in Maharashtra caused a massive landslide in the Pune district early Monday, killing three family members after many houses were buried under rubble. The event also impacted traffic on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway and the ancient Mumbai-Pune Highway, forcing authorities to halt travel on critical roads connecting the two cities. The victims are named as Nandu Tikone (60), Mauli Tikone (30), and Anita Tikone (55). According to officials, approximately five houses were buried when a part of a hill collapsed in Patan village, Maval tehsil. At roughly 4:25 a.m., a piece of a mountain toppled upon residences in the town, trapping between 30 to 35 individuals under the debris. So far, NDRF crews have recovered two bodies, while debris removal is underway and efforts are ongoing to recover the third. "The body of one person has been recovered from the

debris, and the search for the other two continues," an NDRF official told. Deputy Superintendent of Police (Lonavala division), Gajanan Tompe, reported three landslides in the distant village due to heavy rainfall. During one of the events, a house was buried beneath the debris. Three people were inside the house when the landslide hit in the early hours of Monday," he said. Following a distress call, the District Information Office requested quick help from the National Disaster Response Force. A specialised 30-member squad from the NDRF's 5th Battalion, stationed in Pune, was swiftly deployed to Pune's Patan village, according to press reports. Authorities are still working to find and rescue people caught in the debris. The recent landslide has significantly disrupted traffic between Mumbai and Pune, halting movement on both the Mumbai-Pune Expressway and the old highway due to heavy rain, flooding, and landslides.



Authorities have advised against non-essential travel between the two cities until the situation improves, citing safety concerns. A police advisory confirmed that traffic has been suspended in both directions. The Mumbai-Pune Expressway Missing Link, which recently opened, shortens travel by about 6 kilometers and reduces travel time by approximately 25 to 30 minutes. Continuous heavy rain has also affected normal life across Mumbai, prompting the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to issue a weather alert for intense rain, strong winds, and high tides. The India Meteorological Department has issued a 'red' alert for expected heavy

Tripura's chief minister plans to impose a ban on doctors' private practices

Agartala, July 06: The stalemate over the Tripura Government's decision to prohibit private practice by doctors and faculty members at the state's premier Agartala Government Medical College (AGMC) and Govind Ballabh Pant (GBP) Hospital continues, with Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha emphasizing that the government remains firm in its decision. Addressing a crowd at Pragna Bhawan as part of the Doctors' Day programme, he stated that the wellbeing of the people and discipline must come first. Associations and forums representing doctors and academic members have already addressed a memorandum to the authorities, requesting that the government reverse its decision. There are signs that several leading specialist doctors may retire if the administration sticks to its decision. However, the government stated that it just signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to transform the hospital into a centre of excellence, and that the decision to prohibit private practice is a follow-up action. Opposition parties, notably the CPI(M) and the Congress, have also spoken out against the decision, threatening to begin an agitation. However, the administration remains steadfast in its stance. The Chief Minister stated that private practice



by government doctors is strictly prohibited in states such as Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Delhi. He noted that similar circulars were issued in Tripura many years ago but were never followed. The administration has chosen to implement the ban. The government has offered a 20% increase in doctors' basic wage to compensate for the prohibition on private practice. Responding to the doctors' request for speedy career advancement, the Chief Minister stated that a retired High Court judge is now studying the promotion structure to replace ad hoc appointments with regular appointments.

2 detained in Baruipur rape, murder case in Kolkata; prohibitory orders imposed



Kolkata, July 06: Two people were arrested, and three more were detained for questioning in connection with the suspected rape and murder of a 12-year-old girl in Baruipur, near Kolkata, even as prohibitory orders were placed in various areas of the state, police said. "We have apprehended two people. Three others were being questioned. We're waiting for the autopsy results. A six-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed. In total, four first information reports (FIRs) have been filed, including one involving the alleged rape and murder of a girl and the lynching of a man, according to a Baruipur police official. Police claimed that while operations were underway to catch

the remaining offenders, prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) had been imposed in several parts of Baruipur and its surrounding districts. Large police contingents were deployed

in the vicinity to de-escalate the situation and maintain law and order. The body of a 12-year-old girl who went missing on Saturday was discovered in a pond in Baruipur, South 24 Parganas district, on Sunday. Her family members

claimed she was raped and murdered. Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari contacted the little girl's father to ensure justice. "The CM guaranteed me that the perpetrators would be apprehended and punished. I requested that they be hanged. He requested me to visit Bhabani Bhawan (the state CID headquarters) on Tuesday. "I am satisfied with the administration," the minor girl's father told reporters on Sunday. Meanwhile, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) said on Sunday night that barricades and heavy police presence were installed outside former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's residence to prevent her from visiting the underage girl's family.

Armed forces wants to increase retention as the first cohort of Agniveers completes four years

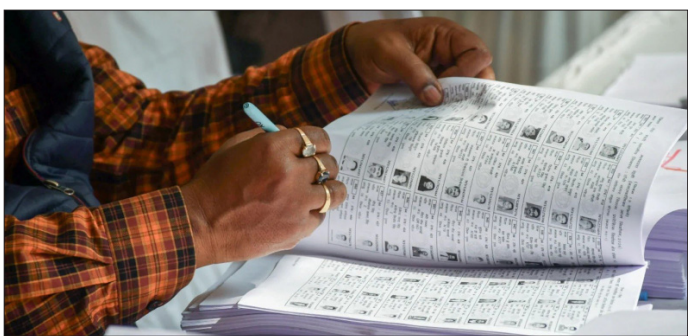
New Delhi, July 06: The Central Government is considering maintaining a bigger number of Agniveers for regular service in the armed services, with the first group slated to finish their four-year term next year. According to an Indian Express story, all three services—the Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force—have submitted recommendations to retain more than 25% of Agniveers after four years of duty. Among the three, the Navy has proposed the highest retention rate, with 75% of Agniveers being incorporated into regular duty. The Army and Air Force have reportedly recommended raising the retention rate from 25% to 50%. The remaining personnel will be dismissed with a one-time financial package known as the Seva Nidhi, as well as a skill certificate and other benefits designed to help them transition into civilian employment. With the first cohort, which began training in early 2023, set to finish next year, efforts are underway inside the defense establishment to increase the retention rate. The measure is intended to preserve skilled labor, fulfill operational needs, and address concerns about the restricted number of permanent posts available under present policy. The report proposes that the suggestion be reviewed within the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) before a decision is made. According to the report, which cites sources, one possibility being considered is increasing the proportion of Agniveers kept for permanent service following their four-year tenure. Even if the general retention quota is not altered, the report stated that the armed forces are considering incorporating additional Ag-

niveers into specific specialised units. It further said that the services intend to enhance annual recruitment to address staffing shortages. Last year, over 70,000 Agniveers were entered for training, with the inflow likely to increase to nearly 90,000 in the upcoming recruitment cycle. The proposed increase aims to meet the Army's estimated 1.8 lakh personnel shortfall while also enhancing operational readiness under the Agnipath recruitment scheme. However, no formal notification has been made by either the military forces or the Central Government thus far. In June 2022, the central government introduced the Agnipath scheme. This is a four-year military recruitment program for young people interested in joining the Army, Navy, or Air Force. Under this scheme, recruits are referred to as Agniveers. The age limit should be between 17.5 and 21 years, however it was temporarily relaxed to 23 years for the first recruitment cycle following the COVID-19 pandemic. Following completion of their stay, up to 25% of each batch may be chosen for regular service based on organizational needs and performance. The remaining 75% are compensated with a tax-free Seva Nidhi package, a skill certificate, and priority in some government recruitment programs. The system employs a selection process that comprises a written exam and a medical examination. The merit list is released state by state. The Agnipath plan was created to provide opportunities for young people who want to join the military. Before being deployed in operational and non-operational tasks, the agniveers go through military training.

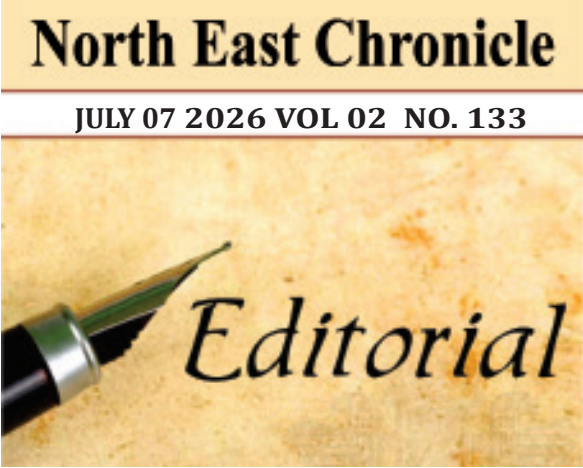
Over 20 lakh Names Deleted, Odisha Draft Electoral Rolls Published

Bhubaneswar, July 06: More than 20 lakh people's names were removed from voter lists in Odisha after the Special Intensive Revision enumeration phase, according to the draft electoral rolls provided by the Election Commission on Sunday. Odisha's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), R S Gopalan, stated that the state had 3.33 crore voters when the electoral rolls were frozen on May 20. Following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) enumeration exercise, which took place between May 30 and June 28, the electoral record now includes 3.13 crore voters, including 1.60 crore men, 1.53 crore women, and 2,775 third-gender people, he stated. Of the 20 lakh voters whose names were removed from the electoral record, 8.32 lakh died, 10.07 lakh relocated or stayed absent during the process, and 1.58 lakh identities were discovered to be enrolled as voters in numerous locations, according to the CEO. In addition, almost 14,000 voters failed to return their enumeration forms to booth-level officers (BLOs) during the enumeration phase. "Voters whose names were not on the draft electoral roll can submit their claim or objection through the BLO, the ECINET mo-

bile app, or voters.eci.gov.in," Gopalan told reporters at a news conference. He stated that claims and objections will be reviewed until August 4, with the final electoral roll issued on September 6. If a person's name does not appear on the draft voter list, they must fill out a form and submit it to poll officials together with a declaration form and other papers," the CEO stated. Claims and objections will be accepted from July 5 to August 4, with 147 Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and 994 assistant EROs reviewing such matters by September 2. If necessary, additional officers would be hired on a regular basis to resolve the claims and objections within the time frame specified, Gopalan stated. Commenting on the draft electoral rolls, BJD vice-president Debi Prasad Mishra alleged, "Not 20 lakh, names of over 27 lakh voters were deleted from the lists. They have hidden the names of another 7 lakh voters." Congress Legislature Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam alleged that the deletion of names of 20 lakh voters, who were "against the ruling BJP," was a "conspiracy". Kadam said his party would raise the issue inside and outside the assembly in the coming days. Re-



sponding to opposition leaders' accusations, BJP MLA Babu Singh stated that the ECI amended the voters' list, not the BJP's. "Those who have any objection to the draft list can submit claims to the ECI through proper channel," Singh stated.



The Footpath That Disappeared

In many cities, footpaths slowly disappear—not because they are removed, but because they are occupied by parked vehicles, temporary structures, or neglected maintenance. The result is that pedestrians are forced onto busy roads, increasing the risk of accidents. Children walking to school, elderly

citizens, and persons with disabilities are often the worst affected. A city’s transport policy should not focus solely on motorists. Every journey begins and ends on foot. Protecting footpaths is not an anti-development measure; it is a commitment to safer and more inclusive urban mobility.

Classroom Accuracy at Stake After CBSE Textbook Error

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but in a school textbook, the wrong picture can just as easily generate a thousand misconceptions. Recent reports that a Class III CBSE Social Studies textbook has allegedly used an incorrect image to depict Assam’s traditional Bihu dance have raised understandable concern, particularly among people from the state. While it may appear to be a minor editorial oversight, such errors carry deeper implications when they enter classrooms and shape the first impressions of young learners about India’s cultural diversity. Bihu is far more than a festive performance. It is the cultural heartbeat of Assam, deeply embedded in the state’s agrarian rhythm and collective identity. Celebrated in different forms across the year—Rongali, Kongali, and Bhogali Bihu—it reflects the cycles of sowing, harvesting, and community life. At the centre of this tradition is the vibrant Bihu dance, performed with distinctive movements, expressive gestures, and accompanied by traditional instruments such as the dhol, pepa, gogona, and taal. The dance is not merely aesthetic; it embodies the spirit of unity, resilience, and joy that has been passed down through generations. When an unrelated or incorrect image is used to represent such a culturally specific tradition, it risks distorting the understanding of students who may have no prior exposure to it. For many children, textbooks serve as the first window into the country’s cultural landscape. What they see on the page often becomes what they believe to be authentic. In that sense, even an unintentional error can harden into a lasting misconception. Misrepresentation in educational material, therefore, is not a trivial matter of editing—it is an issue of cultural integrity. It also reflects how easily regional nuances can be overlooked in centrally produced academic content without careful verification. The incident also highlights a broader systemic concern: the need for stronger editorial scrutiny and cultural verification in textbook preparation. India’s diversity is both its strength and its complexity. With hundreds

The Day Mohammad Never Came Home: A Mother’s Story of Loss in the West Bank

The death of a child is among the most devastating experiences any parent can endure. For families living in areas affected by prolonged conflict, however, such tragedies are often intertwined with a broader reality of insecurity, political violence, and uncertainty. The story of nine-year-old Mohammad, who was fatally shot after leaving home to play football in his village in the occupied West Bank, reflects not only the grief of one family but also the wider humanitarian consequences of an enduring conflict that continues to claim civilian lives. His mother, Aliyah Abdel Majid al-Halaq, describes a life defined by economic hardship, resilience, and the hope that, despite the challenges of living under occupation, her children might still experience a normal childhood. That hope ended on the day her son was killed. For many Palestinian families in the occupied West Bank, daily life is shaped by restrictions, economic uncertainty, military presence, and the constant possibility that routine activities may suddenly become dangerous. Parents often attempt to shield their children from the psychological burden of conflict, encouraging them to focus on school, friendships, and play despite the surrounding instability. Like countless mothers, Aliyah believed that although her family faced financial struggles and limited opportunities, they could still preserve a sense of normality within their home. She hoped that patience, hard work, and family solidarity would be enough to protect her children from the harshest realities of the conflict. The family’s economic circumstances reflected the challenges experienced by many households in the region. Aliyah’s husband worked long hours away from home at a supermarket, earning modest wages that barely covered essential expenses. He returned home only occasionally, bringing whatever remained

after paying for accommodation and food. To supplement the family’s income, Aliyah prepared and sold homemade sweets. Every day involved balancing household responsibilities with the constant effort to provide sufficient food, clothing, and educational opportunities for five growing children. Their lives were modest, but like many families, they found moments of happiness in small achievements and shared experiences. Mohammad was remembered as an energetic and cheerful child who loved football and enjoyed spending time with his siblings and friends. His enthusiasm for ordinary childhood pleasures stood in contrast to the difficult environment surrounding him. One of his happiest recent memories came when he received a new school backpack through humanitarian assistance. The simple gift brought immense excitement, reminding his family that children often find joy in the smallest gestures. For his parents, seeing their son smile despite hardship reinforced their determination to provide as normal a childhood as possible. On the day of the incident, Mohammad returned home from school and asked permission to play football with his friends at the nearby school playground. His mother agreed, believing he would soon return home as he had on countless previous afternoons. Instead, what followed would permanently change the lives of everyone in the family. While Aliyah was shopping with her father and her other children, a phone call interrupted the afternoon. Sensing immediately that something was wrong, she answered the call herself. The caller asked about Mohammad before abruptly ending the conversation. Moments later, she encountered a video circulating on social media that appeared to show her son being carried while seriously wounded. The

shock overwhelmed her, and she collapsed before reaching the hospital. Initially, family members were told that Mohammad’s injuries were not life-threatening. Later they were informed that he had undergone surgery. Hope quickly gave way to despair when news emerged that he had died from his injuries. For his mother, the sequence of uncertainty, hope, and loss remains deeply traumatic. She recalls seeing her son’s body after it was returned home and struggling to comprehend that the child who had left to play football would never return. According to accounts cited by the family, Israeli soldiers had entered the village and clashes or military activity developed in the area. Witnesses reported that tear gas was fired near the school playground, prompting children to run. Mohammad was later struck by gunfire. The family maintains that he posed no threat and questions why he became a target. Israeli authorities have, in various cases involving civilian deaths in the occupied territories, conducted investigations under military procedures, though human rights organizations have frequently criticized those mechanisms as lacking transparency and accountability. As with many incidents arising during the conflict, differing accounts and legal assessments often become subjects of dispute. For Aliyah, however, the legal and political complexities offer little comfort. Her questions are profoundly personal rather than political. She continues to ask why her son, only nine years old, did not survive a simple afternoon of play. Like many parents who lose children in conflict, she searches for an explanation that may never fully exist. Her experience also reflects a broader pattern of grief shared by numerous families affected by the conflict. Civilian casualties, including children, have become one of the most painful and internationally scrutinized aspects of the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Humanitarian organizations, United Nations agencies, Israeli human rights groups, Palestinian organizations, and international observers have repeatedly expressed concern over the impact of military operations and violence on children. Reports documenting fatalities among minors have intensified international calls for greater protection of civilians, adherence to international humanitarian law, and independent investigations where appropriate. Since the escalation of violence in October 2023, the humanitarian situation across both Gaza and the occupied West Bank has deteriorated dramatically. Thousands of civilians have been killed or injured, while widespread destruction, displacement, and psychological trauma have affected entire communities. Children have been among the most vulnerable victims, facing not only physical danger but also interrupted education, family separation, food insecurity, and lasting mental health consequences. International organizations have repeatedly warned that prolonged exposure to violence creates long-term developmental and emotional challenges that extend well beyond the immediate conflict. For parents, these realities fundamentally alter the meaning of everyday life. Simple activities that might otherwise be routine—walking to school, visiting relatives, or playing outdoors—can become sources of anxiety. The constant uncertainty changes parenting itself, replacing confidence with fear and forcing families to make decisions under conditions that few elsewhere would consider normal. Mothers and fathers frequently describe living with an ongoing sense of vulnerability, uncertain whether their children will safely return home each day. Beyond the immediate loss of life, bereaved families often face significant

economic and psychological consequences. Trauma can disrupt employment, family relationships, and physical health. In Mohammad’s family’s case, his father’s ability to work reportedly declined following the tragedy, while grief compounded existing financial hardship. Daily routines became inseparable from mourning, as ordinary household objects—including Mohammad’s school belongings—became powerful reminders of the child they had lost. Such experiences illustrate how the consequences of conflict extend long after individual incidents have passed. The broader debate surrounding accountability remains one of the most contentious dimensions of the conflict. Palestinian families and numerous human rights organizations have frequently argued that investigations into civilian deaths rarely result in meaningful accountability. Israeli officials, meanwhile, maintain that the security environment presents complex operational challenges and that allegations of wrongdoing are reviewed through established military and legal procedures. These competing perspectives continue to shape international discussions regarding justice, transparency, and the protection of civilians. The international community has repeatedly called for greater efforts to safeguard children living in conflict zones. International humanitarian law requires parties to armed conflict to distinguish between combatants and civilians and to take all feasible precautions to minimize civilian harm. Humanitarian organizations continue to advocate for stronger mechanisms to protect children, improve access to medical care, facilitate humanitarian assistance, and promote accountability when civilian casualties occur. At the same time, the political prospects for resolving the broader conflict remain uncertain. Decades of failed

negotiations, recurring violence, and deep mutual mistrust have complicated efforts to achieve a lasting settlement. As diplomatic initiatives continue to struggle, civilians on both sides continue to bear significant human costs, though communities living closest to areas of active military operations often experience the most immediate consequences. For families such as Aliyah’s, discussions of diplomacy, security policy, and international law cannot erase personal loss. Their daily reality is measured less by political developments than by the absence of loved ones whose lives ended far too soon. Grief becomes part of ordinary existence, shaping family relationships, memories, and hopes for the future. Mohammad’s story therefore represents more than a single tragic event. It reflects the vulnerability of children growing up amid prolonged conflict, the emotional burden carried by parents living under persistent insecurity, and the urgent humanitarian questions that continue to confront the international community. Regardless of political perspectives on the conflict, the protection of children remains a universal concern. Every child deserves the opportunity to attend school, play with friends, and return safely home. Ultimately, the death of one child resonates far beyond one household. It illustrates how prolonged conflict transforms ordinary family life into an existence marked by uncertainty, grief, and unanswered questions. For countless families affected by violence, the greatest hope is not only for justice and accountability but also for a future in which children are no longer exposed to the dangers of armed conflict and parents no longer have to fear that a routine afternoon outdoors may become their final goodbye.

The Changing Face of Europe: Why the UK’s Rejoin Debate Is Asking the Wrong Questions

The question of the United Kingdom’s relationship with the European Union has resurfaced with a striking sense of urgency. As Keir Starmer’s premiership draws to a close and Andy Burnham, his likely successor, prepares to enter Number 10, the political landscape is shifting. Wes Streeting, until recently a major contender for the top job and now a possible future Chancellor of the Exchequer, went as far as to say that Britain belongs back in the EU. Yet, despite the passion of those advocating for a return, the “rejoin” debate within the UK remains remarkably parochial. It has focused almost squarely on two narrow metrics: the quantifiable economic costs imposed by Brexit on the British economy, and the prospective price of rejoining—namely, whether London could negotiate its way back to its historic opt-outs from the Euro and the Schengen Area. This domestic fixation fails to grapple with much bigger, more serious international realities. The fundamental issue is not what Britain lost when it chose to exit, but what the European Union has become by 2026. The institution Westminster left a few years ago no longer exists in that form. To have an honest conversation about the future, British political elites and the public must look past their own borders and assess whether this newly forged European club is an organization they genuinely want to join. The EU of 2026 is an entity built increasingly on com-

mon borrowing, an assertive joint industrial policy, and a rapidly expanding role in security and defence that steadily encroaches on the traditional powers of nation-states. It is also an EU that is carving out a far more confrontational, independent stance toward both the United States and China than anything envisioned by the British government. Understanding these systemic transformations must be the central theme of any serious British foreign policy debate. In the years since the UK exited, the EU has changed beyond recognition under the weight of successive global shocks. Confronted by a pandemic, supply chain collapses, and war on its doorstep, the remaining 27 member states responded by radically altering the bloc’s financial architecture. They turned to substantial levels of joint debt backed explicitly by the collective EU budget. This process began during the COVID-19 pandemic when Brussels borrowed €100 billion from capital markets to fund member states’ furlough programmes. As the crisis deepened, the EU took a monumental leap forward by borrowing an additional €750 billion for the NextGenerationEU fund, distributing the capital to national governments as grants aimed squarely at green and digital investments. This evolution was not a temporary emergency measure; it has become the standard operating procedure for European governance. The shifting geopolitical

landscape accelerated this trend when the United States began retreating from its long-standing promise to guarantee European security. In response, the European Commission bypassed traditional national defence budgets to borrow €150 billion to support deeper defence-industrial collaboration through the Security Action for Europe (Safe) initiative. Much of the financial and material aid sent from Brussels to Ukraine has been structured through similar mutualized mechanisms. For decades, British euroscopics warned that the EU would eventually pursue this type of quasi-political and fiscal integration. Had the UK remained a member, its diplomats would have almost certainly deployed a veto or fought tooth and nail to dilute these measures. Free from British resistance, the EU has normalized common borrowing as its primary tool to confront macroeconomic crises. This reliance on shared debt is set to become permanently institutionalized. As Brussels designs the EU’s next long-term budget spanning the years 2028 to 2034, the European Commission has proposed a permanent fiscal capacity. This mechanism will grant Brussels the autonomous power to borrow directly from global capital markets whenever a crisis demands it. However, the reality of running a massive, shared debt load means the EU must find a way to pay it back. More shared borrowing naturally necessitates more supranational taxation. To

fund these obligations, the commission is aggressively pushing for EU-wide corporate and digital taxes. This marks a profound departure from the EU the UK left behind—one where tax policy was fiercely guarded as a sovereign domestic right. The EU of 2026 is also far more interventionist and overtly protectionist when managing its single market. The classic British view of Europe was that of a massive, frictionless free-trade zone driven by liberal market principles and strict rules against state subsidies. Today, that vision has been replaced by an activist industrial policy used as a geopolitical weapon. The European Commission has adopted an increasingly permissive approach to state aid, allowing member states to pump billions into national champions to prevent them from fleeing to the US or falling behind China. This strategy is crystallized in the proposed Industrial Accelerator Act, an aggressive legislative framework designed to boost Europe’s strategic sectors and counter Chinese supply-chain dominance. Through initiatives like the Industrial Accelerator Act and Safe, Brussels is actively targeting Chinese overcapacity in electric vehicles, solar infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing. Simultaneously, the EU has started restricting American defense firms from accessing lucrative European defense financing by attaching strict “Buy European” mandates to its procurement programs. The

underlying objective is to systematically build the continent’s “strategic autonomy.” This economic philosophy runs entirely counter to the instincts of both Conservative and Labour governments. Historically, the UK has prioritized open markets, free capital flows, and international competition, consistently opposing large-scale European interventionism. Successive British governments have preferred to preserve close economic, security, and strategic ties with Washington while balancing increasingly hawkish rhetoric on China with continued economic pragmatism. The EU’s stance toward both superpowers is heading in a much more combative direction. The European push for technological sovereignty marks another sharp departure from British political and economic instincts. The commission’s tech sovereignty package reflects an intense determination within Brussels to reduce Europe’s systemic dependence on Silicon Valley infrastructure, cloud providers, and hardware suppliers. While the UK shares some anxieties regarding the monopolies of American big tech, British policymakers have historically preferred to operate comfortably within a US-led technological ecosystem. London has long prioritized transatlantic intelligence sharing, joint research ventures, and deep corporate integration with American tech firms over continental self-reliance.

After-tax returns matter more than returns: Here's how taxes can impact

Mumbai: Taxes on your investment: When comparing investment options such as mutual funds, fixed deposits (FDs), Public Provident Fund (PPF), National Pension System (NPS) or gold ETFs, most investors focus on the returns advertised by financial institutions. However, experts say the figure that truly matters is the post-tax return—the amount an investor actually retains after paying taxes on interest, dividends or capital gains. With changes to capital gains taxation in recent years, evaluating investments on an after-tax basis has become increasingly important. A recent infographic on post-tax returns illustrates how two investments generating identical pre-tax returns can produce significantly different outcomes once taxes are factored in. Post-tax return refers to the net return an investor earns after paying applicable taxes. Since different investment products are taxed differently, identical headline returns can translate into substantially different take-home gains depending on the investor's tax slab and the asset class.

For investments that receive partial tax exemptions, only the taxable portion of the gain is considered while computing the final return.



Investors should also evaluate the post-tax real return, which adjusts returns for inflation to measure the actual increase in purchasing power. Equity-oriented mutual funds continue to enjoy relatively favourable tax treatment. Long-term capital gains (LTCG) on listed equity shares and equity mutual funds held for more than 12 months are taxed at 12.5% on gains exceeding the ₹1.25 lakh annual exemption limit. Short-term capital gains (STCG), however, are taxed at 20%. Debt mutual funds purchased on or after April 1, 2023 no longer receive indexation benefits. Regardless of the holding period, gains are taxed according to the investor's applicable income-tax slab, reducing their post-tax appeal for individuals in higher tax brackets. Financial plan-

ners recommend evaluating investments on an after-tax basis rather than relying solely on advertised returns. Besides expected returns, investors should consider tax treatment, holding period, inflation and their financial goals before making investment decisions. Looking beyond headline returns and focusing on after-tax wealth creation can help investors build a more tax-efficient portfolio and maximise long-term gains. Interest earned on bank fixed deposits is also fully taxable at the investor's slab rate. Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) may also apply, although the final tax liability depends on the individual's total taxable income. Among traditional investment options, PPF remains one of the most tax-efficient. It follows the Exempt-Exempt-Exempt

(EEE) regime, meaning contributions, annual interest and maturity proceeds remain tax-free under prevailing rules. NPS also offers tax advantages, with up to 60% of the accumulated corpus eligible for tax-free withdrawal at maturity, while the remaining amount is generally used to purchase an annuity. The infographic demonstrates that tax treatment can materially alter investment outcomes. In one example, an investor who puts ₹5 lakh into an equity mutual fund sees the investment grow to ₹7.10 lakh over three years. After claiming the ₹1.25 lakh LTCG exemption and paying tax on the remaining taxable gain, the investor still earns an after-tax gain of nearly ₹2 lakh, translating into an after-tax annualised return of around 12%. Another comparison shows that over a 15-year period, a PPF investment can generate substantially higher post-tax wealth than a bank FD despite similar nominal returns because PPF earnings are exempt from tax. The infographic also highlights that debt mutual funds purchased after April 2023 now deliver after-tax returns broadly comparable to bank fixed deposits for investors in higher tax brackets because both are taxed at slab rates.

HDFC Bank gains 2% on Q1 business

Mumbai: Share price of HDFC Bank rose 2 per cent to ₹819.6 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) in Monday's intra-day trade after the private sector lender reported a steady business growth in the first quarter (April to June) of the financial year 2026-27 (Q1FY27). In the past month, the stock price of the India's largest private sector lender outperformed the market by gaining nearly 10 per cent, as compared to 4 per cent rise in the Nifty 50. However, thus far in the calendar year 2026, HDFC Bank underperformed the market by falling 17.5 per cent, as against 6.8 per cent decline in the benchmark index. HDFC Bank reported a 15.4 per cent year-on-year (YoY) increase in gross advances and a 14.7 per cent rise in deposits at the end of the June quarter (Q1FY27), according to its provisional business update. The bank's period-end gross advances stood at approximately ₹30.61 trillion as of June 30, 2026, compared with ₹26.53 trillion a year earlier. On a sequential basis, gross advances increased 3.4 per cent at the end of March 2026. Advances under management (AUM).

'Overreaction' as 4 Chinese firms enter power tenders, says Nomura GE Vernova, CG Power shares

Mumbai: The 7-8 per cent selloff in shares of grid equipment makers GE Vernova T&D India Ltd, CG Power and Industrial Solutions Ltd, Hitachi Energy India Ltd and Siemens Energy India Ltd was an 'overreaction' to the Ministry of Finance's decision to allow four China-origin manufacturers to bid for power tenders in India, Nomura said on Monday. Noting that the order explicitly states it creates no precedent, Nomura said market players read it as a competitive threat and sold off listed power-equipment stocks such as GE Vernova T&D India, CG Power, Hitachi Energy India and Siemens Energy India. For now, Nomura has retained its 'Buy' rating on CG Power (target price: Rs 1,100) and GE Vernova T&D India (Rs 5,675). It does not cover Siemens Energy India and Hitachi Energy India. Nomura said its analysis indicated that over FY09-20, only 9 per cent of PGCIL's transmission-related tenders for HVDC, substations, transformers, reactors, insulators, SCADA, FACTS and circuit breakers were awarded to the four exempted Chinese manufacturers. They are TBEA, Northeast Electric, Nanjing and Taikai. This was despite an unrestricted bidding field and, in several categories, a headline cost advantage. The structural frictions beyond the security clearance meaningfully cap achievable share even when the regulatory door is open, Nomura said. They included such as technical qualification thresholds, prior-supply-experience



(PQR) criteria, after-sales servicing expectations, testing and type-approval cycles, and buyer preference for vendors with an established execution track record on Indian grid specifications. Besides, it is noted that the exemption applies only to China-origin entities that already have India manufacturing units - not to Chinese imports broadly. Of the four, TBEA Energy (India) has the largest and most established 20,000MVA transformer/reactor manufacturing base in Karjan, Gujarat. It is only one of the four is likely operating at or near optimal utilisation. "Nanjing Electric India, New Northeast Electric India, and Taikai Electric India show balance-sheet and operating signals - thin paid-up capitalisation, small headcount, and revenue/profit decline - that are more consistent with sub-scale or underutilised operations than with

plants ready to absorb meaningful incremental order volume without fresh capex," Nomura said. It concluded that the effective near-term competitive threat from this notification is concentrated in one name rather than spread evenly across four Chinese firms. "We believe re-opening the door for four specific Chinese entities is, therefore, not equivalent to re-opening the door to the 9 per cent share the exempted China-based vendors might theoretically command; The foreign brokerage said the order's own text states the exemption is valid for two years and explicitly may not be treated as a precedent - language the government does not attach lightly, and which signals this was negotiated as a targeted, time-boxed relief valve rather than a policy reversal, Nomura said.

Keeway brings premium electric mobility closer to India's new-age riders

Lakhimpur: As Indian consumers increasingly look beyond affordability and embrace technology-driven mobility, Keeway India has introduced the all-new Hypevolt-R, marking the company's entry into the premium performance electric scooter segment. Launched at an introductory ex-showroom price of Rs 1.99 lakh, the scooter is now available for online booking at Rs 5,000, with deliveries set to begin shortly through Keeway India's network of more than 40 authorised dealerships across the country. Designed for riders seeking a balance between everyday practicality and high performance, the Hypevolt-R features a 5.04 kWh dual removable NMC battery architecture paired with a 12 kW peak mid-mounted Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motor. The scooter offers an IDC-certified riding range of 180 km, a top speed of 115 kmph and accelerates from 0-40 kmph in just 2.3 seconds. It supports in-vehicle charging with 0-80 per cent charging in around



three hours and comes with Eco, Normal and Sport riding modes. Premium features include Dual-Channel ABS, Traction Control System, Hill Hold Control, Hill Descent Control, Intelligent Cruise Control, Blind Spot Detection, Rear Reverse Camera, a

Bluetooth-enabled 5-inch TFT display, projector LED headlamps, reverse mode, USB Type-A and Type-C charging ports, 27-litre under-seat storage, adjustable suspension, 14-inch alloy wheels and semi-slick tyres. The scooter is offered in Cry-

stal White and Platinum Grey. Managing Director Vikas Jhabakh said today's electric mobility customers expect more than efficiency, seeking products that combine performance, intelligent technology, stylish design and everyday usability. He said the Hypevolt-R has been developed to meet those evolving aspirations, while parent company Adishwar Auto Ride India (AARI) continues to expand its dealer network across India. In Lakhimpur, changing consumer aspirations are gradually reshaping the local two-wheeler market. Young professionals and first-time premium EV buyers are increasingly exploring electric scooters that offer advanced technology, long riding range and enhanced safety. With growing awareness of sustainable mobility and improving charging infrastructure, products such as the Hypevolt-R could find a niche among customers looking to upgrade from conventional scooters to feature-rich electric alternatives.

New startup push aims to turn Northeast entrepreneurs into business success stories

Kohima: A fresh opportunity has opened for aspiring entrepreneurs across Northeast India as IIMA Ventures, in partnership with SAP, launched the third cohort of the North East Growth Lab (NEGL), a programme designed to help 25 high-potential startups transform innovative ideas into sustainable businesses. Open to ventures from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura, the initiative will support startups working in agriculture, food processing, climate, livelihoods, biotechnology, financial inclusion and deep technology. Selected founders will receive catalytic capital, mentorship, investor access, market linkages and strategic guidance to help expand their businesses beyond the region. The programme has already demonstrated tangible results for local entrepreneurs. More than 40 ventures have been supported through earlier editions, while the first cohort backed 41 social enterprises. Among them,



31 ventures secured grants and investments worth Rs 2.38 crore before raising an additional Rs 2.29 crore through grants, debt and equity financing. The startups also generated more than 44 business opportunities and forged 27 commercial engagements, including partnerships, pilot projects, procurement discussions and market access collaborations. Ahead of the launch, IIMA Ventures conducted roadshows in Guwahati, Dimapur, Imphal and Agartala between June 15 and June 24 in collaboration with Assam Startup-NEST, BioNEST, IIT Guwahati Technology Innovation and Development Foundation (TIDF), Educentre School of Business (ESB) Incubator, Manipur Technology

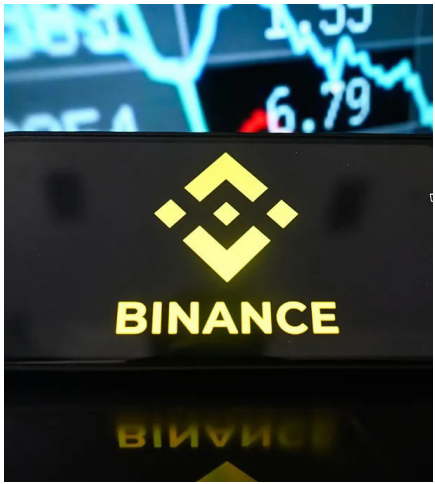
Innovation Hub (MTI-Hub), Startup Tripura and the Directorate of IT & NIT Agartala Incubator. Nearly 175 founders attended the outreach events, which also featured workshops to help entrepreneurs sharpen their value propositions and identify target customer segments. Chintan Bakshi, Partner - Incubation at IIMA Ventures, said the Northeast's entrepreneurs are building solutions rooted in local realities with the potential to scale nationally. Applications for the third cohort are now open, with ventures to be assessed on innovation, scalability, impact potential and their ability to create sustainable livelihoods and economic opportunities across the region.

Binance Is Building the Super App Global Investing One Account, Every Market

Mumbai: A retail investor looking to build a diversified portfolio typically needed multiple accounts: a broker for stocks, another platform for commodities, a bank for international transfers, and increasingly, a crypto exchange for digital assets. Each came with its own onboarding process, capital requirements, trading hours and operational complexities. But what if all of those markets could exist in a single ecosystem? That is the vision underpinning Binance's evolution from a cryptocurrency exchange into what it calls a "multi-asset super app"—a platform that seeks to bring together traditional finance (TradFi), centralized finance (CeFi) and decentralized finance (DeFi) under one roof. The ambition reflects a broader shift taking place across global finance: investors increasingly want access to every asset class, everywhere, all the time.

From Crypto Exchange to Financial Operating System When Binance launched in 2017, its core proposition was simple: provide access to digital assets. Today, the platform spans trading, payments, savings products, staking, decentralized applications, AI-powered tools, social engagement features (Binance Square) and increasingly, exposure to traditional financial assets. The company's vision is increasingly centered around what it describes as the "TriFi" model—the convergence of TradFi, CeFi and DeFi into a single user experience. In practical terms, this means an investor can move between Bitcoin, gold, U.S. equities, tokenized stocks, perpetual futures, decentralized applications and yield-generating products without leaving the same ecosystem (where permitted). For users in emerging markets, where access to global capital markets has historically been restricted by geography, regulation or infrastructure, this convergence could prove particularly significant. The Rise of TradFi Perpetuals These contracts allow users to gain exposure to traditional assets while leveraging the always-on infrastructure of crypto markets. They can be traded 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without the expiry dates typically associated with traditional futures contracts. What began as a niche experiment is quickly becoming a meaningful market.

Binance's lineup now spans precious metals, commodities, global equities and ETFs (where permitted), allowing users to access assets ranging from gold and silver to Tesla, Amazon and Palantir through the same interface they use to trade cryptocurrencies. The appeal is evident. Investors no longer need separate platforms to express macro views across multiple asset classes. Instead, they can manage exposure through a single account and a unified collateral framework. Commodities Are Finding a New Home on Crypto Rails One of the more striking developments has been the growth of precious metals trading. Historically, commodities have been dominated by established futures exchanges and institutional participants. Yet crypto-native infrastructure is increasingly capturing a share of that activity. By the first quarter



of 2026, silver perpetual contracts had reached approximately 40% of the equivalent COMEX silver contract volume at their peak. Meanwhile, aggregated trading volume in gold perpetuals had surpassed several regional gold futures markets by orders of magnitude. Perhaps the clearest example of this convergence is the rapid growth of TradFi-linked perpetual futures. Traditionally, gaining exposure to gold, commodities or U.S. equities required specialized brokers and The trend highlights a broader reality: investors are increasingly valuing accessibility, flexibility and round-the-clock availability over traditional market constraints. Several unicorn-scale companies are expected to remain in focus through the second half of 2026, including OpenAI and Anthropic—both reportedly associated with potential fundraising activity in the vicinity of US\$60 billion each. Additional opportunities are emerging across sectors such as artificial intelligence, small modular reactors (SMRs) and uranium-related businesses. In a world where geopolitical developments unfold continuously, the ability to react in real time is becoming a competitive advantage. The Next Frontier: Pre-IPO Market Access Beyond commodities, one of the most closely watched developments is the emergence of pre-IPO perpetual contracts.

Historically, access to high-growth private companies has largely been reserved for venture capital firms, institutional investors and ultra-high-net-worth individuals. Crypto infrastructure is beginning to challenge that exclusivity.

Binance's SpaceX perpetual contract (SPCXUSD) offers a glimpse into what that future could look like.

Within just 18 days of launch, the product generated approximately US\$2.5 billion in cumulative trading volume. Notably, 88% of participating users came from emerging markets, suggesting significant pent-up demand for exposure to companies that remain inaccessible through conventional channels.

Binance has reported that the normalized liquidity efficiency of SPCXUSD already rivals mature crypto contracts, underscoring the market's appetite for alternative pathways into private-market opportunities. The broader pipeline is even more notable. Often came with restricted trading hours.

Trump’s Gulf allies fear his Iran agreement is a ‘disastrous turning point’

Washington: For decades, leaders of Arab nations in the Persian Gulf viewed their relationship with the United States as a strategic partnership. Donald Trump often saw it differently.

“King, we’re protecting you. You might not be there for two weeks without us. You have to pay for your military,” Trump said in 2018, speaking of the Saudi monarch and encapsulating a more transactional vision of a relationship that Gulf leaders had long regarded as a cornerstone of their security.

A year later, Saudi Arabia suffered the biggest attack on its territory in decades when strikes on key oil facilities temporarily knocked out roughly half of the kingdom’s crude production, sending global oil prices soaring. While Washington blamed Iran and condemned the attack, Gulf states were left with lingering questions

about the extent of American willingness to confront Tehran on their behalf.

By Trump’s second term, Gulf leaders had taken note. As Gulf states pledged trillions of dollars in investment in the US economy, Trump chose the region for his first official trip abroad. That pledge faced its biggest test this year. Despite Gulf states’ efforts to avoid a regional conflict, the US – alongside Israel – launched a war against Iran, triggering ferocious retaliatory attacks across the Gulf and forcing regional governments to confront once again the question of what American protection really means.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in the region this week, with the unenviable task of convincing Gulf states that Washington’s security commitments remain intact. Yet for many in the Gulf, the question is



no longer whether Washington remains committed to their security, but whether the emerging agreement with Iran leaves them better or worse off than they were before the war.

“From the Arab Gulf states’ perspective, the Iran war is a disastrous turning point for the regional security order,” said Hasan Alhasan, senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), who sees the agreement as part of a broad-

er US retrenchment from the region. “US disengagement from the Gulf and the flow of financial and economic resources to Iran are likely to embolden Tehran further.” Speaking in Kuwait on Wednesday, he stressed that

the US would not “undermine” its Gulf allies in negotiations with Iran, and that he “didn’t sense any doubts about our security assurances” to the region.

“We want to reiterate and begin to talk to them and

engage them on conversations about every decision that’s made with regards to this negotiation,” he told reporters. “We’re not going to do anything that undermines the security of our allies, our long-standing allies in the region.” Gulf states had opposed the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement reached under the Obama administration and cheered Trump when he tore it up in 2018 because it didn’t address their concerns.

The emerging US-Iran pact is likely to generate even greater unease in Gulf capitals, not only because it leaves many of those concerns unresolved, but because it comes amid what Alhasan described as a “major loss of confidence in the US.” A senior Gulf diplomat told CNN the conflict showed that “Iran had a well-developed plan to target” Gulf states.

The agreement grants Tehran a formal role in overseeing commercial traffic through the Strait of Hormuz alongside Oman. This means that much of the Gulf states’ maritime trade – and crucially their energy exports – could be conducted with Iranian oversight.

“Nonetheless, the Arab Gulf states have facilitated and supported the Iran-US ceasefire deal. For them, a bad deal is still preferable to war,” he told CNN. Rubio’s tour includes the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Kuwait, three Gulf nations that bore the brunt of Iranian attacks during the war and are likely among the most skeptical of the emerging détente between Washington and Tehran.

“We are going to protect this country,” the US president declared in the Qatari capital Doha during his Gulf tour last May.

American pilot killed by rebels in Papua, says Indonesian military

Jakarta: Indonesia’s military has recovered the body of an American pilot who was shot dead by rebels in the restive eastern region of Papua, it said on Friday after a separatist group said the attack was a “message” to the US and Indonesian governments.

A low-level battle for independence from Indonesia has long raged in the resource-rich western half of Papua, where attacks by independence fighters have grown deadlier and more frequent as they have procured better weaponry.

Sebby Sambom, a spokesperson for the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB), an armed separatist group, said on Thursday that their troops shot dead American pilot Nicholas F. Gosselin and set his plane on fire after it landed in the Yahukimo region of Highland Papua province. The attack was a message to the



Indonesian and U.S. governments for “failing to address the root causes of the conflict in Papua between the Indonesian military and the West Papua National Liberation Army,” Sebby said. On Friday, Wirya Artadiguna, a military spokesperson in

Papua, confirmed the separatist group had carried out the attack and said the body of the American pilot had been recovered and evacuated.

A video supplied by the TPNPB showed rebels armed with guns and axes

and raising the “Morning Star” flag, a symbol of independence, while announcing the attack.

The aircraft is owned by airline operator PT AMA, whose planes carry food, fuel and mail to remote villages in Papua, according to

its website. PT AMA did not respond to a request for comment. In a high-profile case, Papuan rebels kidnapped New Zealand pilot Phillip Mehrrens in February 2023 after he landed a small commercial plane in the remote, mountainous area of Nduga in Highland Papua, before freeing him in September 2024.

The military is seeking the perpetrators, he said, adding that all passengers on the flight are safe and have returned home.

Officials had earlier said there were seven passengers on board, all of whom were Papuans.

He said the aircraft had been “frequently dropping Indonesian military personnel and violating the TPNPB’s ultimatum”, and said there would be more attacks if Indonesia kept allowing civilian aircraft to enter rebel-controlled red zones of Papua.

UNESCO Warns Pakistan Over Reconstruction Work at Taxila Heritage Site

Islamabad: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has issued a strong warning to Pakistan over reconstruction work carried out at two ancient monuments within the World Heritage Site of Taxila.

The agency has cautioned that if the restoration work is not brought into conformity with the site’s original character, Taxila could be placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and its World Heritage status may also be affected. According to Russia’s international state-run news network RT, citing local media reports, UNESCO conveyed its concerns during a recent meeting with senior Pakistani government officials. The agency stressed that “unnecessary alterations” to historical monuments compromise their authenticity and historical integrity. UNESCO also referred to a World Heritage Site in Germany that was removed from the World Heritage List due to similar concerns. UN-



ESCO specifically objected to the reconstruction work carried out at Mohra Moradu and Sirkap, two of Taxila’s most significant archaeological sites. The agency stated that the restoration activities have altered the monuments’ original appearance. The issue came to light after an unidentified individual submitted photographs and supporting documents to Pakistan’s Permanent Delegation to UNESCO in Paris, highlighting the reconstruction work.

The complaint alleged that the Punjab Department of Archaeology had replaced original ancient walls with newly built structures at several locations and had also

increased the height of certain sections. Following the complaint, a UNESCO team visited Taxila to inspect the site. After completing its assessment, the agency urged Pakistan to review the reconstruction work and restore the affected structures in accordance with their original architectural and historical character.

Taxila was one of the most important centres of learning and culture in the ancient world, with its history dating back to the 6th century BCE. UNESCO inscribed Taxila on the World Heritage List in 1980 in recognition of its exceptional historical, archaeological and cultural significance.

Bangladesh courts China even as ties with India improve

Dhaka: Bangladesh’s new government has sought greater Chinese investments and partnership to revive a stuttering economy, even as it attempts to re-balance ties with neighbouring India.

Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman went to Malaysia and China in his first overseas official visit last month, signalling the direction of Dhaka’s foreign policy. Analysts say the choice of destinations reflects Dhaka’s effort to recalibrate its strategic priorities. While Rahman first visited Malaysia, his trip to China is seen as the more significant.

India has historically been the traditional port of call for newly-elected South Asian leaders. Some in India have viewed Rahman’s China visit as a message to Delhi which has maintained close ties with the ousted Bangladeshi leader Sheikh Hasina.

Among several bilateral agreements, Rahman’s outreach to Beijing for help managing the Teesta River and a deal to develop a

special economic zone near Mongla port have attracted particular attention.

These are closely watched in Delhi as the two Asian giants compete for influence in Bangladesh.

Relations between Dhaka and Delhi turned frosty after the overthrow of prime minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024 in a mass uprising. She fled the country and took refuge in Delhi.

Diplomatic ties remained strained after the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus took office, with India avoiding high-level visits. After Rahman took over following a landslide victory for his Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in February, both sides have taken initiatives to reset their ties. “There is no doubt there has been a relative relaxation of tensions between the two countries,” former Indian foreign secretary Shyam Saran told the BBC.

“The cross-border economic activities are gradually returning to normal and India is also issuing tourist visas to Bangladesh-



is,” he said.

Passenger bus services between India and Ban-

gladesh have partially resumed after an 18-month gap. Services now operate

between Kolkata and Dhaka, and between Dhaka and Agartala.

When the war in the Middle East broke out earlier this year and hit global fuel

supplies, Delhi sent thousands of tonnes of emergency fuel via the cross-border Friendship Pipeline to Bangladesh. Last month, India’s new High Commissioner to Dhaka, Dinesh Trivedi, took charge. In a rare move, Delhi elevated him to cabinet rank, signalling its intent to reset bilateral ties.

Despite diplomatic tensions and the two countries imposing tit-for-tat restrictions on trade when the interim government was in power, bilateral trade last year stood at around £13bn, mostly in India’s favour.

Nevertheless, the A strong anti-India sentiment, mainly for supporting Hasina, and attempts by the Indian Border Security Force to push people, who they deem as illegal immigrants, into Bangladesh have triggered controversy and anger in Dhaka. Bangladeshi analysts further point out that the alleged inflammatory comments against Bangladesh during India’s West Bengal state elections by Hindu-nationalist politicians are sending mixed

signals to Dhaka.

“All these things got high visibility and created public dissatisfaction in Bangladesh which in a way reflected on Dhaka’s thinking process,” says Humayun Kabir, a former Bangladeshi diplomat.

“The Bangladeshi government didn’t look at these issues or positive indications,” he adds.

In May, the Hindu nationalist BJP ousted the regional Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, ending its nearly 16-year rule in the Bangladesh-bordering state. West Bengal and Bangladesh share linguistic, cultural and ethnic ties.

Any Chinese role in managing the Teesta River is a sensitive security issue for India.

Bangladeshi officials say India has pushed in thousands of people, mainly Bengali-speaking Muslims, in recent years without following any due repatriation process. rapprochement between Dhaka and Delhi is not as expected and there are continuing irritants in the bilateral relationship.

Top grooming products that make hair care simpler and more manageable include hair dryers and straighteners



Healthy, well-groomed hair is no longer exclusive to salon appointments. With the appropriate grooming tools at home, it has become easier than ever to attain smooth, voluminous, or impeccably styled hair.

Whether you are hurrying to work, preparing for a special event, or just following your daily hair care routine, investing in high-quality hair grooming tools can conserve both time and effort while enabling you to achieve salon-quality results. From hair straighteners to hair dryers, modern styling tools are

designed with advanced technologies that protect hair from excessive heat while delivering faster and better styling. Here's a look at some of the essential grooming tools that can make hair care easier and more manageable. Top hair grooming tools Hair Straightener: For Sleek

and Frizz-Free Hair A hair straightener is one of the most versatile styling tools every grooming kit should include. While it is primarily used to straighten hair, it can also create soft curls, beach waves, and polished flips with the right technique. Most of the hair straighteners these days come with ceramic, titanium, or tourmaline-coated plates that distribute heat evenly and minimise damage. Many models also feature adjustable temperature settings, making them suitable for different hair textures, from fine and delicate strands to thick, coarse hair. For the best results, always use a heat protectant spray before styling and avoid using excessively high temperatures unless necessary. Hair Dryer: Faster Drying with Better Hair Protection A good hair dryer does much more than simply dry wet hair. It helps reduce styling time, adds volume, smooths frizz, and prepares hair for further styling. Modern hair dryers feature ionic technology that helps

lock in moisture while reducing static and flyaways. Many also come with multiple heat and speed settings, along with cool-shot buttons that help set hairstyles for longer-lasting results. Attachments like concentrator nozzles and diffusers make styling even more versatile. While concentrators are ideal for sleek blowouts, diffusers work well for enhancing natural curls and waves. Hair Styling Brush: A Multi-Tasking Essential Hair styling brushes have evolved beyond traditional combs and round brushes. Hot air brushes and heated styling brushes combine drying and styling in one tool, making them ideal for busy mornings. These brushes help smooth hair, create volume at the roots, and reduce frizz while requiring less coordination than using a separate hair dryer and brush. They're particularly useful for those who want salon-like blowouts without the hassle. Choose a styling brush based on your hair length and desired finish, whether it's smooth, bouncy, or naturally volumi-

nous. Curling Wand: Effortless Waves and Curls For those who enjoy experimenting with different hairstyles, a curling wand is a valuable addition to any grooming collection. Available in various barrel sizes, curling wands can create everything from tight ringlets to loose, beach-inspired waves. Ceramic-coated barrels provide even heat distribution, reducing the chances of hot spots that can damage hair. Always curl small sections for more defined results and finish with a lightweight hairspray to keep your style intact throughout the day. Hair Trimmer: Easy Maintenance at Home Hair trimmers are no longer limited to men's grooming routines. Compact and easy to use, they are perfect for maintaining sideburns, trimming split ends, shaping fringes, or grooming facial hair. Many cordless trimmers come with multiple comb attachments, allowing users to achieve different lengths and styles with precision. Rechargeable models with long battery life are especially convenient

for travel and quick touch-ups. Scalp Massager: Supporting Healthier Hair Healthy hair begins with a healthy scalp. A scalp massager is a simple yet effective grooming tool that helps improve blood circulation while removing dirt, oil, and product buildup. Using a silicone scalp massager during shampooing can create a relaxing experience while promoting a cleaner scalp. It may also help distribute natural oils more evenly, leaving hair looking healthier and shinier. Tips for Safe Hair Styling Regardless of the tools you use, following good styling practices can help maintain healthy hair over time: Always apply a heat protectant before using heated styling tools. Use the lowest effective temperature suitable for your hair type. Avoid using heat tools on soaking wet hair unless specifically designed for wet styling. Clean styling tools regularly to remove product residue. Store tools safely after they have completely cooled down.

Here are 8 lightweight foundations that are ideal for daily use

When the weather is characterized by a combination of humidity and perspiration, your makeup truly demands a lightweight approach. This is especially true when selecting the appropriate foundations. Although full-coverage formulas are ideal for special events, daily makeup requires a product that is lighter, more breathable, and comfortable. This is where lightweight, breathable foundations become essential. These lightweight foundations even out your complexion without feeling heavy, allowing your skin to look natural while providing just the right amount of coverage. Whether you have oily, dry, combination, or sensitive skin, there's a lightweight foundation designed to meet your needs. Here are 8 excellent options that deliver a fresh, natural finish that's ideal for everyday wear. 1. L'Oréal Paris Infallible 24H Tinted Serum Foundation: If you're looking for skincare and makeup in one product, this tinted serum is an excellent choice. Infused with hyaluronic acid, it hydrates the skin while offering sheer to light coverage. The formula blends effortlessly and

leaves a radiant finish that enhances your natural complexion without masking it. It's especially suitable for dry and normal skin types, making it a favourite for minimal makeup routines. 2. Maybelline New York Liquid Foundation For All Skin Type, Full Matte Finish, With SPF, Absorbs Oil: A long-time favourite among beauty enthusiasts, Maybelline Fit Me Matte + Poreless Foundation offers lightweight, buildable coverage with a natural matte finish. It helps blur the appearance of pores and controls shine throughout the day without feeling cakey. This foundation is particularly well-suited for normal to oily skin and comes in a wide range of shades to match different skin tones. 3. Swiss Beauty Flawless Finish Foundation | Medium Coverage | Lightweight | Oil-Free Formula: Swiss Beauty Flawless Finish Foundation gives your skin a smooth, even complexion with a lightweight feel and natural-looking coverage. Its blendable formula helps blur the appearance of imperfections while leaving a soft, comfortable finish. Enriched with moisturising ingredients such as glycerin and skin-conditioning silicones, it glides on effortlessly and stays fresh

for hours. Suitable for everyday wear, this foundation provides a polished look without feeling heavy, making it ideal for creating a flawless base for any occasion. 4. NARS All Day Luminous Weightless Liquid Foundation: Combining makeup with skincare-inspired ingredients, NARS Light Reflecting Foundation creates a naturally luminous finish while remaining incredibly lightweight. It helps minimise the appearance of redness, uneven skin tone, and dullness without looking overly made up. The breathable formula is suitable for everyday office wear, casual outings, or even virtual meetings where you want polished yet natural-looking skin. 5. LOVETC Tint, Talk, Etc Radiant Glow Hydrating Skin Tint SPF 30 PA++ | 3-in-1 Makeup: LovETC Radiant Glow Skin Tint delivers sheer coverage with a fresh, dewy finish that enhances your natural complexion. Its lightweight formula helps even skin tone while allowing your skin to breathe. Infused with hydrating ingredients like hyaluronic acid, glycerin and vitamin E, it keeps skin feeling soft and comfortable throughout the

day. Perfect for everyday wear, this skin tint offers a healthy glow with a barely-there feel, leaving your complexion looking naturally radiant and refreshed. 6. Mamaearth Glow Serum Foundation Mini Tube With Vitamin C & Turmeric For 12-Hour Long Stay-18 MI L 12-Hour Long Stay: Mamaearth Glow Serum Foundation combines skincare and makeup to deliver natural-looking coverage with a healthy glow. Its lightweight formula helps even skin tone while keeping skin hydrated and comfortable. Enriched with vitamin C to brighten the complexion and turmeric to support healthy-looking skin, it also contains moisturising ingredients like glycerin for lasting softness. The serum-infused texture blends easily, creating a smooth, radiant finish that feels light on the skin and is suitable for everyday use. 7. M.A.C Studio Fix Fluid Spf 15 Liquid Medium Coverage Natural Foundation For Sensitive Skin Type Nc25, 1 Count: Originally developed for professional artists, this iconic foundation has become a favourite for everyday wear thanks to its ultra-light texture. It offers sheer, buildable coverage with a healthy, radiant finish that mimics naturally glowing skin. Its water-resistant formula makes it reliable in warmer months while remaining comfortable for extended wear. 8. RENEE Lumi Glow Highlighting Liquid Foundation -Glazed Bronz: RENEE Lumiglow Highlighting Liquid Foundation enhances your complexion with buildable coverage and a luminous finish. The lightweight formula blends effortlessly, helping to smooth the skin while adding a healthy-looking glow. Enriched with hydrating glycerin, nourishing vitamin E and light-reflecting pigments, it leaves skin feeling soft and looking naturally radiant. Ideal for everyday makeup or special occasions, this liquid foundation creates a fresh, glowing base that brightens your complexion without feeling heavy or cakey.

Kurta sets priced under ₹1,500 that are stylish and suitable for long days at the office

Choosing attire for work does not necessitate a compromise between comfort and style. A well-selected kurta set can simplify your morning routine while ensuring you maintain a polished appearance throughout the day. Lightweight materials, breathable cottons, understated patterns, and refined embroidery have emerged as essential components of the contemporary work wardrobe, demonstrating that professional dressing can be both functional and engaging. You don't have to spend a fortune. With Amazon offering several stylish kurta sets under ₹1,500, it's possible to build an office wardrobe that's comfortable, versatile and budget-friendly. Whether you prefer classic straight silhouettes, breezy Anarkalis or contemporary co-ord styles, these picks are designed to work from Monday meetings to casual sets for work 1. KLOSIA Women's Rayon Printed Anarkali Kurta and Pant with Dupatta Set: This Anarkali set offers the perfect balance between elegance and practicality. The rayon fabric drapes beautifully, creating a flattering silhouette that remains comfortable throughout long office hours. The subtle print keeps the outfit professional while adding enough personality to stand out from basic workwear. Paired with matching pants and a coordinated dupatta, it's a complete outfit that requires very little styling. Style tip: Pair with nude block heels, a sleek tote and pearl studs.

2. Aurelia Women's Solid Rayon Kurta Set with Palazzos & Dupatta: Solid-coloured kurta sets are timeless office essentials, and this Aurelia set is no exception. The rayon fabric feels soft against the skin while the palazzo pants allow unrestricted movement throughout busy workdays. Its clean silhouette makes it incredibly versatile, allowing you to accessorise differently depending on your schedule, whether it's client meetings or after-work dinners. Style tip: Add a statement watch and minimal silver jewellery for a sophisticated office look. 3. Nermosa Embroidered A-Line Kurta and Pant Set with Dupatta: Embroidery doesn't always have to be festive. This A-line kurta features subtle detailing that enhances the outfit without making it look too dressy for work. The A-line silhouette flatters most body types while allowing excellent comfort and ease of movement. It's ideal for professionals who prefer elegant ethnic wear with understated charm. Style tip: Pair with classic juttis and a structured handbag. 4. Klosia Pure Cotton Sleeveless Kurta Palazzo Set: Hot weather calls for breathable fabrics, and this pure cotton sleeveless set is made exactly for that. The coordinated palazzo pants give it a contemporary co-ord feel while maintaining an ethnic aesthetic. Comfortable enough for all-day wear yet polished enough for meetings, it's a summer office staple you'll

repeatedly reach for. Style tip: Layer with a lightweight cotton stole if your workplace prefers sleeved outfits. 5. KLOSIA Women's Rayon Printed Anarkali Kurta and Pant with Dupatta Set: If you enjoy graceful silhouettes without sacrificing comfort, this printed Anarkali deserves attention. The rayon fabric flows beautifully while remaining lightweight enough for everyday office wear. Its coordinated pants and dupatta make dressing effortless, while the elegant print keeps the overall look refined. Style tip: Finish with low block heels and a sleek ponytail. 6. DRESOUL Pure Cotton Schifflí Embroidered Kurta Set: Schifflí embroidery instantly elevates even the simplest outfits, and this cotton kurta set showcases it beautifully. The straight-cut silhouette keeps the look professional while the breathable fabric makes it comfortable through long workdays. It's a great choice for offices where smart ethnic dressing is part of the culture. Style tip: Pair with tan sandals and a leather office tote. 7. Kaari Women's Chikankari Kurta Set with Dupatta: Few embroidery styles feel as timeless as Chikankari. This Kaari kurta set combines traditional craftsmanship with a work-friendly silhouette that looks elegant without feeling overdressed. The chiffon dupatta adds softness while the straight pants keep the outfit structured and polished.

Are body mists becoming a substitute for perfumes

Entering any beauty store today, one will observe shelves adorned with vibrant body mists next to traditional perfume bottles. The influence of social media trends, endorsements from influencers, and evolving consumer tastes have ignited a lively discussion: Are body mists taking the place of perfumes? Although body mists have undoubtedly surged in popularity in recent years, the situation is not as simple as it appears. Instead of displacing perfumes, body mists are establishing their own niche within the fragrance industry. Understanding the differences between the two can help you choose the right fragrance for your lifestyle, budget, and personal preferences. What is a body mist? A body mist is a lightweight fragrance designed to provide a subtle, refresh-

ing scent. It contains a lower concentration of fragrance oils—typically between 1% and 5%—mixed with water and alcohol. Many body mists also include skin-friendly ingredients such as aloe vera, glycerin, or botanical extracts that offer a cooling and hydrating effect. Because of their lighter formulation, body mists create a soft fragrance that sits close to the skin. They are ideal for everyday wear, post-workout freshness, or quick touch-ups throughout the day. What is a perfume? Perfumes are more concentrated fragrances made with a higher percentage of fragrance oils. Depending on the type, perfumes can contain anywhere from 15% to 40% fragrance concentration. This richer formula allows the scent to develop over time through top, mid-

dle, and base notes, creating a more complex and long-lasting fragrance experience. A few sprays of perfume are often enough to leave a lasting impression, making it a preferred choice for formal occasions, evening events, or anyone who wants their fragrance to stay noticeable for hours. Why are body mists becoming so popular? Several factors have contributed to the rise of body mists. One of the biggest reasons is their affordability. Compared to premium perfumes, body mists are generally much more budget-friendly, making them accessible to students, young professionals, and anyone looking to experiment with different scents without spending a fortune. Another factor is the growing preference for lighter fragrances. As workplaces, gyms, and



ENTERTAINMENT

Tanvi Thakkar splits, seeks privacy



Mumbai : Sometimes, life doesn't go the way we plan, and a few tough decisions have to be made. Television actress Tanvi Thakkar has now shared one such personal update with her fans, asking for love, kindness and a little privacy.

Taking to Instagram, the Ghum Hai Kisikey Pyaar Mein actress revealed that she and husband Aditya Kapadia have decided to part ways after more than five years of marriage. In her emotional note, Tanvi said the decision was mutual and taken only after "a great deal of thought and consideration." Tanvi also made it clear that there is no bad blood between them. She said they are hoping for peace and healing as they move on with their lives. The actress requested fans and the media to respect their privacy and added that she would not be answering any questions or calls about her personal life. She also thanked everyone for their love, support and understanding. The news came as a surprise to many fans who had seen the couple's journey over the years.

Tanvi and Aditya first met while working together on the TV show Ek Doosre Se Karte Hain Pyaar Hum. Friendship soon turned into love, and after dating for several years, they got engaged on December 24, 2013. The couple got married on February 16, 2021, after being together for seven years. Instead of a big wedding, they chose an intimate court marriage in Bandra, Mumbai, with only close family members present. They later celebrated with a small reception attended by family and friends. In June 2023, the couple welcomed their son. They often shared sweet moments from their parenting journey on social media, which fans loved. On the work front, Tanvi has been part of shows like Bahu Hamari Rajni Kant, Madhubala – Ek Ishq Ek Junoon, Miley Jab Hum Tum and Ghum Hai Kisikey Pyaar Mein. Aditya, meanwhile, is known for his work in Just Mohabbat and Shaka Laka Boom Boom.

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Diljit Dosanjh flooded with Satluj links on Instagram live after ZEE5 removal

Mumbai : Just days after Satluj was taken down from ZEE5 India, Diljit Dosanjh addressed the controversy in an Instagram Live session. The actor, whose film has been caught in a years-long censorship battle, interacted with fans after they flooded the comments section saying they had already downloaded the movie before it disappeared from the OTT platform.

Reacting to the comments, Diljit said he was happy that so many people had managed to download the film. He even urged those who had it to share the download links with others so more people could watch Satluj until it returns to ZEE5. He also encouraged viewers to watch the film with their families. In another moment from the live session that has since gone viral, Diljit said, "Hun tension nahi, sab ne kar layi download," adding that he was no longer worried because people had already accessed the



film before it was removed.

Diljit also reflected on the film's difficult journey to release, saying neither he nor the makers sought help from the Punjabi film industry or Bollywood. "We've been fighting to get this film released for the last three to four years. We never went to anyone asking for support. I never asked anyone from my industry, nor did I ever ask anyone in Bollywood to help release our film, support us, or stand by us. We fought this battle ourselves," he said in Punjabi. He went on to add, "Everyone feels their

own struggle is the biggest. Whatever work you're in, everyone is fighting their own battle on their own platform. We too brought our film to the audience on our own, got it released, and made sure it reached the people."

Directed by Honey Trehan, Satluj was originally titled Ghallughara before being renamed Punjab '95 and finally Satluj. The film is inspired by the life of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khaira and spent years in limbo after reportedly facing more than 120 suggested cuts from the CBFC.

Aamir Khan and Gauri Spratt tie the knot, celebrate with joyful dance

Mumbai : Aamir Khan married Gauri Spratt in an intimate ceremony at his residence in Pali Hill, Mumbai, on July 5. The couple, who have been together for over two years, officially registered their marriage under the Special Marriage Act. Cricketer Irfan Pathan, who attended the intimate wedding ceremony on Sunday, has given fans a sneak-peek into Aamir and Gauri's big day. He shared a video that shows the couple exchanging vows, sharing a hug and joyfully dancing together at their wedding.

The video clip shared by Irfan Pathan shows Aamir Khan first reading out his wedding vows, followed by Gauri Spratt sharing hers in an intimate moment during the ceremony. Behind the couple sat Aamir's children, Ira Khan and Junaid Khan. Gauri's son from her previous marriage was seated between the couple, while Azad

Rao Khan, Aamir's son with ex-wife Kiran Rao, was also present. The family members were seen warmly applauding as the couple completed their vows. Aamir was later seen gently kissing Gauri's hand. The video also shows the newlyweds dancing joyfully with the guests present at the wedding ceremony. Rajkumar Hirani, Raj Thackeray, Avinash Gowariker, Amin Hajee, and others were seen in attendance, enjoying the celebrations as they watched the couple dance.

Sharing the video, Irfan Pathan wrote, "Dear Amir Bhai & Gauri, Heartiest congratulations on your wedding! Wishing you both a lifetime of love, happiness, laughter, and togetherness. May Allah bless your beautiful journey with endless joy and countless blessings. So happy for you both, congratulations once again!" Aamir Khan wore a traditional ivory outfit for his



wedding with Gauri, with a statement brooch on the left side of his chest. Meanwhile, Gauri looked stunning in a beige lehenga accessorized with elaborate jewellery.

Aamir Khan and Gauri Spratt first met each other about 25 years ago, when they were only acquaintances. Years later, they reconnected through family members in mid-2023. From being acquaintances, Aamir Khan and Gauri Spratt gradually grew closer, eventually forming a friendship that later turned

into a relationship. After dating for nearly 18 months, the couple made their relationship public in 2025. On the eve of his 60th birthday, Aamir officially introduced Gauri to the media.

Aamir was earlier married to Reena Dutta in 1986; the couple divorced in 2002. They have two children, Ira and Junaid. He later married filmmaker Kiran Rao in 2005, with whom he shares a son, Azad. The two separated in 2021 but continue to co-parent their son amicably.

After jail release in 2018, Salman Khan's heartwarming gesture for race 3 co-star

Mumbai : Back in 2018, actor Saqib Saleem was shooting for Race 3 with seniors like Salman Khan, Bobby Deol and Anil Kapoor, among others. During the last leg of the shoot, he wanted to celebrate his birthday and invite Salman to the party. While the superstar accepted this invitation, his Jodhpur jail sentence came as a roadblock. While Salman was released on bail soon, what happened next is a story that Saqib will never forget.

Saqib Saleem told Variety India, "We were shooting for 'Race' on April 2. It was our



last day and my birthday was April 8. I told bhai, 'Bhai, it's

my birthday on April 8.' And I was wondering how do I tell

him, 'I'm thinking of throwing a party; will you come?'" He added, "He just looked at me and said, 'Of course I'll come.'" Soon after this, Salman Khan was sentenced to jail in Jodhpur after being found guilty in the infamous poaching case. His arrest not only affected the film but also sent the industry into panic mode. As such, Saqib cancelled his grand celebrations. However, Salman was released on bail just a day before Saqib's birthday.

He recalled, "He came back from jail on April 7, and we were watching it live on tele-

vision. They said he had left the airport and he's on his way home. So Bobby sir called me and said, 'Listen, we'll go. Say hi. He's come. We'll go.' And I've forgotten that my birthday party, whatever." The actor added, "It was 11 pm, and I decided to sneak out quietly. So I went to him and told him, 'Bhai, I will see you. I have to go somewhere.' He said, 'Wait a minute. Where are you going? Will you eat anything?' I kept saying no, but he kept asking me to wait for 10 minutes."

"At 12 o'clock, there were

three cakes and a birthday gift for me. And I just kept looking at him. I remember thinking, 'You are going through so much in your personal life, but you remembered.' I'm sure somebody else ordered that cake and somebody else got that gift. But he thought about it. That day I realised, this man is just pure gold. The way he thinks about you, it's lovely," Saqib said. "Since then, it's one of my nicest friendships or other relationships I have with senior people in the business. It's one of them," Saqib Saleem concluded.

Shilpa Shirodkar says Farah Khan rejected her for 'Chaiyya Chaiyya' over weight

Mumbai : 90s Bollywood diva Shilpa Shirodkar made a startling revelation about missing out on one of Bollywood's most iconic songs, 'Chaiyya Chaiyya' opposite Shah Rukh Khan.

The actress, who recently appeared on the dance reality show, 'India's Best Dancer Season 05', recalled the incident starring that Farah Khan, the choreographer of the iconic song, thought she was fat for the song. Host Haarsh Limbachiyaa asked, "Shilpa ma'am, I got to know one thing. The iconic song, Chaiyya Chaiyya, you were supposed to do it, initially."

Recalling the incident, Shilpa said, "Yes, actually Farah had come with the song, and she said, 'This is the song, but I will give you 15 days. Reduce your weight.' So I ate boiled vegetables for 15 days. But I might have lost weight,



but it wasn't less as per Farah. So she came back and said, 'Sorry, but you're still fat. We can't take you for the song,' and then the song happened with Malaika (Arora). I mean, I'm not lying. I was fat, so I didn't get the song, and Farah says, I was 100 kilos. I wasn't 100 kilos." The revelation left everyone on the set surprised.

Adding a lighter touch to the conversation, Shilpa turned to judge Geeta Kapur and said she had witnessed the incident herself. Geeta, smiling, replied, "I was an assistant."

Praising her honesty, Haarsh Limbachiyaa remarked, "I have to admit one thing. She's so selfless and so honest. No one calls her a heroine on na-

tional TV." Talking about Shilpa Shirodkar, the actress has been a part of many successful films and television projects over the years.

In the 90s, Shilpa Shirodkar was among Bollywood's hottest stars, featured in hits like Him and Kishan Kanhaiya, later gaining television fame on Bigg Boss 18.

Amitabh Bachchan thanks fans for braving heavy rains outside jalsa

Mumbai : Mumbai is battling heavy rains right now, and amid this, videos of water entering Amitabh Bachchan's Juhu residence have surfaced on social media. In his new blog, while he didn't react to the viral clips, he spoke about the weather and thanked his fans who battled the heavy rain to show up outside his residence every Sunday.

Amitabh Bachchan took to his Tumblr blog, where he spoke about his weekly Sunday ritual amid the relentless Mumbai rains and said, "A wave, folded palms... a signing of autographs... my respect, as always." "They come despite the weather, rain, shine, winter... and the same enthusiasm... so deeply moving for me," he further added.

While speaking about the ongoing monsoon and the heavy rain affecting many, he add-



ed, "The rains do not abate... flooding continues... yes, Monsoon delayed, and now the water resources the surrounding lakes filling up... some difficulty to dwellers... farming... but this too shall pass." "Be well, all... be safe... venture out only if absolutely urgent... as in Mumbai... but in general too... all of you are too precious," the legendary actor continued.

On the work front, Amitabh

Bachchan will next be seen in the sequel to Kalki 2898 AD. Directed by Nag Ashwin, the film also stars Prabhas and Kamal Haasan. The first installment, released in 2024, turned out to be a blockbuster, earning over Rs 1,000 crore worldwide. Amitabh's performance as Ashwatthama received widespread praise, and he will reprise the role in the sequel. The makers are yet to announce the film's release date.

Director V. N. Aditya on challenges: actresses must work under strict conditions

Hyderabad : Deepika Padukone is among Bollywood's biggest stars, enjoying the clout to negotiate her own working conditions. From limiting work hours to setting other professional terms, the actress is known to collaborate only with producers who agree to her requirements.

Recently, actress Kajal Aggarwal publicly supported Deepika's stand, saying she "completely stands by" her preference for an eight-hour workday, describing it as a simple and reasonable request. She emphasised that similar boundaries are normal in other professions and questioned why the film industry should be an exception. Her remarks come amid industry discussions on providing better working conditions for actors, especially new mothers, without extending work-days.

Nayanthara, too, is known for setting her own conditions, including skipping promotional events and focusing only on her work on the sets. "Female actors have to be respected and their personal lives should also be taken into account," says director V N Aditya. He believes women have long been deprived of equal opportunities in the film industry. "When hair-



dressers and costume designers working with a heroine are allowed to work only eight hours under federation rules, why target and shame an actress when she asks for similar work norms?" he asks.

He says male stars enjoy several privileges, while heroines continue to face restrictions imposed by producers and directors. "An actress has to remain on the set even when the hero has not arrived. The moment he turns up, she has to rush to the set from wherever she is. That is unfair," he says. Aditya also points to pay disparity and the physical challenges faced by actresses. "They perform action sequences even during their menstrual cycle. We often come to know about it through their staff because they hesitate to tell the director. They are afraid to ob-

ject," he says. He adds that heroines are replaced much faster than male actors for various reasons. "An actress's life in the industry is tough and restricted by many factors. She cannot openly express her thoughts. Deepika Padukone has the stature to seek better work rules after motherhood, yet she was blamed and trolled. That is unfair," he says. Speaking about the current generation of Telugu actresses such as Meenakshi Chaudhary, Sreeleela, Mrunal Thakur, Kayadu Lohar and Bhagyashree Borse, Aditya says they are all in demand but have little bargaining power.

"I prefer not to name individuals, but most young heroines have to follow rules made by a male-dominated film industry. While women in other professions enjoy better working norms and hours, the movie industry continues to restrict their freedom and choices," he points out.

He says actresses like Savitri, Vijayashanti, Anushka Shetty and Samantha have proved that women can pull audiences to theatres just like male stars. "These actresses became torchbearers of women-centric cinema, but they do not get such opportunities regularly. That is the unfortunate reality," he concludes.

Mahesh Babu's alleged lord ram look leaks; reddit users compare him to Ranbir Kapoor

Mumbai : A photo of Mahesh Babu as Lord Ram, allegedly from the shoot of Varanasi, is doing the rounds online. The image shows Mahesh Babu in yellow-hued attire, presumably from Lord Ram's vanvaas era. While there is no confirmation of the photo's authenticity, it has gone viral across social media platforms, and people are even comparing Mahesh's look to Ranbir Kapoor's in Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana.

On Reddit, the image was simply shared as a screenshot from KoiMoi's report. The portal's caption read, "Mahesh Babu's Lord Ram look from Varanasi takes the internet by storm." In the image, it appeared as if the actor was in the middle of the shoot, with the crew watching him give his take. Have a look at the photo



here. One comment read, "Namit and Ranbir better be prepared. Kahi SSR 10 minute mein puri 'Ramayana' movie ko overshadow na kar de, as he did with teaser." Someone else wrote, "These leaks are on purpose. Hollywood started doing it, and now everyone else just follows." Another comment simply read, "PR."

Another comment read, "He looks like the character." Someone else wrote, "Yes, he looks amazing; can't say about his acting but he suits the character. Idk why this looks like an AI image tho." Someone commented, "I trust in SSR to get the best out of MB." A comment read, "OMFG This is my Ram He looks great." Meanwhile, SS Ra-

jamouli's Varanasi is shaping up to be one of the most anticipated releases in recent times. Rajamouli said at an event last year, "On the first day, when Mahesh came in Lord Ram's get-up for the photoshoot, I had goosebumps. I was torn. Mahesh has the charm of Krishna, but the calmness of Ram. Still, I was confident. I even set that photo as my wallpaper and then removed it so that no one would see it."

Besides Mahesh Babu, the film also features Priyanka Chopra and marks her Indian cinema comeback. Prithviraj Sukumaran stars as the antagonist, and many viral theories suggest that he might play a version of Kumbhkaran. However, this has yet to be confirmed. The film is scheduled to be released in 2027.

Flash floods in J&K bury machinery at a power project site, blocking the highway

Jammu and Kashmir, July 06: On Monday, relentless rain unleashed flash floods that wreaked havoc in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar and Doda areas, leaving a path of damage in their wake. In a matter of minutes, a rapid flash flood transformed into a moving mountain of water, mud, and house-sized rocks that smashed into Kishtwar's 540 MW Kwar Hydroelectric Project, which was under development. The flood began in the higher reaches following heavy overnight rains. As the water rushed down the steep slopes, it swept up everything in its path, including loose dirt, pebbles, and large boulders. By the time the gushing stream reached the Tail Race Tunnel (TRT) area of the Kwar project, it was no longer just water. It was a violent slurry of debris moving with the force of a mudslide. Several heavy dumpers, trucks, JCBs and other machinery were parked at the site. The torrent hit them head-on, first knocking them off balance, then dragging them and finally entombing them under feet of mud and boulders. In visuals from the site, only the tips of tippers and the arms of excavators could be seen poking out from under the debris.Officials confirmed



no loss of life or injuries in the incident. When the storm waters retreated, project officials and staff began a debris removal operation. Multiple excavators and loaders have been called into action to cut through the mud and extract the buried automobiles. The effort to restore normalcy at the site is underway.The 540 MW Kwar Hydroelectric Power Project, located on the Chenab River near Kishtwar, is one of the most important hydroelectric projects now under development in Jammu and Kashmir. The Doda-Kishtwar segment of National Highway 244

was closed at Prem Nagar in Doda after flash floods deposited massive amounts of debris on the route. Several automobiles that had been parked on the roadside were also buried.National Highways officials and the district administration have dispatched personnel and equipment to clean the highway. Commuters are urged to avoid the road until it re-opens.Authorities are closely watching the situation in Chenab Valley as restoration work continues. People have been advised to avoid rivers, streams, and construction sites during heavy rain.

Neymar Jr. Net Worth 2026: Brand Value, Earnings, and Assets Of Brazil's Icon

New Jersey: Neymar's goal of winning the FIFA World Cup came to a devastating end on Sunday when Brazil lost 2-1 to Norway in the Round of 16. Brazil failed to advance to the FIFA World Cup quarterfinals for the first time since 1990. Following the loss, Neymar made an unexpected declaration, declaring his retirement from international football. The decision marked the end of his 16-year career with the national team, during which he became Brazil's all-time leading scorer with 80 goals in 129 matches. Neymar's final outing for Brazil was as a substitute at MetLife Stadium, where he made his international debut in 2010. Despite the fact that he did not win the coveted World Cup, the Brazilian legend remains one of the world's wealthiest active footballers.

According to Celebrity Net Worth, Neymar's net worth is expected to reach about 450 million dollars (Rs 4,285 crore) in 2026, with his total career earnings exceeding 700 million dollars. A large chunk of Neymar's riches stems from his time at Santos, Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain, and Al Hilal, where he received large salary and transfer-related payments. Beyond football, lucrative endorsement deals, image rights agreements, and collaborations with multinational businesses have greatly increased his income, propelling him to the ranks of the world's wealthiest footballers. His financial triumph didn't happen immediately. Since joining Barcelona

in 2013, Neymar has won La Liga, the Copa del Rey, and the UEFA Champions League. His commercial prominence skyrocketed, and businesses were eager to work with him. In 2017, he transferred to PSG for 222 million pounds. It is still the most expensive transfer in football history. Since then, Neymar's wages have risen. It is reported that he makes between \$70-80 million yearly. Aside from his football earnings, sponsorships and endorsement deals have contributed significantly to Neymar's net worth. He has collaborated with various big companies over the years, including PUMA, Red Bull, Beats by Dre, Blaze Casino, PokerStars, Replay Jeans, and Tru Fragrance, cementing his position as one of football's most marketable talents. According to a report by Yahoo Sports, Neymar earns around \$30 million annually from his long-term partnership with PUMA alone. Beyond endorsements, he has diversified his portfolio with investments in real estate, esports, digital media, and lifestyle ventures. Neymar also enjoys a strong presence on social media and content platforms, with his official YouTube channel boasting 8.56 million subscribers as of July 6, 2026. Neymar was practically inconsolable as Brazil was eliminated by Norway. Visuals of him crying relentlessly after the final whistle broke fans' hearts. Several of his Brazil teammates tried to comfort him, but the former Barcelona man was left utterly shattered.

Abhishek Banerjee submitted documents at Kalighat police station in connection with the footboard case

Kolkata, July 06: Abhishek Banerjee, a Trinamool Congress MP, provided documents on Sunday in response to charges that he posted security people on the footboard of his driving automobile.The papers were turned up the Kalighat Police Station. Police sources felt the papers were insufficient.Last week, Rajib Sarkar, a Baguiati resident, filed a complaint with the Kalighat police station, stating that Abhishek broke various traffic regulations by permitting security guards to stand on the footboard of his moving vehicle, endangering lives. Sources said the police had sought certain documents from the Diamond Harbour MP, which he had submitted before Kalighat police station through a representative on Sunday. An officer said the police received photographs of security personnel standing on the footboard of a vehicle in which Abhishek was travelling.“We have found that the documents are inadequate,” said an officer of Kolkata Police.Sources said the security personnel were deployed in that manner after eggs were hurled at Abhishek during a visit to Sonarpur a few weeks after the Assembly election results were announced. A second FIR was filed on Saturday against



Abhishek and others in connection with suspected irregularities in the Sebaashray project, a healthcare initiative.This case has been registered with the Bishnupur police station by BJP leader Abhijit Das, also known as Bobby.The first FIR was filed in the

same matter following Sukhdev Das' complaint at Diamond Harbour police station.Abhishek and others faced charges under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Drug and Cosmetics Act, Atomic Energy Act, and West Bengal Clinical Establishment Act.

'Toughest Opponent Ever': Lamine Yamal Selects Portugal Star Ahead of World Cup Clash

Arlington:The 2026 FIFA World Cup has already provided its fair share of surprises, penalty shootouts, and breakout stars, but Monday's (Tuesday in India) Round of 16 match between Spain and Portugal promises to be one of the tournament's most exciting yet. While the emphasis will inevitably rest on the Iberian rivals, one individual matchup might decide who advances to the quarter-finals: Lamine Yamal vs Nuno Mendes. In a recent interview, Spain phenom Yamal labeled the Portugal full-back as the toughest opponent he has faced in his career, adding another element of suspense to the upcoming knockout meeting.Nuno Mendes is the most challenging opponent I've ever faced. He's pretty excellent. "I enjoy playing against him because we both know it's one-on-one," the 18-year-old added. Yamal heads into the contest in red-hot form after playing a key role in Spain's impressive World Cup campaign. The Barcelona winger has dazzled with his pace, dribbling and creativity, helping Spain emerge as one of the favourites for the title. His latest display came in Spain's



commanding 3-0 win over Austria in the Round of 32, where he once again underlined why he is regarded as one of world football's brightest young stars.But if there is one defender who has consistently tested him, it is Mendes. The Portugal left-back returned the compliment while acknowledging the threat Yamal poses.“I like to play against him too. He's a young player, a player with a lot of quality, who can make a difference in the game. So I think

it's always a good battle. It's going to be a very difficult battle, with a very complicated team as well. If we can keep the ball away from Lamine, I think it's a good start,” Mendes said.Portugal, led by Cristiano Ronaldo and boasting one of the tournament's deepest squads, booked their place in the Round of 16 after edging Croatia. Spain, meanwhile, have looked increasingly convincing as the tournament has progressed, setting up a heavy-

weight clash that many believe could have been a final.With a place in the World Cup quarter-finals at stake, the duel between Yamal and Mendes has already become one of the most talked-about storylines. One is arguably the most exciting young attacker in world football; the other is the only defender Yamal himself has singled out as his toughest challenge. On Monday, the pair renew their rivalry on football's biggest stage.

A man murders his wife with a pan in Delhi's Gopal Nagar and then confesses to the police

New Delhi, July 06: A 48-year-old man reportedly murdered his wife by bludgeoning her with a frying pan at their home in southwest Delhi's Gopal Nagar near Najafgarh before stepping into a local police station early Sunday and admitting to the crime, officials said. According to authorities, the guy appeared at the Baba Haridas Nagar police station at 8 a.m., contacted the duty officer, and informed him that he had slain his 43-year-old wife at their house about midnight. A police squad escorted him to the residence, where the woman's body was discovered.Her body was sent to a government hospital mortuary for autopsy, and her family members, who also reside in Gopal Nagar, were notified. Police detained the man and registered a murder case at the Baba Haridas Nagar police station. Kushal Pal Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka), said the individual informed investigators he had schizophrenia and had been receiving treatment at Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) hospital for the previous two to three years.

Safety checks of under-construction structures reveal rules infractions



Kolkata, July 06: Safety audit teams inspecting under-construction buildings discovered that several builders began work without informing the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), while others failed to notify the civic body once they reached the plinth level, both of which violated the conditions attached to approved building plans.Engineers stated that these necessary reports allow the KMC to monitor development and uncover unlawful deviations at an early stage. By Monday, 16 combined teams of engineers and officials from the KMC, Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority, state public works department, electricity utilities, and fire services had assessed over 50 structures. KMC sources stated that around 350 under-construction structures inside the city's municipal borders had been identified for safety checks.The state administration has halted construction of all under-construction commercial and residential structures that are G+5 (six storeys) or higher until July 31, awaiting the completion of safety checks. "Developers of all under-construction buildings are required to inform the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) before starting work, even if they have an approved building plan. The

requirement ensures that the KMC is aware construction has begun, allowing our engineers to inspect the site periodically or seek updates and reports from the structural engineer or architect," a KMC official said.“During our inspection, we found that construction in some buildings started without informing the KMC. Some other developers did not inform even after they had completed construction till the plinth level,” said the official.KMC rules require builders to inform the civic body before starting construction after obtaining an approved building plan.

They cannot proceed beyond the plinth level until the KMC inspects the site and grants approval. Engineers can determine at the plinth stage whether the construction has deviated from the sanctioned plan, which is why an inspection is mandatory at that point. Since the state government announced the safety audit of a section of under-construction buildings, the KMC has identified around 350 structures that require inspection. Of these, about 50 had been audited by Monday.Each inspection is time-consuming, and persistent rain has further slowed the process.“The number of under-construction buildings to be inspected is likely to increase. Many builders who

have recently obtained approved plans and are about to begin work are approaching us again for a site inspection,” a KMC official said. In the Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation area, about 68 buildings will need safety audits, said an official. “We have identified 54 residential buildings and 14 commercial buildings where the audits will be necessary. So far, we have completed inspections of 7 buildings. These are the ones from whom we have received applications,” said an official.“We will submit our reports by Tuesday,” the official added.In New Town, about 60 buildings will need safety audits.The ban on construction applies to Calcutta, New Town, Bidhannagar, Rajarhat, Sonarpur-Rajpur, Pujali, Maheshatala, Budge Budge, Baranagar, South Dum Dum, Kamarhati, parts of Bally, parts of the Howrah Municipal Corporation area and the Bishnupur rural area near Joka. The safety audit teams conducting field inspections will submit their findings to a technical subcommittee for review. While various audit teams have been formed across municipal entities, a single technical subcommittee is looking into issues from all of them.“Both the safety audit teams and the technical subcommittee are made up of engineers with subject competence. “Their recommendations will be critical,” an official stated.The ultimate decision on whether to resume construction will be made by a high-level committee made up of top administrators and engineers. The technical subcommittee will submit its recommendations to the high-powered panel, which will have the last say on whether to accept or reject petitions to resume building.

After India's consecutive losses, the BCCI advised Gautam Gambhir to bring in this IPL star

Belfast: Shreyas Iyer's term as India's T20I captain was further hampered on Saturday after India lost to England by four wickets. Iyer's leadership began on a poor note, with India losing 0-2 against Ireland in a two-match series. The squad then traveled to England for a five-match T20I series, with the first match being rained out before England claimed a 1-0 lead with a dominating win in the second game in Manchester. Iyer, who succeeded Suryakumar Yadav as India's T20I skipper, has faced harsh criticism for the team's dismal performance. Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan urged selectors to consider Rajat Patidar for the national T20I team due to his exceptional performance in the shorter format.Pathan commented on X that with so many left-handed batsmen in the Indian T20 team, Team India should consider Rajat Patidar for the future.I sincerely hope he gets an opportunity, especially because Team India still has plenty of time to experiment before the next T20 World Cup,” he continued.Although Patidar is yet to make his T20I debut for India, he has a strong domestic T20 record. He has 3,389 runs in 106 innings, with a strikeout rate of 160.08. In addition to his batting exploits, Patidar has also enjoyed success as a captain, leading Royal Challengers Bengaluru to back-to-back IPL titles, most recently in 2026. Speaking of the game, the hosts bounced back emphatically to defeat India by four wickets in the second T20I, chasing down 191 with an over to spare.

England star hospitalized during wild victory celebrations in Mexico

Estadio Azteca: Jordan Henderson suffered a “really bad” wrist injury while celebrating England's thrilling World Cup last-16 victory against Mexico, according to Thomas Tuchel on Monday. Henderson, who did not participate in the game, was stretched off the field after falling awkwardly from the advertising hoardings following England's 3-2 triumph. “Jordan Henderson just fell and hurt his wrist. “It looks really bad,” England manager Thomas Tuchel remarked on BBC One following his team's victory on Monday. “It's a terrible injury, and Jordan's absence from the evening does not suit with

the occasion. “The doctor informed me that he is in the hospital.” England head coach Tuchel praised his players for defending their advantage despite being down to 10 men in the 54th minute due to defender Jarell Quansah's red card. ““I am very proud,” he stated. “We needed everything.

It was really challenging. “We faced setbacks just as we believed we were gaining momentum. That is the appropriate mentality. This crew truly means it. When the going gets rough, they never give up or lose hope. It was one step farther.” “We need to soak everything in; this is Azteca, Mexico, a cha-

otic game; we left everything out there, every single one of us; and now it's full steam ahead. If a team has heart and a team believes in sheer will. “I have no words; it was an iconic match in an iconic stadium, and we overcame so much adversity today,” he said.England will face Norway in the quarterfinals, who defeated co-hosts Mexico despite the Azteca altitude. England and Norway have met 12 times since their first encounter in 1937. The first four games between the two nations were friendlies in 1937, 1938, 1949, and 1966, with England winning all four by an aggregate score of 20-2.

Aryna Sabalenka crashes out as Naomi Osaka reaches maiden Wimbledon quarterfinals with authority



New Delhi : Naomi Osaka produced a statement performance on Centre Court, defeating World No.1 Aryna Sabalenka 6-2, 7-6(2) to reach her maiden Wimbledon quarter-final, in a match that combined tactical discipline with high-pressure execution at key moments. It was a

clash that tested both players in contrasting ways, Sabalenka's raw power against Osaka's controlled timing and clean ball-striking. Sabalenka entered the contest as the top seed after another strong Grand Slam season, having already reached the Australian Open final earlier in 2026

and consistently going deep at major events, including a fourth consecutive final run Down Under before finishing runner-up to Elena Rybakina. However, against Osaka, that strength was disrupted. The Japanese star repeatedly absorbed Sabalenka's pace and redirected it deep, preventing

her from settling into first-strike patterns. From early in the match, Sabalenka was forced into longer baseline exchanges and higher-risk shot selection, which tilted momentum away from her usual aggressive rhythm. Osaka, meanwhile, played with remarkable clarity. She dictated direction in rallies, returned serve with depth, and consistently neutralised Sabalenka's attempts to take control. Even when the second set tightened, Osaka's ability to stay composed under pressure became the defining factor. The match reached its decisive phase in the second-set tiebreak, where Osaka elevated sharply and ran away 7-2 to close out the contest. That finish was significant beyond just the scoreline, it snapped Sabalenka's extraordinary streak of 21 consecutive Grand Slam tiebreak wins, a run that had underlined

her dominance in pressure situations at majors. It also marked Osaka's first victory over Sabalenka since 2018, reinforcing how rare and meaningful the result was in the context of their rivalry. Earlier meetings this season had gone in Sabalenka's favour, but Osaka flipped the narrative at Wimbledon with one of her most complete performances on grass. The win extended Osaka's strong 2026 campaign, taking her to 20 victories for the season and marking her first-ever triumph on Wimbledon's Centre Court. For Sabalenka, the defeat ends a promising title bid earlier than expected. For Osaka, it signals a return to elite contention at the highest level. With this result, Naomi Osaka moves into the last eight at SW19, where she will face Karolina Muchova, who dumped out 2024 champion Barbora Krejickova in the Round of 16.

Ancelotti explains why Bruno Guimaraes took Brazil's penalty instead of Vini Jr

New Jersey: Brazil head coach Carlo Ancelotti revealed that Bruno Guimaraes was only his side's third-choice penalty taker during the Selecao's shock 2-1 defeat to Norway in the FIFA World Cup Round of 16, with both Neymar and Raphinha unavailable when the crucial spot-kick was awarded. Brazil were handed a golden opportunity to take the lead in the first half after winning a penalty. With Vinicius Jr on the pitch, many expected the Real Madrid forward to step up, having taken penalties for the Spanish giants in the past. Instead, Guimaraes took responsibility, only to see his effort brilliantly saved by Norway goalkeeper Orjan Nyland. The miss proved costly as Erling Haaland struck twice in the second half before Neymar's stoppage-time penalty served only as a consolation in Brazil's tournament-ending defeat. Addressing the decision after the match, Ancelotti explained that Brazil



have a pre-determined order for penalties and that Guimaraes was next in line when the spot-kick was awarded. "Neymar is our first penalty taker and Raphinha is the second," Ancelotti said. "Neither of them was on the pitch at that moment, so Bruno was next." The Italian coach added that Guimaraes had shown enough confidence and quality from the spot in training to earn that responsibility. "These things can happen. Bruno has trained well and we had complete confidence in him. Sometimes you score, sometimes the goalkeeper makes a great

save." The explanation also clarified why Vinicius Jr, despite his experience from the penalty spot with Real Madrid, was overlooked for the decisive moment. Guimaraes opted for a stuttering run-up before aiming low to Nyland's right, but the Norwegian goalkeeper guessed correctly and produced a superb save to keep the scores level. The stop lifted Norway, with Nyland continuing to frustrate Brazil through a series of excellent saves before Haaland punished the five-time champions with two clinical finishes in the second half.

Dear Neymar, thank you for teaching an entire generation what true Joga Bonito looked like

New Delhi: here is an unwritten rule in most Bengali households. Sooner or later, football will find you. And when it does, someone older, louder and infinitely more opinionated than you will ask the question that has divided living rooms for generations. Brazil or Argentina? There are no neutral answers. It's almost hereditary. You inherit a football nation long before you understand what offside means. In my family, Brazil had already won that battle. So when I was born in 2001, there wasn't really a choice to make. The yellow shirt was waiting for me before I could even walk. A year later, Brazil lifted their fifth World Cup in Yokohama. Unfortunately, one-year-old me wasn't particularly interested. I was probably more occupied with learning how to stand upright than watching Ronaldo Nazario bulldoze Germany in a World Cup final. Looking back now, it



feels like a terrible piece of timing. Because here I am, 25 years later, still waiting. That 2002 triumph remains the last time Brazil conquered the world. Somehow, I was born into the most successful football nation on the planet and have grown into adulthood without ever seeing the Selecao lift another World Cup. Yet strangely, that isn't the first thing that comes to mind when I think

about supporting Brazil. Neymar is. I belong to a generation that heard stories about Ronaldinho rather than lived them. Ronaldo Nazario's genius arrived through grainy YouTube compilations, old DVDs and those endless conversations with older cousins that always ended the same way: "You should've seen him in his prime." Rivaldo, Cafu and

Roberto Carlos felt like characters from football folklore. We knew what they had done, but we never felt it in real time. He became my introduction to what everyone kept calling Joga Bonito. Not because Brazil always won, or because every tournament ended with confetti in yellow and green, but because Neymar played football like someone hopelessly in love with the ball.

Ex-FIFA chief slams Trump-linked red card reversal for United States star

Mumbai : Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter has criticised FIFA after the governing body suspended Folarin Balogun's automatic one-match ban, clearing the United States striker to face Belgium in Monday's World Cup Round of 16 clash following reports of intervention from U.S. President Donald Trump. The decision, announced on Sunday, has sparked one of the biggest controversies of the tournament.

Balogun's availability for the knockout tie has drawn criticism from across the football world, with Blatter becoming the highest-profile figure to question the circumstances surrounding FIFA's ruling. Balogun had been handed an automatic one-match suspension after being sent off during the United States' 2-0 win over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The 25-year-old had opened the scoring before receiving a straight red card



following a VAR review for a challenge on Tarik Muharemovic. With three goals to his name, Balogun is the United States' leading scorer at the tournament and a key figure in United States coach Mauricio Pochettino's attack heading into the last-16 clash. Blatter did not hold back in his criticism of the governing body. In a post on X, the former FIFA chief questioned whether football's disciplinary

process had remained independent. "Red cards are not overturned by political phone calls. They are overturned by rules, evidence and independent bodies. If a U.S. President intervenes with the FIFA President, and a player is suddenly cleared before a World Cup knockout match, the question is unavoidable: Quo vadis, FIFA?" "Football must never become a playground for political power," Blatter's

remarks came amid reports that Trump had personally contacted FIFA president Gianni Infantino after the United States' victory over Bosnia and Herzegovina, asking the governing body to review Balogun's dismissal. The Latin phrase Quo vadis, meaning "Where are you going?", underscored Blatter's criticism of FIFA's direction under Infantino. While FIFA has not commented publicly on the reported conversation between Trump and Infantino, the governing body confirmed on Sunday that it had suspended the implementation of Balogun's automatic one-match ban under Article 27 of the FIFA Disciplinary Code. "By operation of Article 27 FDC, the implementation of the automatic match suspension for USA player Folarin Balogun is suspended for a probationary period of one (1) year," FIFA's Disciplinary Committee said in a statement.

Manjrekar questions Samson omission, hails Sooryavanshi's India debut in T20Is decision

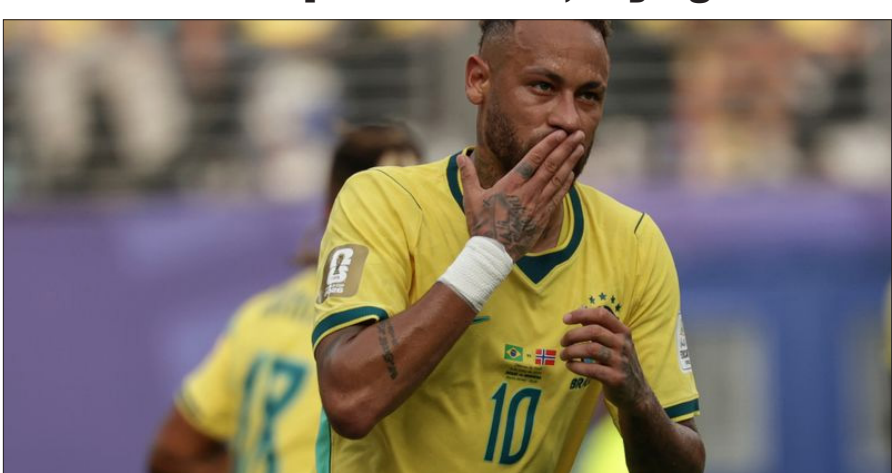


New Delhi: The 15-year-old made a 10-ball 14 after becoming the youngest Indian to make his international debut surpassing Sachin Tendulkar, who was 16 when he first played for India back in 1989. India, however, lost the match on Saturday by four wickets to trail 0-1 in the five-match series after the opening game was washed out. Sooryavanshi's debut came at the expense of T20 World Cup hero Samson as he has struggled to get going on the ongoing tour. Manjrekar said there was no need to leave Samson out for Sooryavanshi as both could have been accommodated. "Great to see Vaibhav in India colours. But what about Samson! Dropped?? Are you kidding me! No, I guess, injured. Let's hope it's injury. Or it's the most bizarre selection." Could have easily batted at 3 if you wanted to get Vaibhav in," Manjrekar posted on X, hinting that changes could have been made lower down the order to ensure both played. 32-year-old Sam-

son was adjudged player of the T20 World Cup after smashing two consecutive 89-run knocks in the semifinal and the final. Sooryavanshi, on the other hand, dazzled in the IPL by hitting at a strike rate of over 230. Former India batter and renowned cricket commentator Sanjay Manjrekar has sparked fresh debate over India's team selection after expressing surprise at Sanju Samson's omission while simultaneously welcoming teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's international debut. Reacting to India's playing XI for the opening T20I, Manjrekar described Samson's exclusion as "bizarre" but insisted that the opportunity handed to Sooryavanshi was an exciting step toward India's future. The comments have reignited discussions around India's selection policy in white-ball cricket, particularly regarding the treatment of experienced performers like Samson and the rapid rise of promising youngsters. While Man-

jrekar praised the selectors for backing youth, he questioned whether Samson deserved to lose his place after his recent performances. Speaking after India's team announcement, Manjrekar admitted he struggled to understand the logic behind leaving Samson out. According to the former India batter, Samson has repeatedly demonstrated his ability at the highest level and deserved a longer run in the side rather than another setback in his international career. Manjrekar said it was difficult to justify dropping a player who had delivered impactful performances whenever given extended opportunities. He stressed that consistency in selection remains essential if players are expected to perform with confidence. His remarks echoed the sentiments of many cricket fans, who have often argued that Samson has rarely enjoyed the security afforded to several of his contemporaries despite producing match-winning innings across formats. Samson's international career has frequently been marked by interruptions. Since making his India debut, the Kerala wicketkeeper-batter has drifted in and out of the national side due to injuries, tactical changes, competition for places and changing team combinations. Despite impressive performances in domestic cricket and the Indian Premier League, Samson has often found himself on the sidelines whenever the selectors opted for alternative combinations. His elegant stroke-play, ability to accelerate against both pace and spin, and experience as a leader have made him one of India's most talented white-ball cricketers. However, competition from multiple wicketkeeper-batters has meant opportunities have been limited. Manjrekar suggested that constantly changing personnel makes it difficult for players like Samson to establish themselves at the international level. While questioning Samson's omission, Manjrekar made it clear that he fully supported Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's inclusion.

Neymar announces retirement after Brazil's FIFA World Cup elimination, saying 'I tried'



East Rutherford: Neymar said on Sunday he is done playing for Brazil's national team, making the announcement after he and his teammates were knocked out of the World Cup with a 2-1 loss to Norway in the round of 16. "I tried," Neymar said. "It started here at MetLife Stadium, and I finished here. It is now over." Neymar, 34, played his first game for Brazil on August 9, 2010 - a friendly against the US at the stadium in the Meadowlands in northern New Jersey. Against Norway, he scored on a penalty kick in the final minutes after subbing in off the bench. Because of a nagging right calf injury, Neymar appeared in only two of Brazil's five games in the tournament. He also was on the field for 15 minutes against Scotland in group play. Bra-

zil's best player for more than a decade had been slowed by injuries in recent years that limited his impact. The country is now entering a period of transition, with the next generation taking over. Brazilian football icon Neymar has announced his retirement from international football following Brazil's heartbreaking elimination from the 2026 FIFA World Cup, bringing the curtain down on one of the most celebrated international careers in the history of the sport. The emotional announcement came shortly after Brazil's defeat, with the 34-year-old admitting that he had given everything for his country but felt the time had come to step away from the international stage. "I tried, it is now over," Neymar said while addressing the media after the match. Fighting back

tears, the forward reflected on his journey with the national team and acknowledged that although lifting the FIFA World Cup remained his greatest dream, it would ultimately remain unfulfilled. His announcement marks the end of a remarkable international career that spanned well over a decade and established him as one of Brazil's greatest footballers. While the World Cup trophy eluded him, Neymar leaves behind a legacy defined by extraordinary talent, unforgettable performances and countless moments that inspired millions of football fans across the globe. The scenes after Brazil's World Cup exit were filled with emotion. Players consoled one another on the pitch while supporters struggled to come to terms with another painful elimination.