

ED raids border locations in Tripura, Mizoram and Bengal in drug money laundering probe

Aizawl, Jun 08: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday carried out searches at four locations across Tripura, Mizoram and West Bengal as part of an ongoing money laundering investigation linked to a major narcotics seizure made by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) last year. Officials said the searches were conducted under Section 17 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, following an ED case registered on the basis of an NCB complaint. The case relates to the seizure of 49.101 kg of methamphetamine and 40 grams of heroin in Tripura on August 21, 2025. According to officials, the operation targeted premises

located in sensitive border areas. In Tripura, the searched property is situated about 200 metres from the Bangladesh border, while the location covered in Mizoram lies around 500 metres from the Myanmar border. Another site in West Bengal was also searched during the coordinated operation. Investigators suspect the involvement of an organised cross-border drug trafficking network operating through India's eastern frontier. Preliminary findings indicate that methamphetamine was allegedly sourced from Myanmar and transported through the Champhai-Zokhawthar sector in Mizoram before being delivered to recipients in Tripura.

Portfolio Allocation Announced for Assam Ministers

Guwahati Jun 08: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday announced the portfolios of the Council of Ministers of the State government. Announcing the allotment of portfolios with the approval of the Governor, the Chief Minister said the departments to be handled by him include the home and political departments; PWD (Buildings and National Highways); PWD (Roads); power; information, public relations, printing and stationery besides any other department not allotted to any other minister. Ashwini Ray Sarkar has been allocated the social justice and empowerment, soil conservation and welfare of minorities development departments while Nilima Devi, another new face in the state Cabinet, has been given charge of the animal husbandry and veterinary and fishery departments. Susanta Borgohain, another first time Minister, has been allotted the water resource-

es and judicial departments. Former Assembly Speaker, Biswajit Daimary, who has been given a ministerial berth, has been allocated four departments - handloom, textiles and sericulture; sports and youth welfare; skill, employment and entrepreneurship, and indigenous and tribal faith and culture. On the other hand, Ashok Singhal has been given charge of health and family welfare department as well as medical education and research department; Ranaj Pegu has been re-allotted school education, higher education; tribal affairs (plain) departments besides information technology; while Bimal Borah has been re-allotted the cultural affairs, industries and commerce and public enterprises departments besides the Act East Policy Affairs department. Besides, Jayanta Mallabaruah has been allocated key departments of finance; environment and forest besides mines and minerals departments; Kaushik

Rai has been given charge of food, public distribution and consumer affairs; housing and urban affairs and cooperation departments; Keshab Mahanta has been allotted revenue and disaster management, science, technology and climate change and general administration departments; Krishnendu Paul has been public health engineering; hills areas and Barak Valley development departments; while Pijush Hazarika has been allocated agriculture; irrigation and parliamentary affairs departments. It may be noted that four Cabinet ministers had already taken charge of the departments allotted to them. They include, Rameswar Teli who was allotted departments such as transformation and development; labour welfare; tea tribes and Adivasi welfare; Atul Bora, who was allotted panchayat and rural development; Implementation of Assam Accord; border protection and



development and excise departments; Charan Boro, who was allotted the transport and welfare of Bodoland departments, while Ajanta Neog was given charge of the women and child development and tourism departments. Congratulating the Cabinet col-

leagues upon portfolio allocation, the chief minister said, "I am confident that, working together with dedication and commitment, we will continue to serve the people of Assam and further accelerate the journey of progress and prosperity of our state."

NPP-NDA cabdditate James Sangma files nomination for Rakya Sabha election

Shillong, Jun 08: Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA) nominee James PK Sangma on Monday filed his nomination papers for the lone Rajya Sabha seat from Meghalaya.

Sangma submitted his nomination before Assembly Secretary Malthus A. Sangma at the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Secretariat in the presence of Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, Cabinet ministers, legislators and representatives of MDA constituent parties.

With Monday being the last day for filing nominations and no opposition candidate having entered the fray till late evening, Sangma appeared poised for an uncontested election to the Council of States.

The Rajya Sabha election is scheduled to be held on June 18.

Speaking to reporters after filing his nomination, Sangma expressed gratitude to the people of Meghalaya and the leaders of the ruling alliance for reposing faith in him.

"I am first of all very grateful to the people of Meghalaya and especially to our Chief Minister Dr Conrad Sangma, the Deputy Chief Ministers, ministers, MLAs and our alliance partners from the UDP, HSPDP, PDF and the Independents for supporting my candidature to the Rajya Sabha," he said.

Describing the nomination as a collective decision of the MDA, Sangma said he felt deeply honoured and privileged to have been unanimously selected by the alliance.

Assam Chief Secretary Assesses June 21 NEET Re-Test Readiness

Guwahati, Jun 08: Assam Chief Secretary Ravi Kota on Monday held a discussion with Chief Postmaster General Arvind Verma regarding preparedness and precautionary measures for the smooth conduct of the NEET-UG 2026 Re-Examination, scheduled in the State on June 21. The re-examination will be conducted across 88 examination centres in 17 examination districts, covering over 43,000 candidates across Assam. The Chief Secretary reviewed arrangements for the secure handling, transportation and distribution of examination materials and emphasised close coordination among all stakeholders to ensure a fair, secure and seamless examination process across the State. Ravi Kota had on May 30 reviewed the preparedness for the re-examination in ac-



cordance with the guidelines of the National Testing Agency (NTA). "Detailed instructions were issued to ensure a secure, transparent and student-friendly examination environment

without any logistical or administrative difficulties," the chief secretary said after chairing a comprehensive video conference with all district commissioners and senior su-

perintendents of police, jointly with the Assam DGP. Reviewing the district-wise preparedness, Kota directed the DCs and SSPs to personally oversee all arrangements.

Thousands rally in Imphal demanding NRC update before census

Imphal, Jun 08: Thousands of people participated in a mass rally in Manipur's capital on Monday, demanding that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) be updated before the next census exercise is conducted in the state. The rally was jointly organised by 14 civil society organisations under the banner of 14 CSOs Kangleipak. The march began at Tiddim Ground in Imphal West and concluded at THAU Ground, where a public meeting was held. Addressing the gathering, 14 CSOs Kangleipak convenor Shanta Nahakpam alleged that the Centre had not acted on repeated demands for updating the NRC in Manipur despite raising concerns over illegal immigration in other parts of the country during elections.

Meghalaya CM expresses confident of RS win, says MP must push Eighth Schedule, ILP in parliament

Shillong, Jun 08: Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Monday said the Rajya Sabha MP from Meghalaya will play a critical role in raising the state's key concerns at the Centre, while expressing confidence that MDA's candidate James K Sangma has the numbers to win the election.

Speaking after James Sangma filed his nomination, the chief

minister thanked MDA partners for their unanimous support. "I would like to congratulate James Sangma for filing his nomination, and I would like to thank all the partners in the MDA for having unanimously and with consensus supported the candidature of James Sangma. Today, most partners were present during the nomination," he said.



On the prospect of other candidates, Sangma said the

position would be clear once nominations close. "Regarding other candidates, we are not very sure. We will have to wait for a few hours; the picture will be very clear. So, whatever it may be, we are very confident that if there is a candidature, the MDA has the necessary strength to ensure that our candidate wins in this MP Rajya Sabha election," he said.

Union Home Minister to Unveil Land Port Facilities in Tripura, Meghalaya



Agartala, Jun 08: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will on Tuesday inaugurate newly developed stakeholder accommodation facilities at Srirampur Land Port in Tripura and Dawki Land Port in Meghalaya to strengthen infrastructure and improve border operations.

The inauguration will take place simultaneously with the launch of the Land Port Management System (LPMS) in New Delhi, mark-

ing a significant step in India's border modernisation efforts. LPMS will digitise cargo and passenger processing across Indian land ports. The platform aims to improve trade facilitation, transparency and border security.

Notably, India is preparing to take a major leap in technology-driven border governance with the launch of the LPMS. The digital platform has been developed to integrate operations at land ports

across the country through a unified system. The initiative reflects the Central Government's focus on modernising border infrastructure. It also supports the broader vision of improving efficiency, transparency and security in cross-border movement of goods and passengers. Officials believe the platform will transform the way land ports operate by replacing multiple manual processes with a seamless digital workflow.

Shillong Gorkha body felicitates succesful students of MBOSE, CBSE, ICSE

Shillong, Jun 08: To recognize and celebrate academic excellence within the Gorkha community, various Gorkha organizations came together under the banner of Sanyukta Gorkha Manch. Led by Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh along with several community bodies, the initiative aimed to honour meritorious Gorkha students whose dedication and hard work have brought pride to the state. The felicitation programme successfully honoured rank holders and students securing 90% and above in Classes 10 and 12 from MBOSE, ICSE, and CBSE boards. A total of 11 students were felicitated from various schools of Shillong. The event not only celebrated their achievements but also served as an inspiration for younger students to strive for excellence in education.



Mizoram introduces strict checks for medical liquor permits

Aizawl, Jun 08: The Mizoram government has introduced a strict multi-stage verification process for issuing Red Cards, special permits that allow individuals to possess and consume liquor on medical grounds in the state. The new system, introduced by the Mizoram Excise and Narcotics Department, is aimed at ensuring that access to alcohol is limited to genuine medical cases while maintaining the state's regulatory framework on liquor consumption. Officials said applications for the Red Card

were invited last week, but the department has not received any applications so far. Under the new procedure, individuals seeking the permit must first obtain a prescription from a registered medical practitioner certifying that alcohol consumption is required as part of a medical treatment plan. The prescription will then be subjected to detailed scrutiny by the concerned district medical superintendent before any final approval is granted. According to officials, only applicants who successfully pass the verification process

will receive the Red Card. The department emphasised that the permit is intended solely for people with legitimate medical needs and should not be used as a means to circumvent existing liquor regulations in the state. The permit will be valid for one year and will carry an annual fee of Rs 5,000. Cardholders will be allowed to purchase liquor only in quantities specifically recommended by their doctors, ensuring that access remains controlled and linked to medical requirements.

Chief Minister Unveils Special NIA Court in Manipur



Imphal, Jun 08: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh inaugurated the exclusive Special Court of National Investigation Agency (NIA) at the Thoubal Court Complex in Khangabok on Monday.

MP (Outer Manipur) Alfred K. S. Arthur, Manipur Home Minister K. Govindas Singh, MLAs, the Chief Justice of the High Court of Manipur, the Chief Secretary, and senior legal and civil officials were present during the inauguration. "The establishment of this dedicated court marks an important milestone in strengthening the justice delivery system by ensuring the

expeditious trial of scheduled offences and cases investigated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). It will enhance judicial efficiency and reinforce the rule of law," the Chief Minister said. "The Government of Manipur remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring fair, transparent and timely justice for all," he said. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister also inaugurated a seminar on "Media for Communal Harmony and Responsible Journalism", organised by the Editors' Guild, Manipur and DIPR, Government of Manipur, at Sangai Hall, Hotel Imphal on Monday.

Customs seizes nearly 900 kg ganja worth Rs 4.49 crore in Tripura, probe widens

Agartala, June 08: In one of the largest anti-narcotics operations carried out in Tripura this year, the Customs Preventive Force (CPF) has seized nearly 900 kilograms of cannabis, commonly known as ganja, from a truck near Hejamara on the Agartala–Manik Bhandar road.

The seized consignment, valued at more than Rs 4.49 crore in the illegal market, was allegedly concealed inside specially designed hidden chambers built into the vehicle. Officials said the operation was conducted based on specific intelligence inputs received on June 6 regarding the movement of a large quantity of narcotics through the state.

Acting on the information, a special Customs team kept surveillance on the route and intercepted a suspicious ten-wheeler truck near Hejamara during the early hours of Sunday. During a detailed search of the vehicle, officers discovered sophisticated concealed compart-

ments beneath the fuel tank and inside other sections of the truck. A total of 135 packets were recovered, including 96 black packets and 39 brown packets. Field tests conducted using an NDPS Drug Testing Kit confirmed that the substance was cannabis.

The total weight of the seized contraband was found to be 898.42 kilograms, making it one of the biggest ganja seizures by Customs in recent months. The truck driver was arrested at the spot and booked under relevant provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. Officials said investigations are underway to trace the origin of the consignment, identify its intended destination and establish links with others involved in the trafficking network. Investigators suspect that the seized consignment may be part of a larger interstate drug syndicate operating across several states.

The seizure has once again drawn

attention to concerns over illegal cannabis cultivation and trafficking routes allegedly active in and around the Mohanpur Assembly constituency and adjoining areas. According to local sources and law enforcement inputs, areas such as Hejamara, Subalsingh, Khowai and Manik Bhandar have increasingly emerged as important transit corridors for narcotics smuggling.

Besides cannabis, traffickers are suspected of using these routes for transporting heroin, brown sugar, yaba tablets and other psychotropic substances. Although agencies such as Customs, Assam Rifles, BSF and the state police have carried out several major seizures in recent years, concerns remain regarding the effectiveness of follow-up investigations and prosecutions.

A senior officer of a central government agency, speaking on condition of anonymity, said many high-profile narcotics cases often lose momentum after being

transferred for further investigation. “Drug trafficking on this scale cannot continue without protection and support from influential quarters. Unless political patronage and local support systems are dismantled, it will be extremely difficult to eliminate drug trafficking and drug abuse from Tripura,” the officer said. The officer also noted that traffickers frequently exploit gaps in intelligence-sharing, investigation and prosecution, allowing key operators to remain beyond the reach of law enforcement agencies.

The latest seizure comes despite the state government’s continued anti-drug campaign led by Tripura Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha and efforts by Director General of Police Anurag Dhankar to curb narcotics trafficking and substance abuse. The government has repeatedly reiterated its commitment to a zero-tolerance policy against drugs and has undertaken drives to destroy illegal cannabis plantations in different districts.

Chief Minister Samipesu helping improve public service delivery in Tripura, says Manik Saha

Agartala, June 08: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said the “Chief Minister Samipesu” initiative is playing an important role in strengthening public service delivery and making governance more accessible to people across the state.

Highlighting the progress of the programme, Saha said the initiative has emerged as an effective platform that connects citizens directly with the administration and helps address public grievances in a timely manner. He shared his views through a post on social media platform X, where he described the programme as a bridge between the government and the people.

According to the Chief Minister, the primary objective of the initiative is to ensure that complaints and concerns raised by citizens are addressed quickly



and efficiently. He said the platform has enabled people from various parts of Tripura to directly place their issues, requirements and suggestions before the administration without unnecessary delays.

“The programme is moving forward successfully with the goal of resolving public grievances swiftly and ensuring that governance remains accessible to every citizen,” Saha said. He noted that the initiative has strengthened commu-

nication between the government and the public, allowing authorities to better understand and respond to the needs of citizens.

The Chief Minister said such direct engagement helps improve the quality of public services while making the administrative system more responsive and people-centric. “Our goal is to earn the trust of the people and ensure a transparent, accountable and citizen-friendly administration,” Saha said.

Thousands rally in Imphal demanding NRC update before census

Imphal, June 08: Thousands of people participated in a mass rally in Manipur’s capital on Monday, demanding that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) be updated before the next census exercise is conducted in the state. The rally was jointly organised by 14 civil society organisations under the banner of 14 CSOs Kangleipak.

The march began at Tiddim Ground in Imphal West and concluded at THAU Ground, where a public meeting was held. A large number of students, youth, internally displaced persons, artists and members of indigenous communities joined the demonstration. Participants carried placards bearing slogans such

as “Only updation of NRC can save Manipur”, “No NRC, No Census”, “Do not neglect Manipur State” and “Until NRC 1951 update, don’t conduct census”.

Addressing the gathering, 14 CSOs Kangleipak convenor Shanta Nahakpam alleged that the Centre had not acted on repeated demands for updating the NRC in Manipur despite raising concerns over illegal immigration in other parts of the country during elections. Referring to a recent notification issued by the Government of India, Nahakpam said a high-powered committee had been formed to study demographic changes in various states and submit its report to the Union



Home Ministry within one year. He argued that Manipur

required special attention because of its international border, existing peace

agreements with various groups and concerns over demographic changes. Na-

hakpam said an updated NRC was necessary to ensure the credibility of any future delimitation exercise.

According to him, conducting delimitation without addressing alleged discrepancies in population records could affect the political representation and constitutional rights of indigenous communities in the state.

He also urged the Centre to include a government agency from Manipur in the newly constituted committee studying demographic changes. Local participation, he said, would help ensure that the state’s concerns are properly assessed and reflected in the committee’s findings.

Flash flood causes widespread damage in Chayang Tajo and nearby villages

Itanagar, June 08: A flash flood triggered by heavy rainfall and a reported cloudburst has caused extensive damage in Chayang Tajo and several adjoining villages in Arunachal Pradesh’s East Kameng district, disrupting water supply, power services and road connectivity. According to local sources, Chayang Tajo, the administrative headquarters of the area, witnessed incessant rainfall on June 4, leading to a sudden surge in water levels and widespread flooding.

The situation was reportedly worsened by a cloudburst over Chayang Tajo and nearby villages, resulting in significant damage to public infrastructure and agricultural land. The flood damaged several paddy fields and standing crops, causing losses to local farmers. Residents also faced severe disruptions in access to drinking water after a major pipeline supplying water to



Chayang Tajo was washed away. Officials said the 150-mm diameter main pipeline connected to the local water treatment plant was completely damaged by the floodwaters.

Restoration work has already begun, but authorities said repairs could take at least two

weeks due to the difficult terrain and high-altitude conditions in the area. The disaster also affected rural water supply systems in several villages, including Soshi Bagang, Namchar Bagang, Doripu Bagang, Laching Bagang, Rebe and Killo.

Officials reported that head-

works, intake tanks and live water supply pipelines in these villages were either severely damaged or completely destroyed. As a result, many villagers have been forced to depend on rainwater collected from rooftops and nearby streams for their daily needs. The Chayang Tajo Public Health

Engineering and Water Supply (PHE&WS) Division has mobilised staff from non-affected areas to speed up restoration work and restore water supply to the affected villages as quickly as possible. Road connectivity in the region has also been severely impacted. Nearly 40 per cent of the PMGSY road connecting Dumdila Tajo to Laching Bagang through Soshi, Namchar and Doripu Bagang was either damaged or washed away by the flood.

The RCC bridge over Pao Nallah, which serves as a vital link for several villages in the area, was also swept away. In several stretches of the road, formation cuttings were washed out, making movement difficult for commuters and local residents. The damaged road is considered a lifeline for at least five villages, and its disruption has created major challenges for transportation and access to essential services.

NERIST students to begin indefinite hunger strike over director's resignation



Itanagar, June 08: The Students’ Union of NERIST (SUN) has announced that it will launch an indefinite hunger strike from June 8 in protest against the alleged forced resignation of NERIST Director Prof Narendranath S.

The decision comes after the union claimed that it had not received any response from the Ministry of Education, the chairman of the NERIST Board of Management (BoM), or the Arunachal Pradesh government regarding its earlier appeal on the matter. In a letter addressed to the chairman of the NERIST Board of Management on June 7, the students’ body said it had been compelled to begin the agitation as its concerns remained unanswered despite repeated representations.

According to SUN, a letter was submitted on June 3 seeking intervention in the matter of Prof Narendranath’s resignation. The union alleged that the resignation was obtained under pressure and called for immediate steps to address the issue. The students’ body has placed two key

demands before the authorities. First, it has urged the Ministry of Education to reject the resignation of Prof Narendranath and allow him to continue serving his full five-year tenure as director of the North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST). Secondly, the union has demanded the release of CCTV footage from the director’s chamber recorded on May 29. According to SUN, the footage relates to the incident that allegedly resulted in the director being compelled to resign. The union stated that its demands have already been submitted to the Union Education Minister.

Copies of the memorandum were also forwarded to the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, the Chief Minister, the Education Secretary, the Ministry of Education and the chairman of the NERIST Board of Management. SUN further demanded that the state government initiate strict legal action against those found responsible for the alleged forcible resignation of the director.

DGP Mukesh Singh of Manipur pays a visit to the districts of Kangpokpi and Senapati

Imphal, June 08: Manipur DGP Mukesh Singh on Sunday visited violence-hit Kangpokpi and Senapati districts and took stock of the situation. This was Singh’s first visit to the districts after taking over as the chief of the state police force recently. He was accompanied by Lhari Dorjee Lhatoo, Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order), Manipur.

During the visit, the DGP interacted with senior police officers and was briefed on the prevailing law and order situation, security measures and key achievements of the police. He also reviewed the overall functioning and operational preparedness of the district police forces.

The DGP also held interactions with the district administration, commanders of the Central Armed



Police Forces (CAPFs), and representatives of various Kuki civil society organisations—COTU, KIM, Kuki Inpi Sadar Hills, KWU, KSO Sadar Hills, Thadou Inpi Sadar Hills, TYA, and TWA—and Naga civil so-

ciety organisations, namely the United Naga Council (UNC), Naga Women Union (NWU), All Naga Students’ Association Manipur (ANSAM), Naga Peoples’ Organisation (NPO), Senapati District Students’

Association (SDSA), and Senapati District Women’s Association (SDWA).

During the interactions, the DGP emphasised that the law was equally applicable to everyone and reaffirmed that the police would continue to serve the people impartially, without fear or favour.

He appealed to the people of the state to cooperate with the police in maintaining law and order and ensuring a safe and secure environment for all.

“The visit was cordial and productive, further strengthening cooperation between the police, security forces, civil administration and civil society towards ensuring lasting peace, security and development in the districts and the state,” a statement from Manipur Police said.

Cairn, Vedanta Oil & Gas Increases Domestic Gas Supply from Hazarigaon in Assam

Guwahati, June 08: At a time when global uncertainties and geopolitical disruptions are placing energy security at the forefront of national priorities, Cairn, Vedanta Oil & Gas is contributing to India’s growing need for reliable, domestic energy from its Hazarigaon field in Assam, Northeast. [NR1.1] For the demerged company, focused on increasing oil & gas production in India, it remains committed to unlocking the country’s resources to build a more resilient and self-reliant energy future. Reaching a significant milestone this month, during the extended well testing (EWT) at its Hazarigaon asset, Cairn recorded its highest-ever gas production of 178,361 standard cubic meters per day, highlighting the asset’s capabilities to drive production from Northeast.

For FY26, the asset maintained an average gas production of approximately 102,000 scm/day during EWT, reflecting consistent performance alongside peak output. With an estimated recovery potential of 2 million boe/11.76 BCF (billion cubic feet) of



gas, the field represents a meaningful contribution to India’s domestic energy basket.

The Hydrocarbon Vision 2030 for the Northeast continues to guide the company’s efforts to unlock the region’s vast energy potential and drive regional development. Through its Discovered Small Fields (DSF) block, Cairn has emerged as a key player in the region’s evolving energy landscape. As the first company in the

Northeast to monetise gas—enabled by strong collaboration with the Assam Gas Company Limited (AGCL), it has helped establish a foundation for a gas-based ecosystem. Gas production from the field is already making a meaningful impact across sectors. Since 2023, it has supplied gas to tea estates through AGCL, driving a shift from coal to cleaner fuel.

It also powers 100 CNG buses in Guwahati, supporting the state’s clean mobility efforts. During EWT, Cairn continues to supply gas to Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) through AGCL for captive power generation, further strengthening industrial energy access in the region. Cairn continues to operate responsibly, ensuring zero routine gas flaring and efficient resource utilisation. From supporting tea gardens to enabling cleaner transport and powering industry, its work in Assam reflects steady progress. Guided by its philosophy of Protect, Preserve, Produce, Cairn continues to deliver energy responsibly while advancing an inclusive and sustainable future.

NPP’s James Sangma Enters Rajya Sabha Race

Shillong, Jun 08: aNational People’s Party (NPP) leader James P.K. Sangma on Monday filed his nomination papers for the upcoming Rajya Sabha election from Meghalaya in the presence of leaders and representatives of various constituents of the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA). Speaking to the media after filing his nomination, Sangma expressed gratitude to the people of Meghalaya and thanked Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, Deputy Chief Ministers Sniawbhalang Dhar and Prestone Tynsong, Cabinet Ministers, legislators, and alliance partners from the United Democratic Party (UDP), Hill State People’s Democratic Party (HSPDP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and Independent MLAs for supporting his candidature to the Rajya Sabha. Hesaidaftertheelectionprocessiscompleted,therespon-

sibilityofrepresentingthestatewouldrestonhisshoulders. Sangma stated that several issues concerning Meghalaya have remained pending for a long time and require collective efforts to address them. He said he intends to raise such matters in the Rajya Sabha so that the voice of Meghalaya is heard at the national level. Describing his candidature as a collective decision of the MDA, Sangma said he was honoured by the confidence reposed in him and pledged to serve the people of Meghalaya with dedication and sincerity. Noting that June 8 was the last day for filing nominations, Sangma said that if he is elected unopposed, he would consider it a privilege and an honour to represent Meghalaya in the Rajya Sabha. In such a situation, he said, he would view himself as representing the interests of the entire state.

UDP Plays Down Infighting Claims Following Resignation

Shillong, Jun 08: United Democratic Party (UDP) leader Olan Sing Suin has downplayed reports of rift within the party following the resignation of former party vice-president Robertjune Kharjahrin. Suin, who is also the legislator of Mawsynram constituency in Meghalaya, said differences of opinion and exits were common in political parties and do not indicate any division within the organisation.

Kharjahrin had recently resigned from the party’s Central Executive Committee (CEC) and relinquished his primary membership in protest against the party’s decision to support National People’s Party (NPP) candidate, James P.K. Sangma, in the upcoming Rajya Sabha election. In his resignation letter to UDP president Metbah Lyncdoh and general secretary Titosstarwell Chyne, Kharjahrin said he was “deeply disturbed” that UDP legisla-

tors backed James Sangma without the mandate of the CEC. Responding to Kharjahrin’s decision to quit the party, Suin said the UDP remains united and takes decisions through consensus. “There is no rift within the party and that members continue to work together on all major issues,” he said. On the UDP’s support for NPP candidate James P.K. Sangma in the upcoming Rajya Sabha election, Suin clari-

fied that the decision was taken by the MDA parliamentary party and not by any individual political party. He said Sangma is the MDA candidate and not of any single constituent party. Suin also said the UDP has already begun strengthening its organisational structure at the grassroots level and will hold meetings in the coming weeks as part of a strategic effort to reinforce the party’s presence at the constituency, district and state levels.

Mawsynram MLA denies rumours about UDP’s split

Shillong, Jun 08: Mawsynram UDP legislator Olan Sing Suin has rejected talk of divisions within the United Democratic Party, maintaining that the party remains firm and united on all issues. Responding to queries on recent political shifts, Suin described such movements as normal in politics. “This is not a rare phenomenon, it is common. In any political party, some go and some come,” he said. He stressed that the UDP has no internal rift and functions on consensus, in line with its name. “There is no rift, there is no division. We are all in consensus on any issues. We are united, as the party name suggests,” the MLA stated. Suin also clarified the context of the recent Rajya Sabha nomination, saying it was a call taken by the parliamentary party, not by the party as a whole. He added that the nominee was not representing a single party but the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance.

Dangari Girl Creates History as Assam’s First Woman Fire Engineer

Doomdooa, Jun 08: In a remarkable achievement that has brought pride to Assam and the Dangari region of Tinsukia district, Shivangi Sonowal has become the first Assamese woman to qualify as a Fire Engineer from the prestigious National Fire Service College (NFSC), Nagpur. The daughter of Jitul Sonowal and Banti Handique Sonowal of Dangari village, Shivangi recently completed her B.Tech in Fire Engineering from the premier institution under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Her accomplishment is particularly significant given the highly competitive and demanding nature of the course, where only a limited

number of women gain admission each year.Admission to the undergraduate programme requires candidates to clear JEE Main with high percentile scores and meet strict physical fitness standards. Every year, only around 60 students are selected from across the country, and typically only three to four of them are women. According to sources, Shivangi secured admission in 2022 after successfully clearing JEE Main and earning a place among nearly 800 aspirants competing for entry into the coveted programme.After four years of rigorous academic training, technical learning, and physical endurance, she was formally recognised as a Fire En-

gineer during the convocation ceremony held on May 29. Sources at the institution stated that she is the first Assamese woman student to achieve this distinction.Her success has also translated into an early professional breakthrough. During the final-semester campus recruitment process, Shivangi reportedly secured placement with a gas-based company. Her achievement has sparked celebrations across Dangari and nearby areas, with organisations and well-wishers congratulating her and describing her success as an inspiration for aspiring students, especially young women seeking careers in unconventional fields.

22 Naga Women Injured in Ukhrul Standoff



Ukhrul, Jun 08: At least 22 Tangkhul Naga Meira Paibis (women torch bearers) were injured during a confrontation with the Assam Rifles in Ukhrul district of Manipur on Sunday. The injured woman were rushed to the Ukhrul District Hospital for treatment. The incidents took place in two separate locations

was also beaten up by the Assam Rifles personnel. In a widely circulated video on social media, Assam Rifles personnel were seen baton-charging the women torch bearers, and several rounds of ammunition were reportedly fired during the confrontation. Sources said that the clash at New Haven (Shokvao Village) occurred when the women demanded that the Assam Rifles vacate an outpost established in their village without proper approval. Villagers have previously urged the Assam Rifles personnel to leave the area on multiple occasions.

Jorhat ‘Robbery’ Case Takes Dramatic Turn: Elderly Woman Admits Staging Incident to Bring Son Back Home

Jorhat, Jun 08: A sensational robbery case reported from Jorhat’s Jyotipur-Kalakhowa area has taken an unexpected turn after police investigations revealed that the alleged crime was allegedly staged by the complainant herself.The incident, reported on June 2, had initially created panic in the area. Ruby Patra, an elderly widow living alone in a large two-storey house, had alleged that two armed robbers entered her residence during the evening, held a knife to her throat and looted cash and gold ornaments before fleeing. The incident was particularly embarrassing

for the police as it reportedly occurred barely 500 metres from the Bhogdoi Police Outpost. Following the complaint, police launched an intensive investigation, examining CCTV footage from the area and questioning numerous motorcycle riders who had travelled through the locality during the relevant period. Despite extensive efforts, investigators found no concrete evidence supporting the robbery claim. During repeated questioning, police noticed inconsistencies in Ruby Patra’s statements, which eventually led them to uncover the truth behind the alleged crime.According

to police, the robbery was a pre-planned drama allegedly orchestrated by the elderly woman with the assistance of a female relative. Investigators said Ruby Patra had been struggling with loneliness after her only son and daughter-in-law moved to a rented house about eight kilometres away. Police stated that Patra had hoped the robbery incident would persuade her son and daughter-in-law to return and live with her. The alleged plot was reportedly born out of emotional distress and a desire for companionship rather than any criminal motive for financial gain.The

case has sparked widespread discussion about the growing issue of loneliness among elderly parents whose children live separately. Many residents expressed sympathy for the woman, saying the incident reflects the emotional challenges faced by senior citizens living alone despite having financial security and comfortable homes. While the revelation has changed the course of the investigation, the incident has also highlighted broader social concerns regarding family relationships and the emotional well-being of elderly people.

Meghalaya Border Village Protests Fencing Plan, Fears Isolation from Rest of India

Shillong, Jun 08: Residents of Lyngkhong village, located along the India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya’s East Khasi Hills district, staged a protest on Sunday demanding that the proposed border fence be constructed along the zero line. Villagers fear that the current alignment would leave their settlement outside the fenced area, effectively isolating them from the rest of the country. Situated almost on the international boundary, Lyngkhong is one of the few villages where houses stand just a few metres away from settlements in Bangladesh. Under existing international conventions, border fencing is generally constructed at least 150 yards inside Indian territory from the zero line.

The villagers said that during the COVID-19 pandemic, a bamboo fence erected by local residents largely served as a separation between the two sides of the border, and little has changed since then. As part of their protest, residents submitted a memorandum to the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Pynursla, urging authorities to immediately halt the ongoing fencing work. Village head Ramu clarified that the villagers are not opposed to border fencing but want it to be built along the zero line. “We are not against fencing. However, we want the fence to be erected at the zero line so that our village remains within India and inside the fenced area,” he said. Residents expressed con-

cern that the present alignment could leave Lyngkhong outside the security barrier, affecting access, security, and the long-term future of the village. Echoing these concerns, resident Rima Khongsdir said, “If the fence is built as planned, our village will remain outside. We are worried about our future and urge the state government to take up the matter with the Government of India.” Officials stated that the fencing work is continuing as part of efforts to strengthen security along the India-Bangladesh border.Meghalaya shares a 443-kilometre-long border with Bangladesh, of which less than 80 kilometres remain unfenced due to local issues and difficult terrain. A senior Border Security

Force (BSF) official said an outpost has already been established in Lyngkhong to ensure the safety and security of residents. “The BSF maintains a presence in the village, and all necessary security measures are being taken to protect the residents,” the official said. Meanwhile, a senior Home Department official revealed that India has raised with Bangladesh the possibility of constructing a single-row fence along the zero line in areas where human settlements may be adversely affected. “Discussions have begun regarding the proposal for a single-line fence at the zero line. However, Bangladesh’s new government has not yet taken a final decision on the matter,” the official added.

Meghalaya border villagers protest fencing plan, fear being left outside security barrier

Shillong, Jun 08: Residents of Lyngkhong village along the India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya’s East Khasi Hills district staged a demonstration on June 7, demanding that the proposed border fence be constructed along the zero line rather than further inside Indian territory. The villagers submitted a memorandum to the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Pynursla, urging authorities to immediately halt the ongoing fencing work until their concerns are addressed. The villagers submitted a memorandum to the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Pynursla, urging authorities to immediately halt the ongoing fencing work until their concerns are addressed. Lyngkhong is among the



few border villages where houses stand only a few metres away from settlements across the border in Bangladesh. Under existing international norms, border fencing is generally constructed at least 150 yards from the zero line. Residents fear that the current alignment would leave the village outside the fenced area, effectively cutting it off from the rest of the country.“We are not against border fencing,

but we want the fence to be erected at the zero line so that our village remains inside India and within the fenced area,” village head Ramu said. According to locals, the village has so far remained separated from Bangladesh mainly through a bamboo barrier erected by residents during the COVID-19 pandemic, with little change in the situation since then. Villagers said the proposed fencing route could

create long-term concerns over accessibility, security and the future of the settlement. Expressing similar worries, resident Rima Khongsdir said, “If the fence comes up in its present alignment, our village will be left outside. We are worried about our future and want the state government to listen to our concerns and take them up with the Government of India.”

Manipur DGP Mukesh Singh Makes First Visit to Kangpokpi, Senapati

Imphal, Jun 08: Manipur DGP Mukesh Singh on Sunday visited violence-hit Kangpokpi and Senapati districts and took stock of the situation. This was Singh’s first visit to the districts after taking over as the chief of the state police force recently. He was accompanied by Lhari Dorjee Lhatoo, Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order), Manipur. During the visit, the DGP interacted with senior police officers and was briefed on the prevailing law and order situation, security measures and key achievements of the police. He also reviewed the overall functioning and operational preparedness of the district police forces. The DGP also held interactions with the

district administration, commanders of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), and representatives of various Kuki civil society organisations—COTU, KIM, Kuki Inpi Sadar Hills, KWU, KSO Sadar Hills, Thadou Inpi Sadar Hills, TYA, and TWA—and Naga civil society organisations, namely the United Naga Council (UNC), Naga Women Union (NWU), All Naga Students’ Association Manipur (ANSAM), Naga Peoples’ Organisation (NPO), Senapati District Students’ Association (SDSA), and Senapati District Women’s Association (SDWA). During the interactions, the DGP emphasised that the law was equally applicable to everyone and reaffirmed that the police would continue to serve the people impartially, without fear or favour. He appealed



to the people of the state to cooperate with the police in maintaining law and order and ensuring a safe and secure environment for all.“The visit was cordial and productive, further strengthening cooperation between

the police, security forces, civil administration and civil society towards ensuring lasting peace, security and development in the districts and the state,” a statement from Manipur Police said.

Tremors felt in Northeast as 5.8 magnitude earthquake jolts Bhutan

Guwahati, Jun 08: Tremors were felt across the Northeast and adjoining areas after a 5.6 magnitude earthquake struck Bhutan on Sunday night. According to the National Centre for Seismology (NCS), the earthquake occurred at a depth of 26 km in Bhutan’s Punakha, 247 km northwest of Guwahati at 11.06 pm. The NCS said the epicentre of the earthquake was at latitude 27.627 N and longitude 89.660 E. The tremors lasted for a few seconds and there was no immediate report of any loss of life or property damage. Several internet users took to social media to report tremors in the region. The tremors were also felt in parts of West Bengal, Sikkim, Bangladesh and Bhutan. Residents in Guwahati said that they felt tremors for a few seconds, prompting many to rush out of their homes as a precaution. The main tremor was followed by a series of aftershocks in the region, indicating continued seismic activity after the initial earthquake. The sequence of tremors occurred within less than an hour of the initial earthquake, with magnitudes declining from 5.8 to 2.8 and then 2.4. The recorded depths of the seismic events ranged between 18km and 26km, according to NCS data.

North East Chronicle

JUNE 09 2026 VOL 02 NO. 105



Law Returns to the Land of the Tiger

West Bengal has long been a theatre of political paradox — a state of poets and philosophers where the rule of law has, at intervals, yielded to the rule of the mob.

The new state government’s arrival, therefore, carries an expectation that is both urgent and historic: the restoration of constitutional order as the lived experience of every citizen, not merely the language of manifestos. “Justice must not merely be done — it must be seen to be done, in every district, every panchayat, every street corner.” Early signals from the administration are cautiously encouraging.

Prompt police action against post-election violence, renewed authority to independent institutions, and the visible retreat of par-

ty-directed intimidation suggest a genuine break from the culture of impunity that corroded public confidence for years. Judicial oversight has been affirmed rather than circumvented. Yet promise must harden into practice. Rule of law is not a ceremonial declaration; it is the daily assurance that a farmer can file a complaint without fear, that an opposition worker can canvass without violence, that a journalist can report without retribution. Bengal’s new government will be judged not by inaugural rhetoric but by whether a widow in Bhangar or a shopkeeper in Jalpaiguri feels the Constitution’s protection on an ordinary Tuesday. The mandate is large. The work is larger. But for the first time in recent memory, the direction is right.

Violation of children’s rights



Over the past ten or so years, Assam’s major child development indicators, including the sex ratio, baby and under-five death rates, immunization rates, and school enrollment rates, have greatly improved. However, concerns about violence against children and general child survival remain quite important. Even while domestic violence is still a big problem in Assam, children who see it are more likely to be neglected or suffer direct physical harm. Their right to be free from all sorts of exploitation and physical or psychological abuse is seriously jeopardized. At the federal level, it is commonly acknowledged that young children’s brain development is substantially altered when they witness domestic abuse. Their capacity to learn, socialize, and develop into healthy individuals is severely harmed by the repeated occurrence of such episodes at home, which frequently results in significant emotional anguish, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Even though there are many student organizations and women’s organizations in Assam, the latter group in particular seldom speaks out against the state’s abuses of children’s rights. Once more, there have been several instances of instructors using physical assault, mental harassment, or other extreme disciplinary measures

throughout the state, even though the RTE Act forbids physical punishment. One can infer that a significant portion of Assamese school and college instructors appear to be ignorant of children’s rights based on the frequency of such events. Higher secondary sections are found in the majority of colleges in Assam. Higher secondary students are legally considered children for all reasons because they are often younger than eighteen. Inadequate and subpar seating facilities, inadequate ventilation, lights, and fans in classrooms, inadequate and unhygienic restroom facilities, a lack of sanitary napkin facilities for teenage girls, poor drinking water facilities, etc. are some significant instances of child rights violations in Assam’s educational institutions, including colleges, higher secondary and senior secondary schools, as well as high schools. These deficiencies have not resulted from the government’s inability to protect children’s rights, but rather from the low caliber of teachers, many of whom are completely ignorant of children’s rights and the part they must play in ensuring that no child’s rights are violated or usurped. Due to these problems, there are worrisome and infrequent instances of teacher misbehavior and physical punishment that are regularly covered by the state’s news media.

The final warning from the lion

Assamese history is more than just the history of a geographical area. Language, religion, culture, land, rivers, agriculture, xatras, namghars, and a shared national identity formed over generations have all influenced this civilization’s history. At various periods in time, a number of notable individuals attempted to safeguard this national identity and alerted the populace whenever they perceived possible threats to the country. Among such notable individuals, Ambikagiri Raychoudhury holds a particular and sentimental place in the hearts of Assamese people. He was more than just a poet and a freedom warrior; he was a visionary who was able to see the dire repercussions of social and demographic shifts long before the general public could understand them. Though many people may have seen it earlier, a letter he wrote in 1966 that we recently received forces us to consider a number of current topics.

Concerns about migration, illegal infiltration, the identity of Assam and the Assamese, and the future of the Assamese nation were highlighted in the letter.Ambikagiri Raychoudhury, sometimes referred to as Asom Kesari (The Lion of Assam), devoted his life to preserving the Assamese language, culture, and sense of national identity. He was born in Barpeta in 1885 and became one of the leading proponents of Assamese nationalism during British administration. He took an active part in the Indian independence struggle and was imprisoned several times by the British government as a result of his revolutionary actions. He was a poet, journalist, editor, playwright, social reformer, and organizer in addition to being a freedom fighter. He founded groups like the Assam Sangrakshini Sabha and the Assam Jatiya Mahasabha to protect the rights and interests of Assamese people. Assamese society was motivated to oppose exploitation and cultural domination by his literary works, which conveyed strong patriotic messages. Ambikagiri thought that a country’s political freedom could never be fully realized if it lost its language, territory, or culture. The defense of Assamese culture was closely linked to his nationalism. He was deeply worried about demographic shifts, land encroachment, and the mounting strains on Assamese society even during the colonial era. He voiced concern over the Assamese nation’s future existence in a number of his publications and speeches. Ambikagiri brought up more profound existential concerns about Assam’s future, while many politicians continued to concentrate only on anti-British politics.The 1966 letter makes it very evident how worried Ambikagiri was about Assam’s future and illegal invasion. Written on August 6, 1966, from Silpukhuri to the Satradhikar of Barpeta Satra, the letter included a newspaper clipping about suspected voters and illegal inhabitants in Barpeta that had appeared in the Assamese daily Natun Asomiya on August 3, 1966. The letter’s tone clearly conveys his anxiety,



irritation, and terror. He asked the devotees and Satradhikar to give the issue careful thought. He claimed that the problem might take a disastrous turn for Barpeta’s and Assam’s futures.

Ambikagiri’s observations were not your typical political statements. They represented the inner turmoil of a longtime social observer. He wrote that there might not be a chance to save Barpeta in the future if people continued to fail to recognize the seriousness of the situation. He cautioned that the leadership and social institutions of today would be cursed by future generations. His words seem very practical and forward-thinking now. The issue of identity and infiltration did, in fact, become crucial to Assamese politics and society in the decades that followed. It finally developed into a significant socio-political problem that is still inevitable today.The fact that Ambikagiri delivered this warning in 1966, long before the Assam Movement of 1979–1985 started, is what gives this letter its historical significance. He believed that unrestrained infiltration could jeopardize Assam’s political stability, cultural security, and social equilibrium.

This illustrates his exceptional vision and deep comprehension of Assam’s complex demographic realities. Infiltration or migration into Assam is not a recent problem. In order to increase agricultural production and generate income, the British government relocated a sizable population from East Bengal to Assam. Many districts’ demographic makeup changed over time as a result of this migration. Many politicians and intellectuals in Assam started to worry about its long-term effects. Land encroachment and demographic shifts were topics of public debate even prior to independence. Among the few leaders who bravely voiced these concerns was Ambikagiri. The problem became considerably more complicated after Bangladesh was established in 1971 and India was divided in 1947. Weak border controls, poverty, intercommunal strife, and political unrest all contributed to the migration’s persistence. It

gradually become one of the most delicate political and social concerns in Assam. The All Assam Students’ Union (AASU) spearheaded the Assam Movement, which demanded that illegal foreigners be identified, erased, and deported. Widespread popular support, sacrifice, struggle, and political change were all brought about by the movement. The Assam Accord of 1985 increased hopes for a resolution, but the problem persisted. While the fundamental issue still exists, different political parties continue to take advantage of it for their own political ends, frequently instilling terror among common people. According to current census data, there have been notable demographic shifts in a number of Assamese districts.

Land rights, political representation, cultural security, and indigenous identity are still major issues in Assamese politics and public life. The future of their language and culture continues to be a source of anxiety for many Assamese people. Ambikagiri’s letter seems especially pertinent in this situation, and we can consider it a forgotten warning from the past. However, upholding social harmony, humanity, and constitutional balance is still crucial while talking about such delicate topics. For a very long time, Assam has been a place where various cultures, religions, dialects, and ethnic groups have coexisted. Assam’s strength is found in maintaining social cohesion and communal harmony in addition to safeguarding indigenous identity. As a result, any conversation on unlawful infiltration must stay within the bounds of democracy, the constitution, and humanitarianism. The Indian Constitution states that it is unacceptable to discriminate or harbor hatred towards any legitimate person, regardless of their group or religion. However, governments and organizations should give concerns like border security, citizenship verification, and the defense of indigenous rights careful consideration. Ambikagiri himself did not support hate-based politics. He promoted national awakening, cultural pride, and self-respect. His passion for Assam

was the source of his nationalism rather than animosity toward other people. He continuously exhorted Assamese people to maintain their unity, independence, social consciousness, and political awareness. Before it was too late, he wanted Assamese society to awaken. His main goals were the preservation of culture and civilization. Ambikagiri’s life proved that nationalism is more than just a catchphrase; it calls for selflessness, introspection, social change, and cultural assurance. He made significant contributions to Assamese literature and culture in addition to politics. His poems conveyed the anguish of national humiliation as much as the fire of revolution. Freedom warriors were motivated by his music. He used journalism as a vehicle for social awakening by publishing and editing periodicals like Chetana and Deka Asom. In order to promote independence among Assamese people, he founded social and economic groups.The title “Asom Kesari” was not bestowed upon him arbitrarily. He roared fearlessly, like a lion, against cultural challenges, colonial exploitation, injustice, and social neglect. He loved Assam with all of his heart. He continued to worry about the future of the Assamese people even as he grew older. It is evident from the letter he sent in 1966, only a year before he passed away, that he continued to worry about Assam’s existence and identity right up until the very end of his life. Assam in the modern era is once again at a critical juncture. Public discourse and politics are still shaped by discussions about the NRC, border security, citizenship, cultural preservation, Indigenous land rights, and political representation. Despite the many steps made by previous governments, many public expectations are still unmet. We continue to hold out hope that issues of citizenship and identity will finally find a long-term, constitutional solution. Assam must simultaneously make progress in the areas of education, employment, development, social cohesion, and economic growth. A robust and successful society is better able to

defend its identity.

As a result, Assamese youth should study figures like Ambikagiri Raychoudhury with both intellectual and emotional seriousness. His life teaches us several valuable lessons. First, a country can only endure if its citizens continue to be watchful and unified. Second, cultural identity needs education, organization, literature, economic power, and political consciousness in addition to slogans. Unfortunately, many nationalist parties and student organizations now hardly exhibit these traits. Third, neglecting potential risks in favor of short-term gains could lead to long-term problems. Fourth, duty to future generations is another aspect of patriotism.Therefore, Ambikagiri’s letter’s recovery and reexamination now goes beyond the discovery of a historical record. It acts as a reminder of Assam’s ongoing challenges, unresolved disputes, and ignored warnings. He has a strong devotion to and concern for Assam, despite the fact that some may disagree with his political interpretations. He was a man who gave his homeland his whole life. Until the end of his life, he warned society about possible threats to Assam’s future, utilized writing as a weapon of resistance, and endured imprisonment for freedom. Ambikagiri Raychoudhury’s voice seems to reverberate throughout the state as Assam continues to debate issues of existence and identity. His warning addressed the survival of a civilization, the dignity of a people, and responsibility to future generations; it was not limited to an area or a specific political period. Ambikagiri’s warning to Assam may have been tragic, but it’s also possible that Assam took too long to comprehend him. Because of his unwavering, brave, and remarkably foresighted passion for Assam, Ambikagiri Raychoudhury is eternal in Assamese national life. He realized that geographical limitations alone cannot sustain a civilization.

A civilization’s collective awareness, cultural self-assurance, and resolve to protect themselves are its true foundations. His warning is still important today for reasons other than illegal infiltration and demographic shifts. More broadly, it illustrates how a society’s future is jeopardized when its considerate guards are neglected. It takes more than simply feelings, catchphrases, or divides to address the issues facing Assam in the twenty-first century. Visionary leadership, constitutional balance, historical awareness, border security, social peace, and, most importantly, informed citizens who respect human values and identity are all necessary.The life of Ambikagiri shows us that patriotism is an ongoing dedication to one’s country, language, culture, and future generations rather than a transient feeling. Even though Ambikagiri is no longer with us, his voice is still heard, and the issues raised in his letter continue to loom large over Assam. Even now, many of the issues he pointed out and the concerns he posed are still unsolved.

Ministers as Protectors

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, the chief minister of Assam, added 12 new ministers to his cabinet last Friday, designating them as guardian ministers for various districts. It’s interesting to notice that this news coincides with the public’s avid anticipation of learning about the newly appointed ministers’ portfolios. The chief minister has acknowledged that the delay in portfolio allocation is deliberate because he wants to carefully evaluate each minister’s unique characteristics and historical performance before assigning the responsibilities. The chief minister is using a really creative tactic to accomplish several goals at once. The Chief Minister must first and foremost evaluate the public’s expectations; in this era of social media, the general public may readily voice their opinions about which minister they like for the department. Second, us-



ing a variety of strategies, the ministers will likewise attempt to advocate and lobby for their preferred departments. Third, in order to give the chief minister an opportunity to evaluate portfolio allocation, the ministers are required to visit their designated districts and demonstrate their

value by meeting with the local officers and public. According to reports, the idea of a guardian minister was originally introduced in Maharashtra, India, in 2004, when the Congress-NCP combination was in power. Since then, a number of state governments have embraced this idea with sporadic slight adjustments.

The duties of a guardian minister include supervising the district’s general development, liaising with local authorities, keeping an eye on the execution of government programs and infrastructure projects, and resolving administrative issues. In order to guarantee

the prompt implementation of development projects, guardian ministers must also play a crucial role in overseeing the distribution and use of public monies. Since they are officially the administrative custodians of their respective districts, the guardian minister concept mainly seeks to link state-level policymaking with grassroots implementation, guaranteeing the effective and transparent execution of local governance, infrastructure projects, and welfare programs. Additionally, guardian ministers are obliged to evaluate how prepared different government departments are for disasters in the districts they have been assigned. Additionally, they can work with local administrative authorities and the District Commissioner to create “vision” and long-term development documents for their specific districts. A competent guardian minister

can also make a substantial contribution to determining the availability of local resources and creating strategies for waste management, infrastructure development, and the creation of jobs in the area.

They can also point out barriers to the execution of grassroots policies and suggest changes to the policies or particular budgetary allocations to the chief minister. Additionally, guardian ministers have the authority to draft and send regular reports to the chief minister of the state, outlining district progress and suggesting state prizes for best practices in administration. Additionally, individuals can more easily communicate with the administration without having to travel to Dispur to voice their complaints. Naturally, during their area visits, the guardian ministers must set aside a few hours just for the common people.

Generali Central Life invests in healthcare access to deepen social and financial inclusion in Sikkim

Jorhat: Generali Central Life Insurance’s donation of two advanced life-support ambulances to Sir Thutob Namgyal (STNM) Hospital reflects a growing trend among financial services companies to invest in social infrastructure as part of long-term market development and inclusion strategies.

As the lead insurer for Sikkim since 2022, Generali Central Life has expanded its role beyond insurance distribution by supporting healthcare accessibility in a state where difficult terrain often limits timely access to emergency medical services. The newly deployed ambulances are expected to improve patient transportation and emergency response across remote and hilly regions, helping bridge critical healthcare gaps.

The initiative aligns with Sikkim’s broader objective of achieving “Insurance for All” by 2027, significantly ahead of the national target of 2047. Government officials said stronger collaboration between public institutions and private sector stakeholders will be essential to achieving this goal.Beyond healthcare, Generali Central Life has focused on expanding insurance awareness and financial literacy through grassroots outreach programmes, Gram Panchayat engagement, village campaigns and targeted

interventions involving students, farmers, self-help groups, police personnel and local community organisations.As of May 31, 2026, the insurer had extended coverage to more than 6,500 lives in Sikkim under its Rural and Social Sector Obligations mandate. The company also organised a blood donation camp at STNM Hospital, reinforcing its community engagement efforts. Analysts note that such investments in healthcare and awareness can strengthen trust, improve insurance penetration and contribute to greater economic resilience and financial security across underserved regions.

Godrej Properties to Sobha: HSBC’s top realty picks with 29% to 68% upside potential

New Delhi: Indian real estate stocks have underperformed despite strong operational performance from developers, but HSBC believes patient investors could be rewarded as the sector moves closer to a phase of stronger cash-flow generation. The brokerage retained its ‘Buy’ ratings on Godrej Properties, DLF, Prestige Estates Projects, Oberoi Realty and Sobha, with implied upsides ranging from 25% to 68%. HSBC said industry fundamentals remain healthy, unsold inventory is low, leverage levels are comfortable and pre-sales momentum remains intact, even as investor interest in the sector has weakened. The brokerage noted that while the 16 developers under its coverage delivered around 20% compound annual growth in pre-sales over the past two years, real estate stocks declined 22% during the same period. HSBC attributed the disconnect to reduced foreign investor participation, concerns over interest rates, a shift towards lower-beta sectors and technology-related themes, and the market’s increasing focus on free cash flow generation.“We think FY28 will bring that sweet spot. Developers have been reducing their guidance for business development as they have

built large future project pipelines. Pre-sales momentum remains, and large project completions are due in FY28. This is a sweet spot of FCF generation, which we think investors will like,” HSBC said. The brokerage noted that listed developers continue to operate with comfortable balance sheets and low leverage while maintaining strong sales momentum. It added that unsold inventory levels remain manageable and developers continue to guide for healthy growth. “Industry health remains good in the interim and we think existing investors will likely wait out till FY28. Listed companies all operate with comfortable balance sheets and low leverage, which allows developers to reduce their cost of borrowing,” HSBC said.

The brokerage also highlighted that most developers reported only a limited impact from the West Asia conflict, with construction costs rising by around 3-5% but without any significant effect on margins. HSBC retained its ‘Buy’ rating on Godrej Properties Ltd. with a target price of Rs 2,900, implying an upside of 67.6%. The brokerage said Godrej Properties delivered pre-sales of Rs 342 billion in FY26, up 16% year-on-year



and the highest reported by any listed real estate developer in India. Management guided for pre-sales of Rs 390 billion in FY27, representing another 14% increase.HSBC said it prefers Godrej Properties for its diversification and decentralised business model.

We prefer GPL for diversification and decentralisation,” HSBC said. HSBC maintained its ‘Buy’ rating on DLF Ltd. with a target price of Rs 920, implying an upside of 55.4%.The brokerage noted that DLF reported FY26 pre-sales of Rs 200 billion and guided for a similar level in FY27. The company remains focused on maintaining margins and execution quality rather than chasing volume growth.

HFCL, Sterlite Tech freeze at 5% lower circuit after massive rally in 2026

New Delhi: Shares of HFCL (₹177.85) and Sterlite Technologies (₹588.40) were locked at the 5 per cent lower circuits on the BSE in Monday’s intra-day trade with only sellers seen at these counters.

Till 12:24 PM; a combined 1.35 million shares changed hands at the Sterlite Technologies (STL) counter, and there were pending sell orders for 2.18 million shares on the NSE and BSE. The stock hit a record high of ₹684.45 on Friday, June 5, 2026. In the calendar year 2026, it zoomed 467 per cent, while from its 52-week low level, it skyrocketed 688 per cent from a level of ₹74.67 on June 9, 2025. Currently, STL trades under ‘T’ group. T group shares are securities that are put into Trade to Trade (T2T) segment by the BSE. These stocks are not allowed for intraday trading. The T2T stocks can only be delivery based i.e. the buyer has to take the delivery of these shares. STL is a global leader in digital connectivity infrastructure, serving telcos, data centers, citizen networks and large enterprises. The company’s portfolio spans fiber to fiber optic cables, specialty cables and connectivity products. STL is India’s No. 1 end-to-end optical manufacturer with over 8 per cent global optical fiber cable market outside of China.

India data center expansion is emerging as one of the most compelling structural tailwinds of



optical fiber, and STL is uniquely positioned to capture it, the management said in Q4 earnings conference call.

Meanwhile, at HFCL counter, as many as 5.56 million shares changed hands and there were pending sell orders for 17.91 million shares on the NSE and BSE. The stock price of the telecom infrastructure company has corrected 15 per cent from its 52-week high of ₹208.8, touched on June 4, 2026. Prior to that, in the calendar

year 2026, it had zoomed 163 per cent. It had bounced back 197 per cent from its 52-week low of ₹59.83 hit on January 23, 2026. STL on June 3, 2026, confirmed that the company is not aware of any unpublished price sensitive information, which in its opinion may have a bearing on the price/volume behavior in the scrip, which is required to be intimated to the Stock Exchanges as per Regulation 30 and that has not been so intimated.

Adani Ports wins contract for Argentina’s first LNG project

Mumbai: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) has secured a 10-year marine services contract tied to Argentina’s first liquefied natural gas export project, the company said on Monday, extending its international marine operations to South America for the first time.The contract was awarded to The Adani Harbour International FZCO, a step-down subsidiary of APSEZ, in consortium with Argentina-based Meridian Group. It follows a global competitive tender by Southern Energy S.A. (SESA), the project developer.

What the contract covers

Under the agreement, the Adani-Meridian consortium will provide end-to-end marine services for LNG carriers operating out of the project site. This includes tugboat operations, offshore logistics and supply support, and crew transfer services.The deployment will be backed by four high-specification tugboats, one anchor handling tug supply vessel, and one crew boat. The investment commitment tied to the contract is estimated at \$70 million, as per the filing. The company further stated that the contract will be executed through Meridian Transportes Maritimos S.A., a joint venture between Adani Harbour International FZCO and Meridian Group, structured on a

51:49 ownership basis. The Southern Energy FLNG project is a joint venture between Golar LNG and Pan American Energy. It is located in the San Matías Gulf, in Argentina’s Río Negro Province, and will liquify natural gas sourced from the General San Martín pipeline aboard the floating LNG vessel Hilli Episeyo, as per the filing. According to the company, commercial operations are expected to begin in September 2027. In its first phase, the project is designed to produce 2.45 million tonnes of LNG annually, roughly 28 cargoes per year, making it Argentina’s first operational LNG export project.India-Argentina energy corridor

Argentina has signed agreements to supply up to 10 million tonnes of LNG annually to India starting 2027, and the Southern Energy project is positioned as a key piece of that supply chain. Ashwani Gupta, Wholesale Director and CEO of APSEZ, said the contract demonstrated the company’s ability to support large-scale energy infrastructure beyond its traditional markets. “By combining these capabilities with strong local partnerships, we are helping create reliable maritime ecosystems that enable new energy trade corridors and strengthen long-term supply resilience,” he said.

TCS vs Wipro: Nomura bets on AI deals to protect 2026

Mumbai: India’s information technology sector is in focus. While companies continue to invest heavily in Artificial Intelligence (AI), uncertainty in the global economy and cautious spending by clients remain near-term challenges.In the latest report, the brokerage house Nomura has maintained a positive stance on two major technology stocks – Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Wipro.Nomura rating on TCS, Wipro As per Nomura report, TCS management recently participated in the Nomura Investment Forum Asia 2026, where it outlined how Artificial Intelligence could create fresh growth opportunities for technology service providers. One of the key messages from the company was that businesses cannot simply deploy AI models without support. According to management, enterprise technology systems remain highly complex, creating a significant role for system integrators and technology service providers. The company also highlighted several areas where AI-related spending could generate business opportunities. The Nomura report added that these include helping clients move toward autonomous operations, preparing enterprise data infrastructure for AI adoption, strengthening cybersecurity capabilities, and supporting industry-specific



ic applications such as drug discovery and insurance claim processing. TCS highlighted that demand conditions remain challenging in certain markets. The brokerage house report added that the ongoing conflict in the Middle East continues to make clients cautious about technology spending decisions. The company noted that weakness seen during the final weeks of the Q4FY26 has extended into the current quarter.Management stated that “Demand softness that TCS started seeing in the last few weeks of 4QFY26 due to the Middle East war has continued.”Nomura has retained its positive outlook on the stock. The brokerage said, “We retain our Buy rating on the stock with an unchanged target price of Rs 2,930.”Nomura on Wipro: Positioning for the next AI cycle

Wipro is also positioning itself to benefit from grow-

ing Artificial Intelligence adoption across enterprises.According to Nomura report, Wipro believes that increasing commercialisation of AI models by companies such as OpenAI and Anthropic could eventually result in higher demand for technology implementation services. Management further said that “AI spends will create newer revenue opportunities for services companies like itself in the medium term.”

The brokerage house Nomura has retained a ‘Buy’ rating on Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). It has set a target price of Rs 2,930, implying an upside of about 33% from current levels.Wipro has also received a ‘Buy’ rating, with the brokerage assigning a target price of Rs 250. This indicates a potential upside of around 26%.So what is driving Nomura’s optimism on these two information technology giants?

India welcomes Chinese investments in ‘desirable sectors’ but RCEP is table

Mumbai: He said Indian industry, farmers and several other stakeholders feared that joining the trade bloc would expose domestic producers to unfair competition and widen trade imbalances. “I wish and pray that nobody looks at entering RCEP, particularly given that we get a raw deal even from the RCEP,” Goyal said.

Financial Express Best Banks Awards 2026Goyal’s remarks came at the Financial Express Best Banks Awards 2026, one of India’s leading recognitions for excellence in the financial sector. Held in Mumbai on June 7, the event brought together senior bankers, financiers, fintech executives and corporate leaders. The awards recognise outstanding performance across banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), small finance banks and fintech firms. Winners are selected by an independent jury with support from EY India based on growth, profitability, financial strength, governance standards and other operational parameters drawn from Reserve Bank of India data over a three-year period.

Apart from honouring top-performing institutions across public sector, private sector and foreign banking categories, the awards also recognise digital lenders, innovative banking products and industry leaders who have built institutions of lasting significance. Goyal also questioned the decision-making process under the previous government, saying there was little public consultation before India joined the negotiations. “I still don’t know what was the compulsion of the then government to have a meeting at the level of the then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and decide to plunge into the RCEP negotiation. The actions did not involve public consultation at all,” he said.Industry opposed joining the trade bloc, says Piyush Goyal

The minister recalled that when he took charge of the commerce portfolio in June 2019, India was only months away from a crucial RCEP decision. “I got into my job on June 1, seven years ago and the final RCEP meeting was on November 4. I had only five months to study what was on the files and interact with all of you,” he said.Goyal said the government conducted extensive consultations with stakehold-

ers across the country before making its decision. “We did 200 stakeholder consultations across India. Out of 200, only three interactions said we should join RCEP. That was the kind of fear that industries had for RCEP,” he said. Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday that India remains open to investments from China and other neighbouring countries in desirable sectors, but there is “absolutely no chance” that the Narendra Modi government will join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Speaking at the Financial Express Best Banks Awards 2026 in Mumbai, Goyal defended India’s investment screening framework and launched a sharp attack on the previous Congress-led government for taking India into RCEP negotiations. According to Goyal, India already had free trade agreements with the 10 ASEAN countries and was at an advanced stage of negotiations with Australia. “RCEP was a discussion among 15 countries. India was not in the scene at all. Out of those 15 countries, India already had an FTA with 10 nations. We were at an advanced stage of negotiations with Australia and it could have been wrapped up quickly,” he said.The minister directly blamed the Congress party for pursuing what he described as an “irresponsible” trade strategy involving China. “The Congress party, I frankly hold them responsible for this irresponsible act of trying to do an FTA between China and India,” Goyal said.He said that joining RCEP could have severely damaged India’s manufacturing sector by exposing domestic industry to a surge of imports. “The outcome could have been devastating for Indian manufacturing. There would have been no Bajaj Auto. There would have been no manufacturing in India,” he said.Responding to a question on whether India should review its approach towards Chinese investments as the trade deficit with China continues to rise, Goyal said India does not oppose investments from China as long as they do not pose risks to the economy or lead to opportunistic acquisitions of strategic assets.“We encourage investments from all over the world. We have no problemalso on Chinese investments as long as they are in desirable segments, as long as they are not coming in as an

opportunistic takeover of an asset which may at some point of time be underpriced,” Goyal said. He said the restrictions introduced through Press Note 3 of 2020 were not targeted at China alone but applied to all countries sharing a land border with India. The policy was designed to prevent opportunistic takeovers during periods of economic stress. “China is one of them and it applies to all the land-border countries. It is not a country-specific problem. It is just a mechanism to protect our own economy from opportunistic takeover,” he said. Goyal reserved his strongest remarks for RCEP, the 15-country Asia-Pacific trade bloc that India chose not to join in 2019. “As regards RCEP, there were basic difficulties in the founding principles of RCEP that I am against. I can place on record that there is absolutely no chance that the Narendra Modi government is going to sign RCEP,” he said.The minister added that he does not see India joining the grouping for many years. “To the best of my knowledge and what I can see around, for many more years now, the Modi government is there and I don’t see the RCEP happening,” he said.

Goyal questioned why India entered the negotiations in the first place. He argued that India already had trade agreements with most RCEP members and therefore did not need to become part of a larger arrangement that included China.“I actually have a suspicion and a big question mark which some journalists should investigate. Why in the first place did India even enter the negotiations of RCEP? What was the compelling reason at that point of time?” he said.Goyal also referred to recent changes in the investment framework. “We have just amended Press Note 3 of 2020 with Press Note 2 recently of 2026 so that up to 10 per cent beneficial ownership is not automatically covered. We are not against investments from any land-border countries except Pakistan,” he said.Turning to India’s growing trade deficit with China, Goyal said policymakers must first examine the composition of imports before drawing conclusions. “As regards the trade deficit, circle back to the issue I said first. You have to study the import profile from China and what are the products we import,” he said.

Israeli Airstrikes Kill Nine Palestinians in Gaza



Gaza: In Gaza, Israeli airstrikes overnight killed nine Palestinians, including four children. On Wednesday, mourners gathered at Al-Aqsa Hospital to bid farewell to two Palestinian brothers, Saqer and Moamen Khalil Abu Karim, who were killed in an Israeli airstrike at Maghazi refugee camp. This is one of their relatives.

Abu Mohammad Al-Aydi: “There’s no ceasefire or anything. The Israeli army is targeting civilians. He was a young man trying to make a living, just like me. I’m a tradesman just trying to earn a living. We want to live. What shall we do? It’s a wartime, and everything is shut down.” The House of Representatives has approved legislation seeking to end President Trump’s war on Iran. On Wednesday, four Republican congressmembers broke ranks and sided with Democrats in a vote of 215-208 on a war powers resolution directing President Trump to remove U.S. armed forces from hostilities against Iran unless explicitly authorized by Congress. The vote had initially been set for two weeks ago but was delayed after House Speaker Mike Johnson adjourned for an early May recess when it appeared the resolution had the votes to pass. It now heads to the Senate; if approved there, the resolution would require President Trump’s signature. Neither chamber of Congress appears to have enough votes to override a presidential veto. Michigan Democratic Congressmember Rashida Tlaib is moving forward with a separate war powers resolution that would end U.S. military involvement in Israel’s war on Lebanon.ple times in Lebanon, which is a war crime. They launched it in residential neighbor-

hoods, y’all, in Lebanese farmland. Is this what our country is supporting? ... We are supplying these horrific chemical bombs to the Israeli military, and our military is providing operational support as we speak for these scorched-earth campaigns that is destroying the very conditions of life in Lebanon.”Lebanon’s government has agreed to extend the U.S.-brokered ceasefire with Israel, even though the Israeli military has consistently violated the deal. The agreement reached Wednesday requires Hezbollah to cease fire on Israeli troops occupying southern Lebanon, ordering their withdrawal from territory north of the Litani River. Once again, Hezbollah was not a party to the talks, which were hosted by the State Department in Washington. Ahead of Wednesday’s announcement, Hezbollah continued to attack Israeli forces occupying southern Lebanon and fired rockets toward northern Israel. Meanwhile Israeli strikes across Lebanon killed at least nine people on Wednesday, including an attack on an ambulance that killed two paramedics. Several more people were wounded after the ceasefire extension was announced, when an Israeli drone attacked a vehicle in southern Lebanon. The British government has banned left-wing political commentators Hasan Piker and Cenk Uygur from entering the U.K. They were scheduled to speak at the SXSW London festival and the Oxford Union Society. The U.K.’s Home Office said that it was canceling their travel permits “on the grounds that their presence in the U.K. may not be conducive to the public good.”50,000 positions could be reclassified, and hasn’t ruled out expanding its order.

Israeli Strike on Gaza Leaves Family of Five Burned Alive in Their Home

Gaza: In the Gaza Strip, Al Jazeera reports a Palestinian family of five was burned alive as they slept in their beds when Israel bombed their home in Gaza City overnight. They were among nine people killed in the attack. This is a Palestinian man who lost his daughter and his two grandchildren.Rabah Lubbad: “The war did not end. It is a hoax. The war did not end. They are fooling people. Nothing ended. There are martyrs every day. There are martyrs in all places in Gaza every day. What war ended? The war ended from one side only.”Since October, when Israel agreed, on paper, to a U.S.-brokered ceasefire with Hamas, it has killed nearly 950 Palestinians in near-constant attacks on Gaza. Nearly 3,000 others have been wounded. Senate Republicans have rammed through a \$70 billion budget reconciliation package to fund Trump’s immigration crackdown through 2029. This is in addition to the \$170 billion already approved for ICE and Border Patrol last year as part of Trump’s so-called One Big Beautiful Bill. Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska was the sole Republican to vote against the package early Friday morning. The legislation does not include language that would permanently bar the Trump administration from creating a \$1.8 billion slush fund for Trump’s MAGA allies, a ban that was backed even by some Republicans. The legislation now heads to the House. Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps says there will be no peace in the region until Israeli forces withdraw from Lebanon, and has reaffirmed its support for Hezbollah. This comes as the World Food Programme warns millions of people face acute hunger due to soaring costs and shortages of fuel and fertilizer due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The U.N. agen-

cy warns the crisis has pushed an additional 2.5 million people in Somalia, 1.3 million in Sri Lanka and 2.3 million in Afghanistan into acute food insecurity. The Trump administration has begun dismantling the Ocean Observatories Initiative, a network of ocean floor sensors that collect critical data on marine ecosystems, ocean currents and the climate crisis. The National Science Foundation said this week it will decommission more than 900 deep-sea sensors installed a decade ago. Its closure was recommended by the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025 playbook for Trump’s presidency. Scientists warn the move will severely degrade efforts to monitor changing climate patterns and could negatively affect weather forecasting and extreme weather alerts.

This comes as detained immigrants continue to raise alarm over the inhumane, unsanitary and dangerous conditions they face in ICE jails nationwide and amid a record number of deaths in ICE custody since Trump’s return to office. At least 18 immigrants have died in ICE custody since the beginning of this year alone. Meanwhile, The Washington Post reports ICE plans to stop reporting deaths of immigrants that occur within 30 days of being released from custody. Israeli attacks across Lebanon have killed at least six people so far today, despite the announcement of an extension of the U.S.-brokered so-called ceasefire. The agreement between Israeli and Lebanese diplomats seeks to create zones inside Lebanon in which Hezbollah operatives would be banned. Hezbollah has not been part of the negotiations, which the group’s leader Naim Qassem has rejected as a “farce.” On Thursday, Qassem also warned of more retaliatory attacks unless Israel agrees to a comprehensive ceasefire and



withdraws from southern Lebanon. Over 3,500 people have now been killed and more than 10,000 injured in Israeli strikes on Lebanon since early March.Meanwhile, U.S. lawmakers have voted down a resolution seeking to block U.S. military support for Israel’s assault on Lebanon. On Thursday, 91 House Democrats joined nearly all Republicans in a vote of 324 to 92 to defeat the resolution authored by Michigan Congressmember Rashida Tlaib, who forced the vote over what she called Israel’s “genocidal war on Lebanon.” The Trump administration has proposed rule changes to the Federal Register that would give the president and his political appointees far more power to decide how billions of dollars of scientific research grants are awarded. Draft regulations released by the Office of Management and Budget would give partisan political appointees oversight over how grants are awarded to scientists researching everything from vaccine safety to LGBTQ+ health to the climate crisis. Trump appointees would also have the power to terminate active projects and could limit international scientific

collaborations. The American Association for the Advancement of Science condemned the proposed rule as a “brazen power grab” and said it would make future discoveries less likely. The Union of Concerned Scientists warned, “It could also give politically connected industries a functional veto over research that might reveal risks associated with products and practices.” The White House has announced funding for construction of what would be the first new U.S. coal plants in 13 years. On Thursday, President Trump announced \$700 million in new federal funding for the coal industry during an Oval Office gathering with Republican governors and Cabinet members.President Donald Trump: “If you look at China, if you look at so many of the successful countries, they’re using coal. If you look at some of the real great failures countries, they’re using wind. Just keeps blowing, blowing, blowing and puts you right out of business.”This week, attorneys general from seven states sued the Trump administration over its efforts to cancel a major offshore wind lease off the coast of New York.

How do US arms sales to Taiwan work and why are they such a sore point for China



China: After US President Donald Trump’s summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping earlier this month, much focus has been put on Washington’s support for Taiwan and US arms sales to its government

On the first day of those talks Xi delivered a stark warning to his US counterpart – that Taiwan, the most important outstanding issue between the US and China, could become a “very dangerous situation” if mishandled.Trump has delayed signing a \$14 billion arms deal for Taiwan that was recently approved by Congress, calling it a “very good negotiating chip” in his dealings with Xi.Meanwhile, acting US Navy Secretary Hung Cao said the deal was being delayed as the Pentagon made sure it has enough weapons for the war with Iran.But Taiwan’s Defense Ministry said last week it has not been notified by the US of any delay in arms sales.

With the confusion and conflicting statements around the issue, here’s a look at the process and law regarding US military sales to Taiwan, the democratically governed island of 23 million that Beijing claims to be its own. “They felt that by giving into Chinese demands that he terminate diplomatic relations with Taiwan and end the mutual defense

treaty, Carter had left the island profoundly vulnerable,” Brookings says.In 1979, US President Jimmy Carter’s administration switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei — whose government was and still is formally called the Republic of China (ROC) — to Beijing, known as the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The move ended a mutual defense treaty between Washington and Taipei, much to the dismay at the time of the US Congress, which quickly passed the Taiwan Relations Act to assert its role in relations across the Taiwan Strait. Last week, chief Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell said “Our Taiwan policy remains unchanged, and the US continues to adhere to long-standing commitments consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act.”Among the weapons systems delivered in the last decade are TOW-2B and Javelin missiles, main battle tanks, Phalanx naval defense systems and fuel tankers.Inside Taiwan there has been growing debate in recent years on whether the island’s military procurement has overly focused on expensive, big-ticket items that take too many years to produce and could be vulnerable against China’s much larger and better-equipped military.

While a US-China joint communi-

que issued in 1982 mentioned Washington’s intention of a gradual and eventual reduction in its arms sales to Taiwan pending a peaceful resolution, Beijing has interpreted the text as a binding commitment while US officials have long disputed the notion — stressing that Washington had never agreed to set a date for ending such sales nor would it consult Beijing beforehanThe weapons pipelineSince 1979, Taiwan has purchased tens of billions of dollars in US military systems, from big-ticket items like destroyers, frigates, jet fighters and main battle tanks, to smaller items like anti-aircraft, anti-tank missiles, computer systems and logistical support. “It is not unusual for defense sales to take years to complete, sometimes never actually meeting full delivery,” said Jeff Abramson, senior non-resident fellow at the Center for International Policy (CIP).“Typically, arms are not already manufactured when they are first sold, but are instead orders and the timing of their delivery can depend on industrial capacity, US military needs for those weapons that might take preference, others who might be in line as higher priority to receive them, or simply changed situations between order and delivery,” he said.waited 81

months for tanksIn Taiwan’s case, that’s resulted in a significant backlog of almost \$30 billion in weapons still to be delivered, according to an April 2026 report from the Taiwan Security Monitor (TSM) project at George Mason University. In Taiwan’s case, that’s resulted in a significant backlog of almost \$30 billion in weapons still to be delivered, according to an April 2026 report from the Taiwan Security Monitor (TSM) project at George Mason University. Joe O’Connor, assistant director at TSM, detailed some deals that have been completed this year or are still delayed after years.An order for 291 small ALTIUS-600M loitering munitions made in 2024 was completed in 21 months, while an order for 108 Abrams tanks made in 2019 took 81 months to fulfill, with the final units only reaching Taiwan last month, he said.And Taipei is still waiting for F-16 fighter jets ordered in 2019 to be delivered, with production and flight testing only recently begun, O’Connor said.Taiwan’s Defense Ministry said as of this April, among the 23 major US arm sales over the last decade, five of them have been fully delivered. Three are partially delivered, and the remaining 15 items are still under production. Many have instead pushed a so-called “porcupine strategy” where Taiwan embraces cheap and easy-to-produce asymmetric weaponry designed and developed locally, such as drones and anti-ship missiles.The effects of Trump’s delayed signing Those are highly valued systems, not only for the US military, but also its allies and partners around the world, and Trump’s delay could mean Taiwan’s order gets pushed down in the queue, O’Connor said.It’s that varied – and extended – delivery record that has analysts saying that Trump’s delay in signing the recent \$14 billion deal has little impact of Taiwan’s military readiness.That deal appeared to be focused on air defenses and drone countermeasures, with systems like Patriot missiles and the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems included

Kenya arrests eight students suspected of arson

Kenyan: Kenyan authorities have arrested eight students on suspicion of arson over a fire at a girls’ boarding school that killed 16 students, police said on Friday.

The fire at the Utumishi Girls’ Academy Senior School in Gilgil in west-central Kenya broke out in the early hours of Thursday and also injured 79 students.Fires are common at Kenyan schools, with many set by students protesting harsh discipline and poor conditions, researchers have found. As a result, the government has disbanded the school’s board of management and will take appropriate legal and disciplinary action against any staff found to have neglected their duties, Ogamba said.A fire in 2024 at a primary boarding school in central Kenya’s Nyeri County killed 21 students. Its cause was never conclusively established.In the worst school fire of recent times, 67 schoolboys were killed in 2001 at Kyanguli Secondary School outside Nairobi, an incident the authorities attributed to arson.

“Preliminary investigations have identified eight students as persons of interest in connection with the planning and execution of the suspected arson attack,” the police’s Directorate of Criminal Investigations said in a statement. Education Minister Julius Ogamba told a news conference that preliminary investigations found that two teachers at the secondary school had been informed of the students’ alleged plans but failed to act to stop them.The school also failed to observe safety rules, he said, pointing to overcrowding in the dormitories and an emergency exit that was locked during the fire.

Iran promises ‘utter ruin’ if war restarts.happen if diplomacy

Kenyan: As negotiations between the United States and Iran edge toward a possible agreement, Tehran is increasingly signaling that any return to war would look very different from the last.US officials said Thursday that a tentative agreement had been reached in talks between Tehran and Washington and was awaiting President Donald Trump’s approval. Yet even as negotiators reported progress, the military confrontation showed little sign of disappearing. The US launched its second round of strikes on Iran in a matter of days this week, while skirmishes continued Thursday evening in the Strait of Hormuz.Iranian officials have used the negotiations to project confidence that they retain significant military options should diplomacy fail. The Revolutionary Guards said any renewed conflict would spread “far beyond the region,” threatening “crushing blows” and “utter ruin” in places opponents “cannot even imagine.”The warnings come after a war that saw Iran target US bases, Israeli cities and critical infrastructure in Gulf Arab states, while effectively shutting shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and triggering a global energy shock. Last week, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned that any future retaliation would “feature many more surprises,” while Iran’s military threatened to open “new fronts” using “new tools.” Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran’s top negotiator, said the armed forces had used the ceasefire period to rebuild their capabilities “at the highest level.” Experts say much of the rhetoric is intended to deter further attacks. But they also warn that Tehran retains significant escalation options should diplomacy collapse.

Should war resume, here are some ways Iran could respond:A new blockadeIran cannot prevail against the US and Israel via conventional military means, so it has pursued deterrence by inflicting global economic pain through a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, a critical maritime chokepoint. Emboldened by its success, Tehran may now seek to disrupt another vital maritime corridor.



At the age of 47, Jyotika proudly displays her well-defined muscles



At the age of 47, Jyotika persistently redefines fashion norms, demonstrating that elegance is timeless. In order to promote her newest release, *System*, available on Prime Video, the actress donned a stunning

pearl-white bridal gown. She posted the images on Instagram, which also included her co-star Sonakshi Sinha, accompanied by the caption, “Evidence that certain pairs command both the room and the courtroom.”

Now, let us analyze the look: Fashion Instagram handle, *Bollywood Women Closet*, shared details of Jyotika’s look. The pearl-white look is from a couture eveningwear and bridal brand, *Karleo*, which she accessorised with

jewels from *Soni Sapphire* and shoes from *Aquazzura*. Celebrity stylists *Radhika Mehra* and *Ankitha Chauhan* styled the look.

Decoding the bridal gown The *Karleo* dress is a perfect blend of elegant eveningwear and bridal elegance. Meanwhile, *Radhika* and *Ankitha*’s styling adds a minimal, understated glamour, blending vintage-inspired femininity with contemporary boldness. The duo kept the structured ivory corset the focal point of the look, balancing it with a satin skirt. Crafted in delicate lace and embellished with pearl detailing along the sweetheart neckline and hem, the corset features a strapless design, front button closures, structured boning that highlights her curves, and a fitted silhouette that creates a sculpted shape while adding a touch of couture drama. The sleek satin mermaid skirt skims the body before flowing into a subtle train. The fluidity of the skirt adds a beautiful contrast to the corset’s structure d silhouette. Mean-

while, the monochromatic ivory palette keeps the look refined and timeless. The accessories and glam

To keep her look refined, Jyotika tied her tresses in a sleek, centre-parted ponytail that draws attention to her collarbones and toned, muscular arms. To accessorise the statement ensemble, she chose chandelier earrings to add sparkle without overwhelming the ensemble. For the glam, she went with minimal makeup: defined eyes accentuated with shimmering eyeshadow, a neutral lip shade, on-fleck brows, mascara-coated lashes, beaming highlighter, and rouged cheeks. The styling exudes quiet luxury, just as the sensual ensemble does.

On the work front Meanwhile, on the work front, Jyotika was most recently seen in *Srikanth* (2024) and the web series *Dabba Cartel* (2025). Her latest release is *System*. Directed by *Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari*, it also stars *Sonakshi Sinha* and *Ashtosh Gowariker* in lead roles. The film will be released on Prime Video on May 22.

Dua Lipa continues to excel in the realm of wedding fashion



After exchanging vows at Sicily’s *Villa Valguarnera*, *Dua Lipa* and *Callum Turner* continued their wedding celebrations with a relaxed post-wedding brunch with friends and family. The couple hosted the brunch the morning following their wedding. For the occasion, they changed into relaxed clothing. What *Dua Lipa* and *Callum Turner* wore for the post-wedding brunch

Dua Lipa and *Callum Turner*’s wedding is the gift that keeps on giving, especially when it comes to the fashion. Following her custom *Bottega Veneta* ensemble, the singer stepped out for brunch in a delicate white lace dress, going fully beach-chic. The full-length ensemble, crafted from a breezy, sheer fabric and decorated with intricate floral embroidery, features a plunging V neckline, full-length bell sleeves with ruffle extensions, ruffled trims on the bust, a figure-hugging silhouette, and a train at the back. She wore a white bikini set underneath the dress to complete the ensemble. To finish the beachy brid-

al look, *Lipa* accessorised with the whimsical *Chloé* swan bag and layered gold jewellery, including two gold neck chains and delicate hoop earrings. Glowing in the flowing look, she kept the glam minimal and clean with a slicked-back ponytail, glossy pink lip shade, and on-fleck brows. Meanwhile, *Callum* complemented her in a simple dual-toned, white-and-blue crew neck T-shirt, styled with a bucket hat, sunglasses, and a pair of dark blue bottoms.

Dua Lipa and *Callum Turner*’s wedding *Dua* and *Callim* officially married on Sunday, May 31, in a secret civil wedding in London, for which the musician wore a custom *Schiaparelli* couture. This weekend, they flew to Sicily with their friends to celebrate with a three-day Italian wedding extravaganza. According to reports, the couple’s ceremony took place beneath the villa’s picturesque gazebo, where *Elton John* reportedly performed *Your Song* for the newlyweds, accompanied by piano. Guests then enjoyed a lavish re-

ception curated by Michelin-starred chef *Tony Lo Coco* of *I Pupi*, featuring Sicilian favourites including *anelletti alla Norma*, *panelle*, *crocchè*, *cassata*, and *cannoli*. After the wedding dinner wrapped, the celebration shifted into full party mode with sets from some of the biggest names in dance music, including *Carl Cox*, *Martin Garrix*, *David Guetta*, and *Peggy Gou*, who kept guests on the dance floor late into the evening. Other celebrities on the guest list include *Charli XCX*, *George Daniel*, *Troye Sivan*, *Joe Alwyn*, *Mark Ronson*, and *Grace Gummer*.

The controversy The couple’s fairytale wedding, which reportedly cost about £1.3 million, has sparked local protests. To keep the event private, authorities closed roads, restricted access to public areas, banned drones, and posted heavy security across parts of the city. Locals say those measures made everyday life difficult and turned parts of Palermo into an exclusive zone for visitors, sparking protests and public anger.

Provide your hair with the appropriate amount of hydration and nourishment

Your hair is perpetually subjected to dirt, pollution, heat styling, and chemical treatments, leading to a lackluster and dehydrated appearance. This is where hair masks become essential. In contrast to standard conditioners, hair masks are designed with concentrated ingredients that deeply penetrate the hair shaft, providing significant hydration, repair, and protection. Most of these hair masks are also enriched with beneficial ingredients such as natural oils, proteins, vitamins, and botanical extracts that help replenish lost moisture and strengthen damaged hair. Apart from repairing the damage, these hair masks also create a protective barrier around the hair, helping to prevent future harm caused by heat, UV exposure, and daily wear.

So, whether your goal is utmost hydration or repairing the damaged strands, give your hair the right hair mask to keep it soft and nourished. Benefits of hair masks

Though the benefits of hair masks can vary depending on the ingredients and your hair type, common advantages

include: Increased moisture: Hair masks often contain oils, butters, and humectants that help restore hydration to dry or dehydrated hair, making it feel softer and smoother. Reduced frizz: By coating and conditioning the hair shaft, masks can help tame flyaways and reduce frizz, especially in humid conditions. Improved hair strength: Protein-rich masks (containing ingredients like keratin, amino acids, or hydrolysed proteins) may temporarily strengthen damaged hair and reduce breakage. Enhanced shine: Well-moisturised hair reflects light more effectively, resulting in a shinier, healthier-looking appearance. Easier detangling: The conditioning agents in hair masks can smooth the hair cuticle, making hair easier to comb and reducing mechanical damage during styling.

Support for damaged hair: Hair that has been exposed to heat styling, bleaching, colouring, or environmental stressors may benefit from masks that help improve texture and manageability. Better elasticity: Regular conditioning can help hair

maintain flexibility, reducing the likelihood of snapping when brushed or styled. Scalp benefits: Certain masks are formulated with ingredients such as aloe vera, tea tree oil, or niacinamide that may help soothe a dry or irritated scalp. 1. *Kérastase Densifique Densité Hair Mask*: For *Kérastase Densifique Densité Hair Mask* is designed for hair that feels thin, weak, or lacking volume. Its rich formula helps make hair feel fuller, softer, and stronger without leaving it heavy. Many customers say their hair feels thicker, smoother, and easier to style after regular use. Users also appreciate its luxurious salon-like fragrance and lightweight finish. This mask is especially popular among people looking to add body and bounce while keeping their hair nourished and healthy-looking. 2. *Schwarzkopf Professional Spa Essence Hydrating Masque*: *Schwarzkopf Professional Spa Essence Hydrating Masque* is a deeply nourishing treatment for dry and dehydrated hair. The creamy texture

spreads easily and helps improve softness, smoothness, and manageability. Customers often mention that their hair feels silky, hydrated, and less frizzy after use. Many users enjoy the salon-like results and find that it adds shine without making hair feel greasy. Some reviewers also love its rich texture, although a few mention that the fragrance may not suit everyone. 3. *L’Oréal Professionnel Absolut Repair Mask* for Dry & Damaged Hair: *L’Oréal Professionnel Absolut Repair Mask* is a favourite for repairing dry, damaged, and chemically treated hair. Its rich formula helps restore softness, shine, and smoothness while reducing the appearance of damage. Customers frequently report that their hair feels healthier, easier to detangle, and more manageable after just a few uses. Many appreciate the noticeable improvement in texture and frizz control. The mask is especially loved by people with coloured or heat-styled hair who want salon-quality repair at home.

Five curling tools for achieving soft Korean-style waves



It is not solely K-beauty, K-pop, and K-dramas from Korea that are gaining popularity. Soft Korean-style waves as a hairstyle have also emerged as a preferred choice, even in India. Characterized by their natural movement, airy texture, and effortless elegance, these waves provide a youthful and refined look without appearing ex-

cessively styled. In contrast to tight curls or bold Hollywood waves, Korean-style waves emphasize gentle bends, volume, and a sleek finish. The appropriate curling iron, wand, or styling tool can significantly impact the ability to replicate this trend at home. What makes Korean-style waves unique? Korean-style waves

are characterised by loose, flowing curves that frame the face naturally. The main goal of Korean waves is to create movement and volume while maintaining a soft, healthy appearance. And the use of larger barrel sizes, lower heat settings, and styling techniques can help in creating these unique Korean waves.

Styling tools to create Korean waves 1. Large barrel curling irons Large barrel curling irons are among the most popular tools for creating Korean-inspired waves. Barrels measuring between 32 mm and 38 mm produce loose curls that naturally relax into soft waves. These curling irons work particularly well on medium to long hair. The larger barrel prevents curls from becoming too tight and helps create the signature S-shaped wave pattern commonly seen in Korean hairstyles.

Look for features such as: Adjustable temperature controls Ceramic or tourmaline coating Fast heat-up technology Automatic shut-off functions Ceramic barrels distribute heat evenly, reducing the risk of hot spots and minimising hair damage. 2. Automatic hair curlers

Automatic hair curlers have gained popularity because they simplify the styling process. These devices automatically draw sections of hair into a heated chamber and create consistent curls with minimal effort. For Korean-style waves, you can select larger curl settings and gently brush through the finished curls to create a softer effect. Automatic curlers are particularly helpful for those who struggle with traditional curling irons or have limited styling experience. Many modern models also include adjustable heat and timer settings, making

them suitable for different hair types. 3. Curling wands for natural texture Curling wands are another excellent option for achieving Korean-style waves. Since they do not have a clamp, they allow users to wrap hair more freely around the barrel, resulting in softer and more natural-looking waves. This styling method is especially useful for creating volume around the crown and face. For beginners, heat-resistant gloves are recommended to make styling safer and more comfortable. 4. Hair straighteners for wave styling

Surprisingly, a flat iron can be one of the best tools for creating Korean waves, too. These straighteners create smooth bends and natural-looking movement. By gently rotating the straightener while gliding it down the hair shaft, you can form soft waves without creating distinct curls. This technique works especially well for shoulder-length hair and layered cuts. Choose a straightener with rounded edges and ceramic plates to achieve smooth, crease-free waves. 5. Multi-styling air tools

Air-based styling tools have become increasingly popular due to their ability to style hair while minimising heat exposure. These styling tools use controlled airflow to shape and curl the hair, helping maintain softness and shine. Multi-stylers often include attachments specifically designed for creating loose curls and waves.

As they rely on lower temperatures than traditional curling tools, they are a great choice for individuals concerned about heat damage. These tools can also add volume at the roots, a key feature of many Korean hairstyles. Tips to style the perfect Korean waves

Regardless of which curling tool you decide on, proper technique is equally important for achieving Korean-style waves. Start by applying a heat protectant to shield hair from damage. Use moderate heat settings whenever possible, especially on fine or colour-treated hair. After curling, avoid immediately touching the hair. Allow the curls to cool completely before gently brushing them out with a wide-tooth comb or soft brush. This step transforms defined curls into the soft, flowing waves associated with Korean beauty trends. Finish with a lightweight texturising spray or flexible-hold hairspray to help maintain movement without making the hair stiff. The best curling tool for soft Korean-style waves ultimately depends on your hair type, skill level, and styling preferences. Large barrel curling irons, curling wands, automatic curlers, flat irons, and air-styling devices can all create beautiful results when used correctly. With the right tool and technique, anyone can recreate the soft, elegant waves that have become a defining feature of Korean beauty and fashion.

Avatar fire and ash OTT release

Agency: James Cameron's Avatar: Fire And Ash is now headed for its digital premiere after completing its theatrical run. The third instalment in the blockbuster Avatar franchise, which continues the story of Jake Sully, Neytiri and the people of Pandora after the events of Avatar: The Way of Water, released in cinemas on December 19, 2025, and received a strong response from audiences and critics.

Avatar: Fire And Ash is set to premiere on JioHotstar from June 24, 2026. Produced by James Cameron and Jon Landau under the banner of Lightstorm Entertainment, the film explores themes of trauma, grief, survival and the strength of family bonds. The movie expands the world of Pandora further while continuing the emotional journey of the Sully family. Like the previous films in the franchise, Fire And Ash combines immersive visual effects with large-scale storytelling and environmental world-building. In Avatar: Fire And Ash, Jake Sully and his family are still dealing with the grief of losing their child. Their fragile peace is disturbed when they come across the Ash People, a hostile Na'vi clan that worships fire and believes it has been abandoned by its goddess. As this new clan emerges as a dangerous force, the Sully family must fight to survive yet another threat. At the same time, the return of human aggressors intensifies the larger conflict between the Na'vi and colonisers. The film not only deepens the emotional stakes for Jake and Neytiri but also introduces new cultures, landscapes and ecosystems within Pandora, adding fresh layers to Cameron's expansive sci-fi universe. The film features the return of Sam Worthington as Jake Sully and Zoe Saldana as Neytiri. The cast also includes Sigourney Weaver, Stephen Lang and Kate Winslet, who reprise their roles from the earlier films. New and returning cast members include Oona Chaplin as Varang, Cliff Curtis as Tonowari, Joel David Moore as Dr Norm Spellman and David Thewlis as Peylak, among others. With its spectacular visuals, emotional family drama and expansion of Pandora's mythology, Avatar: Fire And Ash is expected to attract strong viewership when it begins streaming on JioHotstar from June 24.



Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai Day 3 Box Office: Varun Dhawan starrer races past ₹23 crore mark

Mumbai: The first weekend has come and gone, but Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai is still searching for the kind of momentum many expected from a David Dhawan comedy. Backed by a star-studded cast and a wide theatrical release, the film managed a slight boost on Sunday, though its overall box office performance remains modest.

Headlined by Varun Dhawan alongside Pooja Hegde and Mrunal Thakur, the comedy-drama arrived in cinemas on Friday. The film has generated attention not only because it marks a reunion between Varun and his father David Dhawan, but also because it is being promoted as the veteran filmmaker's final directorial venture. According to industry tracker Sacnilk, the film earned ₹8.33 crore

Hrithik Roshan's alleged ₹500 crore Krrish 4 demand dismissed by Rakesh Roshan as 'nonsense'



Mumbai: Hrithik Roshan's highly anticipated superhero film Krrish 4 has been making headlines, but the recent development around it was rather disappointing rather than exciting. Reports came in that a disagreement between Hrithik Roshan and Aditya Chopra over the budget has led to the film being stalled, but how true are these rumours? Rakesh Roshan has clarified.

Calling the news of Hrithik demanding a Rs 500 crore budget nonsense, Rakesh Roshan told Mid-Day, "It's all nonsense that Hrithik has asked for a Rs 500 crore budget for top-tier VFX and world-class action for his directorial debut, while YRF [Yash Raj Films] wants to cap costs at Rs 350 crore.

Making a good film catering to a [wide] audience takes time. Even I have taken time for each of my Krrish offerings." Revealing the reason behind the delay in Krrish 4 going on floors, the veteran filmmaker said that Hrithik is currently tied up with the production house he launched this year. "Krrish [Hrithik] is on another planet and we are all waiting for his dates," he joked, and added, "There are no issues; all is smooth. It's teamwork between Adi, Hrithik, and me."

According to a report by trade website Sacnilk, production on Krrish 4 was pushed as talks between Hrithik Roshan and producer Aditya Chopra of Yash Raj Films remain unresolved. Sources suggest Chopra has proposed

a cap of around Rs 350 crore for Krrish 4 to keep the film commercially sustainable. Meanwhile, Hrithik Roshan, who is set to make his directorial debut with this instalment, envisions a massive scale with a budget close to Rs 500 crore. Krrish 4 will be made in association with Yash Raj Films, though Hrithik's last big YRF project, War 2, didn't hit the mark at the box office. Hrithik acknowledged the setback while attending an event in Dubai: "That's very kind of you... You know, my film just bombed at the box office, so it feels very good to get all the love. Thank you." The franchise started with Koi Mil Gaya, where Hrithik's character gains powers from an alien named Jadoo, which later pass on to his son Krishna Mehra in Krrish. Over the years, the films have become a defining part of Bollywood superhero lore. Apart from Krrish 4, Hrithik Roshan has teamed up with Hombale Films, known for Kantara, for a new project described as "a tale of grit, grandeur and glory... where intensity meets imagination, and the Big Bang begins."

Bandar day 3 Box Office: Bobby Deol starrer crosses ₹2 crore despite lukewarm audience response

Anurag Kashyap's Bandar earns ₹2.34 crore weekend



Mumbai: Not every film's journey is defined by opening weekend numbers. Some rely on audience conversations and strong word-of-mouth to gradually build interest, and Anurag Kashyap's *Bandar* appears to be hoping for exactly that.

The crime thriller, led by Bobby Deol, arrived in cinemas on Friday and has earned praise from critics as well as sections of moviegoers. However, the appreciation has yet to translate into a significant box office boost, with the film continuing to post modest collections through its first weekend. According to figures reported by

Sacnilk, *Bandar* earned ₹89 lakh on its third day in theatres. While the Sunday collection was higher than its opening day figures, the film still struggled to attract large audiences. The movie had opened with ₹50 lakh on Friday before showing improvement on Saturday with collections of ₹95 lakh. After three days, the film's India net collection stands at ₹2.34 crore, while its India gross earnings have reached ₹2.79 crore.

Given its dark subject matter and character-driven narrative, *Bandar* was never expected to compete with mainstream commercial entertainers. Even so,

the film has benefited from positive reactions online, where viewers have particularly praised Bobby Deol's performance. The film follows Samar, a singer-actor whose career is already facing difficult times when his life is thrown into turmoil by a serious allegation. After a woman named Gayatri, played by Sapna Pabbi, files a rape complaint against him, Samar suddenly finds himself caught in a legal battle that quickly spirals out of control.

As the case gains public attention, Samar insists the encounter was consensual, but he is forced to navigate

Akshay Kumar's welcome to the jungle deal: actor bags ₹1.8 crore fee, secures 72% IPR stake

Mumbai: Akshay Kumar has reportedly taken an unusual route for Welcome to the Jungle, choosing not to charge his standard fee upfront and instead tying his earnings to the film's long-term performance. The actor, who headlines producer Firoz Nadiadwala's upcoming comic adventure Welcome to the Jungle, is said to have accepted a fees of just Rs 1.8 crore for the project. According to industry buzz, Kumar has also negotiated a big share in the film's intellectual property revenues after release.

The arrangement has caught the attention of the trade because it comes at a time when producers are increasingly looking for ways to manage costs on large-scale Hindi films. Kumar's reported decision means the makers face less immediate financial pressure while bringing the project to theatres. The film has already recovered a substantial portion of its investment through the sale of non-theatrical rights. A trade source informs, as per Free Press Journal, "As of now, the makers are ru-



moured to have finalised a deal of around Rs 120 crores from OTT, audio, satellite, etc. They will therefore have to recover a lot less from theatrical income. Welcome is a big franchise. The earlier two films, Welcome (2007) and Welcome Back (2015) have great recall. So, the third part of the franchise is also carrying buzz. Since the secondary rights have already yielded safe numbers, the makers can breathe easy for now."

These pre-release deals are set to have covered major ancillary revenue streams,

giving the film a financial cushion even before its theatrical run begins. Industry conversations have also centred on Akshay Kumar's reported backend arrangement. According to trade buzz, once revenues begin flowing in after release, the actor is expected to receive 72% of the IPR share, while the producer retains 28%. The move has reportedly been praised in the industry, as Akshay is said to have delayed taking a bigger fee and instead linked his earnings to the film's performance. Many believe this gives pro-

ducers more financial flexibility at a time when the box office remains unpredictable.

Akshay Kumar remains one of Hindi cinema's busiest leading actors. While box office results have varied over the years, he continues to maintain a packed release schedule, often delivering three to four films annually. The consistency has helped keep him among Bollywood's most bankable stars. Alongside Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan and Aamir Khan, Kumar is regarded as one of the industry's highest-paid actors.

Female stars challenge token roles in big-budget films

Mumbai: Young actresses Ashika Ranganath and Dimple Hayathi have sparked an important debate on the portrayal of women in mainstream commercial films, adding their voices to a growing conversation that gained momentum following the release of Ram Charan's Peddi.

Ashika Ranganath recently shared an Instagram story highlighting how actresses are often unfairly blamed when female characters are reduced to glamour elements or written without substance. According to her, the criticism is frequently directed at the wrong people. "The problem is not the actresses. Female characters are often neglected or poorly designed at the writing stage itself. Actors perform within the boundaries given to them by the director and the script," Ashika stated.

Joining the discussion, actress Dimple Hayathi described the ongoing debate as "long overdue" in the film industry. Without naming Peddi directly, she pointed out that actresses are often judged for the roles they portray, despite having little influence over how those characters are written and presented on screen. Dimple noted that many women entering the industry accept the opportunities available to them while



trying to establish their careers. Therefore, she argued, they should not be blamed when their characters lack depth or are reduced to decorative roles. According to her, the quality and importance of female characters are primarily determined by writers and filmmakers. Director Teja agrees that the issue is a reality in many commercial entertainers. He points out that several talented actresses have been shortchanged by poorly developed roles. "This is a sad situation for many actresses in Tollywood since they are capable of delivering much more than merely looking glamorous or showcasing their dance skills," says Teja. He cites examples such as Janhvi Kapoor in Devara, Kavya Thapar in Double iSmart, and Priyanka Mohan in Saripodhaa Sanivaaram, where the actresses had limited scope to perform despite their abilities.

"With heroism-driven narratives, action sequences and elevation scenes taking up most of the screen time, heroines are often left with very little to do," he adds. Several leading actresses, including Sreeleela (Skanda), Tamannaah (Bhola Shankar), Shruti Haasan (Veera Simha Reddy), Ritu Varma (Mark Antony), and Anu Emmanuel (Ravana), have faced similar criticism for being confined to songs, comedy tracks, and supporting roles while the hero dominates the narrative. Teja believes filmmakers can create a better balance between male and female characters without compromising commercial appeal. "Even stars like Amitabh Bachchan and Rajinikanth have worked in films where female characters were given significant importance. In Robo, Aishwarya Rai had a pivotal role alongside Rajinikanth.

Varun Dhawan turned down Kangana Ranaut film that later netted ₹450 crore and national awards

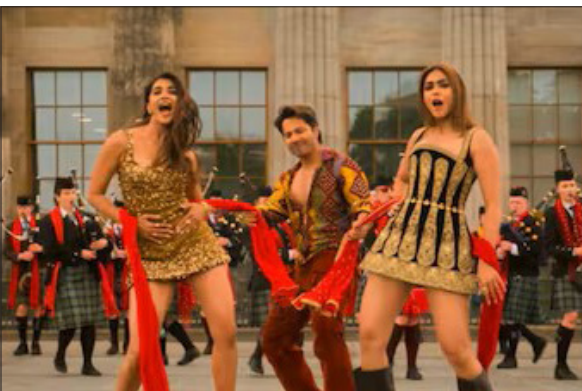
Mumbai: Varun Dhawan has opened up about how he once rejected a film opposite Kangana Ranaut, and it eventually went on to become one of the most critically acclaimed films in recent times. This was Sriram Raghavan's Andhadun, which eventually starred Ayushmann Khurrana, Radhika Apte and Tabu. While Varun rejected the film, it turned out to be a game-changer for Ayushmann's career.

During a conversation with Tanmay Bhatt on his YouTube channel, Varun Dhawan said, "I think I said no to a good film, which became a very good film, Andhadhun. But I was filming for something else so I couldn't do it. And the original cast of the film was supposed to be me and Kangana Ranaut." Directed by Sriram Raghavan, Andhadhun was re-

leased in 2018 and went on to become one of the most celebrated Hindi films of the decade. The film follows Akash, a pianist who pretends to be blind and finds himself entangled in a murder mystery filled with deception, black comedy, and shocking twists. At the time, the script was considered unconventional, especially in an industry dominated by commercial entertainers and larger-than-life heroes.

Ayushmann delivered one of the finest performances of his career, perfectly balancing innocence, humour, vulnerability, and suspense. His portrayal of Akash earned widespread critical acclaim and won him the National Film Award for Best Actor. The role also significantly elevated his standing in the industry, transforming him from a successful actor

into one of Bollywood's most respected performers. Sriram Raghavan's ability to blend thriller, comedy, and noir elements into a single narrative was particularly celebrated. The film quickly developed a reputation as one of the smartest mainstream Hindi thrillers ever made. Commercially, the film exceeded expectations. Produced on a modest budget, Andhadhun emerged as a major box-office success in India and found an even bigger audience internationally. Meanwhile, Varun Dhawan is currently seen in Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai. The film is directed by his father, David Dhawan, and also stars Mrunal Thakur, Pooja Hegde, Mouni Roy and Manish Paul among others. The film has received mixed reviews and is performing decently at the box office.



on its third day in theatres. While Sunday brought some improvement, the jump was not particularly significant. The movie had opened with ₹7.50 crore on Friday before slipping slightly to ₹7.25 crore on Saturday. With its latest earnings, Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai has taken its India net collection to ₹23.08 crore. Its India gross collection currently stands at ₹27.53 crore.

The film was released on more than 2,500 screens across the country, giving it one of the widest releases for a Hindi comedy in recent times. However, audience turnout remained below expectations. Sacnilk reported that occupancy began at around 10% during morning shows and gradually improved through the day, with night shows recording a peak occupancy of 36%. At

the heart of the film is Jass, played by Varun Dhawan. The story follows his complicated personal life after his wife Bani, portrayed by Mrunal Thakur, pushes for a divorce, claiming she cannot keep up with his sexual appetite. Jass later finds love again with Preet, played by Pooja Hegde. Things spiral into complete chaos when both women become pregnant and he discovers that he is the father of both children. Produced by Tips Films, the movie also features Mouni Roy, Kubbra Sait and Rakesh Bedi in important roles.

Apart from its box office journey, the film has also found itself at the centre of a controversy involving veteran producer Vashu Bhagnani. He has raised concerns over the alleged recreation and use of songs associated with his films without per-

mission. Speaking about the issue, Bhagnani said, "How can you shoot the same songs for another producer? There has to be ethics in the industry." He further added, "David is my brother. I have had lunch and dinner with him. I gave my life for him. Financially, it is fine, but emotionally, the whole family is broken."

Meanwhile, Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai carries added emotional significance for fans of David Dhawan. The filmmaker has announced that he will retire after the release of this film. Over the decades, he has delivered several popular comedies that went on to achieve cult status, including Raja Babu, Coolie No. 1, Mr and Mrs Khiladi, Hero No. 1, Haseena Maan Jayegi, Mujhse Shaadi Karogi, Maine Pyar Kyun Kiya and Partner.

Nabin directs BJP Uttarakhand unit to intensify outreach initiatives

New Delhi: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national chief Nitin Nabin has directed the party's Uttarakhand unit to ensure reports of intra-party differences do not overshadow preparations for next year's assembly elections or provide the opposition an opportunity to target the government's performance, people familiar with the matter said. During his visit to the state last week, Nabin met party leaders and stressed the need to set aside differences and focus on the election campaign. According to a party functionary, he also referred to complaints regarding law and order: "The party president was emphatic that the state unit should follow the example of other BJP-ruled states that have overcome anti-incumbency and returned to power. He said reports of leadership changes should be ignored and the focus should remain on outreach and addressing citizens' concerns," the functionary said. Uttarakhand has traditionally not re-elected governments, but in 2022, the BJP bucked the trend and returned to power under chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami. "There are leaders who feel the high command should consider the Gujarat model of revamping the cabinet to counter anti-incumbency, but the party chief's message was to set aside differences and not give the opposition a chance to hurt the government," the functionary added. Ahead of the 2022 Gujarat assembly elections, the BJP replaced then chief minister Vijay Rupani and his cabinet. "The high command has been apprised of deficiencies in law and order, much of which is attributed to outsiders. Local people have also expressed concern over delays in implementing the land law to protect their rights," the functionary said. In 2025, the state cabinet amended the Uttarakhand (Uttar Pradesh Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1950), imposing a complete ban on the purchase of agricultural and horticultural land by outsiders in 11 districts. "The state has already implemented the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and is serious about religious conversions, but there is growing concern about demographic changes and their impact on law and order," the functionary said. A second party leader said concerns over development projects affecting the state's fragile ecology could also emerge as a challenge. "There have been protests over large-scale construction linked to the Char Dham Yatra. While the government wants to attract more tourists, concerns remain about the impact on the Ganga riverfront and the hills. Young people, in particular, are worried about balancing development and environmental protection," the leader said. People aware of the details said Nabin also instructed the cadre to intensify outreach among youth, who remain concerned about issues such as paper leaks and the shortage of government jobs. "Teams of party leaders have begun pravaas (travel) across the state. They will hold meetings and assess public sentiment on the ground," the first functionary said. In the 2022 assembly elections, the BJP won 47 of the 70 seats, many by narrow margins. Dhami lost from Khatima but later entered the assembly through a bypoll from Champawat. Congress won 19 seats, while the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Independents secured two seats each.



Retd Bombay HC judge faces threats, family in UK attacked over 2024 Bohra verdict



Mumbai: The family of retired Bombay high court judge GS Patel has, for 10 months now, faced threats and actual acts of violence across two continents in connection with his landmark 2024 judgment settling the succession issue in the Dawoodi Bohra community, with the most recent incident being on June 5. The demand is that Justice (retd) Patel recant his judgment of April 23, 2024 in a YouTube video, something that is unprecedented in the annals of Indian legal history, especially not at the level of a constitutional court. Last week, on June 5, Patel's daughter in London, Aditi Patel, received an anonymous letter that read: "You were given ample warning. The gang has been paid. The next step involves cremation of you and your family. You can cancel the contract by doing what you were told in the last letter. Attached is a chip that shows what happens because you chose not to comply." The letter, purportedly sent from Germany — it bears a German stamp — was sent from a fake London address by a certain 'Dye Sun Ent: Die Soon Enterprises'. An SD card attached to the letter has been taken by the Hertfordshire police as part of its investigation. The family did not try to open the card on their computer, fearing it could corrupt or take over their systems. HT couldn't independently ascertain its contents from the police. Justice Patel said he has written to the Indian High Commissioner in London and the acting chief justice of the Bombay high court, and has also apprised the Chief Justice of India, Surya Kant, of the matter. "I have been retired since April 2024. A judgment of the Bombay High Court cannot be recanted by a YouTube video," he added. The cycle of threats and violence began in August last year. Justice Patel's wife, Malashri Patel, received a letter in their Mumbai home. "We are a powerful guild of the DB (Dawoodi Bohra) community members inter-

ested in justice being served for our community... We have employed a very capable and dangerous syndicate who carried out the warning in London..." it said. It was unsigned and undated. At the same time, in London, Justice Patel's daughter, Aditi Patel, received a similar letter, which, in addition, claimed responsibility for the break-in into her home in a London suburb in August 2025. Then, on April 22 this year, while his daughter was on a school run, a masked man accosted her, breaking her nose and leaving her bloodied on the road. The letters to the Patel family also give detailed instructions on how the retired judge should walk back his judgment, including recording a YouTube video stating he was coerced into issuing the order and disseminating it to the media and the Bombay Bar Association. On September 9 last year, the Gamdevi police in Mumbai registered a non-cognisable complaint based on the letter. In London, his daughter and son-in-law registered

a complaint with the UK police. The West Hertfordshire counter-terrorism unit is reviewing the April 22 assault on Aditi Patel. Mark Clawson, Detective Superintendent at the Hertfordshire Constabulary, confirmed that the threats and the attack on Aditi Patel were being investigated but refused to divulge any details, stating, "The case is a live investigation." Officials at the Indian High Commission in London told that they were aware of the case and have taken appropriate steps to help Justice Patel's family. This alleged campaign of threats and violence arises from Justice Patel's 2024 judgment affixing who the real spiritual head of the million-strong Dawoodi Bohra community is—a matter which has cleaved the community. Following the death of Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, the 52nd spiritual and temporal leader of the Dawoodi Bohra community in Mumbai in 2014, a suit was filed in the Bombay High Court challenging the appointment of Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin's son, Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, as the next

Dai al-Mutlaq or the supreme leader. The challenger was his uncle Khuzaima Qutbuddin, and after his death in 2016, the suit was taken up by his cousin Taher Fakhruddin. On April 23, 2024, Justice Patel dismissed the Taher Fakhruddin-led Qutbi Bohra faction's suit, citing a lack of credible proof of divine right, and affirmed Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin as the rightful 53rd Dai al-Mutlaq. The Fakhruddin faction has since appealed against the judgment before a division bench of the Bombay HC. "Syedna Taher Fakhruddin Saheb unequivocally condemns any such threats and violence... These acts are clearly meant to malign us and attempt to derail the appeal," Aziz Bhaisaheb Qutbuddin, brother of Taher Fakhruddin, and director of communications for Syedna Taher Fakhruddin, said. Separately, a constitution bench of the Supreme Court is hearing another critical case pertaining to the religious practice of female circumcision called khatna among the Dawoodi Bohras (Sunita Tiwari v Union of India). Ac-

tivists argue that FGM violates human rights and bodily integrity. Among the intervenors in the ongoing case is the Dawoodi Bohra Women's Association for Religious Freedom (DBWRF), which asserts FMG is a harmless cultural practice. In one of the letters sent to judge Patel's family, there is even a mention of the FGM case. It says, referring to Justice Patel: "Your cowardice has enabled the defendant (the Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin faction) to continue to employ violence, threats and coercion tactics upon community members to fleece them for as much as he can and force them to follow reprehensible practices such as FGM etc., and most importantly, to change the true Dawoodi Bohra doctrine to suit his purposes. We will not allow this to continue." Justice Patel says an appeal is the legitimate way to go about things. "The appeal mechanism, which the Qutbi faction is already actively using, is the only correct legal route to challenge a judgment. Thus, the demands (to release a video going back on his verdict) exist not as a genuine attempt to correct a legal outcome, but purely as a coercion instrument: to manufacture false evidence of judicial corruption that could influence the appeal, and to humiliate and break a judge who did his duty faithfully." Justice Patel also said that the threats issued to him and his family have been carefully calibrated, taking advantage of the jurisdictional divide between India and the UK. He said that, while he had diligently pursued the official chain of command, the threat to his family persisted. "I have approached the authorities, and no one has rebuffed me. I also understand that the jurisdictional remit of the authorities is limited to India. But then this would be a systemic failure. A judge is expected to work without fear or favour, but who will want to be a judge if they and their family members face such threats?" he said.

Centre justifies LPG price hike



New Delhi: The government on Sunday justified raising liquefied petroleum gas (LPG or cooking gas) prices by ₹29 per 14.2kg cylinder to ₹942 on the ground that state-run oil companies are still losing ₹700 on each refill and that the fuel is still cheaper in India than in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) late on Saturday raised domestic LPG prices across the country for the second time since the war in February 28, which led to major global supply-side disruptions. Including the increase of ₹60 per 14.2kg cylinder on March 7, total hikes in cooking gas prices now stand at ₹89. OMCs on March 7 raised the price of 14.2kg domestic LPG cylinders supplied to general households from ₹853 to ₹913, and on June 7 to ₹942. The latest hike takes cooking gas prices to their highest level since August 30, 2023. The government, however, subsidises cooking gas by ₹300 per 14.2kg cylinder for up to nine refills a year to nearly 100 million poor households under the Prime Minister Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY). Stating that the government continues to modulate the effective price paid by consumers, the petroleum ministry said: "A PMUY beneficiary will additionally receive the direct benefit transfer of ₹300 a cylinder on the first four refills each year — broadly the average annual consumption of a typical

Ujjwala household, about four refills a year — and so pays an effective ₹642 on those refills; this support is unchanged." It is, however, unclear whether the government has officially reduced the number of subsidized cylinders available to poor household from nine to four annually in the current financial year. A clarification from the petroleum ministry's spokespersons was still awaited. The Union Cabinet on August 8, 2025 approved a subsidy of ₹300 per 14.2kg cylinder for up to nine refills a year (and proportionately pro-rated for 5kg cylinder) for PMUY beneficiaries during 2025-26. The ministry's statement said Indian household continue to buy cooking gas at prices lower than those prevailing in neighbouring countries and advanced economies. According to the ministry, the equivalent price of a 14.2kg LPG cylinder is ₹1,046 in Pakistan, ₹1,225 in Bangladesh, ₹1,755 in the US, ₹1,765 in Australia and ₹2,411 in Canada. "A PMUY beneficiary pays an effective ₹642 for a 14.2kg cylinder, and the general consumer in Delhi ₹942, against a cost to supply that has now risen to over ₹1,600," the ministry said. "Even a non-PMUY household would pay about ₹700 below the market-linked cost of the cylinder. Retail prices differ marginally across locations on account of distribution costs," it added.

Lionel Messi completed football in Qatar; now he reaches for untouchable greatness



Agency: Lionel Messi has already conquered football, and for the first time in his career, he heads into a FIFA World Cup without the weight of unfinished business on his shoulders. By leading Argentina to glory in Qatar in 2022, Messi answered the one question that had followed him throughout his career and cemented his place at the top of the game's all-time greats. The World Cup triumph effectively settled the GOAT debate for many, leaving him with little left to prove on the sport's biggest stage. Yet, the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner remains as driven as ever. Argentina will once again look to their captain as they chase a feat no nation has achieved since Brazil successfully defended the World Cup in 1958 and 1962. Time and again, Messi has produced his finest football when the stakes have been highest. Apart from a disappointing 2018 campaign, he was the driving force behind Argentina's runs to the finals in both 2014 and 2022, carrying the team through crucial moments and ultimately inspiring them to the title in Qatar. His international journey, however, was far from straightforward. For years, Messi endured heartbreak after heartbreak, falling short in World Cup and Copa América finals. Questions over his legacy persisted until 2021, when he finally lifted his first major

international trophy with Argentina, a breakthrough that paved the way for the crowning achievement of his career a year later. Before the 2022 World Cup, one of the biggest criticisms aimed at Lionel Messi was his lack of goals in knockout matches on football's grandest stage. The Argentine captain answered those doubts emphatically in Qatar, delivering when it mattered most. Messi found the net in every knockout round, the Round of 16, quarter-final, semi-final and final, becoming the first player in World Cup history to achieve that feat in a single tournament. The triumph in Qatar elevated Messi into a category of his own. Over the course of his career, he has won virtually every major honour available to a footballer, including domestic league titles, cup competitions, the UEFA Champions League, the Copa América and, ultimately, the World Cup. The long-awaited international success completed a trophy cabinet

that was already among the most decorated in the sport. The contrast with his great rival Cristiano Ronaldo is often highlighted. Despite five World Cup appearances, Ronaldo has yet to lift the game's most coveted trophy and will head into another campaign hoping to change that. Messi's achievement is made even more remarkable when viewed alongside other legends of the game. Diego Maradona never won either the Champions League or the Copa America, while Pele, despite his extraordinary success with Brazil, never played club football in Europe. The aura surrounding Lionel Messi will be different this time. Free from the burden of chasing a World Cup title, he is likely to play with even greater freedom and ruthlessness. At the same time, Messi understands better than anyone that he is approaching the final chapter of an extraordinary career, and his role within this Argentina side has evolved.

Unlike previous tournaments, Argentina no longer depend solely on Messi for goals. The presence of prolific forwards such as Lautaro Martínez and Julian Álvarez gives the reigning champions a reliable cutting edge in attack. That does not mean Messi's influence has diminished. If anything, it has become even more important. While he remains a lethal goalscorer, as evidenced by his prolific record in MLS, Argentina need him more as a creator than a finisher. The retirement of Angel Di María has left a creative void, and the midfield has not looked quite as fluid as it did during the team's peak years. Rodrigo De Paul and Leandro Paredes are no longer competing at the highest level in European football, while Alexis Mac Allister has not consistently hit the standards he set in previous seasons. In that context, Messi's vision, passing range and ability to dictate the tempo of matches could once again prove decisive in Argentina's quest to defend their crown. Argentina will arrive at the World Cup as the top-ranked team in the FIFA rankings, but they will not be considered the most complete side on paper. France, Spain and Portugal arguably possess greater depth and balance across their squads. What sets Argentina apart, however, is their ability to function as a collective.

Florentino Perez re-elected Real Madrid president to pave way for Mourinho's return



Agency: Florentino Perez has earned four more years as Real Madrid's president after winning club elections on Sunday. "We are going to keep working so that Real Madrid keeps winning more titles," he told his supporters at a late-night victory party soon after Real Madrid's club television channel reported Pérez had beaten challenger Enrique Riquelme. The club is yet to make the vote count public. Pérez's victory will pave the way for him to bring back Portuguese coach José Mourinho for a second stint at Madrid. Mourinho, who coached Madrid from 2010-2013, was featured in promotional material for Pérez during the campaign. Pérez said he was "proud that José Mourinho, one of the best coaches in the world, is set to return." Pérez has also said he wants to sign Liverpool center back Ibrahim Konaté and Inter Milan right back Denzel Dumfries, in addition to a pledge to bring in another major signing to be disclosed this week worth more than 150 million euros (\$173 million).

The 79-year-old Pérez ran Madrid from 2000-2006 and from 2009 until now. Under his leadership, Madrid has won seven of its record 15 European Cups. Madrid has also been the most valuable club in the world for the last five years, according to Forbes. Pérez, who also runs an international construction company, hadn't been challenged for Madrid's presidency by a rival candidate in over 20 years. He ran unchallenged when elections were scheduled in 2009, 2013, 2017, 2021 and 2025. That said, Pérez has had a frustrating run of late. His Super League scheme to launch a rival competition to UEFA's Champions League fell through, and Madrid has gone two seasons without winning a title despite recruiting star striker Kylian Mbappé. Pérez has also been criticized for last year floating the idea of selling 10% of the club to private investors, a move that would break with 124 years of the member ownership model. Riquelme congratulated Pérez and accepted the result. But he signaled that he will consider running again. Pérez's term will run through 2030. "For us, this is not the end, this is the beginning,"

Riquelme said. "Real Madrid won't spend another 20 years without holding elections." Riquelme, a renewable energy executive, launched his candidacy after an agitated Pérez announced elections last month during a news conference when he dared anyone to challenge him and denounced what he called a media campaign to topple him. Despite being relatively unknown to the wider public, the 37-year-old Riquelme mounted a credible campaign after getting the backing of former Madrid players such as Raúl González, Fernando Hierro and Iker Casillas. He also promised to sign Manchester City star Erling Haaland. City and Haaland's agent dismissed the chance of him moving to Madrid this summer. There were 98,000 club members eligible to vote. The election was held at Madrid's basketball pavilion because the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium is being used for an event by Pope Leo XIV during his weeklong visit to Spain.

Manav Suthar Becomes Second Indian This Century to Take Debut Test Five-Wicket Haul



New Delhi: India's newest left-arm spinner made an immediate impact on Test debut, tearing through the Afghanistan batting lineup to return remarkable figures of 6/33. His performance helped India enforce the follow-on with a commanding lead of 412 runs, placing him among an elite group of Indian debutants. He now holds the third-best figures by an Indian in an innings on

Test debut, with only Narendra Hirwani ahead of him, who famously took two eight-wicket hauls against West Indies in Chennai in 1988. The young spinner played a pivotal role in putting India firmly in control of the one-off Test, returning 6 for 33 after also contributing a useful 28 runs lower down the order in the first innings. His all-round involvement further underlined his value

to the side on debut. Hailing from Sri Ganganagar in Rajasthan, the left-arm spinner completed a maiden five-wicket haul before going on to add further breakthroughs as Afghanistan's batting order crumbled under sustained pressure. He completed the milestone after dismissing Rahmat Shah, who was fighting alone on 60, followed by the removal of Saleem Safi, who himself had earlier bowled impressively in the match.

The deliveries to Rahmat and Safi were a classic example of his control and turn. Fired in on the stumps, they gripped sharply off the surface and struck the batter on the pads. India went up in a confident appeal, and the umpire had no hesitation in raising the finger. With this spell, the debutant not only announced himself on the international stage but also played a decisive role in ensuring India maintained complete control of the contest from start to finish. The young spinner has given selectors plenty to think about as the race for places in India's Test squad continues.

Seven-Time Olympic Gold-Medallist Simone Biles Shares Details of Her Recent Health Scare

Washington: Simone Biles, the seven-time Olympic gymnastics champion, shared on social media that she recently experienced a health scare. Widely regarded as one of the greatest gymnasts of all time, Biles shared an Instagram story showing her right wrist wrapped with what appeared to be hospital patient identification bands, according to Olympics.com. While she did not reveal the details of the medical emergency, the USA gymnast described it as one of the "scariest" moments of her life. "I'm not one to normally share things like this because I value privacy in today's age. But almost dying wasn't on my bingo card earlier this week. This was one of, if not the scariest, experience of my life," she wrote in an Instagram story. Biles said the health scare was particularly scary, especially as her husband, Jonathan Owens,



was away in Indianapolis for training with the Indianapolis Colts during the incident. "Especially since Jonathan was in Indy for practices. I've been in bed resting this week, I'll explain sooner or later, but s/o to my close circle who reached out, checked in, visited & or sent flowers," she said. Notably, Biles has not competed since her four-medal haul, including three golds, at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

With seven gold, two silver and two bronze medals, Biles is among the most decorated gymnasts in Olympic history. Last week, in an interview with Spanish newspaper El Pais, as per Olympics.com, Biles said she remains undecided about competing in a fourth Olympics at Los Angeles 2028. Jyothi, along with Dhiraj Bommadevara, the Indian men's recurve archer, were speaking in a vir-

tual interaction facilitated by the Sports Authority of India (SAI). After years of asserting her dominance with medals at the Asian and world stage, the prospect of an Olympic debut in Los Angeles awaits her, where the compound archery will be played for the first time as part of the mixed team event. Speaking about her excitement for an Olympics debut, she said for her, it is still "two years from now". "We have been waiting for a long time for compound archery to be a part of the Olympics. There are many people who want me to represent India at the Olympics and win a medal. But for me, it is still almost two years from now. Even though there is a thought of me going there, the main focus is on the Asian Games and the World Cup. These two things are currently in my hands. I want to stay in present.

Emotional Zverev Breaks Down in Tears After Winning Maiden Grand Slam at French Open

Alexander Zverev Wins First Grand Slam Title

Paris: Alexander Zverev was overcome with emotion after finally ending his long wait for a Grand Slam title, breaking down in tears following his victory over Flavio Cobolli in the French Open final on Sunday. The German defeated the Italian 6-1, 4-6, 6-4, 6-7(5), 6-1 in a gripping five-set contest on Court Philippe-Chatrier to claim the first Major title of his career and erase the disappointment of three previous Grand Slam final defeats. As the final point was won, Zverev dropped to the clay before covering his face and crying, the weight of years of near-misses and setbacks finally lifting from his shoulders.

The 2026 French Open had been widely viewed as Zverev's best opportunity to win a Grand Slam. With two-time defending champion Carlos Alcaraz sidelined by a wrist injury and both Jannik Sinner and Novak



Djokovic suffering early exits, the world No. 3 entered the tournament as one of the leading favourites. Despite the growing expectations, Zverev consistently played down his status throughout the fortnight, insisting he was focused only on the next match rather than the possibility of lifting the trophy. That composure was tested in Sunday's final. The second seed made a flying start after electing to receive following the coin toss. He

broke Cobolli's serve immediately and raced through the opening set, breaking three times as the Italian struggled to settle into his first Grand Slam final. Cobolli, however, refused to let the match slip away. The 24-year-old responded strongly in the second set, taking advantage of a dip in Zverev's level to draw level at one set apiece. The German regained control by edging a tight third set, but the contest took another

turn when Cobolli raised his game once again in the fourth. Zverev, meanwhile, appeared to be battling physical issues and showed signs of cramping as the match entered its decisive phase.

Cobolli capitalised on the opportunity, winning a tense fourth-set tiebreak to force the final into a deciding fifth set and raise the prospect of another heartbreaking defeat for Zverev. Instead, the German produced one final surge. Drawing on his experience, Zverev dominated the decider, breaking early and taking complete control of the rallies. Cobolli struggled to maintain the intensity that had carried him through the fourth set, while Zverev continued to attack from the baseline and dictate play. When the Italian sent a final shot long, the 29-year-old collapsed to the clay before celebrating the biggest victory of his career.

Angry Mohammed Siraj Riles Up Rahmat Shah, Triggering Afghanistan's Collapse in Mullanpur

New Delhi: India fast bowler Mohammed Siraj played a key role in Afghanistan's collapse on Day 3 of the one-off Test in Mullanpur on Monday, June 8. Interestingly, Siraj's biggest contribution did not come with the ball in hand. The incident unfolded in the 53rd over of Afghanistan's innings, with veteran Rahmat Shah batting alongside Sharafuddin Ashraf. Nursing a leg injury, Ashraf was struggling to move freely and was largely confined to defending deliveries on the stumps. Seeing Ashraf's limitations, Rahmat too slipped into survival mode during the morning session, content to block deliveries and take the sting out of India's attack.

The approach did not sit well with Siraj. Never one to shy away from a confrontation, Siraj walked up to Rahmat and questioned his intent, urging the batter to show more initiative instead of simply shutting up shop. The frustration was evident a ball earlier. On the third delivery of the 52nd over, Siraj fielded one of Rahmat's defensive shots and hurled the ball back at the stumps despite the batter remaining firmly inside his crease. On the very next ball, Siraj exchanged words with Rahmat, challenging him to play his shots and



move the game forward. The confrontation appeared to change the complexion of the innings. Two overs later, India finally found the breakthrough. Ashraf attempted to take on the bowling and paid the price, edging a big shot through to wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant, who completed a sharp catch behind the stumps. Afghanistan's resistance quickly unravelled after that dismissal. Having lost Ashraf at 142, the visitors surrendered three more wickets in the space of four overs and were eventually bowled out for 152. Rahmat, Afghanistan's lone half-century of the

innings, was cleaned up by debutant spinner Manav Suthar, who finished with a five-wicket haul in his maiden Test appearance. Whether intentional or not, Siraj's intervention injected urgency into a stagnant contest and helped trigger the collapse that put India firmly in control of the match. Leading by 412 runs after Afghanistan's first innings, India followed-on the visiting side immediately, and then dismissed five of their batters by Tea for just 98 runs. Opener Sediquallah Atal, who was batting well in the second innings was the last one to fall before Tea was taken on Day 3.

Football Agent Rafaela Pimenta Shares Inspirational Journey to Inspire Women

New Delhi: Brazil have called up Atalanta midfielder Ederson to their World Cup squad after right-back Wesley was ruled out of the tournament with a thigh injury, handing the Manchester United-linked midfielder a late opportunity to feature on football's biggest stage. The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) confirmed on Sunday that Wesley would miss the World Cup after sustaining an injury during Brazil's 2-1 friendly victory over Egypt in Cleveland on Saturday. An MRI scan revealed damage to the adductor muscle in the 22-year-old defender's left thigh, forcing Carlo Ancelotti into a squad reshuffle just days before Brazil begin their World Cup campaign in the United States. The MRI scan revealed a muscle injury to the adductor muscle in his left thigh," the CBF said in a statement. "The CBF regrets the injury. Wesley is a player much loved by the squad and will always be considered part of this team as it seeks to win its sixth World Cup title."

Ederson, who has made three appearances for Brazil, will join the squad in the United States on Monday. The 26-year-old's call-up comes amid reports that Manchester United have reached an agreement to sign the Atalanta midfielder for a fixed fee of €40.5 million, with a further €4.5 million in add-ons. While Wesley's withdrawal leaves Brazil short of specialist options at right-back, Ederson's inclusion strengthens a midfield unit that appeared light in



Ancelotti's original 26-man squad. Before the change, Brazil had only five natural midfielders — Bruno Guimaraes, Casemiro, Danilo, Fabinho and Lucas Paqueta — alongside nine defenders and nine attacking players. The injury also presents a tactical challenge for Ancelotti. Wesley was the only specialist right-back in the squad, leaving Flamengo's Danilo and Al Ahli defender Roger Ibanez as the leading alternatives on the flank. Ederson's arrival, however, gives Brazil greater flexi-

bility in midfield. Although Ancelotti's preferred system remains a 4-2-4 formation, there has been growing support within Brazil for a three-man midfield against stronger opponents, a setup that the Atalanta midfielder is well-equipped to fit into. Five-time world champions Brazil begin their Group C campaign against Morocco on June 13 before taking on Haiti on June 20 and Scotland on June 24 as they chase a record-extending sixth World Cup title. Brazil replaced injured right-back Wesley with Atalan-

ta midfielder Ederson for the World Cup after Wesley suffered a thigh adductor muscle injury. Wesley's absence leaves Brazil short in defense but strengthens midfield depth, allowing tactical flexibility. Ederson, linked with Manchester United, joins a squad otherwise light on midfielders. Coach Carlo Ancelotti faces challenges adjusting the lineup as Brazil aims for their sixth World Cup, starting Group C matches against Morocco, Haiti, and Scotland in the United States.

Manav Suthar Takes 6/33 on Debut Against Afghanistan

Mullanpur: Manav Suthar snared a six-wicket haul on a dream debut as Afghanistan were bowled out for a paltry 152 day three of the one-off Test against India here on Monday. After India enforced the follow-on, Afghanistan huffed and puffed their way to 18 for no loss at lunch with 394 runs still needed to avoid an embarrassing innings defeat. It was a pity that barely 500 odd people were present in the stands when country's newest spin bowling star completed a rare milestone, becoming the 10th Indian to take five wicket-haul on debut. He was also the seventh spinner to reach the landmark in his maiden Test.

His final first-innings figures read 22-10-33-6 which also showed the kind of relentless pressure he put on inexperienced Afghan batters, none of whom looked comfortable while trying to defend him. Having impressed on the second afternoon with his trajectory and ability to extract turn from a slowish track, it was a matter of time that he would complete a five-for. For the visitors, veteran Rahmat Shah (60 off 135 balls) was the only batter to offer some resistance before he became Suthar's fifth victim, falling



all over while trying to play a slog sweep. Rahmat and injured Sharafuddin Ashraf (11) batted for almost 11 overs after Prasidh Krishna (3/37 in 11 overs) had Azmatullah Omarzai (0) played on with a 140 kpm delivery. Ashraf, who was in considerable pain with what seemed like a hamstring injury, hobbled and at times Rahmat had to refuse easy singles which could have otherwise kept the scoreboard ticking. Ashraf became Suthar's fourth victim when he drew the batter forward and the delivery turned enough to kiss the outside edge into Rishabh Pant's gloves. Rahmat, who on the second day, became the first Afghan batter to complete 1000 Test runs, hit nine boundaries apart from a six but hardly looked comfortable against Suthar, who would repeatedly land

the ball on the same spot over after over. No matter how hard they try, no matter how prepared they are, sometimes, debuts can go awfully. Several legends and veterans' careers are proof of that. Some people, on the other hand, feel at home from the moment they walk on to the field, donning the creamy whites. Manav Suthar is one of them. Barely 23, Suthar has dreamed a decade for this moment. He was handed the Test cap on Saturday. The opposition is Afghanistan in a home Test. But nerves could still be there. And it would be understandable. Suthar, if there were any, did not let the world see it. Instead, after a steady cameo with the bat, he made the cricketing fraternity sit up and watch from the moment he let go off the red cherry for the first time on Sunday.