

Union Minister Stresses More Hydroelectric Projects and Kendriya Vidyalayas in Mizoram

Aizawl, May 08: Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Tourism Suresh Gopi on Thursday Emphasized the need for expanding hydroelectric projects, Kendriya Vidyalayas, and agricultural exports in Mizoram during his visit to Kolasib district.Digital News Platform At an interactive meeting with district officials and heads of government departments, Gopi Emphasized the importance of developing additional hydroelectric projects to make Mizoram self-reliant in meeting its growing energy demands.

He expressed concern over the limited number of Kendriya Vidyalayas in the state, noting that Mizoram currently has only one, and urged that the issue be actively pursued through Members of Parliament to improve access to quality education. Acknowledging Mizoram’s fertile land and strong agricultural base, the minister stressed the need to strengthen efforts to export horticulture and farm produce to national and international markets. He also welcomed the gradual improvement in connectivity, particularly the expansion of railway infrastructure, which he said would significantly enhance the state’s development prospects. Emphasising the role of women’s education in nation-building, Gopi encouraged greater participation of women in fields such as nursing. He added that maintaining high standards in foundational and school education is critical to ensuring that children can achieve their full potential. Later, the minister visited an Oil Palm Processing Mill in Bukvannei near Kolasib, where he interacted with local palm farmers.



Nagaland marks World Red Cross Day with Kohima walk for humanity

Kohima, May 08: Nagaland joined the global observance of World Red Cross Day with a symbolic “Walk for Humanity” held in Kohima, underscoring the values of compassion, service, and solidarity that the Red Cross movement represents. The event brought together government officials, Red Cross volunteers, students, and members of civil society, all marching through the city to highlight the importance of humanitarian service in times of crisis. Organised by the Nagaland State Branch of the Indian Red Cross Society, the walk was flagged off by senior officials and community leaders. Participants carried banners and



placards promoting humanitarian values, disaster preparedness, and community resilience. The march aimed to spread awareness about

the Red Cross’s role in providing relief during emergencies, supporting health initiatives, and fostering peace and understand-

ing across communities. World Red Cross Day, celebrated annually on May 8 to mark the birth anniversary of Henry Dunant—the

founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross—serves as a reminder of the enduring relevance of humanitarian principles. In Nagaland, the observance took on added significance as the state continues to strengthen its disaster response mechanisms and community health programs. Speakers at the event emphasised the need for collective responsibility in addressing humanitarian challenges, from natural disasters to public health crises. They highlighted the Red Cross’s contributions in Nagaland, including blood donation drives, first aid training, and relief efforts during floods and landslides.

Demand for Permanent Gauhati High Court Bench in Barak Valley Gains Momentum

Cachar, May 08: The demand for a permanent Bench of the Gauhati High Court in Barak Valley has gained fresh momentum after the High Court Bench Demand Implementation Committee, Cachar district unit, submitted a 112-page memorandum to the Chief Justice seeking urgent reconsideration of the issue. The memorandum, submitted as a continuation of an earlier representation dated January 12, 2026, was signed by senior advocate Dharmananda Deb on behalf of the committee.

The document details the geographical, infrastructural and financial hardships faced by litigants from Barak Valley and Dima Hasao in accessing judicial services in Guwahati. Speaking to reporters, advocate Deb said litigants from southern Assam often have to travel nearly 350 to 400 kilometres to attend proceedings at the Gauhati High Court and coordinate with lawyers handling their cases. He said this creates severe financial pressure, particularly for economically weaker sections and rural residents. The memorandum also highlighted recurring floods, landslides and fragile transport and communication networks in the region, which frequently disrupt travel and delay court proceedings.

Invoking Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution, the representation argued that accessible and effective justice forms an essential part of the fundamental rights to equality and personal liberty. The committee further cited several Supreme Court judgments to argue that decentralisation of judicial infrastructure is necessary to ensure substantive constitutional justice. According to the memorandum, the Assam government has already sought the opinion of the Gauhati High Court on the matter, indicating that the issue remains under active administrative and judicial consideration. The representation also referred to earlier parliamentary discussions supporting the demand, including debates in the Lok Sabha in 2012 and an intervention in the Rajya Sabha in 1991 by former Union Law Minister Subramanian Swamy.

Scholars and Experts Gather as MAITRI-2026 Opens at NERIST

Itanagar, May 08: The 4th International Conference on Machine Intelligence for Research and Innovations (MAITRI-2026) was inaugurated at North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST) in Itanagar with the participation of academicians, researchers, scientists, industry experts and students from across India and abroad. The inaugural programme was graced by Prof. Narendranath S as the chief guest, while Probodh Borah attended as the guest of honour.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Narendranath S highlighted the importance of research, innovation, and machine intelligence in shaping future technologies and encouraged young researchers to pursue impactful interdisciplinary studies.



Dr Probodh Borah also emphasised the role of technology-driven development and collaborative research in addressing emerging global challenges. The programme witnessed the presence of distinguished scientists, keynote speakers, invited experts, faculty members, delegates, spon-

sors, session chairs, advisory board members, media partners, and students. The organising committee expressed gratitude to the academic leadership of NERIST, including Prof. Sarsing Gao, Prof. Madhu Bala Sharma, and Prof. Muthumari Chandrasekaran for their continuous

support and guidance in successfully organising the international conference. The conference aims to provide a global platform for knowledge exchange, innovation, and collaborative research in the field of machine intelligence and emerging technologies.

sex trafficking network in Uttarakhand

Aizawl, May 08: A joint operation by Mizoram Police, the Women and Child Development Department and Uttarakhand Police has led to the rescue of five women from Mizoram, including two minors, from an alleged sex trafficking network operating under the cover of a spa business in Uttarakhand’s Rudrapur town. Police have arrested six people in connection with the case, including the alleged mastermind and the owner of the spa where the women were reportedly being exploited. However, after reaching the spa, the women were allegedly forced into prostitution.

Buffalo-Train Collision Prevention Drive Intensified by NFR

Guwahati, May 08: North-east Frontier Railway (NFR) has intensified measures to prevent cattle-train collisions in the strategically important Lumding-Badarpur Hill Section, under Lumding Division in Assam.

“Considering the safety of train operations as well as the protection of livestock, NFR has intensified preventive initiatives in vulnerable locations where such incidents had been reported frequently in the

past,” NFR chief public relations officer Kapinjal Kishore Sharma informed on Thursday.

“As part of the safety enhancement measures, fencing work is being carried out along the approaches to major railway tunnels in the hill section to restrict the movement of buffaloes and cattle onto railway tracks,” Sharma said.

Recently, fencing work of approximately 150 metres in length between Tunnel Number

16 and Bridge Number 262 on both sides of the track has been successfully completed.

“In addition, fencing work near Tunnel Number 10 and Tunnel Number 12 is currently under progress and is being expedited for early completion. These initiatives are expected to significantly reduce the chances of cattle straying onto the tracks and avoid cattle-train collision, thus improving operational safety,” he said.

Alongside infrastructural



measures, he further informed that NFR is conducting extensive awareness campaigns in villages located close to areas prone to buffalo dashing incidents, particularly in the New Harangajao-Ditokcherria sec-

tion. Railway officials, in coordination with village councils and residents, are sensitising people about the dangers posed by trespassing of cattle and buffaloes on railway tracks and tunnels. “During these campaigns, pamphlets are being distributed and awareness posters are being displayed to encourage villagers to keep livestock away from railway tracks and premises,” the NFR official said.

Soreng district reviews monsoon preparedness



Agency: The District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Soreng, on Thursday organised a district-level coordination meeting on monsoon preparedness at the Rurban Complex in Soreng to review disaster response measures and strengthen coordination among departments ahead of the upcoming rainy season. The meeting was chaired by District Collector of Soreng and Chairperson of DDMA Dhiraj Subedi. Addressing officials and representatives present at the meeting, the District Collector stressed the importance of preparedness and coordinated response during emergencies caused by heavy rain, landslides and other monsoon-related disasters. He said all line departments must work together effectively to ensure timely response and

minimise risks during the monsoon season. He also highlighted the important grassroots role played by DDMA staff and employees in disaster management activities across the district. During the meeting, the District Collector announced that the district administration had instituted the “Gram Suraksha Shaurya Samman Award” to recognise individuals who make significant contributions during rescue and disaster response operations. As part of the programme, Mingma Dorjee Sherpa was formally honoured with the “Gram Suraksha Shaurya Samman” for his role during the fire incident at Upper Ribdi on February 13 this year. Officials said Sherpa displayed courage, dedication and presence of mind while assisting during the emergency situation.

Majuli Island Identified as Possible Vulture Habitat Through Community Survey

Guwahati, May 08: In a promising development for Assam’s wildlife conservation efforts, a joint biodiversity assessment carried out by Balipara Foundation, in collaboration with the Mising community of Dhapak village in Majuli Island, has revealed a potential island habitat for critically endangered and threatened vulture species. The initiative forms part of an assisted natural regeneration project under CSR support, aiming at ecological restoration of the island ecosystem.

Conducted in March 2026, the survey enlisted active participation from local youth, who were trained by Dr. Subham Chandra Mondal, senior environment specialist at Balipara Foundation in basic wildlife survey techniques such as camera trapping and line transect methods. Covering around 200 hectares of grassland-woodland habitat, the team documented 55 bird species, 5 mammals, and 20 butterfly species, highlighting the island’s rich biodiversity. Among the avian records, two sightings stood out for their conservation value — 10 Slender-billed Vultures (*Gyps tenuirostris*), classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN, and 60 Himalayan Griffons (*Gyps himalayensis*), a Near Threatened species. The population of Slender-billed

Vultures in India is estimated at around 1,000 individuals (BirdLife International, 2021).

A recent report by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII, 2025) further highlights that only about 40 breeding individuals of this species remain in Assam. The same WII (2025) report estimates the population of Himalayan Griffon in India at approximately 890 individuals, underscoring the conservation importance of these observations. The survey also recorded the Swamp Francolin (*Ortygornis gularis*) and Oriental Darter (*Anhinga melanogaster*), both listed as Near Threatened. Slender-billed Vulture, Himalayan Griffon and Swamp Francolin are protected under Schedule I species of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. “Finding such significant numbers of vultures is crucial,” said Dr. Pulakeswar Basumatary, wildlife researcher and part of the assessment team, who previously reported the rare winter migratory bird Naumann’s Thrush from Assam. “The population of Slender-billed Vultures has seen a drastic decline in recent decades, and their presence here underscores the ecological importance of Majuli’s habitats.” The village head, Nahorjyoti Satula, remarked that the vulture

sightings are closely linked to the community’s traditional cattle rearing practices, where cattle carcasses serve as a key food source. He emphasized the need to promote awareness and tree plantation along village edges to aid roosting and nesting opportunities for the birds. Dr. Bidyut Sarania, Lead (Research and Development) at Balipara Foundation, noted that biodiversity surveys of such riverine ecosystems offer insights into habitats supporting not just avifauna but also endangered mammals like the Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) and Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris*). “Our aim is to create a network of community youth for long-term conservation through ecological restoration,” he said, adding that a systematic nest survey of vultures will soon be undertaken across island and riverine habitats along the Brahmaputra. Home to diverse ecosystems, Majuli is already recognised as a Biodiversity Heritage Site, a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), and an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA). This recent survey reinforces its standing as one of Assam’s most vital natural landscapes — a fortress for vulture recovery and broader ecological resilience in the Brahmaputra basin.

Mizoram should move towards self-reliance in power generation

Aizawl, May 08: Union Minister Suresh Gopi stressed the need for Mizoram to become more self-reliant in power generation by developing additional hydroelectric projects and strengthening infrastructure across the state. The minister made the remarks during his visit to Kolasib district, where he held discussions with district officials and heads of various government departments on development priorities and future growth plans for the state. According to officials, district authorities presented an overview of ongoing developmental activities, administrative challenges and infrastructure requirements during the interactive meeting. During the discussion, Gopi highlighted the importance of strengthening Mizoram’s energy sector to meet the state’s increasing electricity demand in the coming years. Officials said the issue of agricultural development also figured prominently during the meeting.

Tiger Spotted Again at D. Ering Wildlife Sanctuary

Agency: Royal Bengal Tiger has been confirmed in the D. Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary through camera trap evidence, marking the species’ return to the protected area after nearly 20 years. Forest officials said the photographic evidence was captured during the latest phase of systematic wildlife surveys conducted in the sanctuary with technical support from Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecol-

ogy and the Environment (ATREE). According to officials, forest personnel and frontline staff had recorded indirect signs of tiger movement over the past year. Several rounds of monitoring and camera trapping were conducted to scientifically verify these observations. Although earlier surveys did not produce photographic evidence, monitoring efforts continued with greater intensity.

Officials said the latest camera trap images conclusively confirmed the tiger’s presence in the sanctuary. The surveys also documented the critically endangered Chinese Pangolin and the endangered Hispid Hare, both of which are rare species associated with grassland ecosystems. Kempi Ete, Divisional Forest Officer, described the development as a major achievement for the sanctuary and its conservation initiatives.

MZP criticizes the Mizoram government for rehiring retirees

Aizawl, Apr 08: The Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), Mizoram’s largest and most influential student organisation, on Thursday strongly criticised the state government over the alleged re-employment of retired government officials, describing the practice as an “insult” to unemployed youth and the people of the state. Addressing a press conference in Aizawl, MZP president C. Lalremruata said the organisation has consistently opposed the reappointment of pensioners and remains firm in its stand against such practices. He said the continued engagement of retired officials in government service undermines employment opportunities for educated but unemployed youths across Mizoram. Despite repeated appeals to the authorities to stop the practice, the government has continued with such reappointments without addressing public concerns, he alleged.

Terming the move “disrespectful” to both the people of the state and job-seeking youths, the MZP demanded that the government rescind all re-employment orders issued to retired officials before May 14. It further urged the government to ensure that such practices are not repeated in the future. Appealing to serving government employees, the MZP said fully during their tenure and, upon retirement, make way for younger generations seeking employment opportunities.

Meghalaya updates the cost of the New Shillong water project to Rs 772.96 crore following the relocation of the dam site

Shillong, Apr 08: The Meghalaya government has revised the estimated cost of the New Shillong Township Water Supply Scheme to Rs 772.96 crore from the earlier sanctioned Rs 538.44 crore, citing major design modifications and infrastructure changes linked to environmental and technical considerations. According to an official clarification note, the revised estimate marks an increase of 43.55 per cent, amounting to an additional Rs 234.52 crore. The project is aimed at supplying potable water to New Shillong Township, Mawkhanu Knowledge City and 32 surrounding villages, with coverage planned up to 2057.

Officials said one of the key reasons for the cost escalation was the shifting of the dam location after it was found that a landfill site had also been proposed near the originally identified site at Nonghali village. The dam was subsequently moved further upstream to avoid environmental risks.

This relocation has led to significant changes in the engineering design, including an increase in dam span from 70 metres to 165 metres and a rise in radial gates from one to three, along with corresponding structural modifications.



The revision also accounts for additional earthwork required for jackwell slope stabilisation, following the relocation of the jackwell due to the upstream shift. Officials said the altered terrain now necessitates extensive excavation, soil stabilisation and related works. Another factor contributing to the revised estimate is compensation to be paid to local Dorbar Shnongs for laying raw water pipelines through customary land. Officials noted that no such demand had been anticipated during the initial DPR stage, but compensation requirements have since emerged. The revised proposal further includes provision for a dedicated power supply system, which was not part of the original detailed project report. Officials said an independent power infrastructure has now become essential to ensure uninterrupted water supply.

Additional expenditure has also been attributed to road restoration works, including dismantling and excavation of around 1.5 km of PWD road due to changes in pipeline alignment near Jaroit and Diengpasoh villages. The government said the revised estimate is necessary to ensure environmental safety by avoiding landfill proximity, maintain structural and hydraulic stability, secure community cooperation through fair compensation, and guarantee reliable water supply infrastructure for the proposed township and adjoining areas.

Security operations in Churachandpur and Senapati yield arms, explosives

Imphal, Apr 08: Security forces recovered a large cache of arms and explosives and dismantled two militant camps during coordinated anti-insurgency operations in Churachandpur and Senapati districts on Thursday.

According to official sources, joint teams conducted the operations in sensitive areas, leading to the recovery of weapons, ammunition and improvised explosive devices (IED). No arrests were made.

In Churachandpur district, security forces busted a militant camp in the Hengkaptot area under Churachandpur police station limits. From the site, they recovered three single-barrel rifles, one .303 rifle, one pompi, four rocket shells, a cylindrical IED weighing around 500 grams, a conical IED weighing about 4 kg, four bulletproof jackets, two helmets, fired cartridges of AK-47 and 7.62 mm calibre, and a radio set charger.

In a separate operation in Senapati district, security forces recovered a significant cache of weapons from the Maremai-Hengbung hill ranges under Senapati police station. The seizure included .22 rifles, a .303 rifle, MP5 and AK-47



rifles with magazines, four locally made bolt-action rifles, a locally made shotgun, pistols of different calibres, 79 live rounds of ammunition and 13 empty cartridges. Officials said the recovered items were handed over to the respective police stations for further legal proceedings as investigations continue.

Tiger returns to Arunachal's Daying Ering Wildlife Sanctuary

Pasighat, Apr 08: The first-ever photographic evidence of a tiger (Panthera tigris) from the Daying Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary has confirmed the species’ return to the protected area after nearly two decades, marking a significant conservation milestone in Arunachal Pradesh.

The recent camera-trap capture of a Royal Bengal Tiger has boosted morale among forest officials and wildlife enthusiasts, with the development seen as a positive indicator of ecosystem recovery in the riverine landscape.

Over the past year, forest officials and frontline staff had documented indirect signs suggesting possible tiger movement in the sanctuary. This led to multiple rounds of systematic monitoring and camera trapping to scientifically verify the presence of the big cat. While earlier attempts did not yield photographic proof, surveillance continued with renewed focus. In the latest phase of surveys conducted with technical support from the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), camera traps installed at strategic locations successfully captured images of a tiger, conclusively establishing its presence in the landscape. The surveys



also recorded the Critically Endangered Chinese pangolin (Manis pentadactyla) and the endangered hispid hare (Caprolagus hispidus), underscoring the sanctuary’s high conservation value.

Divisional Forest Officer Kempfi Ete described the development as a “proud and emotional moment” for all stakeholders associated with the sanctuary. She said the return of the tiger after nearly 20 years reflects the resilience of the ecosystem and sustained conservation efforts on the ground. She added that forest staff, eco-development committees and local community organisations have played a crucial role in supporting conservation initiatives and strengthening protection measures in the landscape. ATREE researcher Rajkamal Goswami said the photographic evidence of the tiger, along with other threatened species, highlights the importance of long-term conservation efforts and collaborative work involving institutions and local communities. He said the rediscovery should bring renewed attention to scientific monitoring and habitat protection, especially in the sanctuary’s unique riparian grassland ecosystem. The Forest Department reiterated its commitment to strengthening habitat protection, scientific monitoring and community-led conservation efforts to ensure the long-term survival of wildlife in the region. Mebo MLA Oken Tayeng said the tiger’s return is a positive sign of ecological improvement in the sanctuary and could boost its tourism potential. He added that it may also generate livelihood opportunities for youth in fringe villages. Tayeng had earlier initiated discussions on the reintroduction of rhinos in the sanctuary with the state government. Chief Minister Pema Khandu had also proposed the idea in the state budget, aiming to develop the sanctuary as a major biodiversity hotspot and eco-tourism destination.

Nagaland records high income inequality with Gini coefficient of 0.46

Dimapur, Apr 08: The report on income disparity in Nagaland has indicated high income inequality in the state, with a Gini coefficient of 0.46. According to the report, while the Gini coefficient for rural Nagaland is 0.42, the coefficient for urban Nagaland is 0.44, suggesting that urban income inequality is only marginally higher than rural income inequality. The report was released by Nagaland Chief Secretary Sentiyanger Imchen at the Nagaland Civil Secretariat in Kohima on Thursday. The report on income disparity in Nagaland is the outcome of a project undertaken as part of the central sector scheme of

the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Support for Statistical Strengthening Subscheme, conducted in collaboration with the University of Hyderabad. The field survey for the report was undertaken between October 2024 and December 2024, and the reported data pertains to the calendar year 2024. In relation to average monthly income, the top 5% receive a mean monthly income of Rs 71,028, while the bottom 50% receive an average monthly income of only Rs 1,639. Among the districts, Longleng tops the list in high income inequality with a Gini coefficient of 0.492,

while Phek has the lowest income disparity with a Gini coefficient of 0.366. In rural areas also, Longleng records the highest income inequality with a Gini coefficient of 0.456, while Zunheboto district has the lowest income disparity with a Gini coefficient of 0.330. Even among urban areas, Longleng district shows the highest income inequality with a Gini coefficient of 0.509, while Zunheboto has the lowest income disparity with a Gini coefficient of 0.359.

A total of 4,396 household samples were collected to prepare the report. In urban areas, altogether 1,315 households from 60 wards



were surveyed, while a total of 3,080 households were surveyed from 140 villages in rural areas. In terms of percentage share of income, the bottom 50% of households receive about 18% of the total income of the state, whereas around 21% of the gross income is received by the top 5% of households.

NSF demands action against NISCE MD Associates over alleged fraud



Pasighat, Apr 08: The Naga Students’ Federation (NSF) has demanded immediate action in connection with a complaint against National Institute of Civil Services Examinations (NISCE) managing director Suman Saha and his associates, alleging cheating, financial exploitation and mental harassment of students, along with the abrupt closure of coaching centres in Kohima, Dimapur and Chumoukedima. In a representation to the Nagaland Director General of Police on Thursday, the federation

expressed serious concern over what it described as an inordinate delay in delivering justice to affected students following the FIR lodged on February 3. The NSF said that despite considerable time having passed since the complaint was filed, there has been no visible progress or concrete action in the case. It urged the DGP to intervene personally and ensure swift delivery of justice. According to the federation, the accused allegedly collected full course fees from students while failing to pro-

vide the promised educational services as outlined in the institute’s prospectus. It further alleged that the coaching centres were shut down without prior notice, and that repeated appeals by students seeking refunds or completion of courses were ignored through excuses and evasive responses. The NSF has demanded that the investigation be expedited without delay, and that all accused persons involved be traced and brought under the purview of law at the earliest.

In Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh, BRO’s Project Brahmank celebrates its 67th Raising Day

Pasighat, Apr 08: Along with Border Roads Organisation (BRO) units across the country’s border areas, Project Brahmank of the BRO celebrated its 67th Raising Day at its headquarters at Raneghat in Pasighat, East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday. The event was held with officials and personnel in attendance, marking the organisation’s continued focus on strategic infrastructure development in border regions. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Engineer of Project Brahmank S C Looniya said the BRO was raised on May 7, 1960, with the primary objective of securing India’s borders and developing strategic infrastructure in remote and difficult terrains to strengthen defence preparedness, border connectivity and national security. He said the organisation has, since its inception, established its footprint across 19 states and three Union Territories, and has also extended its strategic reach beyond India by executing critical infrastructure projects in countries including Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, Tajikistan and Sri Lanka. He added that BRO has also worked in regions previously affected by Left-Wing Extremism.

Looniya said the organisation continues to remain committed to national service and has left a “permanent imprint on the hearts and minds of people” in its areas of operation. Project Brahmank, a formation of BRO, is responsible



for the construction, upgradation and maintenance of strategically important road infrastructure in Arunachal Pradesh and adjoining regions. The project manages over 811 km of road network across Siang, East Siang, West Siang, Upper Siang and Shi-Yomi districts, including areas sharing international borders with China. The programme highlighted the theme “BRO Creates, Connects and Cares” and showcased the organisation’s role in building roads, bridges and improving connectivity in remote and border areas.

During the past year, the project

reported formation cutting equivalent to 122 CI-9 works, surfacing of 205 CI-9 equivalent stretches, construction of 590 metres of bridges and 61 km of blacktopping. It also completed 13 bridges in Upper Siang and Shi-Yomi districts, which were inaugurated by the Raksha Mantri and have improved mobility for both civilian and defence movement. The project has also undertaken upgradation of key road axes in the Siang and Shi-Yomi valleys from CI-9 to NHDL specifications, along with ongoing works to improve long-term infrastructure and regional connectivity.

Additionally, BRO has taken up construction and extension of helipads in forward areas to enhance air connectivity, and conducted medical and dental camps in remote locations including Tuting, Menchuka, Along, Yingkong and Likabali, benefiting local residents and casual paid labourers.

Other initiatives include tree plantation drives, outreach programmes with universities, Har Ghar Tiranga campaigns, Swachhata Abhiyan activities, riverbank cleanliness drives along the Siang, environmental awareness campaigns and welfare support for workers.

MZP Criticizes Mizoram Government Over the Policy of Re-employing Retirees

Aizawl, May 08: The Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), Mizoram’s largest and most influential student organisation, on Thursday strongly criticised the state government over the alleged re-employment of retired government officials, describing the practice as an “insult” to unemployed youth and the people of the state. Addressing a press conference in Aizawl, MZP president C. Lalremruata said the organisation has consistently opposed the reappointment of pensioners and remains firm in its stand against such practices. He said the continued engagement of retired officials in government service undermines employment opportunities for educated but unemployed youths across Mizoram. Despite repeated appeals to the authorities to stop the practice, the government has continued with such reappointments without addressing public concerns, he alleged. Terming the move “disrespectful” to both the people of the state and job-seeking youths, the MZP demanded that the government rescind all re-employment orders issued to retired officials before May 14. The student body also recalled its earlier campaigns against such appointments, stating that in some instances it had even pressured re-employed pensioners to step down from their posts. It further urged the government to ensure that such practices are not repeated in the future. Appealing to serving government employees, the MZP said officials should dedicate themselves fully during their tenure and, upon retirement, make way for younger generations seeking employment opportunities. The MZP functionaries picketed the official to prevent him from attending office on Tuesday. However, the protesters dispersed soon after they learned that the official was on leave for three days. Earlier on Monday, the student organisation had held a demonstration in front of Vanapa Hall in Aizawl and burned a copy of the re-employment order. According to the organisation’s president Lalnunmawia Pautu, the additional RCS Lalrinsanga retired on superannuation in May this year, and his successor Maria G Ralte also retired in July. He said that the student body has been strongly opposed to the re-employment of any retired official, who does not have any speciality or distinction, as it hampers the chance for educated youth to enter government services. Re-employment or retention of retired officials is also a waste of public money, he said. Soon after the protest on Tuesday, the student body held an emergency meeting with its affiliated bodies and decided to intensify its agitation. The meeting demanded the state government revoke the re-employment order on or before Thursday. If the government fails to revoke the order within the deadline, the student body would picket before the official’s office to prevent him from attending office on Friday (August 5), the meeting said. The student body would also hold a demonstration to prevent state cooperation minister C Lalrinsanga from attending office on August 8, it said. The meeting also vehemently blamed the minister for allegedly ignoring repeated appeals made by the MZP not to re-employ the retired official. Minister C Lalrinsanga could not be contacted for comment despite repeated attempts. The sit-in-protest held in front of the state’s largest auditorium Vanapa hall was also organized to demonstrate the student’s firm determination on constructing a rest shed and widespread apathy to the outcome of chief secretary level meeting of Assam and Mizoram in New Delhi on Tuesday.

APPSC Whistleblower Gyamar Padang to Get Memorial Statue

Itanagar, May 08: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu announced that the state government will erect a memorial statue in honour of late Gyamar Padang, recognising his contribution towards promoting transparency and accountability in public institutions. Announcing the decision on social media, Khandu said Padang’s efforts had played a major role in exposing loopholes in the recruitment system and helped strengthen transparency, accountability and efficiency in governance. “Today, I met his family members and conveyed my heartfelt respect and condolences. The memorial will stand as a lasting tribute to his life and inspire future generations to uphold honesty, responsibility and public service,” the Chief Minister said. Padang, who was posthumously conferred the State Gold Medal, came into public prominence after exposing alleged irregularities in the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) recruitment process in 2022. He is widely remembered across Arunachal Pradesh for demanding systemic reforms in the recruitment system. Padang passed away in May 2023 after a prolonged illness. The Pan Arunachal Joint Steering Committee (PAJSC), which led protests against the APPSC paper leak and cash-for-job scam, had long demanded the construction of a “Statue of Honesty” to honour Padang’s role as a whistleblower. The All Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Union (AAP-SU) also supported the demand for erecting a statue in his memory. It may be mentioned that Gyamar Padang, himself an examination candidate, lodged a complaint at Itanagar Police Station on August 28, 2022, alleging that the question papers of the Assistant Engineer (Civil) Mains examination conducted by the APPSC on August 26 and 27 had been leaked in advance. Based on his complaint, an FIR was registered on September 10, 2022, and an investigation was launched by the Itanagar Police. The probe was later transferred to the State Police’s Special Investigation Cell (SIC). The APPSC controversy triggered widespread outrage across Arunachal Pradesh, leading to large-scale protests. Subsequently, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) took over the investigation from the SIC. So far, more than 50 people have been arrested in connection with alleged malpractice in APPSC examinations conducted since 2014. State Administrative Reforms Secretary Ajay Chagti said that 54 individuals, including 41 state government officials, had been arrested in the APPSC paper leak cases. “Out of the 41 officials involved in the malpractices, 19 employees whose services were yet to be confirmed have been terminated, while disciplinary proceedings have been initiated against 22 regular employees,” Chagti said.



complaint at Itanagar Police Station on August 28, 2022, alleging that the question papers of the Assistant Engineer (Civil) Mains examination conducted by the APPSC on August 26 and 27 had been leaked in advance. Based on his complaint, an FIR was registered on September 10, 2022, and an investigation was launched by the Itanagar Police. The probe was later transferred to the State Police’s Special Investigation Cell

AR persuades seven rebels to surrender in Dimapur



Dimapur, May 08: As a result of persistent persuasion and efforts of Assam Rifles, seven cadres of different insurgent groups in Nagaland surrendered at Dimapur Assam Rifles said that based on specific intelligence inputs, it conducted sustained outreach and co-ordination efforts in Dimapur to encourage misguided youth involved with various factions to return to the mainstream. “As a result, seven hardcore anti-national elements (ANEs) surrendered at Dimapur Police Station on Thursday in the presence of Assam Rifles and other security agencies,” it added. The surrendered cadres deposited multiple weapons, including pistols, a shotgun, a gun and a carbine with ammunition. The surrender reflects the effectiveness of coordinated intelligence-based efforts and Assam Rifles’ continued commitment towards peace, stability and rehabilitation in the region, an AR official said.

SFS School Guwahati honoured as the Best NCC Institution in NE

Guwahati, May 08: St. Francis De Sales School, Guwahati, has been awarded the prestigious title of “Overall Best School (NER)” at the NCC Northeastern Region Annual Awards 2025’26, recognising the institution as the Best NCC Institution in the entire Northeastern region. The award ceremony was held at NCC Group Headquarters, Shillong recently. Adding to the school’s achievement, S/Q Dilip Subedi of 1 Assam Battalion NCC received the award for “Best Male Associate NCC Officer (Assam)” for his exemplary leadership, dedication, and contribution towards NCC training and cadet development. The awards were conferred by the NCC Directorate, Northeastern Region, after a rigorous evaluation process involving schools, colleges, NCC units, and officers from across the eight Northeastern states. Over the years, the school has consistently encouraged students to actively participate in NCC programmes, fostering values of service, unity and responsibility among cadets. Speaking on the achievement, the Principal of St. Francis De Sales School said, “This honour is a proud moment for the entire SFS family. It reflects the hard work, dedication, discipline, and commitment of our NCC cadets, Associate NCC Officers, teachers, and staff members. We remain committed to nurturing responsible citizens and future leaders who will serve the nation with pride and integrity.” The school management congratulated the NCC unit, cadets, and S/Q Dilip Subedi for bringing laurels to the institution.



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Mizoram CM Attends Silver Jubilee Ceremony for Aizawl’s Samaritan Blind School

Aizawl, May 08: The Silver Jubilee of the Samaritan Association for the Blind’s Special Blind School was celebrated on Wednesday at M. Suaka Hall, Durtlang Presbyterian Church, with Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma as Chief Guest and PWD Minister and local MLA Vanlalhlana as Guest of Honour. Digital News Platform In his address, the Chief Minister praised the students for their perseverance in pursuing education despite physical challenges, describing their determination as a source of inspiration. He emphasized the importance of mental well-being, remarking that a healthy mind can turn difficulties into opportunities. Lalduhoma noted that while many in Mizoram may not fully recognize the school’s significance, for visually impaired children its value is immeasurable. He recalled that before the school’s establishment, Mizoram had no institution dedicated to educating the visually impaired. The Samaritan Association for the Blind worked persistently to create the school, securing government support and offering hope to children who had previously been deprived of proper education. Over the years, many successful individuals have emerged from its classrooms. The Chief Minister highlighted government initiatives, including granting Ad-hoc status, attaching teachers, and considering provincialization of the middle section. He suggested that adopting a Public-Private Partnership model could further strengthen the institution. He also announced ₹50 lakh earmarked for constructing a separate girls’ hostel, as boys and girls are currently housed in the same building. He encouraged students and school authorities to communicate their needs directly to the government, assuring continued support. Lalduhoma congratulated the students for their resilience, stressed the importance of digital literacy, and reminded them that they are created with purpose and calling. He expressed confidence that they too would succeed, just as many alumni have before them. Media Platform Consulting During the programme, R.K. Vanlalringa, Executive Secretary of the Samaritan Association for the Blind, presented a report. The Association was established in 1990, and the Special Blind School began in May 2001 with 16 students. Since then, it has consistently maintained around 30 students annually. **Guwahati, May 08:** Assam chief secretary Ravi Kota on Friday directed all concerned government departments to identify and map databases under their respective jurisdictions for integration with National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) in accordance with prescribed protocols and technical requirements. NATGRID, an attached office under the Ministry of Home Affairs approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), serves as a secure intelligence-sharing platform to strengthen national and internal security, including counter-terror efforts. Kota also stressed the need for timely inter-departmental coordination and close cooperation with technical agencies for API (application programming interface) development, connectivity and other integration-related processes. The directive came after the chief secretary attended a video conference, chaired by the Union home secretary, with chief secretaries and advisors to administrators of states and Union Territories, alongside the DGP, Assam, regarding the implementation and integration of NATGRID. The meeting reviewed the integration of State and UT-level databases with NATGRID and discussed the inclusion of relevant databases such as Smart City data, utility billing records, land and property registration records, crime and offences databases, licensing records, education-related databases and beneficiary-oriented scheme databases for seamless and secure data sharing. The meeting further noted the growing usage of the NATGRID platform by states and UTs and ongoing capacity-building initiatives for police and enforcement officials across the country. Senior officials of concerned departments were present during the meeting.



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Assam Departments told to Identify and Map Databases for NATGRID Integration



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Newly elected AMC corporators sworn in; Mayor and Deputy Mayor elected

Aizawl, May 08: The swearing-in ceremony of the 19 newly elected corporators of the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) was held on Thursday at the Board of Corporators (BOC) Meeting Hall, AMC Office, Thuampui. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor were also elected during the function. The function was chaired by Municipal Commissioner Joseph H. Lalrangsanga. After the names of the newly elected corporators were read out, Aizawl District Magistrate Lalhriatpuia, administered the oath of allegiance to the Constitution of India to the 19 newly elected AMC corporators. Following the swearing-in ceremony, the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor was conducted in accordance with Section 4 of The Mizoram Municipalities (Procedures & Conduct of Business) Rules, 2007. As there were no other candidates, Ward VI Corporator H. Lalremtluanga was declared elected as Mayor and Ward XVI Corporator R. Lalawmpuii as Deputy Mayor under Rule 4(5). The newly elected Mayor and Deputy Mayor also took the oath of secrecy. The newly elected Mayor, H. Lalremtluanga, appointed four Executive Corporators namely: Christina Roluahpuii Sailo (Ward VIII), Vanlalhruaia (Ward XIII), Vanlalafaka (Ward III) and K. Lalrodinga (Ward XVIII). The Executive Corporators also took the oath of secrecy. The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Chief Minister Lalduhoma, Assembly Speaker Lalbiakzama, Ministers K. Sapdanga, C. Lalsawivunga, Dr. Vanlalhlana and B. Lalchhanzova, Prof. Lalinlawma and Lalnginglova Hmar, besides Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) K. Vanlalvena and MLAs Lalchhuanthanga and H. Ginzala.



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Using KCC to finance fisheries in Assam

The fishery sector in Assam has been witnessing steady growth, significantly narrowing the demand-supply gap for fresh fish in the state. Boosting production remains crucial to achieve complete self-reliance so that even the annual shortfall of around 20,000 MT can also be met by local fish production. Developing the fish value chain to cater to the growing market of packaged fish products can help entrepreneurs in the sector tap the premium segment of pre-cleaned, ready-to-cook, and dried fish items. As more than 90% of the state population are fish consumers, the demand is expected to go up with the rise in population. Therefore, fishermen of the state having easy access to formal credit and insurance coverage remain critical to sustaining the growth momentum. The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) is a saving-cum-loan product available for fishermen, but the awareness of the scheme is strikingly low among fishermen of the state, and due to weak outreach, limited fishing households have accessed the working capital loan under the scheme. The Central Government raised the limit of KCC loans to Rs 5 lakh; of that, the limit for collateral-free short-term agricultural loans, including for allied activities of animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries, has been increased from Rs 1.60 lakh to Rs 2 lakh per borrower against KCC cards. This has enhanced credit accessibility, particularly for small and marginal farmers, including fishing households, which can now borrow more money to meet their working capital needs. Besides, under the “Modified Interest Subvention Scheme” of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, it provides an interest subvention of 1.5% to banks for providing short-term working capital loans up to Rs 3.00 lakh at 7% per annum provided through KCC. Because of the government support by way of reducing the interest burden, the loan repayment is lower than the normal market rate when the KCC scheme is popularised among fishing households. Farmers who repay their loans promptly on time receive a 3% Prompt Repayment Incentive; it effectively reduces the interest rate to 4% per annum. The KCC scheme also offers features such as an ATM-enabled debit card, one-time documentation, an inbuilt provision for cost escalation in the credit limit, and the flexibility to make multiple withdrawals within the sanctioned limit, among others, but financial literacy plays the crucial role in informing the farmers and fishing households about these features in detail. As a KCC loan is in the form of revolving cash credit, fishermen are able

to withdraw and repay funds as needed, based on their cash flow and income generation patterns. The state attaining self-sufficiency in the true sense is also essential to eliminate the possibility of the use of formaldehyde in fish procured from other states to cater to the shortfall in demand. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for ‘restricting import/stock/sale of fish imported from other self-sufficient states by road/river route using formaldehyde for keeping fish in marketable condition for long duration’ issued by the state’s Fishery Department has recommended measures to address this issue. The SOP highlights that suppliers of such fish mostly use road transport, which takes considerable time from Andhra Pradesh and other southern states, but such vehicles lack proper refrigeration facilities. It cautions that unscrupulous traders use formaldehyde to keep such fishes fresh during transit as well as in storage on arrival by wholesalers before such fish reach retail market points across the state. The department warned through the SOP that fish contaminated with a huge quantity of formaldehyde and consumed by humans is harmful and may cause severe abdominal pain, vomiting, and renal injury and may even be fatal in extreme cases. As the use of formaldehyde in fishes is not visible to the human eye nor detectable by smell, the fish appears perfectly normal and fresh to consumers, it explains. The SOP underscores strict measures such as intensified and regular inspection of fish samples at wholesale markets by food inspectors equipped with a rapid formalin testing kit to ensure that fresh fish contaminated with formaldehyde do not reach retail markets. Transparency of the inspection and testing process and regular updating of the laboratory test findings can boost confidence of consumers about the quality of fish sold in the retail markets. The SOP underscored the need for the creation of modern warehousing facilities with built-in refrigeration facilities for bulk storage of fish at wholesale markets to address it, but the pragmatic solution to the problem lies in boosting local production of fish within the state. Increasing fish production hinges on timely procurement of quality fish seeds and reliable fish feed, for which the fishermen need working capital. The fact that fewer than 2500 KCC cards have been issued to fish farmers in the state clearly points to poor awareness among them about the scheme and easy credit facility. Improving credit outreach can unlock Assam’s untapped potential toward complete self-sufficiency in Assam’s fish production.

There is only one issue if Labour now determines that the PM is no longer qualified for the position: nobody else is

This is going to be an ugly weekend for British politics. How ugly we won’t quite know until Saturday night, when enough votes will have been counted to judge whether Keir Starmer’s government has suffered merely a midterm kicking or a full-blown collapse, and what dark forces may have been unleashed in the process. For you needn’t be a Labour voter to worry about the implications of local elections in which so many candidates were caught expressing views so extreme they chill the blood. It’s fear of what this means for Britain in the long term that explains, in part, why the prime minister’s enemies were gathering long before the polling stations closed. Angela Rayner is expected to make “an intervention” this weekend. Wes Streeting – the preferred pick of many ministers, if not party members – is said to have an entire shadow operation ready to go. Next week, the soft-left Mainstream grouping will publish what looks uncannily like the beginnings of a manifesto for Andy Burnham, via a report on “Manchesterism” and how the mayor’s economic experiment could be translated nationally. Though Starmer is visibly digging in, the idea of him leading the party into another general election seems vanishingly unlikely, meaning there will surely be calls this weekend just to get the inevitable over with. Yet to trigger a leadership contest right

now would be a mistake, and not just because some of Labour’s potential players aren’t even on the pitch yet. (You don’t have to be a paid-up Burnham fan to think he should be given time to try to get back into parliament, if only because otherwise he will for ever be Labour’s martyred king over the water. While a swift and uncontested coronation may look appealingly clean and quick, in retrospect it was doing Gordon Brown no favours by 2009, and a full-length leadership contest would have been a useful stress test for Theresa May in 2016.) The better reason for hesitating before pressing the nuclear button is to guard against the whole thing blowing up in Labour’s face. What is their answer if Nigel Farage and Zack Polanski respond to a leadership contest – as they would be mad not to – by demanding a general election, accusing Labour of clinging illegitimately to power by imposing a new and unelected leader over the people’s heads? What if Farage whips the more riot-prone parts of his fanbase into a fury at the very idea of a squatter prime minister, most likely one to the left of the one they already hate? Though governments shouldn’t be held hostage by their opponents, to rerun the kind of infuriatingly exclusive process by which a tiny group of Tory members repeatedly changed leaders mid-parliament – and repeatedly got it wrong – in the current climate would be madness. The 99% of Britons



who aren’t paid-up party members, and therefore not entitled to a vote, need somehow to be brought into the room. Whoever leads Labour and Britain through the next three years may have to navigate a recession, or even a war, all while somehow conjuring up the sunny change for the better that millions were promised in 2024. They will need to tackle the cost of living while raising billions more for defence – which most likely means finding a way around manifesto promises on tax – and simultaneously convincing the bond markets that Britain isn’t bust. And in their nonexistent spare time, they will somehow have to try to bring an angrily polarised country together. To be blunt, none of the current contenders look entirely ready, but nor does the current prime minister.

As the party entrusted nearly two years ago with power, Labour has a moral duty now to resolve that conundrum. If it chooses to do so by bundling a democratically elected prime minister out of the door – either via the kind of more or less consensual months-long transition agreed through gritted teeth by Tony Blair in 2006-7, or more brutally – then what follows must be a genuine contest geared for once to the actual job. Having chaired Labour leadership hustings in 2010 and 2015, all I can say is that never has the current format – in which candidates traipse around the country trying to deliver clips for social media, while members dwell lovingly on big-picture ideas such as international diplomacy at the expense of things voters often care more about – seemed less

fit for purpose. Across all parties, leadership contests have become a perfect test of candidates’ ability to find their own side’s erogenous zones while somehow failing to ask the questions that in retrospect mattered. How exactly do the candidates make decisions? For that’s what being prime minister consists of, more than anything else: judgment call after judgment call on dilemmas escalated to No 10 precisely because they’re too big or bitterly contested to be resolved by anyone else. (Too late we discovered that Starmer doesn’t seem actually to enjoy taking political decisions; that May relied alarmingly heavily on her chiefs of staff; that Boris Johnson tended just to agree with whoever he was talking to at the time, leaving a trail of chaos in his wake.) What do parliamen-

tary colleagues who see them up close daily know that the rest of us should? (Tory MPs did their best to raise the alarm in 2022 about Liz Truss, but Tory members didn’t want to hear it – a mistake their Labour counterparts should beware repeating.) Do they actually know what they’re talking about, deep down? You would learn more from 10 minutes of each candidate being publicly and remorselessly grilled on economic policy by Brown, say, than in weeks of hustings. And, crucially, can they convince the overwhelming majority who currently say they wouldn’t vote Labour at least to give them a chance to put things right? For if not, pressure for an early general election will soon become overwhelming. Though US-style open primaries may be a step too far for the Labour party, holding public events open to all-comers on top of more traditional hustings for voting members would be a far better test of how prospective leaders handle hostile voters – and perhaps the beginnings of building a mandate. All of this would take time to organise and, by the end of this weekend, perhaps Labour MPs may have concluded it’s time that they don’t have. But if so, they must remember that they won’t just be auditioning a leader for their own party: they will be choosing a prime minister for the country. Spin that roulette wheel too soon, and it isn’t going to land on red.

European officials are considering the unimaginable due to Trump’s outbursts over NATO

Donald Trump’s war in Iran and tirades against Nato allies are accelerating moves to develop a plan B for European security in case the US is no longer willing to help defend allies against a Russian attack. Europe must prepare for sudden vulnerability gaps if the fickle US president decides to pull out key military enablers before Europeans can develop their own alternatives. European countries have already taken over financial and political responsibility for supporting Ukraine in its struggle against Vladimir Putin’s war of aggression, as Trump has increasingly sided with Moscow in trying to force Kyiv to hand over swathes of territory to Russia. After four years of war in Europe, most leaders have come to recognise Ukraine as a military and technological asset for European defence rather than a burden or a risk factor.

By branding Nato a “paper tiger” and European allies “cowards” for failing to support the US-Israeli war on Iran, Trump has undermined the credibility of the alliance. The announcement of a partial troop withdrawal from Germany as well as threats of further cuts and possible sanctions against European governments that withheld the use of their bases or airspace for Operation Epic Fury are forcing European leaders to think the unthinkable. Several recent developments have highlighted how European countries are rethinking their security for a potentially post-American future. They can no longer be sure of US military backing if, for example, Putin were to stage a limited incursion into a Baltic state, perhaps sending covert forces to seize a Russian-speaking border town, and threaten massive, possibly nuclear retaliation if Nato responded. Such scenarios send shudders down the spines of European defence planners spooked



by Trump’s unreliability.

In recent weeks, Germany has stepped beyond the horrors of its 20th-century history and issued its first military strategy since the second world war, setting the goal of becoming the strongest conventional army in Europe by 2039. France has opened talks with seven non-nuclear nations on extending its nuclear deterrent to cover European partners. That followed a UK-France declaration last year deepening co-operation between Europe’s two nuclear powers.

Emmanuel Macron has stressed that the French initiative is meant as a complement to US and Nato nuclear deterrence, not a substitute. Yet it is clear that non-nuclear countries such as Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and Poland, which previously relied entirely on the American nuclear umbrella, are looking for new

ways to deter Russia’s nuclear threat.

Although they are stepping up defence spending, European governments cannot in the short term replicate key capabilities provided by the US such as satellite intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, air and missile defence and aerial logistics. Nor do they have the command and control systems or logistics to mount a major military mobilisation without US engagement through Nato.

On Monday EU ambassadors held a first tabletop exercise to test how they would implement in practice their own hitherto largely declaratory mutual assistance pact. Article 42.7 of the EU treaty, which mandates “an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power”, is on paper more binding than Nato’s better-known article 5.

But this EU clause has only been invoked once – by France after the 2015 terrorist attacks – and triggered cross-border police and intelligence cooperation but not military action. The aim of the exercise was to establish procedures for defence emergencies. It reportedly did not factor in the possible role of Nato.

The mere fact of holding such a drill has sparked controversy, with Baltic states privately voicing concern that it could give Washington a pretext for disengaging from European security. However, the Polish prime minister, Donald Tusk broke a taboo by questioning publicly whether Trump would fulfil Washington’s Nato pledge in case of a Russian attack in the coming months. Europe’s “biggest, most important question is if the United States is ready to be as loyal as it is described in our treaties”, he told

the Financial Times.

Europe’s rearmament drive also faces new challenges due to the Iran war. The conflict has massively depleted US arsenals of key weapons, and European governments are being notified that they may face years of additional delay before receiving vital air defence missiles, long-range fires and ammunition ordered from US defence contractors. This ought to give a boost to the European defence industry, except that fragmented European arms manufacturers are already at full stretch, with little or no capacity to meet increased demand. So Europe faces a lengthening window of vulnerability with less US support, political uncertainty and yawning capability gaps. These dilemmas should be top of the agenda at the next Nato summit, in Ankara in July, but European leaders will be loth to air their strategic vulnerability with Trump for fear of prompting the impetuous US leader to walk out on them. Unsure how far they can still depend on the US, Europeans need to prepare for a gradual takeover of Nato’s tried and tested command structures, defence planning and joint exercises.

If possible, Nato should retain a US Supreme Allied Commander Europe (Saceur) to embody the enduring link with US nuclear and conventional military forces – a key deterrent to Russia. But Europeans must urgently seek ways to organise their own defence in case Trump shirks his commitment.

This is unlikely to be centred on the EU, given its unanimity principle and lack of military experience, and the fact that key allies such as the UK, Norway, Turkey and Canada are not members. If the US stands on the sidelines, a European defence union led by France, Germany and the UK, backed by Nato and EU resources, and with key roles for Poland and Ukraine, offers the strongest option to a vulnerable continent.

Brent crude oil increased by 1% due to renewed clashes in Iran

Mumbai: Oil prices increased while stocks declined as the US and Iran engaged in hostilities in West Asia. However, numerous equity markets, especially in Asia, were on track for impressive weekly gains driven by surging demand for AI. Benchmark Brent crude futures were up about 1 per cent to \$101 a barrel, while European stocks fell 0.9 per cent. Traders were also keeping an eye on Labour Party losses in British elections, which could pressure Prime Minister Keir Starmer's leadership, though sterling inched up, and British bonds and stocks traded in line with European peers as results were coming in.

West Asia clashes
The United States and Iran clashed in the Gulf and the UAE came under renewed attack in a test of a month-long ceasefire, but the warring parties downplayed the situation, leaving investors guessing. "The market seem to be taking every chance to price in a quick end to the war," said Jan von Gerich, chief analyst at Nordea. "But it seems unlikely there's going to be an agreement. I still think there are going to be disruptions in the Strait (of Hormuz) for a longer time and it won't be resolved any time soon." Stock markets in Europe were lower. The pan-continental STOXX 600 was down 0.9 per cent, while major bourses in Frankfurt and Paris were off a similar amount. Stock markets in Asia, which have been soaring thanks to strong revenue and spending plans from the US AI hyperscalers - which will benefit the region's chipmakers - slipped slightly from record highs. MSCI's broadest index of Asian shares outside Japan fell 1 per cent, although South Korea's KOSPI inched up 0.1 per cent, for a weekly gain of more than 13.5 per cent - the largest since 2008 - on the back of a surge in Samsung and SK Hynix. Taiwan's benchmark was up 7 per



cent this week and Japan's Nikkei rose 5.4 per cent. The European benchmark was heading for a 0.1 per cent weekly fall. Currency markets were broadly steady with the dollar falling slightly and heading for its second straight weekly loss, although the yen remained in focus. Japan intervened in the foreign exchange market during holidays in early May to stave off further falls in the battered currency, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters. The dollar was last down 0.1 per cent to 156.8 yen, and was set for its second weekly fall against Japan's currency, although it struggled to sustain gains beyond 155 after surges on suspected intervention to the tune of nearly \$70 billion since last Thursday. The euro bought \$1.1742. China's yuan, Asia's best-performing currency since the war broke out, is on the cusp of strengthening past 6.8 to the dollar and sits near its strongest since 2023. US jobs and UK elections in focus Investors are awaiting the US non-

farm payrolls report on Friday, with jobs expected to have increased in April by 62,000 after rebounding 178,000 in March, a Reuters survey of economists shows. "The labour market is still holding up reasonably well," Nordea's von Gerich said. "Since the focus is on the Middle East and the impact comes via inflation more than growth, especially in the US, maybe the payrolls report is not quite as crucial as it has been sometimes in the past." Local government elections across Britain showed heavy early losses for the ruling Labour Party, although Prime Minister Starmer said he would not resign. "Gilt is already under scrutiny due to inflation risks, and adding political uncertainty to the mix could further push (global) investors to look elsewhere," said ING analysts. Britain's 10-year gilt yield was little changed on the day at 4.936 per cent although remained close to a three-decade high.

Kissht experiences an increase in its market debut as investors place digital credit sector in India

Mumbai: The digital-lending platform Kissht had a robust debut on the stock market on Friday, as shares of its parent company, OnEMI Technology Solutions, were listed at ₹191 on the BSE, representing an increase of approximately 12 percent over the IPO price of ₹171. The stock later rose more than 10 per cent to around ₹210 in morning trade, valuing the company at roughly ₹3,532 crore. Kissht's IPO was subscribed more than nine times, driven largely by institutional demand. The qualified institutional buyer portion was subscribed nearly 25 times, while non-institutional investors bid 6.5

times their allocation, according to exchange data. Kissht raised about ₹926 crore through its IPO, including a fresh issue of ₹850 crore and an offer for sale worth ₹76 crore by existing investors including Vertex Venture, Ventureast Pro-active Fund, Endiya Seed Co-creation Fund and AION Advisory. "Kissht is Fund I's anchor exit," said Sateesh Andra, managing partner, Endiya Partners, in a blog post. Ranvir Singh and Krishnan Vishwanathan founded Kissht in 2016. Kissht was built to bring formal credit to the hundreds of millions of Indians the financial system had historically un-

derstood. In 2017, Andra recalled that Singh and Vishwanathan flew to Hyderabad to meet him. The segment was still early and not widely understood. The founders argued that India's underserved middle-income borrowers lacked access to formal credit because lenders lacked underwriting data, creating an opportunity for a technology-led lending platform. Kissht's assets under management (AUM) compounded from ₹1,268 crore in FY23 to ₹5,956 crore in 9MFY26 at approximately 80 per cent CAGR. As of December 31, 2025, Kissht had served 11.17 million customers. Many of these

customers were underserved by formal credit and now borrow through a mobile-first platform. The median CIBIL score of a Kissht borrower is 746, while the average customer age is 32. Kissht's underwriting engine runs on 39 proprietary sub-models and more than 400 variables, delivering 5.17x risk separation versus 2.13x from bureau scores alone. More than 85 per cent of new customers receive a loan decision in under 10 minutes. About 23.7 per cent of customers came through organic referrals, driving minimal acquisition cost. More than half of AUM is from repeat borrowers.

Titan's shares experienced a 6% increase, achieving a 52-week peak , as the Q4 profit after tax

Mumbai: Shares of Titan Company, a fashion accessories firm under the Tata Group, increased by more than 6 percent, reaching a 52-week peak of ₹4,585 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) following the company's announcement of robust results for the March 2026 quarter (Q4FY26). At approximately 02:25 PM, the stock was valued at ₹4,558, reflecting an increase of 5.82 percent from its prior session closing figure of ₹4,307.50. In contrast, the NSE Nifty50 index stood at 24,152.60, having decreased by 174 points or 0.72 percent. Titan stock has surged around 41 per cent from its 52-week low of ₹3,245.5 touched on May 6, 2025. The company's market capitalisation stood at ₹4.03 trillion. Titan Company Q4 results highlights In the March 2026 quarter, Titan's consolidated total income grew 46 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) to ₹20,300 crore as compared to ₹13,891 crore in the year-ago period. Its earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortisation (Ebitda) grew 28 per cent to ₹1,875 crore as against ₹1,470 crore. However, Ebitda margin declined 135 basis points to 9.2 per cent from 10.6 per cent. Titan's profit after tax came in at ₹1,179 crore in Q4FY26, up 35 per cent from ₹871 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal. In the full FY26, Titan reported total income of ₹76,078 crore, up 38 per cent Y-o-Y. PAT rose 52 per cent Y-o-Y to ₹5,073 crore. The company's jewellery portfolio increased 50 per cent to ₹18,195 crore, excluding bullion and digi-gold sales, reflecting sustained consumer confidence despite an elevated gold price environment. The analogue watches segment grew 15 per cent



during the quarter on the back of continuing premiumisation trends, the company said. During the quarter, Titan successfully completed its 67 per cent acquisition of Damas Jewellery, one of the GCC region's heritage and trusted jewellery brands. Ajoy Chawla, managing director at Titan Company, said FY26 has been a landmark year for Titan, with the company crossing the ₹50,000 crore annual revenue milestone in FY25 and adding another ₹25,000 crore in FY26 within a single year. He said the strong quarterly performance was led by the "Festival of Diamonds," with brands like Tanishq, Mia, Zoya, CaratLane, beYon, and Damas seeing strong

consumer response across regions and age groups. The watches business continued its premiumisation journey through new collections and design-led offerings, while emerging businesses also delivered steady growth while strengthening their customer proposition. Looking ahead to FY27, he said the company remains optimistic after a strong FY26, but is mindful of macroeconomic volatility and geopolitical uncertainties. Titan will continue to focus on strengthening its competitive positioning, deepening customer engagement, and driving long-term value creation for stakeholders.

Firstsource Solutions experiences an 18% decline in share value on substantial trading volumes

Mumbai: Firstsource Solutions (FSL) share price as of today: The shares of Firstsource Solutions (FSL) have increased by 18 percent to ₹278 on the BSE during Friday's intra-day trading, supported by substantial volumes and a positive outlook. At 12:48 PM, FSL shares were trading 17 percent higher at ₹274.65, in contrast to a 0.73 percent drop in the BSE Sensex. The average trading volumes surged over ten times, with a total of 66.92 million shares, accounting for 9.6 percent of the overall equity, being exchanged on both the NSE and BSE. Firstsource Solutions (FSL) share price as of today: The shares of Firstsource Solutions (FSL) have increased by 18 percent to ₹278 on the BSE during Friday's intra-day trading, supported by substantial volumes and a positive outlook. At 12:48 PM, FSL shares were trading 17 percent higher at ₹274.65, in contrast to a 0.73 percent drop in the BSE Sensex. The average trading volumes surged over ten times, with a total of 66.92 million shares, accounting for 9.6 percent of the overall equity, being

exchanged on both the NSE and BSE. FSL Q4 results FY26 Firstsource Solutions (FSL), an RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group company, is a global intelligence partner to enterprises across healthcare, banking and financial services, communications, media, technology, retail, and utilities. FSL's revenue grew 3.0 per cent quarter-on-quarter (Q-o-Q) on constant currency (CC) against analysts' estimate of 5.8 per cent, largely due to a delay in the UK collections deal ramp (due to regulatory approvals) and a delay in ramp at payer clients (due to medicare payment ramp). Ebit margin came in at 12.2 per cent against the estimate of 12.4 per cent, analysts at JM Financial Institutional Equities said. The management expressed high visibility to the lower end of guidance with pipeline conversion offering upside. Growth is expected to be evenly distributed across quarters. On an organic basis, FY26 CC growth was 12.1 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) excluding both PDC and TeleMedik. Excluding consolidation of Ascensos



(~5 months contribution), organic CC growth was 9.8 per cent. Management reiterated a medium-term aspiration of 14-15 per cent Ebit margins over 3-4 years. Margin expansion levers include offshore/nearshore mix, AI-led productivity gains and operating leverage. Brokerages upgrade FSL to 'Buy' Given the strong pipeline and healthy guidance, analysts at ICICI Securities upgraded FSL to 'Buy' and revised the target price to ₹290, valuing it at 18x P/E on FY28E EPS. FSL reported Ebit margins expansion in both Q4 and FY26,

supported by operational efficiencies and improved business mix. Management has guided for further margin expansion to 12.25-12.75 per cent in FY27, aided by operating leverage and AI-driven productivity gains. Additionally, the Telemedik acquisition strengthens FSL's nearshore healthcare capabilities in Puerto Rico and enhances its payer-provider positioning, while management remains open to further acquisitions to expand capabilities and support long-term growth, the brokerage firm said in its Q4 results update.

SBI shares have dropped by 7% after the Q4FY26 results did not meet market expectations

Mumbai: The shares of the State Bank of India (SBI) plummeted by more than 7 percent on Friday following the release of the March quarter (Q4FY26) results, which fell short of market expectations. Additionally, the bank experienced a significant increase in slippages sequentially, adversely affecting investor sentiment. SBI share price dropped 7.3 per cent soon after the result announcement, hitting a low of ₹1,011.3 per share on the BSE. The stock also dragged the benchmark BSE Sensex index, which slipped 600 points (0.75 per cent) at the same time.

SBI Q4 results SBI reported a net profit of ₹19,683.75 crore for the January to March 2026 quarter (Q4FY26), up 5.5 per cent year-on-year. Sequentially, it fell from ₹21,028.15 crore. SBI's net interest income (NII) came at ₹44,380 crore, higher by 4.1 per cent over a NII of ₹42,618 crore seen last year. Domestic net interest margin (NIM) contracted to 2.93 per cent from 3.11 per cent in Q3FY26 and 3.14 per cent in Q4FY25. Wholesale NIMs came at 2.81 per cent, down 17bps Q-o-Q and 18bps Q-o-Q. Though the bank's net profit was marginally above Street's estimates, its NII came below expectations. Analysts expected SBI's NII to rise 6-10 per cent Y-o-Y. Operationally, SBI's operating profit tumbled more-than-expected by 15.7 per cent Q-o-Q and 11.45 per cent Y-o-Y in Q4FY26. Pre-provision operating profit came at ₹27,704 crore in the recently concluded quarter. Further, SBI reported an improvement in its asset quality with gross non-perform-



ing asset (GNPA) ratio improving to 1.49 per cent in Q4FY26 vs 1.57 per cent in Q3FY26. NNPA ratio, meanwhile, was flat at 0.39 per cent. SBI's fresh slippages, however, jumped around 24 per cent quarter-on-quarter (Q-o-Q) to ₹5,521 crore from ₹4,458 crore.

The intention to claim the Trent bonus share

Mumbai: Trent has declared a dual reward for its shareholders, as the Tata Group retail and fashion company has announced both a dividend and a bonus issue. Although the company has maintained regular dividend distributions, this marks its inaugural bonus issue in almost thirty years. Additionally, the company has updated the record dates to ascertain shareholder eligibility for both corporate actions. Trent dividend 2026 Trent informed stock exchanges that its board has recommended a dividend of 600 per cent, or ₹6 per equity share of face value ₹1 each. The dividend, if approved by shareholders at the company's 74th Annual General Meeting (AGM), will be paid on or after the third day from the conclusion of the AGM. In a regulatory filing, the company said the record date for determining eligibility for the dividend has been revised to Friday, June 12, 2026, from Wednesday,

June 10, 2026. The company added that, if approved at the AGM, the dividend will be paid — subject to deduction of tax at source, where applicable — on or after Friday, June 26, 2026. Historically, Trent has maintained a steady dividend payout track record over the years. The company paid a final dividend of ₹5 per share in 2025, ₹3.20 per share in 2024, and ₹2.20 per share in 2023. In 2022, it paid a final dividend of ₹1.10 per share along with an interim dividend of ₹0.60 per share. Trent bonus issue Separately, the company informed exchanges that its board has approved a bonus issue in the ratio of 1:2. Under the proposal, shareholders will receive one bonus equity share of ₹1 each for every two fully paid-up equity shares of ₹1 each held as on the record date, which will be announced later, subject to shareholder approval. This marks Trent's first bonus issue in nearly 30



years. The company had last issued bonus shares in 1996 in a 1:1 ratio. The company has also revised the record date for the bonus issue. Earlier, it had fixed Friday, May 29, 2026, as the record date for determining shareholder eligibility. This has now been revised to Thursday, June 4, 2026. "We wish to inform you that the said record date for the purpose of determining the eligibility of shareholders for the issuance of bonus shares has been revised to Thursday, June 4, 2026," the company said in the filing. Amid this, Trent shares were quoted at ₹4,232.50, down 1.43 per cent from the previous close at 1:00 PM on Friday, May 8, 2026.

All of Gibraltar’s untreated sewage is dumped into the Mediterranean



Europe: The British overseas territory of Gibraltar lacks a wastewater treatment plant and has never had one, thus raw sewage from almost 40,000 individuals and companies is being poured directly into the sea. The southern extremity of the peninsula at Europa Point, where the Gibraltar government claims there are “high levels of natural dispersion,” has been leaking untreated sewage into the Mediterranean for decades. Lewis Stagnetto of the Nautilus Project, a local environmental charity, stated that although the region is meant to be protected for animals, there are frequently “wet wipes and plastic pollution entangled in algae and all over the rocks.” Toxic algal blooms that deplete the water of oxygen and suffocate aquatic life can be caused by raw sewage pollution. also exposes fish and mammals to a variety of chemicals and plastics that can harm health and interfere with reproduction, and also puts humans at danger by dispersing diseases and genes resistant to antibiotics. In contrast to Britain, Gibraltar’s drinking water is desalinated and its sewage system uses seawater. The salinity “historically created challenges that are not present in other wastewater treatment plants around the world,” according to the Gibraltar government. Wet wipes “that appear occasionally on our beaches have... come from outlets in nearby Spain,” according to the state-

ment. In 2017, the European court of justice ruled that the UK was in breach of wastewater law by failing to treat Gibraltar’s sewage, but the European Commission lost any power to take action after Brexit. Attempts to fix the problem have repeatedly collapsed. In 2018, Gibraltar’s government awarded a contract to a joint venture between NWG Commercial Services (Northumbrian Water) and Modern Water to design, build and operate a treatment plant, only for the deal to fall apart after a Modern Water subsidiary went into liquidation. “This had a significant impact on the delivery of this vital project,” a Gibraltar government spokesperson said. Preliminary talks with the European Investment Bank also “fell through as a direct result of the UK leaving the European Union”, they added. In June 2025, the Gibraltar government awarded a 25-year contract to Eco Waters to build a wastewater treatment plant at Europa Point. Advanced works have begun on the design and geotechnical aspects of the plant and a planning application was submitted in March 2026. Northumbrian Water, which partnered with the government from 2003 until 2024 through a joint venture called AquaGib, was keen to distance itself from the sewage failures. It said operations “centred on the provision of drinking water” and that it was

not responsible for day-to-day operations. “Northumbrian Water was never responsible in any way for wastewater operations in Gibraltar,” a spokesperson said. Its “involvement was as a shareholder and strategic partner, not as the operator or regulator. All decisions in relation to wastewater management were taken by the government of Gibraltar.” AquaGib said it operated a number of pumping stations that pump sewage from low-lying areas into Gibraltar’s main sewer but it “is not responsible for the main sewer or any wastewater treatment”. The sewer itself appears to be in poor shape. Last year, the opposition Gibraltar Social Democrats (GSD) party described “popular tourist hotspot areas ... embarrassingly subjected to the stench of raw sewage”, with waste “directly seeping through the city walls ... causing damage to the marine ecosystem”.

The government blamed decades of underinvestment for the problem, including years when the GSD held power. The government said there was an “ongoing major project to lay new sewerage mains in phases: a £15m investment in Gibraltar’s sewer infrastructure” as well as “various relining projects which ... have resulted in the main sewer being reinforced and improved within the city walls”. As for the beaches, the government said: “Bacteriological water quality is routinely measured in all of Gibraltar’s beaches ... and the latest results indicate that all bathing areas in Gibraltar attain excellent bathing water quality.” Last year, England’s water companies released untreated sewage into rivers, lakes and seas nearly 300,000 times, despite having wastewater treatment plants in place. Hugo Tagholum, the director of the charity Oceana UK, said: “The public are outraged that our rivers and seas are treated as a dumping ground. It’s an environmental and economic injustice, with the fingerprints of big business all over it.” “The government must get its act together at home and abroad – our seas need proper protection from sewage and plastic pollution. It’s high time they end the outrage and stop the pumping of untreated sewage into the Mediterranean Sea.”

The Palestinian envoy complains to the Foreign Office over the British Museum’s “erasure”

Iran: Following the British Museum’s removal of references to Palestine from its exhibitions, the Palestinian envoy to the UK has demanded that the Foreign Office step in. In September 2025, the UK recognized the state of Palestine; however, that same year, the museum changed the word “Palestine” to Gaza and the West Bank on a panel that listed the modern nations that were part of the ancient Levant. Husam Zomlot, the ambassador, has asked for talks with the museum to remove the terms “Palestine” and “Palestinian” from the explanatory panels of several exhibits in the ancient Levant and Egyptian rooms, and he has requested that it be restored. Zomlot said it was a historical “erasure” at a time when Israel was conducting a campaign of destruction against Palestinians that several human rights organisations and a report by a UN independent commission have deemed is a genocide. Israel has removed archaeological relics from the occupied Palestinian territories, and in September last year bombed the most important storage depot of ancient artefacts in Gaza City, pulverising three decades of archaeological work. Zomlot was invited to meet the museum’s director, Nicholas Cullinan, and some of its curators on 24 March but said he was given no undertaking the changes would be reversed. Instead, he was offered a tour of the museum, which he turned down. “In the absence of corrective action, or a clear commitment to address the issues identified, it would not have been appropriate

to engage further in a manner that could be interpreted as an endorsement of the current presentation,” Zomlot wrote to Cullinan on 9 April, in a letter seen by the Guardian and New Lines Magazine. The ambassador added he was ready to continue discussions and would welcome a tour “once the necessary corrections have been made”. The British Museum said in a statement: “We have not removed the term ‘Palestine’ from displays and continue to refer to it across a series of galleries, both contemporary and historic, and on our website.” This appeared to conflict with the photographic proof of changes, and earlier remarks attributed to the museum. The name Palestine does remain on some exhibits, such as maps of the ancient Middle East in the Egypt room. Since the March meeting, Zomlot has appealed to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office to intervene. The British Museum is publicly funded but run by an independent board of trustees, chaired by the former conservative chancellor, George Osborne. The ambassador hopes, however, that the UK government will persuade the museum to align with its own recognition of Palestine. “I sent a letter to the minister in charge in the Foreign Office, and we are waiting for [a response]” Zomlot said. “For me, this is not only a political issue. This is not only a legal issue. This is not even just a historical issue. This is an existential issue. Because erasing our past is erasing our present.” A British government

spokesperson said: “Museums and galleries in the UK operate independently of the government, which means that decisions relating to the management of their collections are a matter for their trustees.” The British Museum has yet to explain the changes, which became widely known only after the Telegraph reported on 14 February that they had been made following concerns by a pressure group, UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI). UKLFI said it had sent a letter to Cullinan arguing that “several maps and descriptions retroactively apply the term ‘Palestine’ to periods in which no such entity existed and risk obscuring the history of Israel and the Jewish people”. The changes to the exhibits however, predated the UKLFI letter. Cullinan reportedly saw the letter only after the Telegraph story was published. The museum has not explained its reasoning. UKLFI quoted the museum as telling the group: “Audience testing has shown that the historic use of the term Palestine ... is in some circumstances no longer meaningful.” The word “Palestinian” has been replaced by “Canaanite” in a panel about the Hyksos rulers of Egypt from the 18th to the 16th centuries BC, while mention of Palestine and the Philistines has been removed from a text about the Phoenicians, who the new text says were “locally known as ‘Canaanites’”. Scholars of the ancient world have generally been sceptical about the need for a change. Canaan is mentioned frequently in the Bible but in few other contemporary inscriptions

from the late bronze age, and when it is, it is usually used to refer to a variety of people and places along what is now the Levantine coast. Peleset, which is believed to be the root of the name Palestine, appears in inscriptions in Egypt from the 12th century BC referring to a community in the Southern Levant. Before that, the most common names for the region were Djahi and Retenu. There are also later inscriptions mentioning Israel, and the kingdom of Judah is mentioned on a monument dating to the ninth century BC. Both kingdoms survived for several centuries in the iron age, alongside the five city states of “Philistia”, including Gaza, which are frequently mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. Scholars say that Philistia or Palestine was the name which stuck through the centuries that followed and variants were used by the Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks and Romans and persisted into the modern age. “The decision to remove Palestine has nothing to do with historical accuracy,” Marchella Ward, a lecturer in classical studies at the Open University, said. “It’s no less accurate than any other term. In fact, given that it’s used so frequently in historical sources rather than in biblical sources, one might say it’s more accurate than other terms.” The picture is confused by the fact that people in ancient times did not think in terms of nationalities, and the terms outsiders used to refer to a certain people or place may have nothing to do with what those people called themselves or their homeland.

Trump claims that the pope’s position on Iran is “endangering a lot of Catholics”

Europe: Pope Leo is “endangering a lot of Catholics” because “he thinks it’s fine for Iran to have a nuclear weapon,” according to Donald Trump’s latest rhetorical assault. The comments are made two days before US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to meet with Leo at the Vatican in an attempt to defuse the tension caused by Trump’s earlier criticism of the Chicago-born pope for denouncing the US-Israeli attack on Iran. Trump stated that the pope “would rather talk about the fact that it’s OK for Iran to have a nuclear weapon, and I don’t think that’s very good” in an interview with Hugh Hewitt, a well-known conservative radio talk show host on the US-based Salem News network. The president said, “I think he’s endangering a lot of Catholics and a lot of people.” “However, I suppose the pope believes that Iran’s possession of nuclear weapons is acceptable.” Leo has consistently called for ceasefires and talks in opposition to the attack on Iran and the ensuing intensification of the crisis in Lebanon and the larger Middle East, but he has never stated that Iran should possess nuclear weapons. The US ambassador to the Holy See, Brian Burch, stated on Tuesday that he anticipated a “frank” discussion



between Leo and Catholic Rubio in the Apostolic Palace on Thursday morning. “Nations have disagreements, and I think one of the ways that you work through those is ... through fraternity and authentic dialogue,” Burch told reporters, adding that he thought Rubio was coming to the Vatican “in that spirit, to have a frank conversation about US policy, to engage in dialogue”. Burch said he did not accept the idea that there was “some deep rift” between the US and the Vatican, saying that Rubio was coming so that each side could “better understand each other, and to work through, if there are differences, certainly to talk through that”. The trip, which coincides with the first anniversary of Leo’s papacy, was organised after Trump lashed out at the pope in April, calling

him weak and saying he was not doing a very good job as pontiff. Trump also shared an AI-generated image depicting himself as a Jesus-like figure, before deleting it and saying it had actually been a portrayal of him as a doctor. Rubio later denied his trip to the Vatican was designed to “smooth things over” between Pope Leo and Trump, and tried to downplay the rift. “It’s a trip we had planned from before, and obviously we had some stuff that happened and no, look, there’s a lot to talk about with the Vatican,” he said. The US secretary of state will also endeavour to patch things up with the Italian government after Trump berated its prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, previously one of his closest allies in Europe. She had criticised his remarks

against Leo, rebuking her government for not supporting the strikes on Iran and threatening to withdraw US troops from Italy as a result. Rubio will also meet the Vatican’s secretary of state, Pietro Parolin, before meeting Meloni and the Italian foreign minister, Antonio Tajani, on Friday morning. The US vice-president, JD Vance – a Catholic convert – has also criticised the pope, saying the Vatican should “stick to matters of morality” and that Leo should be careful when it came to talking about theology and war. Rubio and Vance attended the pope’s inauguration in May last year and had a private audience with him the day after, during which they handed him an invitation from Trump to the White House that Leo has not yet taken up.

How conflict returned as a result of Trump’s effort to reopen the Strait of Hormuz



Iran: Greetings for the morning. The Middle East is once again plagued by uncertainty. After Donald Trump started a program known as “Project Freedom” to assist thousands of sailors trapped in the Gulf due to the conflict in crossing the Strait of Hormuz, the tense ceasefire between the US and Iran threatened to fall apart. The announcement was viewed as a cynical provocation by Iran. Fighting broke out again as Iran tried to hold onto the vital route out of the area. Overnight, however, the US president announced on social media that his initiative had been “paused for a short period of time” to see if a deal with Iran could be reached, but he also stated that the port blockade would still be in effect. For today’s First Edition, I spoke with Julian Borger, the Guardian’s senior international correspondent, about Trump’s strategy and the likelihood of a return to war. But first, this morning’s headlines. Five big stories UK politics | Zack Polanski falsely claimed to be a spokesperson for the British Red Cross while campaigning for the Green party leadership, the charity has said. Fuel shortages | Two million airline seats have been cut from this month’s schedules as airlines redraw their operations because of soaring jet fuel prices amid the Middle East conflict. UK news | A British crew member who became ill after a suspected outbreak of hantavirus on luxury cruise ship the MV Hondius is to be medically evacuated, officials have said. Tax | An increased windfall tax should be imposed on the UK’s largest banks, say trade union leaders, after the big four lenders reported almost £14bn in first-quarter profits, partly fuelled by market turbulence amid the Iran war. Society | People from black backgrounds in England are twice as likely to experience strokes as their white counterparts, while also being less likely to receive timely care,

according to the largest study of its kind. Since the conflict began in late February, an estimated 20,000 sailors have been trapped in the Gulf, unable to pass through the strait of Hormuz into the open ocean. Concerns about their physical and mental health are growing as they face the prospect of enduring a blistering Middle Eastern summer while at anchor waiting for peace. Food and essential supplies are feared to be running low on some trapped vessels. On Sunday, Trump announced the launch of Project Freedom, a presidential initiative, which would see the stranded 850 vessels pass through the southern section of the strait of Hormuz under the protection of the US military. Trump presented the plan as a humanitarian endeavour “meant to free people, companies, and countries that have done absolutely nothing wrong – they are victims of circumstance” in a post on Truth Social. But Iran did not buy it. They have imposed a blockade on foreign shipping since US-Israeli attacks on 28 February – and maintaining the closure is a key part of their negotiating position. Iran fired missiles at the UAE – a reminder to the world that a return to war is close. In a spate of claims and counterclaims, the US military said that they had destroyed six Iranian small boats carrying missiles and drones. Both sides appear keen to avoid a return to fighting. On Tuesday, the US’s top general Dan Caine clarified that Iran had not broken the ceasefire despite clashes over the strait. Now the US has backed down on the effort to guide stranded ships out – for now. Posting on Truth Social late on Tuesday, Trump said he had made the decision based “on the request of Pakistan and other Countries, the tremendous Military Success that we have had during the Campaign against the Country of Iran and, additionally, the fact that Great Progress has been made toward a Complete and Final Agreement with Representatives of Iran”. But unease

remains, with no direct response yet from Iran and a lack of clarity over whether Trump could reinstate his latest mission. And observers fear another round of violence is not far away. Trump’s Project Freedom was aimed at undermining Iran’s capacity to maintain its blockade of the strait, says Julian Borger. “Iran’s strength is its ability to keep the strait closed – and if that gets challenged then that’s an important card that Iran would have lost. That’s why it’s so important for them to keep it closed,” he says. “Even though Iran is being careful not to engage with the US navy directly, it is keen to keep up a sense of threat around going through the strait.” Just two vessels passed through the strait during Trump’s short-lived project. The US route passes through Emirati and Omani waters, which are more difficult to navigate through than the Iranian side of the passage due to coral reefs and other hazards. But the sheer length of time that ships have been stranded in the Gulf means that some will probably risk the route, says Julian. “For shipowners and crews, you’ve got to remember how desperate they are. They have been stuck there for weeks and weeks with no end in sight, so it is tempting for some to at least try to get out,” he says. “The owners will be watching to see what happens with the first trickle of ships.” After the initiative was announced, a South Korean flagged vessel was struck by what President Trump said was an Iranian attack, and missiles were fired at the UAE by Iran. The Iranians later apologised – but the volley highlights the challenge of convincing shipowners that it is safe to pass through the strait, especially with Iran’s decentralised military doctrine, which permits its military commanders significant freedom to operate independently of its country’s rulers. “Before the war, part of Iran’s defence doctrine was based on the expectation that their leadership would get decapitated. So, local commanders were given a lot of leeway in how they chose to carry out their operations and could inflict as much damage on the enemy as possible,” says Julian. “In a delicate situation like this, it’s difficult for the decentralised Iranian system to collaborate as much as they might want. This might be the reason you had those strikes on the UAE and then an expression of regret.” Markets were unconvinced by the move from Trump, with oil hovering about \$115 a barrel.

5 Japanese Secrets Transforming the Global Skincare Game

In an era where high-actives and quick fixes are the standard, the Japanese beauty routine, also known as J-Beauty, presents a contrasting philosophy that emphasises balance, hydration, and protection. This approach favours long-term skin health and compatibility over aggressive exfoliation or complex procedures. Time-tested natural substances that protect, nourish, and restore the skin are essential to this philosophy. These ingredients, which range from centuries-old plant oils to antioxidant-rich teas, are revolutionising skincare worldwide by proving the transforming power of simplicity. Here are five Japanese ingredients that are becoming popular worldwide due to their holistic appeal and scientifically backed benefits.

Konjac: Gentle Exfoliation Revolution

This biodegradable sponge, which comes from the root of the konjac plant, has become the norm for exfoliating. It is slightly alkaline, which means that it will help to balance the pH of your skin as it cleans it, leaving your skin feeling smooth and refreshed. Konjac sponges are 100% biodegradable and compostable. Using a konjac sponge will help to preserve the barrier of your skin while also helping to keep your complexion clear.

Matcha (Green Tea): Antioxidant Armour for Modern Skin

Green tea powder, or matcha, is high in polyphenols and catechins like



EGCG, which fight inflammation and free radicals. It is beneficial for oily and acne-prone skin because it also controls sebum production. Incorporating matcha into your skincare regimen creates an even, healthy-looking complexion, reduces puffiness, and helps prevent premature ageing.

Camellia Oil (Tsubaki): Biometric Moisturiser

This lightweight oil, which is extracted from the seeds of the Camellia japonica flower, is similar to human sebum and allows for quick absorption without blocking pores. It supports the formation of collagen, improves hydration, and fortifies the lipid barrier. It is abundant in omega-9 fatty acids, vitamins, and squalene. It was used by Japanese geishas to keep

their skin glowing and perfect.

Yuzu: Vitamin-C-Rich Radiance Booster

Packed with natural humectants and vitamin C, this Japanese citrus fruit promotes collagen formation, brightens skin, and improves hydration. Its essential oils are used in baths and toners to encourage radiance and circulation. Compared to other citrus extracts while calming sensitive skin. Regular application keeps the skin supple, soft, and glowing while preserving its elasticity and reducing early ageing signs. Japanese skincare teaches us that less is more. J-Beauty helps you attain long-lasting skin health by prioritising moisture, mild botanicals, and ingredients that complement your biology.

Colours, Sweets, And Smiles: The Right Way To Care For Your Teeth During Holi

Holi may be a riot of colour and celebration, but it can quietly take a toll on your smile. Between sugary sweets, dyed drinks, synthetic powders and constant snacking, your teeth and gums face hours of exposure to staining pigments, acids and bacteria. By the time the colours fade, sensitivity, plaque and dull enamel often linger. The solution isn't skipping the fun, but it's celebrating smarter. Dental experts agree that a few mindful habits before, during and after the festivities can make all the difference. "Holi is one of the most vibrant times of the year, but your teeth can take a beating. Simple precautions like hydration, rinsing and protecting your lips and enamel go a long way," says Dr. Shobhit Raizada, Consultant Maxillofacial Prosthodontist and Oral Implantologist at Manipal Hospital, Goa. Echoing this, Dr. Jaaneel Parekh of Laxmi Dental Limited notes, "Modern Holi celebrations combine synthetic colours, frequent sweet consumption and long hours of grazing, creating the perfect environment for staining and plaque." And according to Dr. Vaishali

Prasad, Consultant in General and Pediatric Dentistry at Dr L H Hiranandani Hospital, Mumbai, cases of sensitivity, cavities, gum irritation and stains typically spike right after the festival.

Before You Step Out: Prep Your Smile

Just as you oil your hair and protect your skin, your teeth need preparation too. Brushing with fluoride toothpaste strengthens enamel and creates resistance against stains. Dr. Parekh calls this preventive care that begins before stepping out. Dr. Raizada recommends applying a thick layer of lip balm around the lips to prevent cracking and reduce the colour pigments sticking around the mouth. Avoid freshly brushing and heading straight into sweets later; instead, start the day clean so fewer particles cling to the teeth. A well-hydrated mouth is equally important. "More hydration means better saliva flow," Dr. Raizada explains, which naturally flushes bacteria and acids.

During The Celebrations: Small Habits, Big

Impact

The real risk comes from continuous snacking. Sugary treats like gujiya, laddoos and thandai feed bacteria that produce enamel-eroding acids. "The concern isn't celebration itself, but it's unconscious indulgence," says Dr. Parekh. Instead of grazing all day, eat sweets with meals. Increased saliva during mealtimes helps neutralise



acids. Swishing with water or mouthwash after every sugary bite is a quick, effective fix. Dr. Raizada suggests frequent rinsing to clear residue and prevent pigments from settling. Also, steer clear of ingesting colours or contaminated water, and

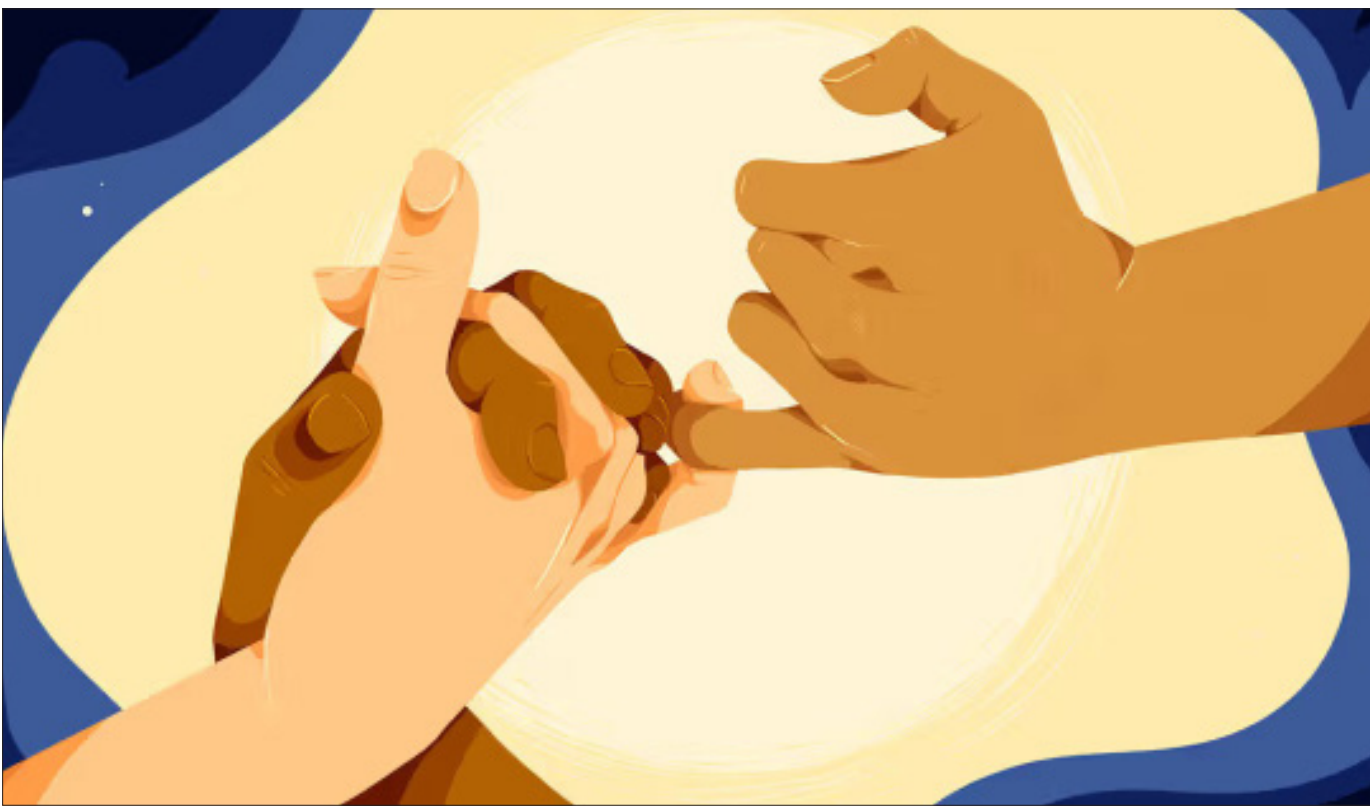
choose naturally derived powders when possible to avoid gum irritation.

After The Fun: Gentle Recovery Matters

Once home, resist the urge to scrub aggressively. "Don't brush immediately after sweets or acidic drinks," advises Dr. Raizada. The mouth's pH turns acidic, and brushing too soon can damage softened enamel. Wait about 30 minutes, then brush gently with a soft-bristle brush and fluoride toothpaste. Dr. Prasad recommends a mild mouthwash and thorough rinse to remove loose particles, while avoiding harsh whitening hacks that could worsen sensitivity. Persistent stains or gum discomfort? Seek professional care early. Holi doesn't have to mean post-festival dental damage. Prep your enamel, stay hydrated, snack mindfully and practise gentle recovery. With balanced habits and conscious care, you can enjoy every splash of colour and every sweet treat – while keeping your healthiest, brightest smile intact long after the celebrations end.

When women choose non-monogamy: ‘It’s an opportunity for more integration’

It's late afternoon, and Lucy texts her husband's girlfriend. The sound of cartoons plays somewhere in the living room, and she absentmindedly wipes a smear of jam off the countertop. A few minutes earlier, Lucy's phone buzzes with a school email: a parent-teacher event for Thursday evening. She's been attending these events alone, but pauses this time. She wants her husband, Oliver, there. When she glances at the shared Google Calendar, she notices that Thursday is already accounted for. Oliver has a date with Cecilia. Lucy opens WhatsApp. She doesn't text her husband. She texts Cecilia. Cecilia replies quickly: they can find another night. A few minutes later, the color-coordinated shared calendar updates. Later, Cecilia described it simply: "The organizing aspect is very gendered." In the group chat between the two couples, she said, the messages tend to come from her and Lucy – scheduling, adjusting, confirming. The men, she noted, rarely initiate these exchanges. When asked about this dynamic, Oliver put it more bluntly: "I'll be the first to admit that there's a disproportionate amount of domestic labor that my partner takes on," he reflected. "That is ... men being shit," he said simply. Oliver, 38, and Lucy, 40, live in London with their two children. For the past several years, Oliver has been in a committed relationship not only with his wife, Lucy, but with another man, James, is dating Lucy in turn. Like many couples exploring consensual non-monogamy – an umbrella term encompassing relationship structures that fall outside sexual exclusivity – they initially understood themselves to be in an open marriage: one that allowed for physical encounters and casual relationships outside the marriage, but where emotional intimacy and romantic love between the two were still expected to remain centered within it. Over time, though, the boundaries shifted. What began as openness evolved into something closer to polyamory: not simply having sex with multiple people, but sus-



taining multiple loving relationships at once. Relationships like these are not as rare as they might seem. Recent research suggests that at least 5% of Americans are now in a consensually non-monogamous relationship, with roughly one in five having tried it at some point. And yet the cultural script remains remarkably narrow. Open marriage is often imagined as something men want: driven by male desire, engineered for male freedom and reluctantly tolerated by women. But that's not the case. Women also make this demand, and the motivations are rarely singular. They are shaped as much by boredom, curiosity and autonomy as by dissatisfaction. In practice, the transition to non-monogamy – and sometimes into polyamory – can be destabilizing for men and, at times, liberating for women, though the emotional and logistical realities are rarely so cleanly divided. Lucy had been drawn to non-monogamy for as long as she could remember. "It was my idea," she said of opening the marriage. "It's honestly something I've always wanted since I was 18." After a few years living in California, she began to see non-monogamy as increasingly "normative". Their social circle was part of a broader milieu that questioned traditional relationship scripts – open relationships, polyamory, fluid boundaries between friendship and romance, and a general ethos of experimentation in spaces such as Burning Man. By the time she and Oliver decided to open their relationship, many of their friends already had. "It was in the water of our friendship group," she said. Oliver resists the idea that non-monogamy is some last-ditch effort to save something broken, or a kind of sexual free-for-all to "fill a lack". He described it instead as an extension of what is already intact. "Because we have this foundation of love between us," he said, "we get to go off and experience these things from a place of safety." Cecilia's story began differently. She and her husband met in their mid-20s and had been dating only a few months when she got pregnant. The timeline compressed quickly, before either of them had decided what kind of life they wanted. "We got thrown into having a child together much earlier than we probably would have planned," she said. Even then, she resisted the idea that one event should determine the rest of their lives. When they eventually married, they assumed monogamy despite their

ambivalence. However, it was with a clear awareness of what they were giving up. "There was a sense that it was a loss for both of us," Cecilia said. Years later, during the pandemic, the structure of their life intensified: two children under three, her mother undergoing chemotherapy, his parents divorcing. "Life was just a huge slog," she said. And then something shifted. "I fell in love with someone from my work," Cecilia said. "It wasn't planned. Having this shiny, bright new thing outside did make it easy for my attention to shift away from our marriage." But at the same time, the way James handled it – and the grace with which he allowed me that release valve from all the stuff that I was going through ... "She paused. "Motherhood is so all-consuming for women," she said, "and the way that James understood that I needed an outlet where I wasn't a mother, and a daughter, and a person with endless, tedious responsibilities." "The way he handled it actually made me feel much closer to him," she said, "and much more committed to him in the long run." In her work with heterosexual couples, Marie Thouin, PhD, a researcher and relationship coach specializing in consensual non-monogamy, has

observed that women are often the ones who first raise the possibility of opening a relationship for this very reason. "Women tend to need greater novelty than men to maintain sexual arousal," she said, something that can be harder to sustain within the predictability of long-term partnership. Thouin isn't the only one noticing this trend. The psychotherapist Esther Perel has made a similar argument in recent interviews. "Women get bored with monogamy much sooner than men," Perel said in a conversation with Lewis Howes. She challenges the assumption that women don't care about sex, arguing instead that "women care less about the sex they can have in their committed relationships, which is often not interesting enough for them". This pattern appears most often among women who are financially independent and socially embedded in environments where non-monogamy is visible – where the idea feels imaginable, if not entirely stable. But desire is only one part of the equation. In theory, open marriage is an equal opportunity endeavor: two people, each permitted to pursue novelty beyond the bounds of the relationship. In practice, they enter a marketplace that is already uneven. On

most dating apps – whether for monogamy or non-monogamy – men significantly outnumber women. The imbalance shows up quickly: women are approached by men more often than men are. Nina, 35, an artist who lives in New York with her husband, described the difference as immediate once they moved from more casual encounters to app-based dating. "On an app like Feeld, a woman is getting hundreds of likes a second," she said. "It's a numbers game." But she was quick to qualify the abundance. Most of that attention didn't translate into actual dates. "There's a very tiny percentage of these people you would ever be interested in meeting," she said. Still, the asymmetry was clear. "I think I certainly found it easier," she said. For Nina, the difference was not only logistical, but psychological. "It feels like I'm operating from a space of plenty," she said, "and he's operating from a space of scarcity." Lucy describes it simply: "It's just ... easier" – for women to meet people, get dates, keep momentum. Oliver does not disagree. "There are periods where it was just quiet," he said. "Like, nothing really happening." While Lucy's options multiplied early on, his often stalled. One married man I spoke to described the experience of putting "open" in his profile as immediately disqualifying. "It reads like a red flag," he said. "Like you're either lying, or you're going to be complicated in a way women don't want." Another was more blunt. "Women have options," he said. "Men have to justify themselves." Nina described the difference as carrying through even once a date is secured. "It's a fairly safe assumption that [sex] is on the table," she said of her own experiences. "If I'm feeling good, cool – let's go." For her husband, she noted, the expectation is less automatic. "As a man, you just can't assume that sex is on the table," she said. "There's more foundation that has to be built." Thouin sees this pattern frequently. "There's often a supply-and-demand imbalance," she said. "Women tend to have an easier time finding partners." Over time, that disparity can leave men feeling discouraged,

leading to "competition, envy and even resentment". Heidi Savell, a sex and relationship therapist, said this is often where asymmetry becomes work. When one partner is struggling – finding fewer dates, feeling more jealousy or carrying more of the logistical burden – the other can end up absorbing the fallout. "The partner who is having an easier time may feel like their ability to date is tied to whether or not the other person has any luck," she said. In heterosexual couples, she sees this dynamic take on a familiar shape. Women, in particular, often become responsible for smoothing things out: slowing their own experiences, offering reassurance and even helping their partner find connections. Cecilia saw this dynamic in her own relationship, though not always in the way she expected. "There were definitely moments where I was like, 'Oh – this is very different for me than it is for him,'" she said. She hesitated, searching for the right phrasing. "I think as a woman, you're just ... received differently." Among the married men and women I spoke with, the idea of a man alone at a bar claiming to be in an open marriage seemed, almost universally, cringe. "A man saying he's in an open marriage can just feel kind of ... "The attention can be flattering and energizing for women who are consumed by the roles of good wife, attentive mother and devoted daughter. Savell described this as one of the most common fault lines in open relationships. "Asymmetry is inevitable," she said. "One person is going to have an easier time getting dates." Women, she noted, often find themselves managing not only their own relationships, but their partner's response to the imbalance – offering reassurance, downplaying experiences and softening the asymmetry. "You don't want to make your partner feel bad," Cecilia said, echoing Savell's sentiment. "So, you're holding both things at once." What she describes is not simply empathy, but a kind of redistribution. The imbalance that begins in the dating market does not remain external. It becomes emotional.

A roadblock was generated by Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli’s visit to this Bengaluru restaurant

Mumbai: A peaceful outing in Bengaluru was once completely chaotic due to the star power of actor Anushka Sharma and cricketer Virat Kohli. When the famous couple visited a well-known restaurant in the city, the audience went crazy.As soon as word of their arrival spread, supporters flocked to the venue in big numbers, creating a significant obstacle in the region, according to a recent interview. The situation got so bad that the local police later got in touch with the restaurant and requested that the management notify the authorities before any high-profile celebrities were scheduled to attend. In an interview, Ganesh Poojari, the director of Central Tiffin Room, a well-known restaurant in Bengaluru, remembered the chaotic event that occurred during Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli’s visit.During the conversation, Ganesh recalled that three days prior to Virat and Anushka’s visit, he had received a call about it. At first, he disregarded it as “fake” and did not take it seriously. He dismissed multiple calls from their “local reference who manages VIP movement” as “hype” prior to their visit.

He received a second call a few hours prior to the visit, and minutes before they arrived, he received a fi-



nal confirmation. ”I received a final call stating that they had arrived in two automobiles and are actually here at the corner. After that, two automobiles pulled up outside the entryway, and I continued to believe it was unreal. We put them at ease. They had families with them. She couldn’t remember the previous instance. “I have come with my family and husband,” she stated, adding that it was a long time ago. We’ve arrived, but we don’t have time. Ganesh remarked, “We had to make time because we had been craving for so long, and we just came here.” Anushka was “very good to talk to,” he added, recalling

that the entire floor had been emptied for their visit. while asked how she found out about the restaurant at the time, Anushka said that she had been there while she was a college student. Ganesh further disclosed that while Virat and Anushka were leaving, the visit caused severe traffic jams and mayhem outside the eatery.People were frantically waiting for the pair to leave the restaurant, and the entire road was stopped at that point, making it impossible for any cars to pass. They couldn’t even enter the car when we unlocked the doors,” he remarked. Ganesh says that after the visit, the local police station called

the restaurant and asked to be notified if a well-known celebrity was scheduled to visit. In 2023, Anushka and Virat went to CTR. When Anushka and Virat first met on the sets of a commercial they were filming together in 2013, they started dating. The pair married in December 2017 in Italy after dating for over four years. In January 2021, Anushka gave birth to their first child, a daughter named Vamika. Akaay, their son, was born on February 15, 2024. They strictly forbid taking pictures of their children and are quite discreet about their personal lives. After Akaay, their second kid, was born, there are rumors that they moved their headquarters to London. However, the rumored relocation has not been officially confirmed.Anushka has been absent from the film industry for a while. Aanand L. Rai’s film Zero, which debuted on cinemas in 2018, was her most recent full-length production. The movie, which starred Anushka, Katrina Kaif, and Shah Rukh Khan, did not do well at the box office. Following that, she briefly appeared in the song Ghodey Pe Sawaar from her production Qala. Her film Chakda ‘Xpress, a biography of former cricketer Jhulan Goswami, has not yet been released. Filming concluded in 2022.

Amidst box office success, Bhooth Bangla producers respond to vendors’ claims of unpaid dues



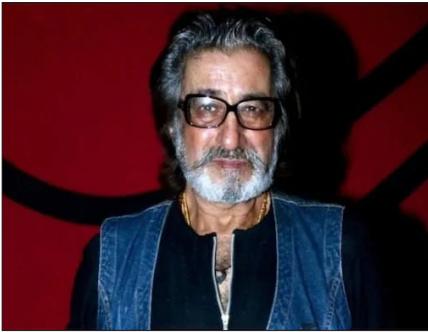
Mumbai: The horror-comedy Bhooth Bangla, starring Akshay Kumar and Priyadarshan, is still doing well at the box office and receiving favorable reviews, but it was recently embroiled in controversy. Despite the movie’s popularity, a number of vendors said their payments were still outstanding. The producers have now spoken out in response to the accusations to make their position clear. Despite the movie’s popularity in theaters, a number of merchants connected to it have claimed that their payments are still outstanding, according to a Mid-Day story.

One vendor stated, “Payments are getting stuck for months,” in the report, claiming that the manufacturers owe him over ₹30 lakh in fees. It gets harder to get the money out when the movie is released. The 90-day invoice clearance period is no longer applicable. Another participant stated that he has been waiting for their ₹18 lakh fee for months. According to the article, producer Alok Kumar Chaubey and Sanjay Gupta received a legal letter from writer Pranjal Kriplani accusing them of not paying him ₹50,000.The film’s producers have finally addressed the accusations and

vehemently denied any misconduct. The movie’s sponsor, Balaji Motion Pictures, declared that it has properly cleared and met all of its contractual payment commitments.In a statement to Mid-Day, the production business said, “Balaji Telefilms Limited has fulfilled all its contractual payment obligations in relation to various projects undertaken by the company.” Bhooth Bangla, directed by Priyadarshan, is the director’s fifth Hindi film. Additionally, it’s his first time working with Akshay Kumar in 14 years.

The protagonists of the horror-comedy are London-based Arjun (Akshay) and his sister Mithila, who unintentionally inherit a palace and a fortune from their grandfather. In order to get the palace ready for his sister’s wedding, Arjun travels to Mangalpur, India. But the community is afflicted by a terrifying legend: brides are kidnapped by an enigmatic figure known as Vadhusur, therefore no wedding is ever consummated. The story’s core is what happens next, which combines supernatural and humorous themes.

In response to death rumors, Shakti Kapoor considers taking legal action



Mumbai: A stunning death hoax recently targeted veteran Bollywood actor Shakti Kapoor after false rumors about his passing spread on social media, frightening followers. In response to the false information, the actor vehemently denied the rumors and reassured everyone that he is “healthy and happy.”Fans were recently greatly alarmed by a flurry of rumors that the renowned actor had died, according to multiple social media posts. The actor himself intervened to clarify the air and correct the record as the false information quickly spread online. Shakti addressed his fans and followers directly in a video posted on Instagram on Thursday, refuting the rumors.”Hello to all. All of the reports about my death is false. I’m content and in good health. In the video, Shakti appeared cool and collected as he added, “Please ignore it.” Shakti was seen sporting a purple vest in the video.Shakti Kapoor stated that he intends to take legal action against individuals respon-

sible for spreading the false death rumors while also reassuring supporters that he is completely safe and in good health. ”I am going to do a cyber complaint about it because this is not good,” the 73-year-old actor continued.Following the release of the video, a number of social media users expressed their delight that the veteran actor is safe and well while vehemently denouncing those who were circulating false death rumors about him.”Seriously, why do fans want you to die?” wrote one fan. By the way, you are one of Bollywood’s greatest comedians. Shakti, more power to you, legend.”

The tiger is still alive. Another wrote, “Long live.” “You remain alwayz quite happy & healthy;” a social media user commented. Over the course of his four-decade career, Shakti Kapoor, who is well-known for his comedic and villainous roles, has appeared in almost 700 Bollywood films. Raja Babu, Baap Numbri Beta Dus Numbri, Andaz Apna Apna, Chaal-Baaz, Hungama, Hulchul, Chup Chup Ke, Malamaal Weekly, and Bhagam Bhag are just a few of his well-known creations. Siddhanth Kapoor and Shraddha Kapoor, his two children, are both actors. After trying his hand at Bollywood, Siddhanth Kapoor became a DJ, while Shraddha Kapoor is now occupied with her film endeavors. Her most recent appearance was in Stree 2 (2024), which brought her back together with Pankaj Tripathi, Rajkumar Rao, Abhishek Banerjee, and Aparshakti Khurana.

Palak Tiwari Discusses Growing Up Without Father

Mumbai: Palak Tiwari, the daughter of well-known television performer Shweta Tiwari and her ex-husband Raja Chaudhary, recently stated that she did not experience the “absence” of a father figure during her childhood. After their split, her mother raised her by herself. Palak never experienced loneliness thanks to her mother, grandma, and a solid family support network.I was never very concerned by it. Like a sponge, a child reflects what their parents model for them. The actor said to Yuva, “It never felt like something was missing.”It was a full house with my mom, my nani, and my relatives. “Never in my life have I felt deprived of anything,” she continued.Palak added that her mother fiercely defends her. ”My mother never permitted anyone to treat me disrespectfully. I don’t have a dad at home, someone once said. My mother went to his house after I told her, saying, “She does have a family... it’s her nani, it’s me... we

are her family.””When I was young, my mom was shooting, and television hours are very gruelling,” Palak continued, discussing her upbringing under her grandmother’s tutelage. I was raised entirely by my nani, who was at home most of the time. I learned everything from my nani.

She and I are really similar.In 2007, Shweta filed for divorce due to Raja’s alcoholism and domestic abuse. Shweta Tiwari gave an explanation in an interview as to why it took her nine years to end her difficult marriage. Shweta responded, “In my entire family, nobody had ever had a love marriage—I had,” when asked what had initially prevented her from ending the problematic relationship. Although I was married to someone from a different caste, there were caste problems in our household as well.People had already begun criticizing my marriage and making fun of my mother.

After returning to work following Rishi Kapoor’s passing, Neetu Kapoor responds to terrible trolling



Mumbai: Actor Neetu Kapoor threw herself into her career following the loss of her husband, Rishi Kapoor, and returned to the screen with JugJugg Jeeyo after a nine-year hiatus. However, trolls questioned how she could return to work so soon after her loss, and her return to the spotlight was greeted with scathing criticism. Neetu has now spoken out about the backlash, describing the trolling as “horrible” and “hurtful.”In the most recent episode of Soha Ali Khan’s YouTube series, All About Her, Neetu talk-

ed about the trolling she experienced after choosing to go back to work. During the episode, Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, Neetu’s daughter, joined her. ”I recently began working.” I played JugJugg Jeeyo after he passed away. To regain my confidence, I simply went to work. People used to remark things like “ohh he passed away, and she jumped into work,” which affected me greatly because I was in such a terrible position. That was awful. However, they are unaware of my motivation. I must tell you what transpired with me. I started drinking after he died because I was unable to sleep for a month or two. Neetu remarked, “I used to start drinking and then I could not sleep without drinking.” Neetu, who has always been concerned about her health, acknowledged that she didn’t like this version of herself.

“I had to go to sleep and numb my head.” I didn’t like who I was. I asked for assistance over the phone with my doctor.She then put me in contact with a gynecologist who used to visit my home at around 11 p.m. to give me an injection and put me to sleep. She would stay there till I couldn’t sleep. She used to instruct my employees to monitor me. For ten days,

this was the case. I called her on the eleventh or twelfth day and said, “I am good and I can move on.” However, I had to leave. The actor continued, “I spoke with Karan (Karan Johar), and he begged me to return to work. On January 22, 1980, Rishi and Neetu tied the knot. Actor Ranbir Kapoor and Riddhima Kapoor Sahni are their two children. The duo inspired generations with their on-screen and off-screen romance in a number of successful films from the 1970s and 1980s, including Amar Akbar Anthony, Khel Khel Mein, Rafoo Chakkar, Kabhi Kabhie, Besharam, and many more. In 2018, Rishi Kapoor received a leukemia diagnosis. He spent almost a year traveling to New York for treatment after receiving his diagnosis. 2019 saw him return to India, where he started working again and made appearances in a few projects. But in early 2020, his health deteriorated once more, and he was admitted to a hospital in Mumbai. At the age of 67, Rishi Kapoor lost his fight with cancer on April 30, 2020. Sharmaji Namkeen (2022), which was released posthumously, was Rishi’s last motion picture. Paresh Rawal filled in for him as he was unable to finish filming.

According to her co-star Kriti Sanon from Cocktail 2, Rashmika Mandanna has no insecurities

Mumbai: Bollywood diva Kriti Sanon is getting ready for the release of her next movie, Cocktail 2, which also stars Shahid Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna. Kriti has previously collaborated with Shahid on Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya, but this is her first time working with Rashmika.

Kriti recently talked about her experience working with the Pushpa actor at The Femina Beauty Awards, and she only had good things to say about her co-star. Kriti characterized Rashmika as kind and sincere. “She’s just a very genuine person, kind, lovely, and warm.” Kriti stated, sharing her experience from the Cocktail 2 sets.

There is no insecurity. I think I’m a vibe person, and it’s just goodness. I am drawn to an aura if I sense optimism. She is simply wonderful, and I’ve had a great time with her. I adore her. Kriti also



discussed the similarities between Cocktail 2 and the 2012 original, starring Diana Penty, Deepika Padukone, and Saif Ali Khan. Over time, the first part—especially its music, characters, and contemporary interpersonal drama—became a cult favorite. Kriti noted, though, that the upcoming movie is a franchise picture with an entirely distinct plot and cast of characters rather than a direct sequel. ”I’m sure a comparison is going to happen, but the good part is that this is not a sequel; it’s a franchise,” she stated in

reference to the comparisons. The characters are distinct, and it’s more of a mood franchise.”Rashmika’s marriage to actor Vijay Deverakonda in February of this year marked the beginning of a new chapter in her personal life. Even though only close relatives and friends attended the intimate wedding, the couple later had a lavish reception in Hyderabad, where Kriti and other famous people from the film business were present. In terms of her career, Rashmika has been doing well in Bollywood. She starred in movies

like Chhaava, Sikandar, and Thamma after making her Hindi film debut opposite Ranbir Kapoor in Animal. Her fifth Bollywood movie is Cocktail 2. Cocktail 2, which is directed by Homi Adajania, will hit theaters on June 19. Fans are already curious about Cocktail 2 after a number of photos and videos from the shoot appeared online.

Many people conjectured that Shahid Kapoor, Kriti Sanon, and Rashmika Mandanna will form a romantic triangle in the movie. When Kriti went to Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda’s wedding celebration in Hyderabad, director Homi Adajania responded to the rumors in a lighthearted manner. “Congrats, guys,” Homi joked while posting a photo from the occasion on Instagram Stories. Could you please keep out of this, Kriti Sanon? “Never... love them,” Kriti retorted.

Gauri Khan and Shah Rukh Khan never interfere with a project

Mumbai: Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan is all ready to make a comeback to the big screen with the upcoming crime drama Kartavya on Netflix. The film’s powerful teaser, which teased a grim world full of corruption, moral dilemma, and personal grief, was released on the site on Wednesday. Rasika Dugal, Sanjay Mishra, Zakir Hussain, Manish Chaudhari, and Saurabh Dwivedi are among the film’s strong ensemble cast members in addition to Saif. Red Chillies Entertainment, the company of Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan, is supporting the movie. During the trailer launch event for “Kartavya,” producer Ashish Singh highlighted the involvement of Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan in the filmmaking process. He noted that while they provide significant input and have final approval on the film, directors are granted the flexibility to shape their vision. Singh emphasized Shah Rukh’s marketing acumen, which becomes pivotal once the film is complete, ensuring optimal audience positioning without impairing the creative process.



Hrithik Roshan, 52, performs the Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai hookstep at a wedding to evoke nostalgia

Mumbai: Fans are often impressed by Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan’s dancing skills. The actor has performed a number of famous hook steps over the years, the most notable of which is from his first movie, Kaho Naa. Hai Pyaar. Fans gushed about Hrithik’s “unbeatable energy” after seeing him perform to the movie’s title track at a wedding in a recent video that went viral. Hrithik is seen dancing energetically to the Kaho Naa in



the video while wearing a beige kurta-pyjama. The title song of Pyaar Hai. Hrithik was accompanied by a sizable crowd at the event, which was held in Suryagarh, and they mirrored his moves to the famous 2000 song. Fans couldn’t stop complimenting his energy and dancing skills. Alongside Ameesha Patel, Hrithik made his big Bollywood debut as a lead actor in Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai. Under Rakesh Roshan’s direction, the musical love dra-

ma became an overnight sensation and a huge box office hit. Anupam Kher, Dalia Tahil, Mohnish Bahl, Ashish Vidyarthi, and Satish Shah all played significant parts in the movie. The title song is still a favorite among fans, and it went on to become the highest-grossing Bollywood movie of that year. Krishi 4 will mark Hrithik’s directorial debut. The actor acknowledged that he is anxious about taking on the role of director during a re-

cent meet-and-greet with fans in the US. “I feel like I’m back in kindergarten,” he remarked. I feel like I have to start over and grow up in a whole different way. Uncertainties, searching, and seeking will present a new challenge. There will undoubtedly be times when I think I’ve made the worst choice ever. And I shall remember all of you and the affection during my times of solitude and dread. I therefore require your blessings.

Hardik Pandya joins the Mumbai Indians squad prior to the RCB match



New Delhi: After missing the previous game owing to a back spasm, captain and star all-rounder Hardik Pandya has joined the Mumbai Indians (MI) squad in Raipur ahead of their pivotal IPL 2026 encounter against the Royal Challengers Bengaluru. The team posted a picture of their captain, Hardik, on their Instagram site, confirming the development. Hardik was replaced as team captain by Suryakumar Yadav during MI's previous IPL 2026 match against the Lucknow Super Giants. Ryan Rickelton addressed worries on Hardik's injury during the post-match news conference following Mumbai's crushing victory over LSG. I have no idea when he is anticipated to return. I'm not sure how severe his back spasms are, but I learned about them this afternoon. I don't want to refer to it as an injury because I don't know how severe it is or how he feels. But when we travel to Raipur this week, I'm confident he'll be back with the group," Rickelton remarked. Pandya is anticipated to exercise with the team in the nets on Friday as part of a comprehensive training session at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Cricket Stadium. In a thrilling match on Sunday night, the five-time champions will visit the reigning champs, RCB. The Mumbai Indians are currently sitting in ninth place on the points table with seven losses and three wins. To maintain their modest chances of making the playoffs, they must win each of their remaining games. In the meantime, the Bengaluru-based team dropped to third place after losing their fourth game of the competition to LSG in Lucknow.

In a seven-page letter, the BCCI clamps down on scandals and is prepared to suspend IPL players

New Delhi: Devajit Saikia, the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), has formally warned all ten IPL teams about possible "honey-trap" issues during the 2026 season. In order to prevent major accusations, such as sexual misbehavior, against T20 league players or officials, the board has taken a more stringent position. The BCCI announced in a message to the teams that players' hotel rooms will be subject to surprise inspections, and any infractions will be dealt with harshly. "The BCCI draws the attention of all franchises to the well-documented risks of targeted compromise and honey-trapping that pervade high-profile sporting environments," Saikia said the teams in the statement. It is impossible to rule out the likelihood that instances will result in significant legal accusations, particularly those under relevant statutes on sexual misconduct. In a seven-page directive released on Thursday, Saikia said that IPL franchise management must always be watchful and proactive in reducing such risks. Members of the IPL Operations team and the BCCI have formed a task force. This group will be in charge of checking hotel rooms. Strong disciplinary action will be taken in any instance of unauthorized access, and possible penalties have already been specified. Periodically, the BCCI/IPL Operations Team may evaluate



compliance with the guidelines outlined in this advise. All authorized visitor visits and hotel movements must be documented by team management, the message went on. "The IPL Operations Team or the appropriate IPL Venue Team must be notified as soon as possible of any violation of the aforementioned directions. The BCCI has faith that every IPL team would take this advice seriously and take all required actions to protect the Indian Premier League's integrity and reputation. Saikia pointed out that regardless of their connection to the player or official, strangers would not be permitted to enter the rooms of IPL team members without the team manager's prior knowledge and consent. All players and support staff are required to notify and receive clearance from the Security Liaison Officer (SLO) and/or Team Integrity Officer

(TIO) before leaving the team hotel at any time. Any planned outings, whether for personal or recreational purposes, must also be disclosed to the Team Manager and the SLO. Guidelines articulated by Saikia emphasize that breaches of these directives will be met with serious disciplinary actions, potentially involving proceedings under IPL Regulations, BCCI Rules & Regulations, and other relevant statutes. The BCCI and IPL Governing Council may impose penalties at their discretion, which could range from show-cause notices to financial fines, suspensions, or disqualifications. Compliance is strongly advised, and periodic audits may be conducted to ensure adherence to these directives. Additionally, IPL franchise owners are cautioned against contacting players or managers in the dugout during matches.

Gujarat AAP's prohibited social media accounts were brought to the attention of the Supreme Court

New Delhi, May 08: In response to a lawsuit by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) against government orders last month that suspended its Gujarat unit's Instagram and Facebook accounts one day prior to local body elections, the Supreme Court on Friday requested answers from the Center and the Gujarat government. The petition requested that the top court establish guidelines and procedural safeguards to govern the exercise of powers to block or suspend official social media accounts of registered political parties. It also asked the court to request records in order to determine the reason behind the suspension of the social media handles on April 25. According to



counsel Siddhant Sharma's argument, this was necessary to guarantee the protection of the fundamental right to expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution, which restricts this freedom on certain reasons under Article 19(2). A bench of justices PS Narasimha and Alok Aradhie referred the case to be attached to a similar matter that was pending before a court led by Chief

Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant. They also sent notices to the central and state governments. The bench declared, "We will issue notice and tag it with that matter," notwithstanding Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's insistence that the government be given a copy of the plea rather than notice. Speaking on behalf of the AAP, senior counsel Shadan Farasat stated that the petition presents a

Dumped for Vijay, the DMK no longer wants to sit with the Congress in the Lok Sabha

New Delhi, May 08: Kanimozhi has written to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, ending the DMK's partnership with the Congress official, asking that the party's MPs be seated differently from where they are now next to their former ally.

With 22 MPs, the DMK is the fourth-largest member of the Opposition INDIA alliance, which has been under pressure for a while and seems to have reached a breaking point with the Congress, which ran in the Tamil Nadu elections as part of a coalition led by the DMK, endorsing Vijay's TVK to form a government.

In a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Kanimozhi emphasized "changed political circumstances" and said that the collaboration with the Congress was over. "I am writing to humbly ask that the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) members of parliament be seated differently in the Lok Sabha. The DMK MP from Thoothukudi stated, "It might not be right for our Members to continue occupying the current sitting arrangement alongside them in the House given the changed political realities and the dissolution of our coalition with the Indian National Congress. In order for the Hon'ble Members of the DMK Parliamentary Party to properly



carry out their duties in the August House, I respectfully ask your excellent office to make the appropriate arrangements for their separate seats. I will be appreciative of your thoughtfulness in this matter," she continued. In 2016, the DMK and Congress, who had been allies for decades despite occasional setbacks, reunited.

A party senior referred to the ally as a "backstabber" in an interview with NDTV on Wednesday, demonstrating the DMK's sense of betrayal by the Congress. Additionally, DMK spokesperson Saravanan Annadurai asserted that the Congress's five-seat victory was solely due to its membership in a coalition headed by the party. If not, they would have failed the most recent

surveys," he claimed. The Congress has said that it is backing the TVK in order to uphold the Tamil Nadu people's mandate, arguing that this is the "responsible" course of action. On a day when another important constituency, the Samajwadi Party, also appeared to be mocking the Congress for attempting to assist Vijay, whose TVK won 108 seats in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, in reaching the majority mark of 118 at the expense of the DMK, Kanimozhi's letter brought the simmering dissatisfaction within the opposition bloc to the fore. Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav posted pictures of himself with Trinamool Congress Chairperson Mamata Banerjee and DMK Chairman MK Stalin, both

of whom lost state Assembly elections.

He stated in Hindi, "We don't abandon people in times of difficulty." In an alliance with the Congress, the Samajwadi Party ran in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh. They surprised the BJP by gaining 37 of 80 seats, making them the second-largest member of the INDIA bloc. The Congress and the Trinamool Congress ran against each other in the West Bengal elections, despite their seeming cooperation at the national level.

Tensions between the Congress and the Trinamool were evident during the Bengal election campaign, and Banerjee had also been competing for leadership of the INDIA coalition.

How Virat Kohli's Dismissal for Duck Against LSG Was Caused by His Own Advice



New Delhi: Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) remained in contention for the IPL 2026 playoffs with a narrow nine-run win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in a rain-affected match. Despite multiple rain delays reducing the game to 19 overs, LSG,

powered by Mitchell Marsh's explosive 111 off 56 balls, posted a total of 209 runs, which was adjusted to 213 due to rain. Marsh showcased a dominant performance, including a rapid fifty in just 20 balls, before LSG's innings was interrupted by rain.

In response, LSG's bowlers excelled, particularly Prince Yadav, who took 3 wickets for 33 runs. He dismissed both Virat Kohli, who was bowled for a duck, and key players Jitesh Sharma and Rajat Patidar, contributing to RCB's collapse during crucial moments of their innings. RCB's illustrious recovery hinged on Padikkal (34) and Patidar (61), who added a significant 95-run partnership. However, LSG's disciplined bowling, especially in the latter overs, secured the victory. Notably, Tim David and others attempted a final charge, but LSG's Digvesh successfully defended 20 runs in the final over. With this win, LSG not only ended their six-match losing streak but also marked their first victory at home this season.

According to PM Modi, the Somnath temple represents Bharat's unwavering spirit



New Delhi, May 08: Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the significance of the Somnath Temple, emphasizing its role as a unifying symbol for Bharat on the occasion of its 75th anniversary of its reopening. He articulated that the spirit of unity transcends geographical divisions and is more essential in a world often marked by discord. The struggles and sacrifices of those who defended and rebuilt the temple, notably in Gujarat, remain a lasting legacy. Modi announced plans for special pujas at Somnath over the next thousand days as a tribute to the courage displayed throughout his

tory. He encouraged Indians to visit Somnath, suggesting that standing on its shores would evoke a profound sense of civilizational continuity and devotion. He highlighted that despite historical challenges and invasions, the Indian culture has persevered, embodying an "unconquerable spirit" that will leave an indelible mark on those who visit. The Prime Minister recounted personal milestones, including his visit in 2026 and the historical context of the temple's restoration, which he framed as a journey from destruction (Vidhvans) to renewal (Srijan). He shared reflections on past leaders like Sardar Patel, who envisioned the

reconstruction of the Somnath Temple and inspired a national movement of participation in its restoration. Modi honored notable figures from Indian history, including those who contributed to the temple's legacy, underscoring its role as a center of philosophy and worship. He reflected on the foundations of the temple, established by various rulers and cultural figures, and conveyed messages of resilience against tyranny and adversity. The enduring nature of the Somnath Temple and its historical significance were highlighted as a declaration that faith and love cannot be extinguished. In conclusion, Modi echoed sentiments from President Dr. Rajendra Prasad's remarks at the temple's inauguration, advocating for ongoing restoration and prosperity for the people, in line with Sardar Patel's vision. The speech encapsulated a deep reverence for India's past and a call to unite in celebrating and preserving its historical and cultural heritage.

Four family members in Mumbai died from rat poison rather than watermelon

New Delhi, May 08: Mumbai police are investigating the deaths as a potential homicide or suicide pact ten days after a couple and their two teenage daughters died within hours of one other after being severely unwell after consuming watermelon at their Pydhonie house. The state-run Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) reported to the investigators on Thursday that samples of the viscera from all four of the Dokadia family's deceased members had evidence of zinc phosphide, a very toxic rodenticide. The watermelon samples retrieved from the Dokadias' home also contained traces of zinc phosphide, which was an important discovery because all four family members had consumed the fruit after supper with their relatives. Abdullah Dokadia, 40, who owned a mobile phone company in Andheri, his wife Nasreen, 35, and their daughters Ayesha, 16, and Zainab, 13, reported experiencing nausea, vomiting, and dyspnea within hours. On the intervening night of April 25 and 26, they were sent to the hospital but passed away one after the other. The final person to pass away was Abdullah Dokadia, who had documented the evening's events with the JJ Marg police, who had been called to the hospital to file a medico-legal case. According to the FSL study, rodenticide traces were discovered in the deceased's liver, kidneys, and spleen as well as in the stomach contents, bile, and abdominal fat samples removed from the bodies, according to Deputy Commissioner of Police Pravin Mumde. Mumde stated that while samples of every other food item consumed at supper tested negative for the rodenticide, samples of the watermelon consumed by the dead also tested positive for zinc phosphide. "After consulting with forensic doctors, the report will be thoroughly examined and an additional investigation will be carried out," he stated. After authorities struggled to explain how four seemingly healthy members of a family could suddenly become ill and die within hours of one another, the FSL report finally provided direction for the inquiry. That evening, the Dokadias enjoyed dinner at their house with their extended family, but none of their relatives complained of any pain following the meal. It is a poisoning case, but we are unsure if the poison was intentionally planted or if it was part of a suicide pact. An investigating officer with the JJ Marg police stated, "That will be determined by further inquiries." Eleven food items, including the chicken biryani that everyone had for dinner that night, were sampled by the authorities from their residence. They also collected drinking water, other foodstuffs from their kitchen, and samples of the watermelon that the four Dokadias had consumed. The Food and Drug Administration said earlier this week that the other foods taken from the Dokadias' kitchen were free of adulteration. One of their neighbors, Mehmood Qureshi, 59, stated that their derelict house had long suffered from unsanitary conditions and was infested with vermin that entered through the open sewage that ran alongside the building. "We looked for signs of suicide thoughts on the family members' cell phones, but we didn't find anything alarming. Additionally, the phones were forwarded to FSL for additional examination in order to find any deleted communications. The police officer stated, "No wrapper of any rat poison has been found in their home," which prompted detectives to look into a potential homicide case.

Delhi High Court will issue directives to remove Shashi Tharoor's AI videos



New Delhi, May 08: On Friday, the Delhi High Court said that it would issue orders for the prompt removal of deepfake films made with artificial intelligence (AI) techniques that misrepresented Congress MP Shashi Tharoor as saying politically sensitive things. In order to safeguard Tharoor's personality rights, a bench of justice named Mini Pushkarna further stated that she will make orders prohibiting entities from abusing his persona. Orders will be fulfilled. Justice Pushkarna informed Amit Sibal, Tharoor's attorney, that it would be uploaded. During the hearing of Tharoor's lawsuit, which sought to preserve his personality rights by preventing entities from abusing his character without his permission, the court issued the directive. This came after Amit Sibal, Tharoor's attorney, claimed that his client's name was being exploited to produce deepfake videos with politically sensitive statements, damaging his reputation. He also told the court that even while many fact-checks had shown the videos to be fraudulent, their ongoing dissemination on social media could mislead people into thinking they were real and perhaps allow foreign agencies to exploit them. Sibal further stated that although the videos had been removed after complaints were filed with the Delhi DCP and the Center, they had reappeared under new URLs and were once more available on websites like Facebook, Instagram, and X. In order to prevent the entities from abusing his client's personal characteristics, he petitioned the court to issue an order for the removal of the films. According to Meta's attorney, the movies on its platform were removed earlier this morning, rendering the links unusable.

Sunil Gavaskar Contacts Sourav Ganguly To Propose A Major Cricket Rule Change

New Delhi: India batting great Sunil Gavaskar has called on former India captain Sourav Ganguly to push for a major rule change in cricket, urging the ICC to give fast bowlers more leeway in the interpretation of wide bouncers. Ganguly, who currently chairs the ICC Men’s Cricket Committee, was specifically urged by Gavaskar to raise the matter during the panel’s next meeting as concerns continue to grow over the balance between bat and ball in modern cricket.

Writing in his column for Sportstar, Gavaskar said bowlers are increasingly being “short-changed” in an era dominated by batters, pointing to shorter boundaries, powerful bats and stricter fielding rules that have heavily tilted the game in favour of batting units, particularly in T20 cricket. “There’s the ‘wide ball’ call for a bouncer going barely over the batter’s head. This is like asking a fast bowler to bowl with one hand tied behind his back.



C’mon, give him some leeway. After all, with boundary lengths being shortened even though there’s enough space to push them back, the bowlers are being short-changed, and now, with this interpretation where the ball is called a wide if it goes above the batter’s head in his normal stance, the quickies are being handicapped even more,” Gavaskar wrote. The former India captain suggested that the ICC tweak the existing rule to allow pacers a margin of around one foot above the batter’s head before a delivery is deemed a wide. “If that rule can be tweaked to allow the quick a margin

of one foot, approximately the length of the bat handle, above the head while in his batting stance, that would give the fast bowler some relief and encouragement to fire in some more,” he added. Gavaskar also recalled his tenure as chairman of the ICC Cricket Committee, when members agreed to re-introduce the bouncer in limited-overs cricket in a bid to restore some balance to the contest. When I took over as Chairman of the ICC Cricket Committee, the other members joined me in bringing the bouncer back in the format, albeit one per over per batsman.

Valverde Hospitalized After Training Ground Fight With Teammate Aurélien Tchouaméni

Real Madrid Disciplines Teammates After Violent Clash

New Delhi: Who doesn’t love a bit of football off-the-field drama? Well, maybe if you’re Real Madrid fan, then probably your answer will be no as the club has seen one of the most turbulent days in their recent history. This has culminated in Aurelien Tchouameni and Fede Valverde coming to blows after training, and the latter being taken to the hospital for stitches. It has been a season of disappointment for Los Blancos by their lofty standards as they look set for a second consecutive season without a trophy. Madrid currently 11 points behind arch-rivals FC Barcelona, who they will face in the El Clasico on Sunday.

They were eliminated in the quarterfinals of the Champions League by Bayern Munich and had been knocked out early in the Copa del Rey. This has led to rumours of tensions within the squad, and it all came to a head on Thursday. The initial altercation between Tchouameni and Valverde happened on



Wednesday, according to the Athletic. The midfield duo had a bust-up at the end of training, and it carried on inside the dressing room. On Thursday, multiple sources revealed to the Athletic that a strong tackle from Valverde instigated the bust-up with Tchouameni. After the training was done, Valverde confronted the French midfielder and what started as a verbal dispute quickly became a physical fight.

Amid the altercation, Valverde lost his balance and struck his head

against a table in the dressing room. He was taken to the hospital for precautionary tests and has since been discharged. Soon after the dust settled, Real Madrid issued a statement saying that they have opened disciplinary proceedings against Valverde and Tchouameni. “Real Madrid CF announces that, following the events that took place this morning in the first team training session, it has decided to open disciplinary proceedings against our players Federico Valverde and

Aurlien Tchouameni.” “The club will announce the resolutions of both cases in due course, once the corresponding internal procedures have been completed,” read the statement from Real Madrid. They also provided an update on Valverde, saying that the Uruguayan midfielder suffered a traumatic brain injury and will need 10 to 14 days to recover. “Following tests carried out today on our player Fede Valverde by the Real Madrid Medical Services, he has been diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury,” “Valverde is at home in good condition and will have to remain at rest for 10 to 14 days, as indicated by the medical protocols for this diagnosis,” said Real Madrid in the statement. The seriousness of the incident led to an emergency meeting involving senior club officials, with players kept at the training ground for more than an hour. The objective was to prevent tensions from escalating further after the episode left the squad unsettled.

Aditya Tare Urges RCB To Back Suyash Sharma Following Loss Against Lucknow Super Giants

Mumbai: Former Mumbai Indians batter Aditya Tare has called on Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to show faith in leg-spinner Suyash Sharma following their nine-run defeat against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in IPL 2026 on Thursday night. Speaking on Star Sports, Tare said RCB’s bowling balance has been under pressure and stressed the importance of developing a dependable sixth bowling option in the squad. “RCB have always struggled to find a reliable sixth bowler. I believe they need to back Suyash Sharma more.

He must bowl his full four-over quota,” JioStar expert Tare said. While acknowledging the young spinner’s dip in form, Tare



urged the defending champions to continue investing in him rather than looking for short-term alternatives. “Yes, his line and length have drifted, and his form has dipped. But if RCB want to defend their IPL title, they must trust Suyash,” he added. Tare also questioned the team’s current bowling combinations, suggesting that Suyash should be preferred

over other part-time options. “Backing him is a better option than giving Shepherd two overs. Shepherd has not done well with the ball this year,” he said, referring to Romario Shepherd. The former cricketer concluded that consistent backing of young players like Suyash Sharma could be key to RCB’s chances of lifting the IPL trophy again. So, Suyash

Sharma needs more support if RCB are to lift the trophy for the second time,” Tare added. Meanwhile, LSG defeated defending champions RCB by nine runs at Ekana Stadium. The hosts posted 209/3 in 19 overs, powered by a brilliant 111 off 56 balls from Mitchell Marsh and late contributions from Nicholas Pooran and Rishabh Pant.

Chasing 213 under the DLS method, RCB suffered an early collapse with Prince Yadav dismissing Virat Kohli for a two-ball duck. Despite a strong 95-run partnership between Rajat Patidar (61) and Devdutt Padikkal (34), and late resistance from Tim David, Krunal Pandya and Romario Shepherd, RCB finished at 203/6, falling short by nine runs.

Midfield Veteran Lucy Staniforth Announces Her Retirement From Football This Summer

Birmingham: After sixteen years of orchestrating play from the heart of the pitch, Aston Villa and England midfielder Lucy Staniforth has officially announced her retirement. The 33-year-old veteran confirmed on Thursday that she will hang up her boots at the conclusion of the current season, marking the end of a career defined by technical brilliance and elite longevity.

A Villa Mainstay Staniforth arrived at Villa Park in January 2023 following a successful stint at Manchester United. Her impact was immediate; she became the tactical engine of the squad, providing a veteran presence that helped propel the club to new heights. During the latter half of the 2022/23 campaign, her influence was undeniable: 17 Appearances: She became an ever-present figure in the starting XI almost overnight. History-Making Finish: Her leadership steered Villa to their highest-ever finish in the Women’s Super League (WSL). The Scoring Touch: She notched her first goal for the club in a dominant 6–2 victory



over Brighton & Hove Albion, a performance that epitomized her ability to control the tempo of a game.

A Legacy Beyond Birmingham While her time at Villa served as a fitting final chapter, Staniforth’s legacy is woven into the fabric of the English game. A seasoned Lioness, she represented England at the highest levels, including the 2019 FIFA Women’s World Cup. Known

for her vision and set-piece delivery, she played for several of the country’s top tier clubs, including Sunderland, Liverpool, and Birmingham City. As the season draws to a close, the footballing world prepares to say goodbye to a midfielder who combined grit with grace. For Aston Villa, replacing her tactical intelligence will be a tall order, but Staniforth departs with her status as a modern great intact.

Prince Yadav Reveals His Favorite Moment Beyond Taking Virat Kohli’s Wicket Today



New Delhi: When it comes to an international game or a match in the IPL, nothing is sweeter than getting the wicket of Virat Kohli in a must-win clash. Kohli had ensured that RCB got over the line in four chases, scoring 222 runs at an average of 111. But Prince Yadav changed everything with an incredible delivery at the Ekana. The Delhi pacer bowled a beauty to beat Kohli all ends up and send his off-stump for a walk as the RCB star was dismissed for a 2-ball duck. But despite this, Prince was more happy with seeing his team win. Speaking at the press conference after the game, the LSG pacer said that Kohli’s wicket wouldn’t have mattered had they lost the match. “I felt good about Kohli’s wicket, but what makes me happiest is that we won the match. If I had taken the wicket and we still lost, it wouldn’t have felt the same. The best feeling for me is when my team wins,” said Prince. A feature of Prince’s bowling in the IPL this season has been the way he has varied things up in different phases with the ball. With the new ball, 73.8% of his deliveries have consistently hit the good-length or back-of-a-length areas,

the traditional control zones.

In the 2026 IPL season, Virat Kohli transitioned into an Impact Player role for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) primarily to manage a lingering ankle injury. He first utilized this strategic substitution during a home match against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG), where he contributed 49 runs to a successful run-chase of 147. When it comes to the middle overs, the LSG pacer goes for a hard length more often than not. And at the death, he leans more on full length deliveries. But Prince remained coy on the use of variations and more happy about the fact that he was able to get the wickets at the right time to seal LSG’s win. Whether it happens in different ways or one way, as a bowler you do feel good when you take a wicket. But like I said earlier, in that situation we could only win the match by getting that wicket, and that’s exactly what happened. So yes, it feels really good, absolutely,” said Prince.

The LSG pacer finished with figures of three for 33 in his four overs against RCB. Teammate Josh Hazlewood noted that while Kohli’s fitness limited

his ability to field for full matches, his high energy and tactical adaptation remained vital to the team’s performance. Despite being unwell for several days and managing physical soreness, Kohli has maintained a modern T20 approach, keeping his season strike rate competitive while balancing the needs of his recovery. ”question”: “Would you like to know more about Virat Kohli’s recovery from his ankle injury?”, A viral moment occurred after the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) victory over the Gujarat Titans (GT) when Mohammed Siraj surprised his former teammate Virat Kohli with a hug from behind. The interaction, which took place on the field at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on April 24, 2026, quickly gained traction on social media as a “heartwarming” reunion. The exchange captured the enduring bond between the two players, as Kohli turned around to smile and return the embrace. Siraj, who moved to the Gujarat Titans for the 2025 season after a long stint with RCB, shared several lighthearted moments with Kohli. For both teams, the playoff race is still alive only in theory.

The reality is far harsher. Another defeat could leave either side staring at elimination. When Delhi Capitals and Kolkata Knight Riders meet at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Friday, it will be about far more than just two points. It will be about survival.

There is no margin for error left now. One more slip-up could effectively shut the door on the season for either side, and only one team is likely to walk away from Friday’s clash still feeling in control of its playoff destiny.Delhi Capitals are seventh on the table with eight points from 10 matches and must win all four of their remaining games to stay in contention for the playoffs. KKR are only slightly better placed in eighth with seven points from nine matches.

Will Delhi Capitals Gamble On Prithvi Shaw For Their Final IPL Playoff Push?

New Delhi: Delhi Capitals are running out of road. The playoffs are still theoretically within reach, but the margin for error has all but disappeared, and the decisions made in the next few days could define their entire season. Friday’s clash with Kolkata Knight Riders is not quite a must-win. But it is close enough that the distinction barely matters. And in the middle of all this pressure, one question refuses to go away: is now finally the time to hand Prithvi Shaw a game? There is something almost poetic and painful about Shaw’s story. He arrived in senior cricket with everything. The footwork, the instinct, the swagger at the crease that you simply cannot coach.

He looked like the real deal, and for a while, he was. But somewhere along the way, it all got complicated. The discipline questions, the form slumps, the sense that a generational talent was slowly slipping through the cracks. Now, at a stage in his career where every opportunity feels like it could be his last in the IPL, Shaw has not played a single game for Delhi this season. When DC brought him back to where it all started, there was a quiet optimism about it. A second chance at the franchise that first believed in him. So far, that chance has not come. It is completely fair to wonder why Shaw over Abishek



Porel. In DC’s last game against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Porel was the only batsman who showed up. He played with freedom and intent on a day when almost everyone else went through the motions.

He also offers something increasingly valuable in T20 cricket: a right-left combination at the top of the order that keeps the opposition guessing. But the argument for Shaw is less about statistics and more about psychology. When a team is struggling and morale is low, sometimes what you need is not the safest option. You need a spark. Shaw, for all his recent struggles, is a player who genuinely wants to prove people wrong right now. That kind of hunger, that desperation to succeed, can be infectious in a dressing room that badly needs something to rally around.

It is fair to say that Shaw might’ve not shown that hunger to succeed as the many other generational talents we have seen in Indian cricket. But the situation dictates that the current combination is clearly not working. The top order has been the biggest problem, and if Pathum Nissanka makes way, Shaw coming in at the top allows David Miller to slot into the middle order where his big-match experience is worth its weight in gold. The bowling has been decent enough. It is the batting that needs fixing, and it needs fixing now. The math is straightforward even if the execution is anything but. Delhi need to win all their remaining games, win big where possible, and hope results elsewhere break in their favour. That is a tall order when you look at what is coming. After KKR on Fri-

day, DC travel to Dharamsala to face Punjab Kings, before returning home to take on Rajasthan Royals, and then finishing with another trip to face KKR at Eden Gardens. No gimmies. No soft touches. Just four games against sides who all have something to play for. The bowling can hold its own on most days. That side of the team has shown enough quality to keep Delhi competitive. But if the top order keeps misfiring, none of that will matter. Delhi Capitals need a jolt.

Not a restructure, not a philosophical shift, just something different. Something that tells the dressing room that the season is not over yet. Maybe that something is Prithvi Shaw. Maybe it is not. When a team is struggling and morale is low, sometimes what you need is not the safest option. You need a spark. Shaw, for all his recent struggles, is a player who genuinely wants to prove people wrong right now. That kind of hunger, that desperation to succeed, can be infectious in a dressing room that badly needs something to rally around. It is fair to say that Shaw might’ve not shown that hunger to succeed as the many other generational talents we have seen in Indian cricket. But the situation dictates that the current combination is clearly not working.