

ICCW Arunachal Condemns Itanagar Child Abuse Case, Flags Rise In Trafficking

Itanagar, Sept 10: The Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) Arunachal Pradesh State Branch has expressed grave outrage over a recent child abuse incident in Itanagar, issuing a stern public statement condemning the heinous act while raising urgent concerns regarding the troubling rise in child trafficking, illegal domestic employment, and minor exploitation across the capital complex and adjoining districts.

The statement follows the arrest of an accused individual, identified as Biri Tara, by the Itanagar Women Police Station after video clips depicting the physical assault and sexual molestation of a minor surfaced on social media platforms. The ICCW lauded law enforcement agencies for swift action under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), while



urging prosecuting authorities to ensure a time-bound, impartial investigation to secure maximum legal penalty against the perpetrator.

Highlighting a systematic spike in child rights violations, the ICCW noted that child abuse cases in urban centers like Itanagar are fre-

quently linked to broader illegal child trafficking networks operating from economically vulnerable rural belts. Minors, often brought under the pretext of formal education or care, are routinely forced into domestic labor without legal adoption procedures, leaving them acutely vul-

nerable to physical violence, psychological trauma, and sexual abuse.

The Council called upon the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) and the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) to oversee comprehensive medical, psychological, and legal rehabilitation for the survivor. Emphasizing collective societal responsibility, the ICCW urged civil society organizations, local administrative bodies, and citizens to strictly refrain from circulating viral abuse media online, which further violates the victim's privacy and dignity.

Furthermore, the child rights body appealed to the state government and police administration to institute mandatory registration protocols for all domestic workers and intensify vigilance across inter-district check gates to effectively dismantle trafficking supply chains operating within the state.

Temjen Imna Along Urges Students To Reject Discrimination

Kohima, Sept 10: Nagaland Minister for Tourism and Higher Education, Temjen Imna Along, strongly urged young scholars to reject all forms of racial and ethnic discrimination, calling upon the youth to foster unity, inclusivity, and mutual respect across diverse communities.

Addressing the newly enrolled students at the Orientation Programme 2026 of the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM) at its central auditorium in Ri-Bhoi on Thursday, the Minister highlighted that education must serve as an equalizer that transcends narrow regional and social divides. Emphasizing national integration, Along noted that educational campuses represent micro-models of the country's pluralistic fabric, where youth from various cultural backgrounds converge to build a shared future. Describing USTM as a vibrant center of oneness, diversity, and regional harmony, Along



remarked that the university reflects the collective spirit and aspirations of the entire Northeast. He stressed that academic pursuits should go beyond earning degrees to focus on character building, confidence, and holistic development. Pointing to the rapid socio-economic transformations driven by technology and global changes, he advised students to cultivate a strong work ethic, adaptability, and critical thinking to effectively navigate emerging challenges.

The event was attended by USTM Chancellor Mahbulul

Hoque, Vice Chancellor Prof. G.D. Sharma, faculty members, and hundreds of incoming students. Welcoming the Chief Guest, Chancellor Hoque reiterated the university's commitment to delivering quality, accessible education while promoting research, innovation, and community development across the region. The orientation concluded with an interactive session guiding students on academic pathways, career opportunities, and civic responsibilities.

Underlining the critical role of the North Eastern region in shaping India's future economic and cultural landscape, Along urged the student community to actively dismantle historical prejudices through sustained intercultural dialogue and collaborative learning. He reminded the youth that real progress cannot occur in silos, making it essential for students from different tribal and non-tribal backgrounds to build bridges of understanding.

Nagaland's Nchumbemo Mozhui Sworn In as Additional Gauhati HC Judge

Kohima, Sept 10: Justice Nchumbemo Mozhui was officially sworn in as an Additional Judge of the Gauhati High Court on Thursday. The solemn oath-taking ceremony took place at the High Court complex in Guwahati, where Chief Justice Vijay Bishnoi administered the oath of office in the presence of distinguished judges, senior advocates, legal luminaries, and government officials from Assam and Nagaland.

Justice Mozhui's elevation follows the recommendation of the Supreme Court Collegium, which was subsequently approved and notified by the Union Ministry of Law and Justice. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Justice Mozhui built a distinguished career as a practicing advocate in the region. He served extensively across various legal domains, representing



state departments, statutory bodies, and private litigants with high professional integrity and expertise. His appointment is seen as a major milestone for the legal fraternity in Nagaland, adding experienced representation to the higher judiciary serving the Northeastern states.

The Gauhati High Court

holds a unique institutional structure, functioning as the common High Court for four Northeastern states: Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh. It operates through its principal seat in Guwahati along with permanent benches in Kohima (Nagaland), Aizawl (Mizoram), and Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh).

Khandu meets TCL leaders to accelerate eastern Arunachal Pradesh development

Itanagar, Sept 10: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu convened a high-level review meeting with elected legislators and Zilla Parishad Chairpersons (ZPCs) representing the Tirap, Changlang, and Longding (TCL) districts on Thursday, aiming to streamline administrative coordination and accelerate infrastructure growth across the state's eastern frontier.

Held at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Itanagar, the consultative dialogue focused on reviewing ongoing developmental projects, addressing critical public service delivery gaps, and assessing the socio-economic aspirations of communities residing in the strategically sensitive TCL region. The meeting was attended by senior state cabinet ministers, local Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs), and district administrative heads.



Emphasizing a decentralized governance approach, Chief Minister Khandu urged local leaders to bridge the gap between administrative planning and ground-level execution. He stressed that grassroots concerns submitted by district councils must directly inform state budget allocations and sector-specific policy decisions.

Key priorities highlight-

ed during the deliberations included expanding road networks to improve rural connectivity, strengthening healthcare infrastructure in remote pockets, upgrading government educational institutions, and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for local youth. The discussions also touched upon enhancing security frameworks, curbing

cross-border insurgent influences, and implementing targeted skill development initiatives to empower vulnerable tribal populations. Addressing the delegates, Khandu reaffirmed the state government's commitment to ensuring equitable fund distribution and targeted welfare delivery for the eastern districts, which have historically faced geographical isolation and developmental deficits. He directed department heads to establish clear timelines for completing pending infrastructure projects and urged elected representatives to maintain continuous oversight.

The meeting concluded with a joint pledge to establish a structured feedback mechanism between Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and state ministries, ensuring that regional growth models reflect the immediate priorities of the local population.

Arunachal media delegation explores Gujarat's smart technology and innovation landscape

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Nagaland steps up digital systems for pension services

Kohima, Sept 10: The Nagaland Government has significantly accelerated the adoption of digital platforms across state pension administration, mandating the enrolment of government retirees onto the Jeevan Pramaan Digital Life Certificate system to streamline disbursements and eliminate procedural delays.

The initiative, spearheaded by the state Finance Department and the Directorate of Treasuries and Accounts, aims to replace manual verification protocols with biometric-enabled digital authentication. Under the updated framework, pensioners across Nagaland can submit their annual life certificates using smartphone-based



face authentication technology or biometric devices at local treasuries, common service centers, and designated post offices. To ensure smooth on-boardings, district treasury offices have been instructed to set up dedicated facilitation desks to assist elderly pensioners with biometric registration and digi-

tal verification. State authorities emphasized that the digitized verification ecosystem will enhance transparency, prevent fraudulent pension claims, and guarantee uninterrupted, timely monthly credit of pensionary benefits directly into verified bank accounts of retired state employees.

India and Canada Eye Major Trade Deal by Year-End to Boost Economic Ties

New Delhi, Sept 10: In a major push to deepen economic engagement, India and Canada are actively working to finalize an Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA) by the end of the year. The ambitious timeline, reiterated by senior Canadian diplomatic representation, signals a renewed commitment from both capitals to institutionalize trade partnerships and bypass political friction through commercial cooperation.

The proposed EPTA serves as an interim framework preceding a comprehensive partnership. By securing early wins in key sectors, both nations hope to establish a predictable regulatory environment for investors and exporters. Bilateral trade between India and Canada has consistently shown resilience, particularly in agricultural products, critical minerals, energy, technology, and education services.

A primary driver behind the agreement is the mutual interest in supply chain resilience. For Canada, India represents a critical market with vast consumer demand and an expanding manufacturing footprint. Canadian institutional investors and pension funds are particularly eager to increase exposure to Indian infrastructure, renewable energy, and technology sectors. Conversely, India seeks expanded access for its service professionals, information technology firms, pharmaceuticals, and textile exports, alongside steady supplies of Canadian pulses, fertilizers, and clean technology inputs.

Navigating diplomatic sensitivities remains an essential aspect of the trade negotiations. Both governments have emphasized prioritizing shared economic benefits to keep commercial dialogue decoupled from periodic geopolitical tensions. High-level diplomatic engagements have focused on addressing non-tariff barriers, streamlining customs procedures, and ensuring robust investment protection frameworks.

Achieving a trade deal by the end of the year would mark a major milestone in Indo-Canadian relations. Beyond lowering tariffs and simplifying trade protocols, the agreement is expected to unlock billions in potential investment, foster innovation-led partnerships, and set a stable roadmap toward the eventual completion of a full-scale Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. In addition, senior trade delegates emphasized that the upcoming agreement will significantly streamline regulatory frameworks, offering Indian businesses enhanced access to Canadian clean technology sectors while granting Canadian exporters favorable terms across India's rapidly growing consumer markets.

West Bengal CM defends 'godman' who sought to avoid meat during Durga Puja

Kolkata, Sept 10: A sharp political debate has erupted in West Bengal following remarks made by self-styled religious preacher Dhirendra Krishna Shastri of Bageshwar Dham, who appealed to devotees to refrain from selling or consuming non-vegetarian food near idols during the upcoming Durga Puja festivities. Addressing a religious congregation in Liluah near

Kolkata, Shastri urged local residents to avoid non-vegetarian items around worship sites during Navratri, sparking immediate disapproval from local cultural organizations and political parties who pointed out that non-vegetarian culinary offerings represent an intrinsic part of traditional Bengali festive heritage. Defending the preacher amid growing public debate, Leader

of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari stated that Shastri had merely expressed his personal spiritual perspective as a visiting saint rather than imposing mandatory restrictions on local dietary choices. Speaking to journalists in Kolkata, Adhikari noted that Shastri's address focused primarily on broader themes of national pride and cultural heritage. Adhikari asserted that cit-



izens remain fully free to accept or decline spiritual advice based on their personal convictions, while strongly criticizing protests staged by opposition political workers outside police stations as an attempt to polarize the atmosphere ahead of the festive season. Conversely, the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued strong

statements opposing Shastri's appeal, warning outside commentators against interfering in long-standing Bengali customs and dietary habits. TMC leaders emphasized that Durga Puja in West Bengal has historically celebrated pluralism, where traditional non-vegetarian food offerings—including fish and meat—are deeply embedded in community rituals and cele-

brations. The controversy underscores recurring political friction over regional cultural identity and festive practices in the state. Despite the sharp political exchanges, prominent Durga Puja organizers and neighborhood committees across Kolkata reaffirmed that the multi-day celebrations will proceed strictly in accordance with age-old Bengali traditions.

The chief minister of Manipur meets to plan the month-long “Seva Sankalp Abhiyan”



Dispur , Sep 10: Yumnam Khemchand Singh, the chief minister of Manipur, met in the Secretar-

iat to discuss plans for the planned month-long “Seva Sankalp Abhiyan.” Deputy Chief Minis-

ter Smt. Nemcha Kipgen joined the meeting via video conference, along with Chief Secretary Shri Ra-

jeev Singh Thakur, Home Minister Shri Govindas Konhoujam, Deputy Chief Minister Shri Losii Dikho, and administrative secretaries from other departments. The meeting focused on preparations and coordination among different government departments for the month-long observation of the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan.

Senior officials discussed the arrangements and departmental participation required to ensure the smooth implementation of the programme. The Chief Minister also emphasised the importance of coordinated efforts among departments in carrying forward the objectives of the campaign and ensuring effective participation at the administrative level.

Children are forced to switch from learning to pleasure due to extreme heat IIT Guwahati study



Guwahati, Sep 10: According to a study by IIT Guwahati researcher Prof. Bhaskar Jyoti Neog, extreme temperatures can affect how kids split their time between studying and play.

The study, which was published in the Springer Nature journal Review of Economics of the Household, looked at daily meteorological data

and data from India’s nationally representative Time Use Survey 2019. The results indicate that when temperatures go extremely high, kids tend to spend more time relaxing and less time studying. The study also found that attendance at schools and colleges decreased on hotter days, suggesting that extreme weather can interfere with education

in ways other than how it directly affects traditional academic results.

According to Prof. Neog, an assistant professor at the IIT Guwahati Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, the study emphasizes how youngsters allocate their time as another way that the weather might impact human capital formation and well-being. According to Neog, “the majority of the evidence from developing countries has focused on effects of weather, particularly through agricultural productivity and household agricultural incomes.” “The study highlights an additional aspect of the economic and welfare costs associated with extreme weather by concentrating on children’s everyday activities.” Evidence of long-term acclimatization was also discovered by the study. In regions with gener-

ally warmer climates, the relationship between temperature and kids’ time usage was reduced, indicating that people might adapt their behavior to the weather they frequently experience.

The study did not, however, provide any solid proof that humans adjust to unfavorable weather circumstances in a comparable way during shorter time periods.

Additionally, different socioeconomic groups were affected differently by severe temperatures. Boys and kids from households with higher levels of education and relative wealth showed a smaller correlation between temperature and time consumption. According to the researchers, this suggests that children’s capacity to deal with extreme weather may be influenced by household resources and socioeconomic circumstances.

Filed nominations for the Tripura Tribal Council

Agartala, Sep 10: The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council’s nomination process for 5,873 seats on 587 Village Committees concluded with a prediction that the majority of the statistics would be directly contested. The date of the election is set for September 28. The State Election Commission reports that 10,936 candidates filed nomination papers. There were 4,371 nominations from TIPRA Motha candidates, 1,974 from the BJP, and 486 from the IPFT.

The Congress filed 466 nominations, while the CPI(M) presented 2,484 on the opposition side. There were four nominations from the CPI, compared to 1,151 from other parties and independent candidates.

One noteworthy aspect of the nomination is that, although being members of an alliance, the BJP, TIPRA Motha, and IPFT filed nominations in numerous seats. The alliance’s sources, however, stated that they are communicating with one another and that the overlapping nominations will be withdrawn on September 11, the withdrawal deadline.

In the meantime, the CPI(M) has claimed that threats from the BJP and TIPRA Motha in several locations prevented many of their candidates from submitting nominations. The BJP has denied these accusations, claiming that the CPI(M) is making unfounded claims since they were unable to submit a candidate.

Feel Good Inc visits Guwahati, and Gorillaz will make its debut



Guwahati, Sep 10: Global sensation Gorillaz will perform at Sarusajai Stadium in Guwahati on January 31, 2027, as part of their eagerly awaited first-ever India tour.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma made the announcement on X, calling it a moment of pride for the city. “Guwahati is honored to be one of the cities hosting this historic journey. He tagged

the band’s official handle and commented, “Looking forward to welcoming the band and fans from across the country to Assam.” Russell Hobbs on drums, Noodle on guitar, Murdoc Niccals on bass, and 2D on vocals are all well-known for their unique animated members and genre-bending singles.

With the track “Clint Eastwood,” the band’s 2001 self-titled debut album sold

six million copies worldwide and won them a Guinness World Record for Most Successful Virtual Band. Demon Days, their 2005 sequel, reached the top of the UK charts and delivered the world “Feel Good Inc.,” a Grammy. Since then, Gorillaz has traveled widely throughout the world and released nine studio albums, the most recent of which is The Mountain (2026). Guwahati has joined an exclusive list of Indian towns hosting the tour, making their arrival in the Northeast a significant milestone. After Bengaluru on January 23 and Mumbai on January 27, Guwahati is the third and last stop in Gorillaz’s India debut. The tour is in promotion of the band’s most recent album, The Mountain, which features collaborations with musicians like Anoushka Shankar and Asha Bhosle and was mostly recorded throughout India.

Possibility of becoming a natural, sustainable farming



Guwahati, Sep 10: On Wednesday, Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya urged farmers, scientists, agricultural organizations, businesspeople, legislators, and governments to make Natural Farming economically feasible and develop it into a widespread people’s movement. The Governor stated at the opening of the three-day National Conference on “Natural Farming: Pathways to Self-Reliant Farming and

Rural Prosperity (NCNF 2026)” at the College of Post Graduate Studies in Agricultural Sciences, Umiam, Meghalaya, that natural farming needs to develop into a sustainable and financially viable model of agriculture that can improve rural livelihoods and promote self-reliance. According to Acharya, natural farming has regained importance in the context of sustainable development and is firmly ingrained in India’s agricultural and civilizational traditions. He emphasized the importance of supporting farming method. According to Acharya, natural farming has regained importance in the context of sustainable development and is firmly ingrained in India’s agricultural and civilizational traditions.

4,631 Model Anganwadi Centers have been completed in Assam, while 4,423

Guwahati, Sep 10: 4,631 Model Anganwadi Centers (MAWCs) have been completed by the Assam government, while 4,423 more are presently being built. 9,054 Model Anganwadi Centers have been approved under the State Own Priority Development (SOPD), Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), and North East Development Infrastructure Fund (NIDA) programs, according to government data. The anticipated cost of building for each center is Rs 25 lakh.

have been finished and put into operation, and building is now taking place on the other 4,423 centers. A variety of kid-friendly and necessary amenities, such as ramps, kid-friendly restrooms, separate kitchens, storage spaces, furniture, power, and clean drinking water facilities, are being constructed for the Model AWCs.

There are currently 62,142 Anganwadi Centers operating in Assam, serving around 30.06 lakh beneficiaries, including children, expectant mothers, and nursing mothers. Nonetheless, 53,483

AWCs around the state have received external energy connections from the Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL), and 28,833 Anganwadi Centers have received water supply facilities from the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Assam.

A significant national flagship program, Anganwadi Services aims to improve the health and nutritional status of expectant and nursing mothers as well as the developmental needs of children up to the age of six.

Overjoyed Mom recalls the final message from the late Manipuri musician Vikram



Imphal, Sep 10: On September 10, the mother of deceased Manipuri singer Chongtham Vikram Singh recalled a message he wrote her a few days prior to his passing, expressing his joy over his son’s excellent achievement in his semester exams.

The letter, according to Chongtham Kamala Devi, 86, a seasoned playback singer known as the “Lata Mangeshkar of Manipur,”

was one of her final exchanges with her son. He wrote me a note three or four days prior to his passing, informing me that my grandson had received prizes and had received excellent grades on his semester exams. At her home in Thangmeiband, Imphal West, Devi told PTI, “We were very happy.” Devi claimed that she frequently messaged 54-year-old Vikram about music, art, songs, and musical instru-

ments. She remembered that their discussions revolved around their mutual passion for the arts. The family found it difficult to inform Vikram’s 95-year-old father about his passing. According to Devi, Vikram passed away on “Ekadashi,” the day his father fasted. “After dinner, we planned to tell him, but we were unable to do so. We informed him that Vikram was in the intensive care unit after being hurt in an assault,” she claimed.

Devi claimed that in order to keep her husband from knowing about the death from the media, she concealed the newspaper the next morning. We subtly informed him after breakfast that Vikram’s condition had gotten worse and that his chances were slim. He went back to his room and refused to eat when we informed him that Vikram had passed away, she claimed. Devi claimed that since losing her son, eating has been difficult for her. Since

his passing, I’ve lost my appetite. “I just had a few bananas,” she remarked. Chongtham Tommy, Vikram’s brother, stated that the family was still expecting the post-mortem result. He told reporters that Delhi Police, other relevant authorities, and elected officials had been very helpful. On Wednesday night, Vikram’s lifeless remains were flown back to Imphal for his final rituals. After complaining about noise from a dhaba outside his Kilokari neighborhood residence in Delhi, the 54-year-old musician was allegedly beaten to death. In relation to the case, seven males have been arrested, and a minor has also been taken into custody.

For almost twenty years, Vikram had resided in Kilokari. He was a well-known guitarist who led the Manipuri rock group Phoenix in the early 1980s. Later on, he performed and taught music.

Doctor from Mizoram wins the US Consulate’s Citizen Liaison Volunteer of the Year Award for the first time

Aizawl, Sep 10: The US Consulate General in Kolkata established the Citizen Liaison Volunteer of the Year Award, which Dr. Vanlalsiama Chhangte, Medical Director of Ebenezer Medical Center in Aizawl, is the first recipient in India.

On September 7, Vice Consul Warren Newton gave the award to Dr. Vanlalsiama at the Hotel Regency in Aizawl. A souvenir and a certificate signed by US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor were part of the acknowledgment. The prize was granted in honor of Ebenezer Medical Center’s medical care for US citizen Collin Mayfield, who was transported to Mizoram on December 1, 2025, following injuries he sustained in Myanmar. Mayfield had treatment at Ebenezer Medi-

cal Center for around a month, during which time orthopedic surgeon Dr. Lalrinliana Varte conducted surgery. After getting better, he was allowed to go back to the US. Dr. Vanlalsiama is the first recipient of the Citizen Liaison Volunteer of the Year Award in India, according to representatives of the US Consulate. Speaking about the medical center’s operations, Dr. Vanlalsiama stated that its goal was to “Transform Lives through Healthcare” and that patients could use its services regardless of their country or socioeconomic status. It was gratifying, he said, that an international organization recognized the efforts of physicians, nurses, and other medical workers. Ebenezer Medical Center would keep working to support the growth of healthcare services in Mizoram, Dr. Vanlalsiama continued.

Accident involving a passenger car on NH-27 near Chamata Sonapur



Dispur , Sep 10: On September 10, a four-wheeler transporting passengers was involved in a collision

on National Highway 27 at Chamata in Sonapur, injuring multiple passengers. The facts behind the ve-

hicle’s involvement in the tragedy are yet unknown, however it was apparently traveling from Jagiroad to Guwahati.

The accident injured a number of passengers, who were taken right away to a local hospital for medical attention. Concerns regarding road safety along the Sonapur section of NH-27, where a number of accidents have appar-

ently happened in recent weeks, have once again been raised by the most recent incident. This is the third reported traffic accident in the Sonapur area this month, according to local sources, underscoring mounting worries about commuters’ safety on the congested roadway.

Concerns over traffic control, road conditions, and the necessity of more

stringent safety regulations along the route have been raised by the frequent accidents. Road safety is especially crucial along the Sonapur.

Jagiroad-Guwahati route because of the high volume of passenger and commercial traffic. Concerns among locals and frequent commuters have also grown to today’s disaster are still unclear.

Prevention of suicide is a shared responsibility prompt assistance



Dispur , Sep 10: District Mental Health Program (DMHP), Barpeta, in partnership with BMCH, observed World Suicide Prevention Day at Barpeta Medical College & Hospital (BMCH) on September 10.

The program’s main goals were to increase awareness of suicide prevention, promote mental well-being, and encourage prompt access to mental health support. The Principal-cum-Chief Superintendent of BMCH, the Superintendent and Vice Principal of the institution, representatives and members of the District Mental Health Program, faculty, medical professionals, and a sizable student body attended the program, which was held on the grounds of Barpeta Medical College. Speakers at the event emphasized the value of fostering an environment that is encouraging, and prompt professional assistance can be crucial in saving lives. Individuals in need to the proper mental health resources.

An estimated 190 warheads make up India’s nuclear arsenal

New Delhi, Sep 10: The estimations were obtained by the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) through analyzes of commercial satellite images, state-originating data, and open sources.

According to the article “India’s Nuclear Weapons - 2026,” written by Hans Kristensen, director of the FAS Nuclear Information Project, “We estimate that India may have produced around 190 nuclear warheads based on available public information about its nuclear-capable delivery force structure and strategy.” India’s nuclear arsenal includes over 160 warheads for operational launchers as well as additional warheads for new missiles in production, it said.

The article, published on Wednesday, noted that India continued to modernise its nuclear arsenal, with several new weapon systems fielded in recent years



and several more under development to complement or replace existing nuclear-capable aircraft, land-based delivery systems, and sea-based systems.

We calculate that India may have constructed up to 190 nuclear weapons and produced enough military plutonium for 140 to 225. The nation’s warhead stockpile will probably rise much more when more weapon systems are developed, it stated.Following the Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998, India adopted the no-first-use philosophy,

which it still upholds today. The government has informed Parliament that India is dedicated to upholding a posture of “no first use” of nuclear weapons and credible minimum deterrence.According to the FAS article, the International Panel on Fissile Materials projected that India has generated roughly 730 kg (plus or minus about 170 kg) of weapon-grade plutonium as of the start of 2026. “Assuming approximately four kilogramme of plutonium per warhead, this would theoretically

be sufficient for producing anywhere between 140 and 225 nuclear warheads,” it said.

However, it said the calculation comes with some caveats due to several uncertainties, such as the warhead designs India has produced.

India’s 1998 nuclear tests reliably validated a fission design, but the country’s progress on boosted fission and thermonuclear weapon designs remains highly uncertain, the article said.“Regardless of the warhead designs, it is unlikely that India has used all its plutonium to produce warheads, and it may have kept some in reserve,” the author noted.

It is unlikely that India would develop much more warheads than these systems can launch, according to the study, therefore the size of its nuclear stockpile also depends on the number and kinds of launchers that can deliver them.

Charges in the Railroad Hotel Scam are ordered by the court against Lalu Yadav, his wife, and their son

New Delhi, Sep 10: In the Enforcement Directorate’s investigation concerning the purported IRCTC hotel scam, a Delhi court on Thursday ordered the filing of money laundering charges against former railroad minister Lalu Prasad Yadav, his wife Rabri Devi, son Tejashwi Yadav, and six other individuals.

Special Judge Vishal Gogne charged nine of the sixteen suspects while dismissing seven.The judge stated verbally that the court just needed to determine whether there was a strong suspicion against the accused and that the strict criteria of determining criminal intent or mens rea (mental state to commit a crime) were not necessary at this time. The court has already framed charges of corruption against the RJD patriarch and 11 others last October year in the CBI case in the alleged scam.Judge Gogne said the nature, timing, and course of investigation do not indicate the complaint to have been motivated by political vendetta against Lalu Prasad, as had been argued by his counsel.

“Some dubious deals are indeed cut in plain sight, with the public layer serving to camouflage rather than to pry. The court would mindfully observe that the special courts for CBI and PMLA matters, especially for MP and MLA cases, exist precisely to detect such masked and circuitous deals, which strike Faustian bargains to trade public trust and assets for personal gains,” the court said.

It said the ED’s allegations, spanning from 2005 to 2014, strongly indicate that, under the stewardship of Lalu Prasad, the then railways minister, a tender was manipulated by railway officials for the award of the lease of radio hotels at Ranchi and Puli to Sujata Hotels.

As quid pro quo, the directors of Sujata Hotels, namely Vinay Kochhar and Vijay Kochhar, transferred their prime land at Patna to a company named DMCP, which was controlled by Prem Chand (PC) Gupta and his wife Sarla Gupta, close associates of Lalu Prasad, at undervalued rates,” the court

said. It stated that Sarla Gupta and others then gave Rabri Devi and Tejashwi Yadav the company’s shares for a little sum.”Lara Projects LLP is the new organization in charge of this essentially free property. The court stated, “There is a strong suspicion that Lalu Prasad Yadav’s abuse of office created the proceeds of crime in the hands of his wife Rabri Devi and son Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, who continued to enjoy the use of this tainted land at a prized commercial avenue in Patna.”It stated that the land in Patna is the product of criminal activity and that Lara Projects, Rabri Devi, Tejashwi Yadav, Lalu Prasad, P C Gupta, Sarla Gupta, Vijay Kochhar, and Vinay Kochhar may be charged with money laundering.

Quoting Rabindranath Tagore before pronouncing the order, the judge said, “Whenever power removes all checks from its path to make its career easy, it triumphantly writes into its ultimate crash of death, its moral break becomes slacker every day, without its knowing it, and its

slippery path of ease becomes its path of doom,” the judge said.

He said Tagore held the moral compass for the Indian freedom movement and his words often bestowed cohesion in times of prevarication among the balladeers of freedom.The court said it had to determine “whether all checks from the path of power were indeed unhinged” by the ex-railway minister to create a picture that the project was untainted.

The court rejected the accused’s advocates’ claims that the charge sheet lacked evidence, noting that there was a strong suspicion due to the cited witnesses and documents, which included evidence of the sale of land in Patna, the incorporation of DMCP, the loan of two crores given to DMCP by Abhishek Finance, the loan repayment, including the raising of reference shares, the change in DMCP’s shareholding pattern in 2005, the status of various directors, and the transfer of shares to Rabri Devi and Tejashwi.

Prior to the 2027 elections, the BJP has planned a 13-day anti-drug campaign in Punjab

New Delhi, Sep 10: The BJP is planning a statewide campaign against drug misuse months before Punjab’s elections, which party leaders hope would be more effective than a traditional political outreach initiative.The march, known as the “Nasha Mukh Punjab Yatra,” is set to start on September 18 and end on September 30. According to sources, it will begin in Pathankot, cover a substantial portion of the state over the course of 13 days, and end with a significant protest in Jalandhar.

There is a distinct political backdrop to the yatra. The BJP seems eager to take a stance on the matter in front of the 2027 Assembly elections, given the AAP government’s criticism over law and order and Punjab’s drug problem. BJP national president Nitin Nabin will flag off the yatra, sources said, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to attend the concluding event in Jalandhar.

Five major rallies are planned during the campaign. The party is also attempting to ensure the yatra does not appear to be a routine political roadshow. Families affected by drug addiction are expected to share their experiences at several



stops, with the focus being on personal stories as much as political messaging.

Alongside the rallies, the BJP is preparing what it calls a “drug abuse chargesheet”, a document outlining its allegations against the AAP government’s handling of narcotics control, which will be distributed during the campaign.

The party also plans to involve NGOs working on de-addiction, youth clubs, sports bodies, rehabilitation centres and vil-

lage-level anti-drug committees. Pledge-signing campaigns against drug use are scheduled at multiple locations along the route.According to sources, the outreach target is ambitious, with the party aiming to reach nearly three crore people through ground events, local engagement initiatives and a social media campaign.

Along with visits to rehabilitation facilities, a women-focused outreach campaign is planned under the Nari Shakti name. During the

campaign, a BJP group is anticipated to pay a symbolic visit to Shaheed Bhagat Singh’s hometown. Uatras have been a common strategy employed by the BJP to increase its grassroots presence, and Punjab seems to be its most recent testing ground.

Even if the 2027 elections are still a ways off, the party has obviously started preparing.The official launch of the campaign is anticipated to occur soon with the unveiling of the yatra’s logo.

The Supreme Court will make a decision about packaged food warning labels

New Delhi, Sep 10: The Supreme Court is scheduled to make an order on Thursday about a plea for front-of-pack warning labels (FoPL) for packaged food goods that have excessive levels of sugar, salt, and saturated fat. The court claims that this issue affects people’s health, especially that of developing children.A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and K Vinod Chandran referred to the matter raised by the petitioners as one of “national interest” and stated that the Court had completed its work and would make a decision today that would be posted on the top court’s official website on Friday. It requested that the parties review the order and come back on September 28 for the case’s next hearing.

“We have also done some homework. We will pass an order today, or maybe it’ll be uploaded tomorrow. You study the order and come back. We will keep it on the 28th of September”, the Court said.

The observations came in a matter in which the Court had earlier asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to consider introducing FoPL warnings on packaged foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat. FSSAI has since filed a compliance affidavit setting out its proposed framework.

The Court today said it was concerned with the health of people, particularly growing children, and described the issue as being in the national interest. “We are concerned about people’s health, especially



that of developing youngsters. The Court declared, “This is a cause in the national interest.”

Senior Advocate Devadatt Kamat, who represented the petitioners in the case, contended that nutritious foods like eggs and salted cashews should not be given the same status as highly processed foods.

He suggested that a color other than red be used for the warning label and argued that ultra-processed food should have a stronger warning. Kamat’s recommendations were noted by the Court. FSSAI’s response has proposed a prominent red-coloured hexagonal warning on products high in any two or more of added fat, saturated fat, added sugar and salt, based on thresholds specified under the Dietary Guidelines for Indians, 2024.

The Court stated that it anticipated the Union to give careful consideration to the recommendations made on FoPL and has given the Union two weeks to record its final decision. The petitioners were rep-

resented by attorneys Rajiv Shankar Dvivedi, Priyanka Parmar, Arti Dvivedi, Sushant Sarkar, Sugandha Bhardwaj, Snigdha Singh, Priya, and Bhushan. The respondent, FSSAI, was represented by Additional Solicitor General Brijender Chahar. The authority has proposed implementing FoPL in phases, with the first phase covering products high in two or more specified nutrients and the second extending warnings to products high in any one of the specified nutrients.

FSSAI has proposed exempting single-ingredient food products and foods inherently rich in fat, sugar or salt, including ghee, edible oil, salt, sugar, jaggery and honey, subject to applicable food safety and labelling regulations.

The Court’s earlier order had noted that FoPL is intended to help consumers make informed decisions about food purchases and healthier dietary choices. It also highlighted obesity as a public health challenge and referred to the health risks associated with unhealthy diets and lifestyles.

VPP increases government pressure on the salary structure

Shillong, Sep 10: The Voice of the People Party (VPP) has intensified its criticism of the state government about the Structured Pay Framework (SPF), accusing it of being a “anti-teacher, anti-student, and anti-education” policy that could jeopardize Meghalaya’s teaching profession.

Ardent Miller Basaiawmoit, president of the VPP, stated that the party has already brought up the matter in the Assembly and charged the administration with deceiving educators and the general public.He stated that education is still a top priority for the VPP, encompassing not only infrastructure but also the rights and welfare of teachers.For the VPP, education is a crucial topic. We cannot build a stronger society if we disregard education,” he stated. He alleged the government was projecting recent salary hikes and scholarships as its achievements while ignoring similar steps by earlier governments, and creating an impression that the MDA was the first to enhance teachers’ pay through the SPF.

A later Education Department notification, he said, raised serious concerns by placing future recruits against vacancies in deficit schools under the SPF instead of the existing pay structure. The framework will remain in force only till the end of 2027-28.“This is something that should concern the teaching community. We will continue to follow up and expose the anti-teacher, anti-student and anti-education policies of this government,” he said.Basaiawmoit warned that an uncertain or inferior pay structure would deter qualified candidates.“We wanted to attract the best talent to the teaching profession. If things continue in this manner, how can we attract talented people to teaching?” he asked, adding that the government was taking advantage of unemployment as thousands of youth leave the state for work. The SPF has also been opposed by teacher organizations. The Khasi Jaintia Deficit School Teachers’ Association (KJDSTA) opposed to notices on August 12 and 19 that eliminated government and long-standing sanctioned deficit teaching positions and transferred future appointments to the SPF.Boswell S. Pala, president of KJDSTA, called for their immediate withdrawal, claiming that doing so would undermine the deficit school system.

The state prepares to start Reform Utsav

Kohima, Sep 10: On September 7 and 8, 2026, Longleng and Phek districts hosted high-level consultative discussions under the State Level Governance Framework of Reform Utsav 2026.Deputy Commissioner W. Manpai Phom presided over the meeting, which took place on September 8 at the DBDP Hall in Longleng. Phom welcomed the participants and presented Kekhrievor Kevichusa, the district’s State Nodal Officer and Commissioner & Secretary for Urban Development & Municipal Affairs, together with his staff, officers, and representatives from civil society organizations. Kevichusa gave the house an overview of the program’s main elements, purposes, and future goals. He said that the Reform Utsav portal would be launched in October after public awareness campaigns in September. Additionally, he asked the Deputy Commissioner to form committees at the block and district levels. Officers from different departments, blocks, and civil society organizations were instructed by the DC to raise public awareness of Reform Utsav. The chair gave a vote of thanks to end the meeting.On September 7, DC Phek Rhoisetho Ngouri presided over a discussion meeting for Phek and Meluri districts at the DC Conference Hall. Delivering the opening remarks, Ngouri welcomed members and officers present. Sarita Yadav, secretary and AHoD, Higher Education Department & State Nodal Officer for Reform



Utsav (Phek & Meluri), gave a detailed introduction of the programme, outlining its key components and features. She informed that public sensitisation would be carried out in September, followed by the launch of the Reform Utsav portal on October 2, 2026. Yadav requested both DCs of Phek and Meluri to constitute District Level Committees by September.

The discussion discussed the roles that officials from every department in both districts should play in raising public awareness. DC Phek emphasized the need of community involvement, characterizing Reform Utsav as a comprehensive improvement project akin to Viksit Bharat 2047.Neitsho Wezah, Liaison Officer (Higher Education) & Nodal Officer (Reform Utsav), as well as the HoDs of Phek and Meluri districts, attended the program. DC Meluri, Phuleshe K. Yepthomi, asked heads of Phek district offices overseeing Meluri to make sure subordinate officers posted there were properly guided regarding Reform Utsav.

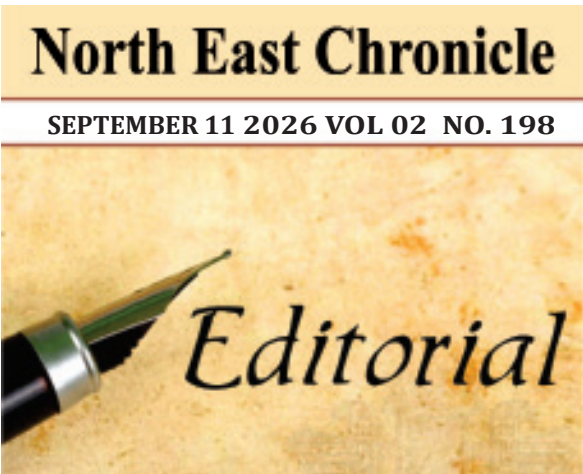
By December 2026, Tripura will have new motor stands, bus ports, and DTO offices

Agartala, Sep 10: Transport Minister Sushanta Chowdhury stated on September 9 that a number of significant transportation infrastructure projects around Tripura are anticipated to be finished by December of this year. During a Transport Department meeting at the Secretariat conference hall, the minister reviewed the status of ongoing projects.In Melaghar, Gandacherra, Jirania, Jolaibari, Manu Ghat, and Santirbazar, new motor stands are being developed,

according to Chowdhury. Additionally, district transport offices are being set up at Bishramganj, Teliamura, and Kailashahar. The minister said that the development of an advanced bus terminal at Rajarbagh in Udaipur’s Gomati district would enhance regional connectivity and passenger transportation capabilities. Additionally, the department has plans to build contemporary motor stands in Jatanbari, Bir Chandra Manu, Sidhai-Mohanpur, and Bishalgarh.According

to Chowdhury, the administration is concentrating on modernizing transportation infrastructure to enhance passenger comfort and make traveling around the state simpler.

Additionally, he emphasized the necessity of enhancing facilities for those involved in the transportation industry. Transport Commissioner Subrata Chowdhury gave the minister an update on the department’s numerous development projects during the meeting.



The Northeast tourism imperative

The gradual retreat of the monsoon has set the stage for a new tourism season to begin across the Northeast region. The focus has now shifted from disaster management to sustainable growth, community tourism, and industry readiness to welcome guests arriving in the region after the monsoon season ends. The record footfall in iconic tourism spots such as Kaziranga National Park and Manas National Park last year is a reminder for the park authorities to gear up for facilitating smooth visits for tourists throughout the season. The European Union’s lifting of the restrictive travel advisory for Assam is expected to boost foreign tourist arrivals to the state this tourism season, raising hopes for higher tourism revenue. The ecological fragility of the region is a constant reminder for tourism stakeholders and policymakers to keep focusing on the sustainability of tourism activities. This challenge is also an opportunity to strengthen community tourism through homestays. Homestays are a pragmatic alternative in ecologically fragile regions where establishing large hotels is not sustainable. Furthermore, the community tourism model plays a crucial role in strengthening the local economy through the creation of local livelihoods in the tourism value chain, provided the communities are prepared to tap the opportunities. Poorly maintained highways contribute to fatal road accidents; the safe travel of tourists in their favourite circuits remains a top priority for the industry.

Tourism activities involving movement of domestic tourists from different states and foreign tourists from different countries require strong coordination between the central and state governments to facilitate their smooth, safe and hassle-free movement. Connectivity infrastructures such as modern airports, faster railway movement, comfortable bus rides, and reliable tourist taxi services form the backbone of tourism. While the authority and responsibility of constructing new airports, modernising existing airports, the expansion of railway networks, the construction of new highways, the expansion of existing highways and the maintenance of these assets lie with the central government, the state government plays a vital role in the acquisition of land for these infrastructure projects. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture, while dealing with the question of whether tourism is the responsibility of the Centre or the states, made a pertinent observation that tourism is neither in the Union List, the State List, nor the Concurrent List of the Constitution and is treated as a residual subject. The Committee Members believe that this situation creates inherent coordination difficulties between the Centre and the States. The Committee’s recommendation that the Tourism Ministry

Repeated in-flight violations drag air India into fresh operational crisis

Early in August, an Air India A320 aircraft flying from Phuket, Thailand, to Delhi, with 145 persons on board, including crew members, experienced an incident that led to several passengers and crew members getting injured, with at least one case that could be classified as a severe injury (a cabin crew member suffered a cervical fracture). Initial reports claimed that the aircraft faced bad weather and severe turbulence the seat belt signs, however, were off resulting in a sudden drop of 300 feet from the cruising altitude. The pilots involved were tested for psychoactive substances post the incident.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB)’s preliminary report, recently made public, classified the incident as an accident and stated that recovered data confirms the aircraft in question (A320, narrowbody) experienced a

failure of all three hydraulic systems a rarest-of-the-rare occurrence from which it subsequently (almost miraculously) recovered within seconds and the crew decided to continue to Delhi. While the preliminary report did not recommend any action for Airbus to take, it recommended that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation take appropriate action against the pilot in command (PIC) who tested “non-negative for psychoactive substances.” The airline terminated his service. To begin with, the Air India management should note that this is the second time within a short span that the phrase “rarest of the rare” has been brought up in connection with its aircraft. The first was the AI171 Dreamliner crash in June 2025 that killed 260 people. There are striking similarities between the two incidents. In the June 2025 incident,

the dual engine failures were described by experts as “virtually impossible”. The simultaneous failure of all three hydraulic systems in the latest incident was also termed as such. In February 2026, another Air India Dreamliner was temporarily grounded after the pilots complained of faulty fuel control switches. Globally, there are over 1,100 Dreamliners and over 11,000 A320s in operation, but it is Air India’s aircraft that seem to be achieving the virtually impossible repeatedly.

Two, some industry experts say that though the PIC testing positive for psychoactive substances deserves condemnation, this was incidental to the accident given the more serious hydraulic failure identified in the AAIB report: Had the systems not recovered, this would have been a tragedy of the magnitude of the June 2025 crash. That said, sev-

eral actions (and failure to act) by the PIC and his first officer have also spurred an allegation that is doing the rounds of the civil aviation sector: The PIC may have taken some unnecessary risks while demonstrating to his first officer how the aircraft should be handled in case there was a problem in the hydraulic systems, and inadvertently triggered the sudden loss of altitude the aircraft encountered. The fact that the seat-belt signs were not on they would have been on had the aircraft been experiencing turbulence lends some credence to this hypothesis. The AAIB report clearly states that the aircraft faced no adverse weather or turbulence that could explain such a drop in altitude. Senior commanders also point at the PIC’s decision to continue towards the terminating destination (Delhi) instead of landing at the closest runway to argue that

the drop in altitude did not alarm the crew as much as it normally should have. Had the cockpit crew suspected that the sharp fall was on account of some kind of unprecedented hydraulic failure, they would have landed at the first and closest opportunity in this case, Kolkata airport rather than continuing towards Delhi. This alone, many argue, is incontrovertible evidence that what occurred might have been triggered by pilot action rather than other factors. While the AAIB report refrains from laying the blame entirely on the PIC in this case, sources in DGCA and the airline say that unlike in the AI171 case, where they are very sceptical of the cockpit crew’s culpability in this particular case, all indications point towards the now-terminated PIC. Many industry experts argue termination is not punishment enough, if indeed it is prov-

India’s defence atmanirbharta: the drone imperative

Scott Bessent, the US Treasury Secretary, laid out three maxims in a recent speech: “The nation that cannot produce what it needs is not truly secure. The nation that depends on its adversaries for critical inputs is not truly sovereign. And the nation that reduces its economics to consumption is not truly prosperous.” Bessent’s context is a world that his country more than any other has worked to create — a world in which, as Thucydides wrote, the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must; where alliances can be disregarded, friendships become irrelevant, and markets are subject to unexpected disruptions.

The phrase that characterises this new world is ‘weaponised interdependence’. Such weaponisation comes more easily to those in control of the main nodes of the global economy, giving them coercive power. One could even think of panopticon situations (the usual example being a single guard in a circular prison who can watch all the inmates). Think of the SWIFT interbank communication system. Equally, they could offer choke points for coercive use. Choke points can also be points of vulnerability think of submarine cables, which, if cut, could cripple an adversary for a while. For a middle power like India, such a world is more complex and offers many new challenges, and only imperfect answers or solutions. In the spirit of atmanirbharta, can India hope to ensure its security and sovereignty in such a world by producing all that it needs—as Bessent asked? Or not rely on others for critical inputs—something that even the major powers don’t attempt? Think of the major weapons platforms and technologies that are currently imported. Most obviously, what price strategic autonomy when 90 per cent of the country’s oil and half its gas needs are imported? And what price sovereignty in the face of penal tariffs and arbitrary trade sanctions? It is obvious that the goal in such a world has to be economic efficiency and competitiveness, and must also include the issue of vulnerability and ways to minimise it—without paying too great a price through higher costs that localisation often imposes, affecting compet-

itiveness. Hence the current attempts at domestic chip manufacture and the setting up of data centres. Yet interdependence is written into the scenario and must be dealt with. The asymmetric conflicts in Ukraine and Iran pose their own urgent questions for the economy. Hundreds of missiles and drones (offensive and defensive) have been fired in a day, for days on end, in both theatres. Can India hope to develop such a supply capability, given its limited manufacturing base, or (as a more sensible alternative) turn civilian industrial units to military use in short order?

Sensible policies can always provide answers. India could become an electro-state, for instance, by copying China’s example to reduce oil dependence, and multiply storage capacity in order to insulate against supply shocks. China can store more than four months’ oil requirements, whereas India’s strategic reserves are for barely 10 days. When availability can trump price in a critical agricultural input like fertiliser, sensible policy can serve to boost the domestic production of an item that does not, after all, involve rocket science. India has always been wary of international dependencies. Especially in defence, space and atomic energy, it has sought from the beginning to build national capabilities and to be self-reliant. There are some impressive success stories to show for this in the defence arena: the nuclear-powered submarines, for instance (though Russian help has been critical). Then there is the multi-pronged missile programme. A layered air defence system that showed its mettle during Operation Sindoor. Mobile howitzers for the artillery have been developed by the Armaments R&D Establishment in partnership with Kalyani and Tata. Some aspects of electronic warfare capability constitute another success story. The risk is that over-reach can result in failure, or unaffordable delays (which in defence is the same thing). Over-reach explains why many attempts at self-reliance in defence have failed, such that the country is the world’s second-largest importer of armaments (next to Ukraine). Major weapons platforms that the country needs are still being imported. On the immediate buy

Forget headline GDP: the real test is falling household income growth

India’s GDP numbers have become a war zone. Economists, statisticians and politicians continue to fiercely contest one another’s methodologies and motives. But an ordinary Indian does not live inside those figures. She is concerned with whether this month felt easier or harder than the same month last year. The economy arrives at the household not as aggregate growth but as rent, school fees, groceries, medical bills, a son or daughter still waiting for a job, lack of a salary hike or a business doing less well than it used to. She worries whether the family income is keeping pace with the cost of living and whether there are enough savings to pay the EMI or absorb a sudden shock.

I was reminded of this recently while talking to a young man in his early thirties at my neighbourhood café in south Delhi. He worked in finance, lived with his parents and earned a decent salary. He was unmarried, and had no immediate financial anxiety in his own life. But many of his friends, he said, had taken loans; some had even borrowed to get the latest smartphone or fund a holiday. The young, he said, wanted to live in the “now.” The basic calculation was that things would get better: salaries would rise, careers would progress and tomorrow’s income would take care of today’s borrowing. But, as a finance professional, he could also see the large “if” lurking behind that assumption. What if salaries did not rise as expected? What if someone was laid off and took months to find another job at the same pay? The EMI would not disappear in the meantime. Nor would the rent, school fees or medical bills. Borrowing helps people aspire and cope with the present. It also assumes that tomorrow will be better.

That conversation brought home what is sometimes missed when the economic debate becomes a contest over headline numbers. Urban India is changing not only in what people earn and consume, but also in how they finance the lives they want. The city life many Indians want has a price — homes, furnished apartments, vehicles, good education for their children and the other markers of a better life all require money, often long before the hoped-for income has actually materialised. Today, credit is no longer that difficult to obtain for many people. The lending landscape has expanded well beyond traditional banks, making borrowing faster and more accessible than it once was. Loans against gold jewellery have also taken off in a big way in the last few years. The question therefore is not whether borrowing is necessarily bad. Credit can help people buy homes, build businesses and manage legitimate needs. But what happens when borrowing becomes part of the way people maintain their present standard of consumption on the assumption that their future incomes will keep rising? Given the global turmoil and uncertainties, the nagging big “if” persists. What does national growth feel like for people whose job prospects and incomes are not rising? According to the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) June 2026 Financial Stability Report, India’s household debt has climbed to 45.5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by September 2025. The rise in household borrowing is driven primarily by non-housing retail loans, with consumption-related borrowing a major driver. Non-housing retail loans have climbed to 58.4% of household borrowing by March 2026.

The young finance professional I met was not opposed to borrowing. But he was acutely aware of the assumption built into it. The assumption is that the future will be kinder to the borrower than the present. Salaries will rise. Careers will progress. Employment will continue. A temporary squeeze will remain temporary. But if that chain breaks, the arithmetic changes very quickly. An EMI remains an EMI whether the salary has risen or not, even amid layoffs and a potential spike in AI-related redundancies. What does growth feel like when good jobs are scarce, and incomes stand still for millions? Arguably, India’s household debt-to-GDP ratio is lower than that of many rich countries, but Indian households have much lower incomes and thinner financial buffers, so a rise in debt can leave them more exposed when income falls or an unexpected expense arrives. In India, a lost gig, a hospital bill or a failed monsoon can still mean a moneylender or a gold loan. Formal household debt is also only part of the picture; informal credit sits on top and does not show up comprehensively in official data. When both rise together, distress can be acute. If you go by headlines, the debate over India’s gross domestic product is the big story. Equally important is how Indian households are negotiating the economy that the GDP number describes. The increase in household debt has coincided with a fall in net household financial savings, given that people are using larger portions of their income to repay loans. Household financial savings temporarily surged during the Covid pandemic, as lockdowns curtailed consumption, but fell soon after the economy reopened. Indian families typically saved first, deferred pleasure, spent later. Today, however, as Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund observed in a recent blog (Dreams on Credit: Prosperity or Peril?), “borrowing has become an increasingly integral part of household finances, fuelled by rising incomes, rapid urbanisation, digital payments, and unprecedented access to formal credit. From home loans and vehicle financing to credit cards, EMIs, and buy-now-pay-later schemes, debt is no longer reserved for major life events; it is becoming a routine tool for managing consumption and aspirations.” This shift, it noted, “is reflected in the data: household credit in India has grown several times faster than GDP over the past decade, with retail lending emerging as one of the fastest-growing segments of the financial system. Yet as households take on more debt to fund homes, education, consumption, and entrepreneurship, important questions arise about sustainability, financial resilience, and the long-term implications for India’s consumption-driven growth story. Ultimately, the future trajectory of the Indian economy may be shaped as much by the strength of household balance sheets as by headline GDP growth itself.” The continuing row over India’s GDP will eventually produce another set of arguments, another round of rebuttals and perhaps another correction in the numbers. But the more consequential question will remain outside the statistical debate: whether people can recognise their own economic lives in the country being described to them. Once that recognition becomes difficult, the problem is no longer simply that citizens do not understand official statistics. It is that the statistics have begun to lose their ability to persuade them.

Infosys, TCS, Coforge, Mphasis shares: Targets as Amazon

New Delhi: Antique Stock Broking in a note on IT sector said all three major hyperscalers namely Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud Platform (GCP) ramped up capex in the June quarter, with the current capex wave skewed towards capacity building, including GPUs, data centres and cloud networks. This, the brokerage said, hits hyperscalers' balance sheets well before translating into application such as layer development, integration and AI-adoption work that Indian IT firms bill for.

Infosys Ltd, Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS), Wipro Ltd, HCL Technologies Ltd and Tech Mahindra Ltd. It remained selective on mid-caps, with Coforge and Mphasis as its preferred names. Antique

said accelerating hyperscaler growth and record backlogs point to a large multi-year pipeline of enterprise workloads still to be migrated, integrated, and managed. This is the layer where Indian IT partners actually monetise, it said adding that the conversion towards application demand typically lags infrastructure spending by several quarters. In the near term, it expects hyperscalers to continue to ask Indian IT services partners for lower prices as they continue to invest in capacity-building. Antique said Google Cloud revenue jumped 82 per cent YoY to \$25 billion, with backlog surging \$50 billion sequentially to \$514 billion. AWS posted its fastest growth in 18 quarters at 37 per cent YoY, marking the

fifth straight quarter of acceleration, with backlog at \$496 billion, Antique said. It said Azure grew 43 per cent YoY, pushing Microsoft Cloud revenue to \$59 billion (up 27 per cent) and full-year Azure revenue past \$100 billion. Microsoft's commercial RPO also jumped 84 per cent YoY to \$678 billion. In the case of large Indian IT firms, organic revenue growth was flat or decelerating sequentially and guidance bands were maintained despite strong bookings. The management teams were explicit that macro uncertainty continue to create headwinds. "Discretionary projects are being deferred or scrutinized more closely, decision cycles have lengthened, and one-off shocks - the Middle East conflict.

Coforge, Persistent, Tech Mahindra Choice shares top IT picks

New Delhi: Coforge Ltd, Persistent Systems Ltd and Tech Mahindra Ltd have emerged as the top investment picks among Indian IT companies, according to Choice Institutional Equities, which cited rising technology spending by major banks and increasing focus on artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, cloud, data and modernisation. Choice said banks' technology spending is entering a structural reinvestment cycle, with technology budgets at major banks rising around 16 per cent since June 2024 and 7.8 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in June 2026, despite macroeconomic uncertainty. "Spending is increasingly skewed towards AI, cybersecurity, cloud, data and modernisation, with AI accelerating the broader technology transformation cycle," the domestic brokerage said. For



Indian IT companies, Choice said the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) segment remains a relatively bright spot. However, it noted that vendor consolidation and gains in wallet share could be more important for IT companies than overall growth in technology spending.

The brokerage said it prefers

vendors that combine scale, BFSI domain expertise, modernisation capabilities and differentiated AI offerings. At the same time, it noted that AI-led productivity gains and outcome-based pricing could limit revenue conversion. "Against this backdrop, we see Coforge, Persistent and Tech Mahindra as the best-positioned beneficiaries

and our top investment ideas," Choice Institutional Equities said. Among its top picks, Choice has a 'BUY' rating on Coforge with a target price of Rs 2,050. Persistent Systems also carries a 'BUY' rating, with a target of Rs 6,350, while Tech Mahindra has an 'ADD' rating with a target price of Rs 1,775. The brokerage has a 'REDUCE' rating on Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) with a target of Rs 2,320, Infosys Ltd at Rs 1,140, Wipro Ltd at Rs 170 and HCL Technologies Ltd at Rs 1,330.

LTM (formerly known as LTI-Mindtree) has a 'SELL' rating with a target price of Rs 4,350, while Mphasis has a 'REDUCE' rating with a target of Rs 2,520. Choice has an 'ADD' rating on Zensar Technologies Ltd with a target of Rs 550 and on Happiest Minds Ltd with a target of Rs 440.

From commodity chemicals to global contracts 3 smallcaps riding China+1



New Delhi: India's specialty chemicals sector is getting another shot at the China+1 opportunity. The first wave came in 2020-22, when pandemic-driven supply disruptions forced global buyers to explore alternatives to China. This time, the shift looks more structural. Global customers are diversifying suppliers, while Indian companies are moving up the value chain - from commodity chemicals to specialised molecules, contract manufacturing, and high-value applications. In one of our earlier articles, we looked at how Indian specialty chemical manufacturers are supplying into some of the world's fastest-growing industries. The opportunity is getting even broader across the specialty chemicals value chain. Three

small-cap specialty chemical companies sit at different points of this shift: Yasho Industries, Privi Specialty Chemicals, and Aether Industries. Their businesses are very different. Yasho makes rubber chemicals and aroma ingredients. Privi specialises in aroma and fragrance chemicals. And Aether is increasingly focused on contract manufacturing and specialised intermediates. What connects them is the same

structural shift: global customers are looking beyond China for reliable suppliers, and Indian chemical makers are growing more resilient. Yasho Industries is emerging as one of the sharper recovery stories in India's specialty chemicals space. Its businesses have historically faced pricing pressure because of Chinese oversupply, making the recent improvement in earnings particularly significant. The company manufac-

tures specialty and performance chemicals used across industries such as rubber, lubricants, pharmaceuticals, food, and fragrances. Its portfolio includes rubber chemicals, antioxidants, lubricant additives, and aroma chemicals. The annual numbers show that the recovery had already started in FY26, with revenue growing 23% and net profit more than quadrupling. But Q1FY27 marked a much sharper improvement, particularly in operating profitability. In Q1FY27, consolidated revenue rose 55% YoY to ₹308 crore, while net profit expanded to ₹36 crore, coming off a depressed base of ₹3.6 crore in Q1FY26. During the quarter, Yasho generated 69% of its revenue from exports and 31% from India.

Adani Enterprises vs Adani Energy

Jefferies anticipates a potential upside of up to 46% for a particular stock

New Delhi: Two stocks from the Adani Group have been included in Jefferies' Buy list, although the rationale for each differs significantly.

Adani Energy Solutions presents a potential upside of 46%, while Adani Enterprises offers an approximate 29% upside according to the brokerage's target prices.

The common factor between them is infrastructure. However, the investment cases diverge in two distinct paths. One focuses on enhancing the predictability of its power-trading operations, while the other is heavily investing in sectors such as airports, data centers, defense, and energy transition.

Jefferies on Adani Energy: Can long-term contracts stabilize earnings?

Jefferies has maintained its 'Buy' rating for Adani Energy Solutions, setting a target price of Rs 2,060, which suggests a potential upside of around 46% from current levels. A significant catalyst is the company's recent power supply agreement with the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company (MSEDCL). Adani Energy Solutions has secured a 25-year contract for 2.5 gigawatts (GW) of continuous power supply. The proportion of secured volumes in the trading segment is projected to in-

crease to 57% by FY28, compared to just 20% at the conclusion of the first quarter of FY27.

Power trading can exhibit volatility due to sharp fluctuations in merchant prices based on demand and supply dynamics. Long-term contracts can enhance earnings visibility. Jefferies noted,

"The increasing tie-ups in the trading segment align with management's vision. The brokerage also anticipates some short-term support from elevated merchant power prices. Average prices in the second quarter of FY27 are currently estimated at Rs 5.8 per unit, reflecting a 48% year-on-year increase and a 14% rise from the previous quarter.

The brokerage stated, "Merchant power prices have surged 2.1 times year-on-year as of September 2026." Jefferies presently values the trading segment at only 5 times the estimated enterprise value to EBITDA for September 2028, in contrast to 22 times for the company's non-trading operations.

The brokerage believes that the trading segment could become less risky and command a higher valuation multiple.

Jefferies on Adani Enterprises: A larger investment in new business.

2,678% in five years this power stock became more than a cables play

New Delhi: In the last ten years, APAR Industries has returned 3,063 per cent. Over five years the return is 2,678 per cent. Over the past year it is 125.15 per cent — a multibagger. The 52-week high of Rs 18,432.40 was hit on August 12, 2026. The 52-week low of Rs 6,800 was touched on January 21, 2026. From that low, the stock has risen by approximately 160 per cent in just over seven months, taking it to more than 2.5 times its January level.

These are not the returns typically associated with a cables and conductors manufacturer. Understanding why they happened requires reading what APAR has become rather than what it was. APAR Industries operates across three principal businesses: conductors, specialty oils and cables. Each has a different demand driver, margin profile and growth trajectory. Most investor analysis treats APAR as a conductor company with two smaller businesses attached. The Q1 FY27 numbers challenge that framing significantly. Conductors — transmission conductors including premium HTLS and HTSC variants — contributed Rs 3,338 crore of Q1 FY27 revenue. Specialty oils — transformer oil, auto lubricants and industrial oils — contributed Rs 1,701 crore. Cables — power cables for utilities, railways, defence and data centres —

contributed Rs 1,838 crore. Together, the three divisions accounted for roughly 51 per cent, 26 per cent and 28 per cent of Q1 FY27 revenue, respectively, for conductors, specialty oils and cables.

Management stated explicitly on the call: "This incidentally is the highest quarterly sales as well as profit number that we have achieved in the history of the company." However, reading each division separately is essential before treating the consolidated margin as representative of the normalised business.

The conductor division is the heart of APAR's long-term investment thesis. Revenue grew 19.9 per cent year-on-year to Rs 3,338 crore in Q1 FY27. But the more important number is the EBITDA per tonne — Rs 53,418 in Q1 FY27 versus Rs 43,688 a year earlier, a 22.3 per cent improvement. Volume was actually down 6.7 per cent year-on-year at 53,279 MT.

— yet absolute EBITDA grew 14 per cent. Higher per-unit realisation from premium products more than compensated for lower volumes.

Management attributed the lower volumes to what it expects to be a temporary disruption in manufacturing clearances. A surge in aluminium prices caused certain customers, particularly those on TBCB domestic proj-

ects without hedged metal to withhold manufacturing clearance on orders already placed. These orders exist in the book with contractual delivery timelines carrying significant penalties for delay. The more structurally important development is the premium product mix. Premium products — HTLS conductors, copper transposed conductors, busbars, railway supplies — reached 50.3 per cent of conductor revenue in Q1 FY27, up from 43.7 per cent a year earlier. Premium products generally carry higher EBITDA per tonne than conventional conductors. As the mix has shifted, APAR's per-unit profitability has improved, suggesting a structural benefit from product mix rather than relying solely on volume growth.

The pending conductor order book stands at Rs 10,190 crore with 56.8 per cent from exports. New orders received in Q1 FY27 alone were Rs 5,245 crore — including two large orders exceeding Rs 2,800 crore combined from one major US utility and one European utility, with delivery schedules spread over four years. Management also received approval from one of the largest US utilities for OPGW with 144 fibre count — a technically significant product approval for the US market. APAR recorded its all-time highest reconductoring installations in Q1 FY27.

4 Mutual Funds to Long-Term Investing

New Delhi: Returns, ratios, rankings, manager records — all these metrics describe what has already happened, in market conditions that will not be repeated in the same order. And the time horizon of a decade is long enough for almost everything to change.

So, for investors looking out for the best funds for the next 10 years, the useful question is which characteristics from the past data have chances of surviving in 2036. After applying filters to the entire universe of equity funds, only 4 cleared our tests and could potentially continue their strong show in the coming years. The filters we applied include consistency across different periods, risk-adjusted efficiency over a long period, and whether the person making the decisions is still there, i.e. fund manager's track record. HDFC Flexi Cap is 7.23 percentage points ahead over five years and 4.71 ahead over three years. Bandhan is 5.68 points ahead over three years and 4.39 over five years. Over two years, when the Nifty 500 TRI actually fell, HDFC Flexi Cap returned 4.77%. ICICI

Pru Value trails over one and two years, by 4.43 and 0.44 percentage points, while beating comfortably over three, five, and seven years. Every one of the four names has a higher Sharpe ratio than its benchmark, which means all four converted risk into return more efficiently than simply buying the index would have.

HDFC Flexi Cap ran at a volatility of 11.99 against its benchmark's 13.42, with a Sharpe ratio of 0.28 against 0.16 and a Sortino of 0.52 against 0.29.

WOC Mid Cap has the best absolute Sharpe and Sortino of the four, at 0.33 and 0.63, and does it at a volatility below the mid cap index. Bandhan is the one carrying slightly more volatility than its benchmark, at 14.15 against 13.98, but converts it into a far better Sharpe ratio.

ICICI Pru Value is the calmest of the four at 11.15, which is the compensation for its recent underperformance. HDFC Flexi Cap Fund has the fewest reservations attached. It manages about Rs 1.11 trillion (tn), making it one of the



two largest flexi cap schemes in India, at a direct plan expense ratio of 0.57%.

Its mandate lets it move freely across large, mid, and small caps. In practice, it has stayed predominantly large cap, which is precisely why its volatility sits below a broad market index while its returns sit well above it. There is one development an investor buying this fund for ten years must know about. Roshni Jain man-

aged the fund from July 2022 until her resignation from HDFC AMC in November 2025 and delivered roughly 23% a year over that stretch.

Amit Ganatra took over on 1 February 2026. He is not unknown, having previously headed equities at Invesco India where the flexi cap fund he co-managed returned about 21.8% a year over three years against 16.2% for its benchmark.

EVs need 4x more wiring leader 38% market share

Mumbai: India's two-wheeler (2W) and three-wheeler (3W) industry is going through a technology shift that is creating a new opportunity for component suppliers. Integrated Starter Generator (ISG) technology is a good example. The number of 2W and 3W vehicles equipped with ISG increased from 51 lakh units in FY23 to 84 lakh units in FY26, taking its market penetration to around 35%. This shift is also visible in the wiring harness market. As vehicles adopt more electronics, sensors, electrical systems and electrified powertrains, the wiring harness is becoming more complex and valuable. India's domestic 2W wiring harness market is therefore expected to grow at a 14% CAGR between FY26 and FY31, significantly ahead of the growth in underlying vehicle volumes. The opportunity is particularly higher in electric two-wheelers. growth in India's 2W and 3W component industry is increasingly driven by how much technology each vehicle carries.

From weeks to minutes: New fintech tools bring banking services closer to everyday users

Kohima: Getting a new bank card, accepting digital payments or depositing cash for a family member could soon become easier and faster as the Department of Financial Services unveiled three fintech initiatives at Global Fintech Fest 2026.

DFS Secretary Sanjay Lohiya launched an open-source Android ATM that can instantly issue personalised RuPay debit, credit and NCMC cards and merchant UPI QR codes.

The machines can also facilitate cheque deposits, account opening and loan applications, potentially reducing branch visits and waiting for physical card delivery. Banks are exploring their use as Digital Banking Units in rural and semi-urban areas, as well as at airports, metro stations, campuses and corporate parks.

Nine banks, including SBI, Bank of Baroda, Union Bank, PNB, Bank of India, Central Bank of

India, UCO Bank, Slice Small Finance Bank and Airtel Payments Bank, are evaluating the solution with NPCI and ATM makers Hitachi Payment Services, Perto India and Vortex Engineering.

For farmers and small entrepreneurs, Credit Line on UPI is being extended to eligible KCC and PM MUDRA accounts. The ecosystem represents over 7.7 crore operative KCC accounts with sanctioned limits above ₹10 lakh crore and more than 57 crore PMMY loans exceeding ₹40 lakh crore.

The third initiative, AePS Three-Party Cash Deposit, allows eKYC-registered customers to deposit cash directly into another person's bank account through participating AePS Touchpoint Operators. Aadhaar biometric authentication and beneficiary-name confirmation add security. Fourteen banks currently support the service, with more expected to join.

Chancellor urged to fix £100k childcare ‘cliff edge’ that prompts parents to cut work

UK: John Healey has been urged to fix the £100,000 childcare “cliff edge”, that means some higher-paid employees cut back on work to avoid losing their entitlement.

Since the latest expansion of taxpayer-funded childcare in 2024, families with young children in which both parents earn less than £100,000 a year can be entitled to 30 hours a week of care - or none at all, if one of them cross that threshold.

In a report, researchers from the Centre for Tax Reform (CenTax) said that, by the end of this parliament in 2030, the average parent crossing this “cliff edge”, will have to earn £124,000, to be no worse off after losing their free childcare.

Arun Advani, director of CenTax, said: “Our analysis shows the childcare cliff edge stands to grow dramatically by the end of this parliament, but there are solutions available to the government.”

The researchers find that “bunching” of incomes just below the threshold suggests that even in 2022 – the latest year for which data is available – about 1,000 families were artificial-

ly suppressing their earnings to avoid falling foul of the threshold. That could rise to almost 12,000 by the end of this parliament.

The thinktank, based at Warwick University, also suggested the policy may be incentivising some mothers to drop out of work. Below the £100,000 threshold, 6% of lower-paid partners – usually the mother – are out of work; but above the threshold that rises to 9%.

“The jump in non-working mothers at the point where their partner exceeds £100,000 income suggests the loss of childcare entitlement as a cause, with possible long-term consequences for those mothers’ earnings,” the report said.

CenTax also criticised the fact that the threshold is based on how much parents expect to earn in the year ahead – pointing out that some families appear to be claiming it, despite eventually earning more than £100,000.

It proposes several potential solutions. Restricting free childcare to 15 hours to families above the £100,000 threshold, instead of withdrawing it altogether, would cost £210m by 2030, it



said.Gradually tapering away the entitlement at 28p for each £1 earned above the threshold would be revenue neutral, but less problematic for parents, it adds.

Healey is set to deliver his first budget on 28 October, against a backdrop of renewed fears about higher inflation and febrile global bond markets.Analysts believe higher than expected interest rates on the Treasury’s debt are likely to have wiped out at least half of the £24bn headroom that

Healey’s predecessor Rachel Reeves built up against the government’s fiscal rules.

In his first major speech in Coventry on Monday, Healey promised to put growth at the heart of his approach; but also warned that Labour must “be honest” about the constraints on public spending in the years ahead.

Since taking over as Labour leader in July, Andy Burnham has announced a VAT cut on electricity bills and capped bus fares;

but Healey has also suggested the government is keen to do more to give hard-pressed consumers a “breathing space”.Andrew Griffith, the Conservative shadow chancellor, said: “John Healey sounds increasingly like continuity Rachel Reeves. Warm words about growth will not make growth a reality, or cover up the enormous damage Labour have done to businesses and family finances.”

Robert Jenrick, Reform UK’s

Treasury spokesperson, said: “On the day 4,000 people are losing their jobs, Healey gave a dire and dreary speech that will change absolutely nothing.”

Refusing to be drawn on the details of his tax and spending plans less than two months before the budget, Healey promised to stick to Labour’s manifesto commitments not to raise taxes on working people. However, he signalled the government could look at finding savings from the welfare bill by tackling youth unemployment.

“As the prime minister has said, there is a need to bring down welfare costs. And most importantly for me we have to get more of Britain working again,” he said.

The chancellor ducked questions on whether taxes would need to rise and also a suggestion from the British Chambers of Commerce that the government should scrap the pensions triple lock to fund a cut in employer national insurance contributions to help support youth jobs.

The government is awaiting the findings of a highly anticipated review into youth worklessness by the former Labour cabinet minister Alan Milburn, which

Healey said would “address this scar of youth unemployment”.

Healey said there was a “moral duty” and a “fiscal duty” to supporting young people to find work.

“A person coming off benefits and into work saves the taxpayer money. And that becomes a win-win when those people start paying tax themselves,” he said.Business groups said they welcomed the chancellor’s pro-growth message, including pledges to devolve tax and spending powers to regional mayors and also his promise to “take an axe” to regulations he said were holding back business investment.

Louise Hellem, the chief economist at the Confederation of British Industry, said: “Firms will welcome the positive signals of intent from the chancellor and will now be looking ahead to the budget to see whether the government can match its ambition with decisive action to cut business costs and give firms the headroom they need to invest.”

The chancellor’s critics said his speech was light on detail despite the mounting pressure on the economy.

Reform UK says migrant deal was ratified by far-right National Rally president

France: Reform UK has insisted its deal with France’s far-right National Rally to return migrants back across the channel was fully approved by the party and signed off by its president, Jordan Bardella, amid a furious backlash in France.

The agreement unveiled on Friday between Nigel Farage and Bardella, who is the 30-year-old protege of presidential candidate Marine Le Pen, appeared to directly contradict Le Pen’s long-held policy of refusing to accept the return of those who arrive in the UK in small boats from France.

Le Pen was pressed for her position by journalists from France TV, the state broadcaster, on Monday. Le Pen declined to comment, saying she would talk about the issue soon, but at a time of her choosing.

In 2021, Le Pen said she wanted a rewriting of border agreements for the UK to specifically send people arriving on boats back to their countries of origin, instead of returning them to France.

Since the agreement, Bardella has come under fire from political parties in France for signing the deal, with Benjamin Haddad, the Europe

minister, criticising Bardella for “submission” that was “against our interests and sovereignty”.

Some French media have questioned whether Bardella was duped by Reform, querying whether the French translation accurately conveyed the meaning by Farage that the National Rally (RN) was prepared to accept any migrants back who travel by small boat.

However, a Reform spokesperson said it was “signed off by both Bardella and the presidential team”, that the policy was included in the French version as well as the English, and it could “confirm both parties are fully on board”.

Until the summer, Bardella had been considered as a potential replacement for Le Pen in next spring’s presidential election but will now run as her future prime minister. In July, when a Paris appeal court upheld Le Pen’s conviction for embezzling European parliament funds, her ban from running for office was reduced, allowing her to stand.Farage has kept Le Pen at arm’s length, while having cultivated good relations with Bardella over the past year, but he is rumoured to be planning to meet her later in the autumn.

He previously rejected the idea of a tie-up in 2014 in the European parliament when he accused Le Pen’s party of having a history of “prejudice and antisemitism”, which she said was slander. Last week, Farage said he would not have done a deal with the party when led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, Marine’s father, a convicted Holocaust denier who co-founded the Front National in 1972. Le Pen expelled her father from the party in 2015.

Farage praised her, saying she had got rid of “extreme elements”.

At the heart of the row in France is the wording of the document Farage brought out for Bardella to sign with him on stage in Birmingham, calling it a memorandum of understanding. Both texts, presented side by side in English and French, state that, if Farage and Bardella become prime ministers of their respective countries, the UK will intercept boats launched from the French coast, and that France will return people onboard to their countries of origin.

But the English text carried an extra phrase saying “France will ordinarily accept these persons” who would then be returned to their home coun-

try. This appeared to show that Bardella was promising to accept returned persons in France, which contradicts the long-held position of RN.

France TV said RN denied any controversy, saying the text was only a declaration of intention that would be refined at a later point. Speaking in Italy over the weekend, Bardella suggested his party in government would prevent migrants from reaching France by much tougher border controls, resulting in the numbers crossing to the UK being much lower.

However, RN’s opponents were critical of Bardella for signing a memorandum on immigration on stage with Farage.

The MP, Sacha Houlié, an ally of the centre-left would-be presidential candidate, Raphael Glucksmann, wrote on X about what he called “a miserable episode where the whole of France could see Mr Bardella used as a doormat by the English far-right.” He told the RN: “You claim to be patriots, you’re cowards.”Gabriel Attal, the former centrist prime minister and presidential candidate, wrote on X: “To applause from his party members, Nigel Farage made Jordan Bar-

della sign a memorandum to ensure that all migrants intercepted in the Channel are sent back to France. Either Jordan Bardella doesn’t understand English or he is shamefully weak when it comes to defending French interests. And I think he does understand English.”

Édouard Philippe, a former prime minister and centre-right candidate, said it was an example of hypocrisy and division in Bardella’s party. Philippe said it looked like Bardella found it difficult to stand up to Farage in order to “protect French interests”.

Xavier Bertrand, the right-wing head of the northern Hauts-de-France region, wrote on X that in agreeing that France alone would take responsibility for returning people to their home countries, Bardella was “reducing France to the status of Britain’s subcontractor.” Chris Philp, the Conservative shadow home secretary, said: “Reform UK’s deal with Jordan Bardella is a complete farce ... Time and again, Reform prove they are fundamentally unserious with grand claims for the cameras, with none of the detail or hard work that might survive actual scrutiny.”

UK air traffic control breakdown strands hundreds of thousands of passengers

UK: Flight delays and cancellations were expected to continue into Wednesday at UK airports after another air traffic control failure kept planes grounded for hours, affecting hundreds of thousands of passengers.

At least 177 flights scheduled for Wednesday to and from UK airports had been cancelled, plane tracking site Flightradar24 said, “nearly all at London Heathrow”. More than 1,000 were cancelled by about 8pm on Tuesday.

The “technical issue” at the air traffic control services provider Nats caused Britain’s third major stoppage in just over three years. Nats said on Tuesday evening: “This has been a very complex recovery and has created difficulties for the whole aviation network, from which it will take time to recover.”

The breakdown started at about 1pm on Tuesday and affected departing flights at many of Britain’s biggest airports including Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester and Stansted. By the time Nats said it had fixed its flight processing system almost

four hours later, most flights scheduled to depart were yet to take off. The disruption spread to include incoming flights to much of southern England.

Cancellations and delays continued through Tuesday evening, and British Airways said disruption would affect operations into Wednesday at least, with passengers offered free rebooking until Friday. Nats provides air traffic control services to 15 UK airports.

Ryanair said more than 65,000 passengers had been delayed and 50 flights cancelled. The knock-on effects hit flights across Europe, according to easyJet. Some inbound flights had to be held at airports abroad, said Eurocontrol, the European airspace co-ordinator.

London airports, as well as Manchester and Birmingham, were among the most directly affected. Flights to and from other airports around the UK, including Edinburgh and Belfast, were also disrupted. Heathrow said late on Tuesday that departures had resumed with disruptions but arrivals had been

suspended for the rest of the night.Nats initially announced at 1.46pm that it was “investigating a technical issue which is causing some disruption to flight departures”. It later identified the problem in its flight processing system, and announced at 4.40pm that it was fixed.

A spokesperson said the fault was not the same as those that caused outages and mass disruption in 2023 and 2025. “We are continuing to work closely with our airline and airport customers on recovery. We apologise sincerely for the disruption to people’s journeys today and they should continue to check with their airline.”

The chief executive of Nats, Martin Rolfe, was scheduled to brief the transport secretary, Heidi Alexander, on Wednesday over the breakdown. Alexander will in turn address MPs in the Commons for the second reading of the civil aviation bill.

Rolfe expressed his “huge sympathies to everyone who has been caught up in today’s disruption”.

Notorious Ecuadorian crime gang designated a terrorist group by US

America: The US has designated Ecuador’s Los Tiguerones gang, which stormed a television station during a live broadcast in 2024, as a terrorist organisation as the Trump administration expands its campaign against narcotics traffickers it says are destabilising Latin America.

The US secretary of state, Marco Rubio, made the announcement in Quito, where he met Ecuadorian president Daniel Noboa, one of several rightwing allies of Donald Trump whom Rubio is courting as a security partner during a three-nation tour through Latin America that began on Tuesday.

Rubio said the Los Tiguerones gang was linked to narcotics trafficking, as well as attacks on civilians, law enforcement officers and journalists.

“We are not talking about an ordinary mafia, nor are we talking about common criminals, we

are talking about terrorists who, in many cases, possess weapons and equipment resembling the national armies of certain countries,” he said.

The heavily armed gang’s attack on the TC Televisión network in 2024 prompted Noboa to declare a state of “internal armed conflict”, amid claims foreign drug gangs had descended on Ecuador to take control of important routes for coca grown in neighbouring Colombia and Peru and then shipped to the US.

Live footage from the El Noticiero news programme showed men toting pistols, shotguns, machine guns, grenades and sticks of dynamite. The viral images quickly became a symbol of the drug violence destabilising the country.In its efforts to fight against narcotics trafficking and illegal migration from Latin America, the Trump administration has also empowered a num-



ber of hardline leaders through its “Shield of the Americas” coalition that aims to tighten security cooperation with rightwing allies in the region.

During his trip, Rubio plans to visit several newly elected conservative leaders amid a significant political shift to the right in Latin America.

On Wednesday, Rubio hailed Ecuador as being the Trump administration’s most “aggressive” partner in its military campaign against alleged drug traffickers,

including in the controversial strikes against boats that have killed at least 227 people whom the Trump administration has called drug traffickers without providing evidence.

Rubio said that he would seek \$45m (£33m) in additional funding from Congress towards efforts aimed at “dismantling these terrorist groups”, although he did not go into details. He also told reporters that elite forces from both countries were “working jointly on a day-to-day basis in a way that has no precedent in order to try to dismantle these terrorist organisations”.Rubio visited Colombia on Tuesday, where he met its newly inaugurated president Abelardo De La Escriella, who narrowly won a June election against leftist leader Gustavo Petro with whom the Trump White House had cold relations.

During his remarks, Rubio

took something of a victory lap, saying that the two sides would seek to “[confront] the mistakes of the past four years” and called Petro’s leadership of the country “unnatural”. Colombia joined the Shield of the Americas initiative only after its change in government.

During the meeting, the two men discussed security and counter-narcotics policy, and signed memorandums of understanding on critical minerals and nuclear energy.

Rubio is expected to next travel to Peru, where he will meet Keiko Fujimori, who defeated a leftwing candidate by a margin of just 50,000 votes during a close election in July. She has promised to fight crime with an “iron fist” and adopt some controversial policies from neighbouring El Salvador, which has been a close ally of the US on security policies.

Crucial Advice for Dental Health: Improve Your Brushing

To maintain optimal dental health at home, it is essential to brush your teeth twice daily for two minutes each time, utilizing fluoride toothpaste and a soft-bristled toothbrush. Daily Brushing and Cleaning: Ensure to brush your teeth two times a day: once in the morning and once more before going to bed. Position your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle against your gums and use small circular motions while brushing. Maintaining optimal oral hygiene goes far beyond simply rushing through a quick, twice-daily brushing routine; it requires adopting mindful, evidence-backed habits that maximize the protective benefits of your dental care products. One of the most counterintuitive yet crucial adjustments you can make to your daily regimen is encapsulated by the simple rule: “Spit, don’t rinse.” Following a thorough brushing session, the instinct for many is to immediately flush out the mouth with a generous gulp of water. However, doing so washes away the concentrated fluoride left behind by your toothpaste—an essential mineral that acts as a powerful shield for your enamel, helping to remineralize weak spots and protect against the relentless onslaught of cavity-causing acids. By simply spitting out the excess foam and resisting the urge to rinse, you allow that therapeutic layer of fluoride to linger on your tooth surfaces for a significantly longer duration, thereby continuously fortifying your smile throughout the day. In addition to preserving your enamel’s defenses, a truly comprehensive oral care routine must also address the often-neglected terrain of the tongue, which serves as a major breeding ground for volatile sulfur-producing microorganisms. Incorporating a gentle tongue brushing or scraping step into your morning and evening habits helps to effectively dislodge trapped food parti-



cles, sloughed-off epithelial cells, and residual bacteria that would otherwise contribute to persistent foul breath and compromise overall oral freshness. By combining these two refined practices—retaining your protective fluoride barrier and diligently cleansing your tongue—you elevate a basic hygiene chore into an advanced, highly effective strategy for long-term dental health and total oral confidence. Floss and Rinse: Floss every day: Use dental floss or a water flosser to clean the small crevices between teeth that your toothbrush cannot reach. Be gentle: Curve the floss into a C shape around each tooth and softly move it under the gumline. Use mouthwash smartly: Choose an antibacterial or fluoride mouthwash, but use it separately from brushing to avoid washing away the fluoride in your toothpaste. Nurturing a healthy, resilient smile requires a holistic approach that extends far beyond the bathroom sink, seamlessly integrating mindful dietary choices and disciplined maintenance habits into your daily lifestyle. At the foundation of this proactive routine is the simple yet vital act of staying consistently hydrated by drinking

water throughout the day, which serves as a natural, continuous rinsing mechanism to wash away lingering food particles and residual sugars before they can settle and feed harmful oral bacteria. Complementing this hydration habit is the conscious effort to cut down on sugar by strictly limiting your consumption of sticky, sugary snacks and highly acidic beverages that erode enamel and lay the groundwork for tooth decay and disease. Furthermore, protecting your dental health means paying close attention to the tools you use every day, particularly by making it a rule to swap your manual toothbrush or electric toothbrush head every three to four months; over time, bristles inevitably fray and lose their structural integrity, becoming far less effective at sweeping away plaque and far more likely to harbor accumulated bacteria. By harmonizing these pillars—frequent water intake, mindful dietary moderation, and timely equipment replacement—you create a robust, self-sustaining defense system that ensures your teeth and gums remain vibrant, strong, and healthy for years to come.

These Are 8 Conventional Neem Uses

For many generations, the neem tree located in the backyard has been associated with refreshing breezes and natural shade. Yet, its true power resides in its leaves, bark, and twigs. Employed for centuries in traditional Indian medicine, neem is a potent natural resource. Nevertheless, proper usage is essential to safely enjoy its benefits without any associated risks. Neem leaves are packed with natural bioactive compounds. Boiling clean leaves in water and adding it to your bath is a age-old practice for basic skin hygiene. Consuming tender neem leaves is a traditional ritual, but daily or excessive intake is a strict no-no. Dr. Pandey warns that children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those on regular medications must consult a doctor before consuming neem internally. Chemical-free pest protection has always been right in our backyards. Placing dried neem leaves inside clothes trunks, grain storage containers, or storage rooms is an effective traditional trick still widely used in rural households to keep insects and moths at bay. Chewing on a fresh neem twig (daatun) is an ancient method for cleaning teeth and gums. While it carries

antibacterial properties, modern dentists recommend scientifically backed toothbrushes and fluoride toothpaste as safer, more efficient choices for daily oral care. Neem bark is heavily utilized in traditional home remedies due to its strong astringent properties. Often ground into a paste, it has historically been applied to minor scrapes. However, expert supervision is necessary before applying raw bark to sensitive skin. Lesser known than the bitter leaves, delicate white neem flowers offer a much milder flavor. In traditional cooking, dried neem flowers are roasted to prepare gut-friendly dishes, balancing digestive health during seasonal shifts without the harshness of raw leaves. Extracted from neem fruit seeds, neem oil is a popular natural repellent and plant-protector. While widely used in organic gardening and hair care, applying undiluted neem oil directly to skin can cause severe irritation, requiring careful home usage. Neem is a powerful botanical, not a self-cure for medical conditions. Dr. Kusum Pandey emphasizes balancing traditional remedies with modern safety. Always tailor neem usage according to age, health status, and correct dosage to enjoy its benefits without adverse effects.

This season’s top five jeans styles and the wardrobe issues they address

Are you uncertain about whether to choose straight-leg, baggy, flared, or wide-leg jeans? Here is a useful guide to five denim styles that are essential to understand this season, along with the appropriate occasions for each style.I have a slightly complicated relationship with jeans. I want them to look current, but I also want to be able to wear them without spending half my morning wondering what top goes with them. And that is where denim trends can get unnecessarily confusing. Every season brings another silhouette that is suddenly everywhere. One year it is skinny jeans, then baggy denim takes over, then flares return, and suddenly your perfectly good straight-leg pair starts looking outdated on social media. But you do not need every jeans trend in your wardrobe. The better question is what you want your jeans to actually do for you.Do you want something that gives a little more shape to an oversized top? Something comfortable for days when you do not want restrictive denim? A pair that works with almost everything already hanging in your wardrobe?These are five jeans styles worth knowing this season, along with the everyday dressing problem each one can help solve.

1. Flared jeans for when you want to balance an oversized top: Flared jeans can be surprisingly useful when the rest of your outfit is relaxed. The fitted shape through the upper leg followed by the wider hem creates more balance when you are wearing an oversized shirt, fitted jacket or cropped top. They can also give the outfit a slightly more dressed-up feel without requiring much styling.
2. Nifty Women’s Denim Stretchable High Waist Baggy Jeans for Women: 3. Straight-leg jeans for when you want one reliable pair
4. If you only want to buy one new pair of jeans, straight-leg is probably the safest place to start. The silhouette is neither extremely fitted nor dramatically oversized, which makes it easy to wear with different types of tops and shoes. The Levi’s Women Jeans, Straight is one option to consider.
5. Try straight-leg jeans if: You want jeans that work across casual and slightly polished outfits.You do not want an extremely tight or

everyday look. For a more relaxed outfit, swap the blazer for an oversized shirt and add a small shoulder bag. The important thing with flares is the length. The hem should work with the footwear you are most likely to wear with them rather than dragging on the floor.

1. KOTTY Women’s High Waist Flared Fit Stretchable Denim Jeans for Casual: 2. Baggy jeans for when comfort matters more than a fitted silhouette
3. There are days when skinny or slim jeans simply feel like too much effort.That is where baggy denim comes in. The roomier silhouette makes it easier to move around and works particularly well for casual outfits. But because the shape is already relaxed, the rest of the outfit benefits from a little structure.The Nifty Women’s Denim Stretchable High Waist Baggy Jeans are one option to consider.
4. Try baggy jeans if: You find fitted jeans uncomfortable after several hours. You like oversized or street-style dressing.You want more room around the legs. Your wardrobe already has fitted T-shirts, tanks or cropped tops. How I would style them

Pair baggy jeans with a fitted T-shirt or a tucked-in shirt to keep some definition around the waist. Sneakers make the outfit casual, while loafers and a structured handbag can make the same denim feel more polished.If you are already wearing an oversized top, avoid adding an equally oversized jacket unless that deliberately oversized look is what you want.

2. Nifty Women’s Denim Stretchable High Waist Baggy Jeans for Women: 3. Straight-leg jeans for when you want one reliable pair

If you only want to buy one new pair of jeans, straight-leg is probably the safest place to start. The silhouette is neither extremely fitted nor dramatically oversized, which makes it easy to wear with different types of tops and shoes. The Levi’s Women Jeans, Straight is one option to consider.

5. Try straight-leg jeans if: You want jeans that work across casual and slightly polished outfits.You do not want an extremely tight or



oversized silhouette.You frequently switch between flats, sneakers and loafers. You want something less trend-dependent.Wear straight-leg jeans with a crisp shirt and loafers for a simple office-friendly outfit. With a fitted knit and sneakers, they become an easy weekend look.They also work well with shorter kurtas, relaxed blazers and lightweight jackets, which makes them particularly useful if your wardrobe moves between Western and Indian pieces.

3. Levi’s Women Jeans, Straight: 4. Slim-fit jeans for when you want a cleaner silhouette

Slim-fit jeans have lost some of their spotlight to oversized denim, but that does not make them irrelevant.In fact, there are situations where a closer-fitting pair is simply easier to style.If you prefer a neat silhouette or regularly wear longer shirts, polo shirts, structured jackets or oversized layers, slim jeans can provide the balance you need. The Levi’s Men Mid Rise 511 Slim Fit Mid-Rise Jeans in Classic Blue are one option to consider.Try slim-fit jeans if:

5. You prefer denim that follows the shape of your legs. You wear longer shirts or relaxed jackets.You want a cleaner silhouette with formal or smart-casual pieces.Baggy denim feels too oversized for your personal style. How I would style them

Keep the top slightly relaxed rather than pairing slim jeans

with an equally tight top. A loose button-down, lightweight sweater or structured blazer can create a more balanced outfit.If you prefer a sharper look, loafers or clean sneakers will work better than heavily chunky footwear.

4. Levi’s Men Mid Rise 511 Slim Fit Mid-Rise Jeans Classic Blue: 5. Wide-leg palazzo jeans for when you want to make a simple outfit look different

Wide-leg jeans are useful when your wardrobe feels repetitive but you do not actually want to buy more tops.The dramatic leg shape changes the proportions of an otherwise familiar outfit, so even a basic T-shirt can look noticeably different with wide-leg denim. The Sassafras Basics Women’s Fashionable Wide-Leg Palazzo Jeans are one option to consider.

Try wide-leg palazzo jeans if:You want more volume through the legs.Your wardrobe is full of fitted or tucked-in tops.You want to experiment with proportions without buying a completely new outfit.You like relaxed, contemporary silhouettes.

How I would style them A fitted top tucked into wide-leg jeans creates a simple contrast between the waist and the wider leg. A cropped jacket can do the same. If you are petite, pay particular attention to the length. A pair that pools heavily at the ankle can overwhelm the outfit, while the right length can make the silhouette look much cleaner.

Are you applying the proper moisturizer to your skin

For passionate beauty enthusiasts and dedicated followers who have diligently kept up with our ongoing skincare content, it remains an undeniable truth that incorporating a high-quality moisturiser serves as an absolutely foundational and irreplaceable pillar of any comprehensive daily regimen. Industry professionals and dermatological experts consistently emphasize the absolute necessity of utilizing a properly formulated, nourishing moisturiser, regardless of whether your complexion is naturally dry, combination, or persistently oily and prone to stubborn acne breakouts. By delivering essential hydration, supporting the skin’s natural lipid barrier, and preventing transepidermal water loss, a well-chosen moisturiser protects your face from daily environmental stressors, pollution, and premature aging while laying down the ideal, smooth canvas required for all your subsequent skincare and makeup applications. Ultimately, understanding that every single skin type desperately needs targeted moisture allows you to move past outdated beauty myths and embrace a scientifically backed routine that fosters long-term skin health, resilience, and a radiant, luminous glow. All you have to keep in mind is to read labels before you buy.

Because, obviously, a moisturiser that suits your friend’s skin might not actually suit you.The label matters here. A few of the ingredients do most of the job, and the best ones are different for each skin type”. Oily skin still needs moisturiser

Dr Chavan highlights that one of the most frequent misconceptions he encounters in his clinical practice is the widespread belief that individuals with oily skin should entirely avoid using a moisturiser, warning that skipping this crucial step can actually make skin problems significantly worse. He explains that when your skin becomes dehydrated and loses essential water content, the sebaceous glands overcompensate by going into overdrive and producing even more oil in an attempt to protect and lubricate the surface. To break this vicious cycle, he recommends incorporating a lightweight, oil-free, gel-based moisturiser formulated with hydrating hyaluronic acid to infuse the skin with necessary water without leaving behind a heavy or greasy residue. Furthermore, Dr Chavan strongly emphasizes seeking out moisturisers enriched with niacinamide, as this versatile ingredient works wonders to actively regulate sebum production, balance oil levels, and soothe redness or inflammation, ensuring your

skin remains calm, clear, and properly hydrated. Dry skin needs barrier repair

Dr Chavan further elaborates that dry skin inherently lacks both adequate water and essential lipids, which means your primary objective should be restoring the skin’s natural protective barrier and preventing further dehydration. To achieve this, he recommends looking for formulations packed with ceramides to effectively repair micro-damages in the skin barrier, alongside powerhouse humectants like glycerin and hyaluronic acid that aggressively draw moisture into the epidermal layers and lock it there. Additionally, Dr Chavan specifies that incorporating moisturisers rich in squalane or shea butter is exceptionally beneficial because these nourishing emollients create a protective, occlusive layer over the skin’s surface to trap hydration and prevent environmental moisture loss throughout the day. To maximize these barrier-boosting benefits, he strongly advises opting for a rich, comforting cream rather than a lightweight gel, as creams provide the heavier texture and deeper nourishment that dry skin desperately requires to remain plump, soft, and healthy. Combination skin needs balance

Dr Chavan explains that



managing combination skin requires a strategic approach since your T-zone—encompassing the forehead, nose, and chin—typically feels oily and shiny, while your cheeks often feel tight, dry, and dehydrated. To effectively balance these conflicting zones simultaneously, Dr Chavan advises seeking out a moisturiser formulated with powerhouse ingredients like glycerin for deep hydration, niacinamide to regulate oil production and soothe inflammation, and ceramides to repair and strengthen the compromised skin barrier, as this synergistic blend works remarkably well across both oily and dry areas. Alternatively, for those who experience

extreme differences across their face, he notes that some people achieve much better results by customizing their application method, using a lightweight, oil-free gel exclusively on the oily T-zone to prevent congestion and a richer, more emollient cream on the cheeks to provide long-lasting comfort and relief from tightness. Why non-comedogenic matters

Dr Chavan emphasizes that incorporating non-comedogenic moisturisers into your daily routine is exceptionally beneficial, particularly for individuals struggling with oily or acne-prone skin, because these specialized formulations are meticulously engineered

to hydrate the skin without clogging your pores. Beyond managing excess oil and breakouts, choosing products labeled as non-comedogenic can proactively help anyone maintain a clearer complexion and prevent the formation of pesky micro-comedones, small textural bumps, and other common skin congestion issues. To ensure you are purchasing the right formula, you should always carefully inspect product labels for this specific designation before making a purchase. Furthermore, Dr Chavan strongly cautions against applying heavy mineral oils to your facial skin, as their occlusive nature can easily trap sebum,

dirt, and bacteria within the pores, frequently triggering unwanted breakouts and exacerbating existing skin sensitivities. Sequence after face wash

According to Dr Chavan, the exact sequence and timing in which you apply your skincare products play a profoundly critical role in maximizing their efficacy and maintaining optimal skin health. He specifically recommends applying your moisturiser within two to three minutes of washing your face while your skin is still slightly damp, as this clever technique helps trap existing water within the epidermal layers and effectively prevents transepidermal water loss. When building your multi-step regimen, any targeted serums or active treatments should always be layered onto the skin first to allow their potent ingredients to penetrate deeply without obstruction, followed immediately by your moisturiser to seal everything in. Dr Chavan further clarifies the daily timeline by advising that sunscreen must always be applied as the absolute final step in your morning routine to guarantee proper UV protection, whereas at night, a nourishing moisturiser should serve as the culminating final layer to support skin barrier repair while you

sleep. Dr Chavan shares an important clinical disclaimer noting that an individual’s skin type is never static and can fluctuate significantly depending on changing environmental seasons, natural aging processes, and shifting hormonal balances. Because these intrinsic and extrinsic factors constantly alter the skin’s barrier function, lipid production, and hydration levels, it is considered a best practice to regularly evaluate and reassess the specific moisturiser you use every few months rather than remaining on autopilot with the same formulation. Experts strongly advise against sticking rigidly to the exact same product for years on end, as a cream or lotion that provided optimal hydration during the dry, harsh winter months may prove far too heavy and occlusive during humid summers, or conversely, a lightweight gel might fail to offer adequate nourishment as your skin matures or experiences hormonal shifts. By intentionally auditing your skincare routine periodically, you ensure that your daily moisturiser continues to actively support your skin’s evolving physiological needs, effectively preventing unexpected breakouts, irritation, or chronic dryness caused by using obsolete products.

ENTERTAINMENT

Suriya's next film titled scene; slated for Diwali release

Chennai : Suriya is set to bring a very different cop character to the screen with Scene, his upcoming collaboration with Aavesham and Romancham director Jithu Madhavan. The makers officially unveiled the title with a teaser on Wednesday, September 9, while also confirming that the film will arrive in theatres worldwide on November 6, ahead of the Diwali weekend.

The film, which has been referred to as Suriya 47 during production, marks Jithu Madhavan's first Tamil directorial. The title teaser offers a glimpse into the world of

Suriya's character, DSP Inbaraj, a police officer whose methods and temperament appear to put him at odds with those around him. Inbaraj is portrayed as a rebellious and intimidating figure who has earned the displeasure of his colleagues. The teaser also hints at his unusual relationship with prisoners, several of whom appear to have landed behind bars because of his actions. The glimpses suggest that Jithu is bringing the irreverent humour and eccentric characters associated with his Malayalam films into a distinctly Tamil setting.

Scene brings together an interesting combination of talent from the Tamil and Malayalam film industries. Jithu Madhavan made his feature directorial debut with Romancham in 2023 before following it up with the highly successful Aavesham in 2024. Both films were noted for their distinctive humour, memorable characters and energetic storytelling. The filmmaker has previously described his Suriya project as a proper Tamil film, making Scene an important new chapter in his career. The film also marks the Tamil debut of actor Naslen, who has emerged as



one of the most recognisable young performers in Malayalam cinema following films such as Premalu.

Nazriya Nazim, meanwhile, returns to Tamil cinema after more than a decade. Her last Tamil feature was Thiruma-

nam Enum Nikkah, released in 2014. Her pairing with Suriya and the presence of Naslen add another layer of interest to the project. Scene also features Anandraj, Lal and social media personality Raj Priyan, who makes his feature film debut. The supporting cast further expands the film's ensemble, although the makers have kept several details about the characters under wraps.

Jithu has once again collaborated with composer Sushin Shyam, who has scored all of the director's feature films so far. Scene marks Sushin's first Tamil film as a composer.

The technical crew includes cinematographer Vineeth Augustine, editor Ajmal Sabu, production designer Ashwini Kale and action director Chethan D'Souza. Dravid Selvam, known for Idhayam Murali, has penned the Tamil dialogues.

Production on Scene began in December 2025 and was completed in July 2026, with portions of the film shot in both Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Suriya is also producing the project along with Jyothika under their Zhagaram Studios banner, with Jaishree Damodaran serving as

co-producer. The film is now in post-production ahead of its November release. Netflix has acquired its digital streaming rights, while Sony Music has secured the music rights. With Scene scheduled to arrive on November 6, Suriya will headline a film that brings together one of Tamil cinema's biggest stars with a filmmaker who has quickly established a distinct voice in Malayalam cinema. The title teaser's glimpse of DSP Inbaraj suggests that their collaboration could offer Suriya a particularly unconventional addition to his filmography.

Parineeti Chopra calls thriller shaque her son neer's unofficial acting debut

Mumbai : Parineeti Chopra's upcoming series Shaque: Trust No One carries an especially personal memory for the actress. At the trailer launch of the Netflix series in Mumbai on Thursday, Parineeti revealed that she discovered she was pregnant with her son Neer only after filming had already begun.

Joking about the coincidence, Parineeti said Shaque does not merely mark her series debut but also Neer's debut, since she was pregnant with him during the shoot. The actress also recalled how the production team accommodated her pregnancy while they were filming in difficult locations in Shimla. Speaking at the event, Parineeti revealed that she had already begun shooting when she learnt about her pregnancy. Since the team was working in Shimla and filming under



challenging conditions, she knew she needed to inform the makers.

However, Parineeti recalled that she could barely finish telling them before they assured her that they had already figured it out. "I didn't even finish my conversation, and they were like, 'humko toh pehle se hie pata tha'. They said, 'Just don't worry about anything.' They really treated me like a baby. They made changes in action sequences for me to be more com-

fortable without destroying anything creatively," she said.

The actress praised the team for ensuring that her pregnancy did not become a source of anxiety during the shoot. Since some of the locations were far away, arrangements were also made for Parineeti to stay on the sets rather than undertake repeated travel. Parineeti said the support extended by the makers allowed her to continue working without feeling that the production

was being inconvenienced because of her.

"I never felt guilty for a single day. I felt taken care of, nurtured, which is something a woman needs at that time, and I was just blessed to have these makers," she said. Her family also rallied around her during the Shimla schedule. Parineeti revealed that her husband Raghav, her mother, mother-in-law and brothers all travelled to Shimla to spend time with her while she was working.

The circumstances ultimately made Shaque far more personal for the actress than she had anticipated when she signed the project. "It turned out to be a beautiful experience for me, and of course, we joked that this is Neer's debut along with my debut. So, it is going to be the most special show for me always," Parineeti added.

Dhanush heap praise on modha rathri, asks moviegoers to watch it in cinemas

Chennai : More than two weeks after its theatrical release, Modha Rathri continues to find appreciation from within the Tamil film industry. The Rishikanth and Anishma Anilkumar-led film has received encouraging responses from critics and audiences, with several prominent names speaking positively about the debut venture. The latest celebrity to champion the film is Dhanush, who met the cast and crew before sharing a special note about the film on social media.

The actor's endorsement comes at a time when Modha Rathri is attempting to find a larger audience in theatres. His post also drew a response from director Tamizharasan Pachamuthu, who is set to collaborate with Dhanush on one of his upcoming projects. Quote-tweeting Dhanush's post, the filmmaker wrote, "Thank you, sir. Appreciation like this will inspire and encourage many more debut talents. Keep inspiring." Dhanush is not the first major name from the Tamil film industry to express his appreciation for Modha Rathri. Silambarasan TR has also backed the film, while Tamizharasan Pachamuthu



previously shared his positive response to the project. The growing word of mouth has brought attention to a film largely powered by newcomers both in front of and behind the camera.

For Mythri Movie Makers, which is producing the film, Dhanush's endorsement was naturally a moment to celebrate. The production house responded to his post by describing it as "A moment that has the #ModhaRathri team on cloud nine." Modha Rathri marks the directorial debut of Raja Karuppasamy, who has also written the film. The project is produced by Naveen Yemini and Y Ravi Shankar under Mythri Movie Makers. The production banner's entry into Tamil cinema has already includ-

ed Ajith Kumar's Good Bad Ugly and the Pradeep Ranganathan and Mamitha Baiju starrer Dude, making Modha Rathri its third Tamil production.

At the centre of Modha Rathri is a newly married couple whose wedding is not entirely of their choosing. The film unfolds around their first night together, but rather than presenting marriage through a conventional romantic lens, it uses the situation to expose uncomfortable truths about the couple and their families.

As the night progresses, revelations force the newlyweds to reassess the circumstances that brought them together. What initially appears to be a story about an arranged or forced marriage gradually becomes an exploration of relationships, family expectations and the difficult realities that can remain hidden beneath social conventions. Alongside Rishikanth and Anishma Anilkumar, the film features Chetan, Bagavathi Perumal, Abdool Lee and A Venkatesh in supporting roles. The ensemble contributes to a story that places its characters and their interpersonal conflicts at the centre of the narrative.

Rohit Saraf and Prajakta Koli wrap shoot for Mismatched season 4



Mumbai : Rohit Saraf and Prajakta Koli have wrapped filming for the fourth and final season of Netflix's popular coming-of-age series 'Mismatched', marking the completion of Dimple and Rishi's journey. Koli announced the wrap on Instagram, writing, "See you soon."

The upcoming season will bring the series' central characters back for the

concluding chapter of their story, with familiar faces returning alongside new moments and surprises. Produced by RSVP Movies, Mismatched follows Dimple and Rishi as they navigate love, friendship and growing up. The fourth season will bring their journey to a close. For Koli, who plays Dimple, returning for the final season has been an emotional

experience.

In a statement issued as part of a release, she said, "Coming back to the Mismatched set for one final season feels incredibly emotional. Dimple has been such a huge part of my journey, and getting to tell the last chapter of her story on Netflix is something I'll always be grateful for. I can't wait for our paglus on Netflix to experience what we've been cooking." Saraf, who returns as Rishi, also reflected on the show's significance to him.

"Mismatched has given me some of my favourite memories, and returning for this final season on Netflix feels really special. Being back with this team, slipping into Rishi's world again, and creating new memories together already feels magical," he said. With filming now complete, the fourth season is set to serve as the final chapter of the story that has built a loyal fan following over the years.

Bipasha Basu demands FDA action after allegedly finding worms in health drink

Mumbai : Actress Bipasha Basu has raised concerns about an Isopure nutrition product after claiming she found what looked like tiny worms inside a newly opened container. She shared a video of the product on her Instagram story on Thursday, September 10, and appealed to Maharashtra FDA Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe for help.

In the video, Bipasha showed the contents of the container up close and identified the material as worms. "This Isopure is full of worms... tiny tiny worms. The new dabba that we've opened is full of worms," Bipasha is



heard saying in the video. She also tagged Tukaram Mundhe in her Instagram story and asked the Maharashtra FDA Commissioner to look into the matter.

Along with the video, Bipasha wrote, "@tukaram_ias You are our only hope... so we don't get spoilt or adulterated

stuff in everything that we purchase." She also added a folded-hands emoji. Her post raises an allegation about the product, but there is no independent confirmation in the information available that the substance shown in the video was worms or that the Isopure product was

contaminated.

Isopure is a nutrition brand known for whey protein isolate products and supplements. Its products are marketed as low-carb or zero-carb options. Bipasha has now asked the Maharashtra FDA to look into the issue. There is no information yet about any response from Isopure or the FDA. On the work front, Bipasha currently has no announced film in her lineup. The actress has maintained a relatively low profile in recent years and was last seen in the 2020 web series Dangerous.

Her fans are still waiting for an announcement about her return to the big screen.

Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda continue to build buzz for Ranabaali

Hyderabad : The teaser of Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda's upcoming film Ranabaali has instantly struck a chord with the fans. The film's posters, genre, and plotline have already garnered considerable attention. But the biggest highpoint is that Ranabaali is Rashmika and Vijay's first film together after their wedding.

The response to the Ranabaali teaser has given the filmmakers a fresh lease of life. Fans are taking over social media to express their responses. The comments sections under both the actors' timelines on social media are filled with exciting messages. While the teaser clearly describes what Ranabaali is about, let's look at the glimpses of what the fans and audiences can look forward to. Director Rahul Sankrityan has penned a story that is a complete departure from Vijay Deverakonda's earlier films. Set



in the Rayalaseema region between 1854 and 1878, Ranabaali's story centres on local resistance. How a fierce hero leads a desperate rebellion against famine and British colonial oppression. The film chronicles how scores of people suffered from starvation while harsh colonial tax policies and grain exports continued unabated.

Vijay Deverakonda plays the titular character of a fierce, rebellious warrior, Singanamala Bobbili

Ranabaali. He is a gritty, fierce man rising from the region of Rayalaseema to protect his people. The Arjun Reddy star underwent intense physical and combat training to play a fierce tribal warrior. Vijay reportedly underwent rigorous horse-riding training - learning single-hand riding, full-speed galloping, firearm control on horseback, and managing high-agility stallions. Rashmika Mandanna plays Jayamma, the wife and companion of Vijay De-

verakonda. Her preparation for the part has been clinical through dedicated look transformations and costume fittings to understand the character nuances. The Pushpa actress spent time reviewing the cultural (Rayalaseema region) and traditional attires.

Ranabaali marks Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna's first onscreen collaboration since their wedding earlier this year. And naturally, fans can't wait to look forward to their onscreen chemistry. The posters and the teaser show how they display natural and heartwarming chemistry. According to the film's director Rahul Sankrityan, Vijay and Rashmika's established real-life connection naturally translates onscreen. This adds an extra layer of depth to their historical romance. The couple's past performances together have turned them into a fan-favourite pair.

Binge the c-drama wave: where to watch Chinese films and shows in India

Agency : Korean dramas may have become a mainstream obsession in India, but Chinese dramas are quietly building their own audience. From historical romances and fantasy epics to contemporary love stories, crime thrillers and short-form dramas, C-dramas offer an enormous catalogue for viewers willing to look beyond the more familiar Korean and Japanese titles.

The only problem is figuring out where to watch them in India. Here's a guide to platforms that offer Chinese films and shows in their catalogues. The streaming service has a substantial catalogue of Mainland Chinese dramas, along with Korean, Thai and other Asian content. Its current catalogue includes titles such as Story of Kunning Palace, Mysterious Lotus Casebook, Story of Yanxi Palace, Love Is Sweet, Love Between Fairy And Devil, The Story of Ming Lan, Destined and Only For Love.

The platform operates with both free and VIP content. iQIYI also offers English subtitles and also has an India presence through its app. For someone just getting started with C-dramas, iQIYI is particularly useful because



its catalogue covers multiple genres. Its Mainland China section currently features a dedicated catalogue of Chinese series and movies, and Viki also has curated collections designed for people new to C-dramas. Viewers can browse by country, genre and curated collections. The platform has a mix of free and premium content.

The platform is useful for viewers looking for contemporary romances, costume dramas, fantasy series and other popular Chinese television content. Availability, however, can vary depending on the title and region, so it is worth searching for a specific

show directly rather than assuming every WeTV title is accessible in India. YouTube is one of the most underrated options for watching Chinese movies or shows in India. Several Chinese production companies and broadcasters operate official YouTube channels where episodes, clips, trailers, and sometimes complete dramas are uploaded with subtitles. Many C-drama fans begin their journey here because it is free. While these are not dedicated C-drama streamers, their catalogues offer select movies and shows with subtitles. Some of these streaming platforms also carry dubbed content.

Will Mamata Banerjee Run in Upcoming Bypolls Bengal Evaluates Her Prospects

New Delhi, Sep 10: There is now more conjecture in Bengal on whether former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee may run for one of the six seats in the upcoming by-elections. It has become a discussion subject even though Banerjee hasn't said anything. Elections for two Bengali seats are scheduled for October 6. First, Humayun Kabir, who also won from the Naoda seat, departed Rejinagar. Additionally, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, who defeated Banerjee in the Bhabanipur seat this year, deserted Nandigram. The party head should take the lead, according to many, considering the BJP's ascent in Bengal and the defections in Banerjee's Trinamool Congress. In order to accomplish that, she must run for and win a seat in the assembly.They point out that Banerjee can successfully highlight the problems that are dominating public conversation, act as the Leader of the Opposition, and support her party as an MLA. While Banerjee is known as a mass leader, her presence in the House can make her more effective particularly regarding controver-

sies -- such as the current debate over vegetarian-non-vegetarian fare for Durga Puja. Or the ongoing crackdown on small eateries and hotels in Kolkata over cleanliness. Statistics indicate that Nandigram could be the safer bet for the former Chief Minister, even though she lost to Adhikari there in the 2021 elections. Back then, Adhikari had defeated Banerjee by 1,956 votes. This time, he beat the Trinamool candidate by a margin of 9,665 votes.Rejinagar - located in Murshidabad district within the Baharampur Lok Sabha constituency - many say, is best left to the Congress. But the constituency has a 65 per cent Muslim population and that could also work as an advantage for Banerjee should she choose to contest from here. Party insiders suggested that Banerjee should form an alliance with the Congress for the by-elections on these two seats.

It could work better for Trinamool since this is an area where Congress's Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has served as MP multiple times, they said.State Congress chief Shubhankar Sarkar can con-



test from Nandigram since he is a local resident, they declare. The big complication could be whether Banerjee's Trinamool Congress will retain the poll symbol of "twin flowers". Earlier, Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena and Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party both lost their poll symbols and party name after a split when the other side claimed they were the real party. Ritabrata Banerjee's group has already declared itself to be the "real Trinamool." "We will contest

both seats, and our candidate will get the party symbol," asserted Ritu Dutta, a leader of his group. Kunal Ghosh of the Trinamool Congress stated, "People are with Mamata Banerjee, and our candidate will definitely contest the election from there."Additionally, the BJP declared its intention to run for both seats.

"Let Mamata Banerjee contest from both seats; we would enjoy defeating her again," Sajal Ghosh stated.

Wrestler Antim Panghal Talks About India's Asian Games Medal Hopes

Aichi-Nagoya: Ahead of the forthcoming Asian Games, Indian wrestler Antim Panghal is optimistic about his country's wrestling squad. He claims that the team has been practicing together for the past three months and has a solid mix of veteran and youth wrestlers. In an interview with ANI on Wednesday, Antim stated that the wrestlers have been supporting and mentoring one another during their training, with the older members also pointing out areas that require development.

"Our crew is excellent this time. We have wrestlers that are both senior and junior. For the past three months, we have been training together. We support one another, and the elders mentor us as well. They point out my shortcomings and recommend areas for improvement. We're getting ready for the mat thanks to this training," Antim said. The wrestler also said there is no pressure despite the expectations of winning medals in wrestling. She said the entire team is aiming for gold and will give its best at the continental showpiece."Everyone wants to win a medal, and everyone is preparing to win gold. We are trying to give our 100 per cent. There is no pressure.

We know what we have to fight for, and we train for that. We compete in other tournaments as well. The Asian Games are important because they are held once every four years, but we will give our 100 per cent," she added.Antim further highlighted the importance of improving performance on the mat and working repeatedly on mistakes during training."We will focus more on our work on the mat. We all have to fight on the mat, so it is not about doing separate training. We are focusing on our mistakes and working on them again and again so that we can execute them properly during the bout," she said. Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, will host the 2026 Asian Games from September 19 to October 4. Indian wrestlers will want to do better than they did in the last tournament in Hangzhou, where the nation took home three bronze medals.India will aim to improve its performance in Aichi-Nagoya after winning a record 107 medals in Hangzhou 2023, including 28 gold, 38 silver, and 41 bronze.

Parul Chaudhary's Audacious Asian Games Message "I Don't Really Take Pressure"



Hangzhou: At the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in 2026, defending 5000-meter champion Parul Chaudhary will compete in an enlarged schedule that includes the 1500-meter event in addition to the 5000- and 3000-meter steeplechase. The Indian distance runner sees this as an opportunity rather than a burden. At the Sports Authority of India's regional center in Bengaluru, Parul, who won gold in the 5000m and silver in the 3000m steeplechase at the Hangzhou Asian Games, is getting ready for her second continental Games. The 30-year-old will face a new challenge with the

three-event schedule, but she is sure she is prepared. "Like I won gold and silver last time, this time I am thinking of bringing back the same medals for my country again," Parul said to Olympics.com at the Bengaluru regional center of the Sports Authority of India.This time, I'm competing in three events instead of just two, which is fantastic for me. Everything is going really nicely with my preparations."Parul is enjoying the opportunity to test herself over a new distance rather than seeing the third event as an additional source of strain.She remarked, "I don't really

take pressure." "In fact, I am excited that I get to compete in a new event as well." An event that revealed a possible weakness has also influenced her preparations. Her effort in the steeplechase at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow was impacted by bad weather, but she returned the next day to participate in the 5000m.The incident forced Parul and her colleagues to alter their training strategy in advance of the Asian Games, when the heat and rain in Japan would also pose problems."I hadn't trained specifically for rainy and cold weather conditions back then," she said. "Realising that Japan also experiences heat and rain, we are now actively training in rainy conditions here (in Bengaluru) to adapt better." That willingness to identify shortcomings and work on them has been central to Parul's development. She recalled a period when her steeplechase progress had stalled before a major improvement in 2022."I was training continuously, but for a long time, the results weren't coming," Parul said. "Around 2021,

my timing in the 3000m steeplechase had plateaued. I was stuck around the 10-minute mark. But in 2022, I clocked 9:38 (at the Indian Grand Prix in Thiruvananthapuram). That's when I felt that I could really perform well."The breakthrough helped propel her onto the international stage, while increased exposure and training support further accelerated her progress. With the Asian Games now the immediate target and the Los Angeles Olympics also part of her longer-term planning, Parul said the sacrifices made during the training cycle are substantial. "We stay and train continuously at SAI Bengaluru without even going home or celebrating festivals, all to prepare for the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and Olympics," Parul stated.She will have three opportunities to add to India's medal total in three events at Aichi-Nagoya, which is now the main emphasis.Any athlete that represents their nation twice at the Asian Games and wins medals both times will feel really proud, so it will be incredible.

MK Stalin retaliates and doesn't hold back in response to Vijay's jaw gesture

Chennai, Sep 10: In Tamil Nadu, gloves are off. The previous chief minister has retaliated two days after the chief minister made a "jaw" gesture during an Assembly address that the DMK perceived as making fun of party leader MK Stalin.Stalin described his time in prison during the Emergency in a forceful criticism of the Chief Minister's gesture, which Vijay subsequently claimed was not deliberate. He remembered being subjected to "torture" while incarcerated, which resulted in the damage to his jaw.After the Karunanidhi-led DMK government was overthrown during the Emergency (1975-77), Stalin, who was then in his early 20s and a leader of the DMK's youth wing, was detained in early 1976. "In the jail, we experienced all types of abuse. We were paired with lepers. Ten of us were imprisoned in a little space. The cell included a single urinal. The Chief Minister recalls, "We had to sleep there only, and there was stench everywhere."Stalin went on to describe the "torture": "Police wouldn't let us sleep at night. They would strike us with boots and laathis. Chitti Babu MP, who was with me, died in prison after they used life in prison to punish us. My jaw bones fractured in that attack. The DMK chairman called Vijay's gesture "inappropriate" and attacked the TVK chief. "You pointed to the jaw with your hand, didn't you? I still have the scars from the hits I took. I don't refute. This type of clampdown has occurred for many in public life, especially for those who fought for Tamils and Tamil Nadu, and we have all experienced it. We've always struggled and faced repercussions. Asking Vi-

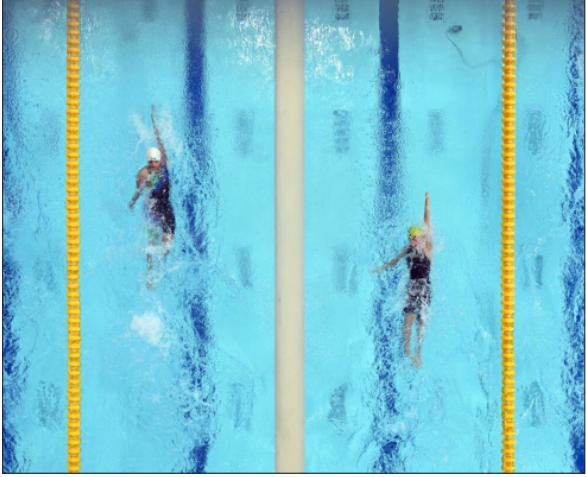
jay to read the history of Tamil Nadu and the DMK, Stalin said: "This is the history from the days of Annadurai, who you call your inspiration. That is the history of DMK and I am proud to be part of it." "Read about my life, my struggle. You don't know the truth," Stalin told Vijay.During his September 7 speech, in which he targeted the main opposition DMK over alleged corruption, Vijay was seen holding his jaw with one hand as if to lift it.As the DMK turned up the heat, Vijay clarified that his body language - including the gesture of holding his jaw with one hand - was involuntary and completely unintentional.Referring to his expression in the Assembly, Vijay said: "My body language was an accidental expression. I would like to make it known that it was not in any way intentional."Therefore, I kindly request that it should not be interpreted as an act intended to hurt anyone's feelings on a personal level," he continued in a social media message.According to DMK officials, Vijay was making fun of party president MK Stalin, a phrase that has a sad past for the former chief minister.Stalin details his 1976 arrest and subsequent incarceration in his memoirs Ungalil Oruvan (One Among You). He also speaks of the prison being turned into a torture chamber that is filled with death and agony cries.Vijay and the CPM, his ally, are now at war over the incident.The Chief Minister's gesture was denounced by CPM state secretary P Shanmugam, who claimed that Stalin's jaw was shattered and that he had been badly abused by the police during the Emergency.

In the Champions League opener, PSG defeats Slovan Bratislava while Liverpool loses to Atletico Madrid

Paris: Ferran Torres scored a hat-trick in Paris Saint-Germain's 6-1 victory against Slovan Bratislava on Wednesday, while Liverpool overcame Atletico Madrid to win the Champions League for the third time in a row. Arsenal made an impression with a 1-0 victory against Napoli, while Barcelona opened the season with five goals against Feyenoord. In their next two European matches, PSG will go to Manchester City and host Barcelona in an attempt to become only the fourth team to win three consecutive European Cups. "It is the Champions League, we always play against tough teams, but we have to be focused first in Ligue 1 because we didn't start in the right way," said Torres, with PSG yet to win a domestic game this season.But they wasted little time in picking apart Yaya Toure's Slovan at the Parc des Princes.Ousmane Dembele hammered in a rebound and then nodded in a deflected cross to put Luis Enrique's men two goals ahead inside 22 minutes.Torres tapped home Dembele's cross just after the half-hour mark

After an 18-month doping ban, an Indian swimmer will miss the Asian Games

Aichi-Nagoya: After failing a drug test, an Indian swimmer who had qualified for the Asian Games was suspended for eighteen months on Wednesday. As a result, he will not be able to compete in this month's continental tournament in Aichi-Nagoya. The 17-year-old was on the short list for the continental competition and has qualified for two events at the Asian Games. But after his sample revealed the presence of terbutaline, a beta-2 agonist prohibited by anti-doping regulations, he was suspended for eighteen months. The adolescent's name was removed off the roster of competitors for the Asian Games after he acquired an adverse analytical finding (AAF) in February. His hearing was held last week and he was handed an 18-month sus-



pension on Wednesday morning."The swimmer had received the violation earlier this year. However, the hearing did not take place till last week and he was handed an 18-month suspension today morning," a source in the Swimming Federation of India (SFI) told PTI.The SFI had requested that the hearing

be expedited so that the swimmer could take part in the Asian Games, provided he was given a clean chit by The National Anti Doping Agency (NADA).The swimmer's twin brother is part of the Indian Asian Games team.The Asian Games are scheduled to begin in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan from September 19.

P Chidambaram claims that India would not benefit from the BRICS The BJP Has A Question



New Delhi, Sep 10: Senior Congress lawmaker and Rajya Sabha MP P Chidambaram questioned on Wednesday the concrete advantages India has received from prior BRICS meetings, even as New Delhi prepares to host the high-profile summit over the weekend. The former Union minister claimed that the previous two or three sessions had not produced any noteworthy results.Speaking on the next BRICS Summit in Delhi in 2026, Chidambaram stated that India is a member of a number of multilateral organizations, such as the G20, QUAD, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and BRICS, but he questioned what tangible advantages the nation has gained from them. "I'm not sure how many prime ministers and presidents will be attending. Chidambaram

told news agency ANI, "I don't think the last two or three BRICS summits have produced tangible benefits or tangible results."In actuality, we are members of the G20, SCO, BRICS, and QUAD. What advantages does it provide for us? I am unable to see. I didn't observe any advantages at the previous two or three peaks. The BRICS Summits had produced some real advantages before, he continued. Hitting back at the Congress leader, the BJP raised question on Congress' understanding of diplomacy. "This raises question on how Congress views diplomacy. The Congress during its tenure called Pakistan a victim of terror while it is a perpetrator of terrorism," senior BJP leader Nalin Kohli said. "Does Congress see diplomacy purely in terms of give and take that it is asking about tangible benefits,"

he further asked.He also accused the Congress of trying to play politics over a big and important event.Chidambaram's remarks came as preparations are underway in the national capital for the BRICS Summit 2026, with civic and infrastructure agencies stepping up arrangements ahead of the gathering.India will host the BRICS summit in New Delhi on September 12-13, 2026. The country assumed the BRICS Chairship on January 1, 2026, under the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'.BRICS brings together eleven major emerging and developing economies - Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, India, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates. The BRICS Partner Countries include Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.Top leaders anticipated to attend the pivotal summit include South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. Together, BRICS account for around 40% of the world's GDP and 49% of the world's population.

Raphinha and Torres Shine as Barcelona and PSG Lead Champions League Goal Rush

New Delhi : Barcelona continued their free-scoring start to the Champions League, while Paris Saint-Germain also made a statement on the opening night of their title defence. Raphinha struck twice as Barcelona overwhelmed Feyenoord, with Karim Adiyemi, Lamine Yamal and Gabriel Jesus also finding the net in a five-goal rout. PSG were just as ruthless, with Ferran Torres scoring a hat-trick after Ousmane Dembele's first-half double. Liverpool, meanwhile, had to fight back from an early Marcos Llorente goal to beat Atletico Madrid at Anfield, while Martin Odegaard's fourth goal in five games gave Arsenal a hard-earned victory over Napoli. The night's results offered plenty of different flavours: Barcelona and PSG produced goal fests, Liverpool showed their ability to respond under pressure, and Arsenal relied on patience before their captain delivered the decisive moment. Raphinha's sensational start to the season



continued as Barcelona tore Feyenoord apart. The Brazilian opened the scoring inside three minutes after producing a brilliant piece of skill to evade two defenders before finishing calmly. Karim Adiyemi soon doubled the advantage with a curling effort from outside the box, before Raphinha returned to strike again in the 57th minute. Lamine Yamal added a fourth from a free-kick, while Gabriel Jesus marked his Barcelona debut with a late header. Sem Steijn's consolation ensured Barcelona's wait for a Champions League clean sheet



continued, but the attacking display was emphatic. PSG began their title defence in style as they dismantled Slovan Bratislava. Dembele set the tone with two goals in six first-half minutes before turning provider for Torres, who tapped in his first of the night. Torres doubled his tally shortly after half-time before completing his hat-trick from a Dembele corner. Fabian Ruiz added a late sixth, while Suileiman Camara scored a consolation for Slovan. For PSG, it was a much-needed European boost after an indifferent domestic start. Liverpool

were given an early reminder of their history with Atletico when Marcos Llorente put the visitors ahead at Anfield. But Arne Slot's side gradually turned up the pressure and eventually found a response through Dominik Szoboszlai. Alexis Mac Allister then completed the turnaround after the break, firing Liverpool ahead following a sustained spell of pressure. Atletico had chances to make Liverpool pay, but the hosts held on for a victory that puts them on the front foot in Europe. Arsenal's finishing was anything but clinical against Napoli, but their persistence eventually paid off. After missing several clear opportunities, the Gunners found their breakthrough through Odegaard. The captain's strike from outside the box was his fourth goal in five games and capped a performance in which Arsenal registered 26 attempts. The winner came after a 29-pass move, underlining the control Arsenal finally provided the finishing touch.

Sable, Yashvir in Focus Before Asian Games

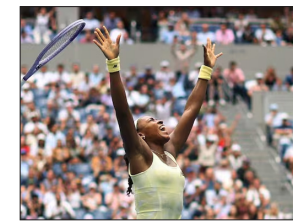


New Delhi : Almost all the Asian Games-bound track and field athletes, including fit-again star steeplechaser Avinash Sable, will be in action in the Indian Athletics Series Final in New Delhi on Thursday as part of their tune-up to the mega event in Japan later this month. The invitational one-day event at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium is the culmination of the 15-leg Indian Athletics Series, which was introduced by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) this April. The national federation has made the finale lucrative by introducing a total prize fund of Rs 65 lakh. The winner in each of the 30 events will pocket Rs one lakh. The second place finishers will receive Rs 50,000 each, while the athletes who ended at third, fourth, fifth and sixth will get Rs 25,000, Rs 20,000, Rs 15,000 and Rs 10,000 respectively. Except for a few athletes such as long jumper Murali Sreeshankar, high jumper Sarvesh Kushare and triple jumper Praveen Chithravel, all the athletes from the 77-member Indian team for the Asian Games in Japan beginning September 19 will be competing on Thursday. Sreeshankar, who won silver in the recent Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and has also crossed the 8m mark in every competition he took part this season, is already in Japan, training at the University of Tsukuba near Tokyo ahead of the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya. The remaining athletes will leave for Japan on Saturday and reach the University of Tsukuba the next day for a short acclimatisation camp.

Coco Gauff Rallies Past Mirra Andreeva Into US Open Semis Against Rybakina

New Delhi : Coco Gauff showed why she is one of the toughest players in terms of mentality and pure skill as she pulled off a stunning comeback win against Mirra Andreeva to enter the semi-final stages of the US Open 2026. Gauff won the match 2-6, 7-6, 6-2 to set up a final four clash against the new World No.1 Elena Rybakina. This is the first time since 2023 that Gauff has reached the semi-finals at Flushing Meadows. It appeared that Andreeva was actually running away with the game when Gauff appeared to be rusty and not even close to the level.

The crowd quickly got behind the 4th seed as she battled back into the contest and pushed it to a tiebreak in the second set. Gauff was able to save two match points before sealing the deal and pushing the match into the decider, where Andreeva's challenge just withered away. The up-



coming US Open semifinals will mark only the second time in the Open Era that all four top seeds have reached the final four. The previous instance came in 1975, when top seed Chris Evert, No. 2 Virginia Wade, No. 3 Martina Navratilova and No. 4 Evonne Goolagong all advanced to the semifinals. Mirra Andreeva looked in complete control for much of the opening set as Coco Gauff endured a nightmare start in their US Open quarterfinal. The American struggled to find any rhythm, particularly on serve, while her forehand repeatedly let her down. Gauff has spent the past year working to rebuild both aspects of her game, but

neither weapon was functioning when she needed them most. Andreeva, the 19-year-old French Open champion, had also spent much of the summer dealing with the expectations that followed her breakthrough in Paris. Yet in New York, she was handed a perfect opportunity when Gauff's game suddenly deserted her. Andreeva raced into a 4-0 lead within just 12 minutes and wrapped up the opening set 6-2 after only 27 minutes. Gauff looked completely out of sorts, with the match appearing to be slipping away rapidly. The momentum changed dramatically once the second set began. Andreeva's level dipped, and she started making mistakes that allowed Gauff back into the contest. What followed was a tense battle between two players struggling to take control, with neither willing or able to dictate rallies unless the other forced the issue.

Watch Chess Legend Magnus Carlsen Swap Pieces for a Day of Golf During His GCL Run

New Delhi: Magnus Carlsen may be the king when it comes to the chess-board but the Norwegian showed that he can handle himself well on the golf course. Carlsen was part of a golf outing in Bengaluru amidst the Global Chess League action on September 9, from the event are anything to go by, the World No.1 showed his laser-sharp focus during the outing, hitting his shots with perfection and ease.

Apart from Carlsen, Divya Deshmukh and Adhiban Baskaran were also in action during the golf outing. Carlsen has been vocal about his love towards golf as he plays the sport as a hobby to wind down when he is away from chess. During an interview, Carlsen



even suggested he would have picked being a world champion in golf rather than chess. He also said that advantage about golf is that you can play the sport for a long time. "The thing about golf is that you can play until you're old," said Carlsen in

2023. Carlsen played a big role in helping Alpine APL Pipers complete a double on close contenders CheQ Mumba Masters to take the top spot in the overall standings. The Pipers defeated Mumba Masters 11-6 and Carlsen played a solid game

Big Ben Time at US Open: Shelton Breaks Through Against the Elite

New York: At 3:33 on a Wednesday morning in New York, Ben Shelton had lost all sense of time. Four hours and 28 minutes after stepping onto Arthur Ashe Stadium to face Carlos Alcaraz, Shelton had just produced the win of his life. He looked towards his team, grinned, let out a roar and brought back the telephone celebration that has become synonymous with him. The timing could not have been more fitting. Shelton had waited a long time for a moment like this. Until Tuesday night, the 23-year-old was 0-17 against players ranked inside the world's Top 3 and had lost all three of his previous meetings with Alcaraz. For all the noise around his booming serve, explosive athleticism and boundless potential, there remained a line between Shelton and the game's true elite that he had been unable to cross. By the time the clock struck 3:33 a.m., that line had finally disappeared. The signs had been there for a while. Shelton arrived at the US Open in the middle of the best stretch of his career, having won 11 of his previous 12 matches and gone 13-2 during the North American hard-



court swing. His run included a second ATP Masters 1000 title in Montreal, while the victory over Alcaraz also sent him into a third Grand Slam semifinal. His explosive game was no longer simply producing highlights. It was producing results. But there remained an obvious barrier. Before Tuesday, Shelton had never beaten a player ranked inside the Top 3, losing all 17 of his previous attempts. Alcaraz, whom he had faced three times and lost to on each occasion, represented the most significant obstacle yet. For all the progress Shelton had made over the past few months, there was still a difference between being one of the most dangerous players on tour and proving he could beat those sitting at the very top of it. Tuesday

night offered him another chance to close that gap. This was undoubtedly the biggest victory of Shelton's career, though it did not come against Alcaraz at his absolute best. The defending champion was unusually erratic, particularly through the second and third sets, where his forehand repeatedly broke down. His 53 unforced errors, compared to Shelton's 34, reflected a performance that never quite found sustained rhythm. But Alcaraz's struggles should not entirely define the story of Shelton's night. He was given an opening and, unlike on the previous 17 occasions against the world's Top 3, Shelton took it. More importantly, he survived when the match changed again. Alcaraz rediscovered his energy and rhythm in the fourth set, breaking Shelton twice to force a decider. Then, when Shelton fell behind 3-5 in the deciding tiebreak, the old doubts could easily have returned. Instead, he won four of the final five points. Taking advantage of an off-colour Alcaraz was one thing; holding his nerve when the defending champion had fought his way back into the contest was another.

AS Roma Will Wear Special Nepal Tribute Jerseys in Champions League Clash

New Delhi : AS Roma will take the pitch in Istanbul wearing a special jersey dedicated to Nepal during their Champions League clash with Fenerbahce. The one-off shirt will replace their usual sponsor with a message supporting relief efforts after devastating floods and landslides in the country. Roma's regular shirt sponsor, Eurobet.live, cannot be displayed in Turkey because of the country's restrictions on gambling and betting advertising. Instead, the Italian club have teamed up with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to use the fixture as a platform to raise awareness about the humanitarian crisis in Nepal. The special jersey will feature the WFP logo across the front, alongside the message "Together for Nepal" and the Nepalese flag. The initiative comes after a major natural disaster left thousands of people in urgent need of assis-



tance. "The visitors will take to the pitch with the World Food Programme (WFP) logo on the front of their shirts," Roma said ahead of the match. Rather than taking the field with a blank shirt, Roma have turned Turkey's advertising restrictions into an opportunity to support those affected by the disaster. A flash flood triggered by a glacier and rockslide near the Chi-

na-Nepal border on August 26 has caused a devastating humanitarian crisis. According to the figures provided, at least 1,410 people have died, while 5,651 remain missing. The club's partnership with the WFP will extend beyond Wednesday's fixture, with the special shirts set to contribute to the organisation's relief efforts. The jerseys worn by Gian Piero Gasperini's play-

ers during the match will be auctioned after the fixture, with all proceeds directed towards the WFP's emergency operations in Nepal. Fans will also be able to contribute through a dedicated challenge on the UN's ShareTheMeal app. The auction and fundraising campaign will provide additional support for the WFP's ongoing emergency response in Nepal.

England Take Control at Edgbaston as Pakistan Suffer Same Old Struggles

New Delhi : Pakistan's troubles deepened on the opening day of the Edgbaston Test as another dramatic batting collapse left them struggling to keep England in check. With their confidence already shaken, Pakistan had made a big shake-up squad after their loss at Lord's. For the match in Edgbaston, sweeping changes to their XI, handing out three Test debuts and bringing Saim Ayub back into the side. Captain Babar Azam had urged his team to approach the match with a "nothing to lose" mindset, but their batting once again failed to deliver. Pakistan were bowled out inside 34 overs, losing all 10 wickets across roughly a session and a half. Ollie Robinson, Jofra Archer and Josh Tongue caused most of the damage as England's seamers exploited



the conditions. Robinson was particularly miserly, while also reaching 100 Test wickets faster than any post-war England bowler. Pakistan's opening partnership once again failed to provide a platform, ending in single figures for the fifth time in the series. Archer then added to the damage by dismissing Shan Masood, leaving Pakistan reeling at 26/4. Tongue continued the assault by removing Babar, clipping the top of the off stump and

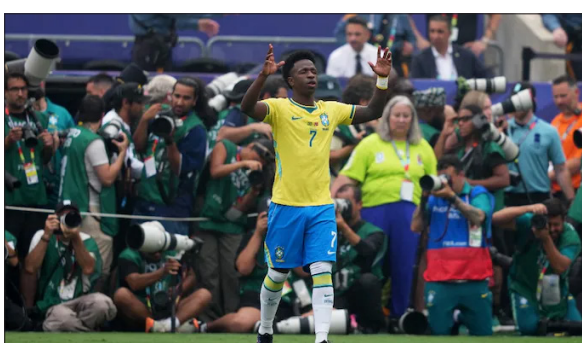
further exposing Pakistan's fragile top order. Their first five batters managed only 24 runs collectively, their second-lowest such total in a Test innings since 2000. Saud Shakeel attempted to hold the innings together, but support at the other end was scarce. Tongue struck again to remove debutant Ghazi Ghori and Mohammad Imran before eventually breaking through Shakeel's defence after the left-hander had battled into the 40s.

Vinicius Jr and Raphinha Featured as Brazil Announce 26-Man Squad for India Friendly

Mumbai : Brazil head coach Carlo Ancelotti has named a star-studded 26-man squad for the upcoming international friendly against India on October 3. Real Madrid superstar Vinicius Jr and Barcelona winger Raphinha are among the headline names set to travel to India for the historic clash against the Blue Tigers. The Brazilian squad is packed with some of the biggest names

in world football. Alongside Vinicius and Raphinha, Marquinhos, Bruno Guimaraes, Douglas Luiz, Endrick, Estevao and Joao Pedro have also been included by Ancelotti. However, there are a few notable absentees from the squad. Goalkeeping duo Alisson and Ederson have not been included, while Neymar will also miss out after announcing that his time with the national team had come

to an end following the recently concluded FIFA World Cup 2026. Veteran midfielder Casemiro, one of the most decorated midfielders of his generation, has also not been picked for the friendly. Ancelotti has also injected some young blood into the defensive unit, with Jair Cunha and Vitor Reis earning call-ups. The Nottingham Forest and Manchester City youngsters are among the fresh faces in



the squad as Brazil continue to build towards the future.

The biggest attraction for Indian football fans will un-

doubtedly be the arrival of Vinicius Jr and Raphinha. Two of the most recognisable stars in world football today, the Real Madrid and Barcelona forwards are expected to headline Brazil's visit to India. Kolkata is all set to host Carlo Ancelotti's Brazil in a historic international friendly against the Blue Tigers at the Salt Lake Stadium on October 3. The prospect of seeing Vinicius and Raphinha take

the field in India is expected to make the match one of the biggest international football events ever hosted in the country in recent times. Brazil's visit will offer the Indian team a rare opportunity to test themselves against one of world football's most successful nations, while fans will get the chance to watch some of the game's biggest stars in action. Brazil head coach Carlo Ancelotti an-

nounced a 26-man squad for a historic friendly against India on October 3 in Kolkata. The team features stars like Vinicius Jr and Raphinha, alongside Marquinhos and Bruno Guimaraes, but excludes key players such as Neymar, Alisson, Ederson, and Casemiro. Young talent like Jair Cunha and Vitor Reis were also called up, signalling a mix of experience and youth.