

Disputes over 123 Assam border villages largely resolved: Khandu

GROUND CONSENSUS PAVES WAY FOR PEACE

Itanagar, Oct 14: Chief Minister Pema Khandu stated that long-standing border disputes between Arunachal Pradesh and Assam involving 123 boundary villages have been largely resolved. Speaking at an official event in the state capital, Khandu highlighted that sustained bilateral talks and regional committee frameworks have enabled both states to achieve significant ground-level consensus along their shared 804-kilometer interstate border.

The breakthrough builds upon the historical Namsai Declaration signed by Chief Minister Pema Khandu and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in July 2022. The landmark accord initially brought down the total number of disputed



border habitations from 123 to 86 by establishing 12 joint regional committees tasked with conducting detailed field verifications, consulting local indigenous communities, and mapping administrative boundaries. In the latest operational

progress, regional committees representing Papum Pare district in Arunachal Pradesh and Lakhimpur and Biswanath districts in Assam convened to review joint survey reports. Officials confirmed that consensus has been reached

across 31 out of 32 disputed sectors in the Papum Pare zone. To formalize the resolutions, both state administrations have agreed to engage the Survey of India to initiate physical pillar demarcation and boundary mapping across 33 disputed villages within the next two months. Chief Minister Khandu expressed gratitude to the Central Government and local tribal councils for facilitating a peaceful, dialogue-driven resolution process. He emphasized that settling decades-old boundary friction will prevent local clashes, streamline rural development schemes, and accelerate road and electricity infrastructure expansion across remote border communities in both states.

Kohima holds voter registration camps across 189 booths

Kohima, Oct 14: In line with the directives of the Election Commission of India (ECI), the District Election Officer (DEO) of Kohima launched a proactive campaign featuring special voter enrollment camps across all 189 polling booths in the district. The initiative aims to facilitate electors, rectify discrepancies, and ensure no eligible citizen is excluded from the updated electoral rolls.

Organized under the framework of the ongoing voter roll revision process, the special camps provide direct local assistance for submitting application forms. Electors can submit Form 6 for new voter registration, Form 7 for objection or deletion of names, and Form 8 for correction of entry details or transposition. To assist residents and address procedural grievances, the district administration deployed 189 Booth Level Officers (BLOs), supported by

seven Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) and six Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) stationed across designated polling locations.

Deputy Commissioner and District Election Officer, Kohima, B. Henok Buchem (NCS), appealed to the public to actively participate in the drive and approach election officials to resolve any documentation challenges. He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to building an error-free, inclusive voter database. State election authorities directed field personnel to record and verify incoming documents systematically while documenting camp proceedings through photographic, video, and testimonial logs to ensure transparent execution. To maximize reach, special emphasis was placed on enrolling young citizens turning 18 years of age, with Booth Level Officers directly

engaging with local youth clubs and educational institutions. College students and first-time voters were assisted in submitting online applications through the Voter Helpline Mobile Application and the National Voters' Services Portal (NVSP), enabling digital verification and seamless processing of primary identification documents.

District authorities also conducted focused door-to-door visits in remote and rural habitations surrounding Kohima to assist senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PwDs), and marginalized community members. Specialized facilitation counters were arranged at accessible polling stations to help individuals update their residential addresses, replace damaged voter ID cards, and complete mandatory Aadhaar linkage with their electoral records without experiencing long waiting queues.

Arunachal CM unveils startup programmes and mini NITI Aayog

Itanagar, Oct 14: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu announced a suite of new policy initiatives to strengthen the state's startup ecosystem, including the launch of the Arunachal Creative Economy (ACE) programme and the establishment of an expert think tank—the Institute for Transforming Arunachal (ITA)—which he described as a “mini NITI Aayog” for the state.

Speaking at an event marking the graduation of Cohort 4 and the launch of Cohort 5 of the Arunachal Pradesh Entrepreneurship Development Program (APEDP), Chief Minister Khandu highlighted that the proposed Institute for Transforming Arunachal will bring together interdisciplinary domain experts to guide long-term policy formulation across agriculture, tourism,

Nagaland gears up for iconic 27th Hornbill Festival

Kohima, Oct 14: Preparations are underway across Nagaland for the 27th edition of the Hornbill Festival, set to run from December 1 to December 10 at the Naga Heritage Village in Kisama, near Kohima. Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio convened a meeting of the High-Powered Committee at the venue to review inter-departmental coordination, road connectivity, power supply, security, and logistics for the international event. Often termed the “Festival of Festivals,” the annual ten-day gala brings together all recognized indigenous tribes of Nagaland to showcase their distinct cultural traditions, folk music, traditional attire, and heritage crafts.

The festival ground at Kisama is structured around morungs (traditional community dormitories), where

each tribe hosts interactive cultural sessions, culinary displays, and artistic exhibitions. The 2026 programming features daily folk dance and musical performances, indigenous sports including Naga wrestling and archery, traditional fashion shows, and the iconic Hornbill International Rock Contest, which draws musical acts and visitors from across the globe.

To promote the cultural showcase nationally, the Nagaland Department of Tourism and the Task Force for Music and Arts (TaFMA) are organizing lead-up promotional showcases, including the “Ticket to Hornbill” musical event at New Delhi's Talkatora Stadium. Tourism authorities report high accommodation bookings across Kohima and neighboring districts, prompting

local administrations to expand homestay accreditations and streamline online Inner Line Permit (ILP) processing for domestic and international travelers. State officials emphasized that the 27th edition aims to boost rural tourism, promote local entrepreneurs, and strengthen Nagaland's positioning as a global cultural destination.

Additionally, state authorities are expanding eco-tourism and adventure circuits surrounding Kohima to distribute tourist footfall beyond the main arena at Kisama. New initiatives for the upcoming edition include guided trekking corridors along the Dzukou Valley, traditional village homestay networks in Khonoma, and specialized culinary workshops focusing on traditional Naga fermentation techniques and indigenous herbs.

Tribeny Rai's film wins APM awards

Gangtok, Oct 14: Sikkim filmmaker Tribeny Rai's upcoming feature film project, A Chronicle of Minor Things, achieved a major international milestone by winning both the top APM Busan Award and the prestigious Sørfond Award at the Asian Project Market (APM). The industry co-production platform was held alongside the Busan International Film Festival in South Korea. Selected from a record 604 project submissions spanning 48 countries, Rai's project was among 30 feature projects curated for international co-production pitching. Pitching the project alongside producer Kislay at the BEXCO convention center in Busan, the duo secured double honors that significantly elevate the film's international financing and production prospects. Winning the Sørfond Award additionally earns Rai an official invitation to Norway, unlocking strategic co-production and distribution channels across European networks. Hailing from Nandok in East Sikkim, Tribeny Rai has established herself as a prominent cinematic voice from the Eastern Himalayas. Set against the rural backdrop of Sikkim, A Chronicle of Minor Things follows a tense community dispute when a 15-year-old girl is found dead on a tree rooted in one village while its branches extend over another, turning a human tragedy into an administrative boundary quarrel. Expressing her gratitude, Rai noted that the international recognition at such an early development stage reassures her creative direction as scriptwriting continues.

Manipur CM urges collective peace

Imphal, Oct 14: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh called for collective, multi-stakeholder efforts to restore lasting peace, foster social harmony, and strengthen unity across the state. Speaking at a public event organized as part of the state-wide Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, the Chief Minister emphasized that peace cannot be achieved in isolation and must be pursued collectively by all sections of society, civil bodies, and community institutions working in tandem. CM Singh urged citizens to halt mutual public criticism and focus constructively on building practical bridges of dialogue between ethnic groups. Citing Singapore's social transformation model as a compelling parallel, he noted that while Manipur can draw valuable insights from international examples of civic harmony, the local population must demonstrate a willingness to learn, adapt, and drive positive structural changes from within. Highlighting government delivery mechanisms, the Chief Minister noted that 42 state government departments organized multi-service outreach camps under the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan umbrella.

Nagaland: Rovisenuo Hibo Crowned Miss Kohima 2026

Kohima, Oct 14: Rovisenuo Hibo, a student of Kohima Science College, Jotsoma, was crowned Miss Kohima 2026 at a grand finale event held at the Regional Centre for Excellence in Music and Performing Arts (RCEMPA) in Jotsoma. Organized by 4Front Event Management in collaboration with Sazolie College, Jotsoma, the prestigious pageant was held under the theme “Beyond the Crown”. The theme emphasized leadership, social responsibility, community engagement, and empowering young women as emerging ambassadors of positive change across the state. Out of 20 participants who competed across various rounds, Sunepjungla Kichu and Thejazenuo Angami, both representing St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Jakhama, secured the first runner-up and second runner-up positions, respec-

tively. In addition to winning the main title, Hibo was awarded the Miss Multimedia subtitle. Subtitle awards were also conferred on other stand-out contestants: Sunepjungla Kichu was named Miss Perfect 10, Thejazenuo Angami won Queen of Hearts, Lumvila T. Sangtam received the Best Advocacy title, and Vinika P. Kiba was adjudged Miss Talent. The outgoing titleholder, Miss Kohima 2025 Ritsala Thonger, officially crowned Hibo amidst applause from an enthusiastic audience.

The event was attended by Major General Harinder Singh Mavi, Inspector General of Assam Rifles (North), as the special guest. Addressing the gathering, Maj Gen Mavi praised the talent, confidence, and vibrant cultural spirit of the Naga youth, calling the contestants true representatives of Nagaland's future.

The evening concluded with cultural showcases, musical performances, and celebrations highlighting youth achievement and empowerment in Nagaland.

During her reign, Miss Kohima 2026 Rovisenuo Hibo will collaborate with local non-governmental organizations and civic authorities to champion youth development, mental health awareness, and educational mentorship initiatives for underprivileged girls across Kohima district. Her advocacy platform will focus on establishing peer support networks and hosting skill-building workshops to encourage young women to pursue higher education and entrepreneurial ventures. The organizers expressed gratitude to event partners, sponsors, and the local community for supporting the pageant and providing a platform for young talent to flourish.

Itanagar Capital administration bans unauthorized public events on NH-415

Itanagar, Oct 14: The Itanagar Capital Complex district administration has prohibited the organization of public events, festivals, rallies, processions, and political programs on or along National Highway-415 (NH-415) without obtaining prior formal permission from the competent authority.

The prohibitory order was issued by District Magistrate Talo Potom in response to growing traffic congestion, street encroachments, and public inconvenience caused by unauthorized event setups and roadside gatherings along the arterial highway stretch. Administrative officials noted that the unauthorized occupation of highway lanes and adjoining road spaces severely impedes traffic flow and restricts the movement of emergency services, including ambulances,



police patrols, and fire tenders, posing risks to public safety.

Under the directive, event organizers must hold all public functions, political gatherings, and community celebrations at designated designated grounds situated away from NH-415 to maintain unhindered vehicular transit. The administration reiterated that no activity will be permitted to encroach upon carriageways or obstruct pedestrian footpaths. Organizers seeking permission for events

in approved municipal zones are also required to secure advance clearances, adhere to strict sanitation protocols, and arrange dedicated off-road parking facilities for attendees.

The executive order has come into effect immediately and will remain in force until further notice. District authorities warned that any violation of the directives will attract strict prosecution under relevant legal provisions, including the Bharatiya

Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Disaster Management Act. Traffic police personnel and executive magistrates have been deployed across key intersections along NH-415 to monitor compliance and ensure smooth transit across the capital region.

To further streamline traffic management, the district administration has directed traffic wardens and local police stations to intensify surprise inspections along key stretches from Banderdewa to Chimpu. Commercial establishments, vendors, and event contractors who place temporary structures, hoardings, or sound systems within the designated Right of Way (RoW) of NH-415 face immediate confiscation of equipment and financial penalties, alongside mandatory cleared-site restoration at their own expense.

Tripura CM highlights 23,986 government jobs, distributes teacher appointment letters

Agartala, Oct 14: Tripura Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha announced that the state government has provided 23,986 direct government jobs since the BJP-led administration assumed office in 2018. The Chief Minister shared the milestone while addressing a formal distribution ceremony in Agartala, where he handed over appointment letters

to 1,452 newly recruited teachers across primary and secondary schools. Elaborating on the state's employment figures, CM Saha noted that when contractual engagement, skill development initiatives, and outsourced roles are included alongside regular government postings, the total job creation figure reaches over 26,000. He

reiterated that the administration remains dedicated to maintaining absolute transparency in public sector recruitment, ensuring that merit and qualifications serve as the sole criteria for selections across all state departments. Addressing the newly inducted educators, Dr. Saha emphasized the vital role of teachers in shaping the state's human

capital and strengthening foundational literacy. He urged the teaching community to embrace modernized NCERT curricula and digital learning tools to elevate academic standards across government schools. On the same occasion, Chief Minister Saha also distributed free motorized two-wheelers to meritorious female students under the state's

flagship Mukhyamantri Kanya Atmanirbhar Yojana, reinforcing government commitments toward women's empowerment and higher education access. Reaffirming the state's welfare roadmap, the Chief Minister confirmed that ongoing recruitment drives across health, education, and administrative services will continue to fill existing

vacancies in a time-bound manner. Addressing ongoing legal challenges in teacher recruitment, CM Saha clarified that the distribution of appointment letters for TET-I qualified candidates remains temporarily delayed due to pending litigation in the High Court. He assured aspirants that the state legal team is actively pursuing a swift resolution

to clear legal hurdles and expedite secondary-stage inductions. To immediately address staff shortages in remote rural schools, the state government created 700 additional Graduate Teacher posts, against which 686 candidates recommended by the Teachers' Recruitment Board, Tripura (TRBT) received their official offers during the event.

UDP-BJP Merger Row Meghalaya Speaker Gives Priority to Disqualification Proceedings

Shillong, Oct 14: Meghalaya Assembly Speaker Thomas A. Sangma has said that the disqualification petition filed by the United Democratic Party (UDP) against eight of its former legislators will be given priority over their claim that they have merged with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The Speaker's position leaves the political status of the eight MLAs unresolved as the Assembly examines the competing submissions under the applicable constitutional and procedural provisions. The legislators—Lahkmen Rymbui, Pius Marwein, Kyrmen Shylla, Mayralborn Syiem, Matthew Beyondstar Kurbah, Ollan Singh Suin, Balajied Kubar Synrem and Synshar Kubar Roy Lyngdoh Thabab—submitted a merger letter to the Assembly Secretariat on September 25, formally communicating their decision to join the BJP. The documents were received by Assembly Adviser (Legislation)



Andrew Simons in Sangma's absence. However, the submission has not yet resulted in the legislators receiving formal recognition as BJP members in the Meghalaya Assembly. Following a meeting with the eight MLAs on Tuesday, Sangma told reporters that his office was still examining the matter and awaiting legal opinions before reaching a conclusion. "The Speaker's Office is still examining it, and I am awaiting legal opinions from different sources. Therefore, I will not say that they are BJP MLAs, as the matter is still under consideration," Sangma said. His remarks indicate that

the legislators' claim of a merger remains under review and that no final determination has been made on their status. The Speaker has emphasised that the decision must follow the relevant rules and constitutional provisions. The UDP has filed a petition seeking the disqualification of the eight former legislators following their decision to join the BJP.

Sangma confirmed that the petition contained certain omissions and deficiencies, prompting his office to ask the party leadership and the remaining four UDP MLAs to correct the document and resubmit it. They were given 10 days

to address the shortcomings, with the deadline set to expire on Wednesday. The completion of this procedural step is expected to be important to the further examination of the petition. Sangma made it clear that deciding the disqualification matter is his immediate priority, placing it ahead of any determination on the merger claim.

"Deciding the disqualification petition is my immediate priority," the Speaker said, adding that the matter would be considered in accordance with the rules and constitutional provisions. The two submissions have placed the Speaker at the centre of a significant political dispute in the state. While the eight legislators are seeking recognition of their move as a merger with the BJP, the UDP is pursuing proceedings that could lead to their disqualification.

The outcome will depend on the examination of the petitions and the applicable legal framework.

Meghalaya HC Defers Deadline for Lawyers' Apology Affidavits

Shillong , Oct 14: The Meghalaya High Court on Tuesday granted additional time to advocates facing contempt proceedings to submit affidavits tendering an unconditional apology and undertaking not to repeat the conduct that led to the case.

The court has scheduled the matter for further hearing on October 14, 2026, while the contempt proceedings remain pending. A division bench comprising Chief Justice Revati Mohite Dere and Justice Hamarsan Singh Thangkiew passed the order while hearing Public Interest Litigation (PIL) No. 21 of 2026.

The proceedings relate to a resolution adopted by the High Court of Meghalaya Bar Association and the Shillong Bar Association calling for lawyers to abstain from judicial work across the state until the state government removed Advocate General Amit Kumar. During Tuesday's hearing, the advocates named in

paragraph 10 of the court's October 8 order appeared in person, except those listed at serial numbers 13 and 15(vi). They requested additional time to file their respective affidavits, following which the bench allowed their plea.

The court directed that the matter be listed again on October 14, giving the advocates an opportunity to submit affidavits containing an unconditional apology and an assurance that they would not repeat the conduct in question. The latest order comes as the High Court continues to examine whether the actions of the two bar associations and their office-bearers amounted to criminal contempt by interfering with the administration of justice. The High Court had issued notices on October 8, 2026, to 24 office-bearers and executive members of the High Court of Meghalaya Bar Association and the Shillong Bar Association. The notices were issued under Section 15 of the

Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, read with Article 215 of the Constitution of India. The provisions formed the legal basis for the court to seek explanations from the lawyers over the conduct under scrutiny. The two-judge bench had directed the advocates to show cause why criminal contempt proceedings should not be initiated against them for calling for abstinence from judicial work in courts across Meghalaya. The court's concern centred on whether the call for abstinence had obstructed the administration of justice.

The notices required the named advocates to respond to the allegations and explain why action should not be taken against them under the applicable legal provisions.

The October 8 order marked a significant stage in the proceedings, as the court formally sought explanations from the office-bearers and executive members associated with the two bar associations.

Seva Sankalp Abhiyan Wraps Up in Assam

Dispur, Oct 14: The Education Department of the Government of Assam organised a state-level prize distribution ceremony on October 13, 2026, to recognise the winners of drawing, quiz and speech competitions conducted as part of the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan 2026.

The event took place at Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra and marked the conclusion of a month-long campaign focused on encouraging youth participation and promoting civic development across Assam. By acknowledging participants' efforts, the event also underscored the importance of providing young people with platforms to develop their abilities and take part in constructive activities.

The ceremony brought the campaign's activities to a close by acknowledging the achievements of participants who took part in and perspectives through art. Such mance during the campaign.

Manipur Political Crisis Naga MLAs Review Situation



Imphal, Oct 14: Manipur Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho has said that Naga legislators are holding discussions with the state government and senior security officials to address the prevailing situation in the state. The consultations come amid demands from Naga MLAs for the resignation or removal of Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen.

The discussions are taking place against the backdrop of continuing political concerns in Manipur, where legislators are seeking ways to address the situation through engagement with the government and security establish-

ment. Dikho's statement indicates that consultations are underway, although the specific outcomes of the discussions have not been detailed. The demand concerning Kipgen has added another dimension to the political developments. Some Naga legislators have called for her resignation or removal, bringing the deputy chief minister's position into focus amid wider discussions on the situation in the state. Dikho said Naga legislators were engaging with the state government and senior security officials as part of efforts to address the prevailing

circumstances. The consultations are expected to provide an opportunity for elected representatives to discuss their concerns and consider possible steps in coordination with the authorities.

The involvement of Naga legislators in discussions with the government highlights the role of political dialogue in responding to the situation in Manipur. By engaging with senior officials, the legislators are seeking to raise concerns and explore ways to address the issues facing the state.

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The participation of senior security officials suggests that the consultations include engagement with authorities responsible for security-related matters. However, no specific measures or commitments arising from the discussions have been announced in the information provided.

Assam Media Owner Faces Blackmail Allegations After Audio Leak

Dispur , Oct 14: A leaked audio conversation allegedly involving Prag News owner Sanjive Narain and businessman Nayan Ghosh has sparked controversy in Assam, following claims that money was demanded to prevent the television channel from airing a damaging report against the businessman.

The allegations have drawn attention because the same channel had previously accused Ghosh of involvement in drug trafficking, making the latest development a matter of public and media scrutiny. The authenticity and full context of the purported recording have not been independently established in the information available. The allegations surrounding the conversation therefore remain unverified, and the claims against the individuals involved should be treated with caution until further evidence or official statements clarify the matter. The controversy centres on the alleged conversation be-



tween Narain and Ghosh and the suggestion that the proposed broadcast of a negative news report was linked to a demand for money. If established, such conduct would raise serious questions about the relationship between media organisations, commercial interests and journalistic responsibilities. However, the available information does not establish whether any money was paid, whether a formal complaint has been filed or whether an official

investigation has begun. The recording reportedly features a conversation between Narain, who owns Prag News, and businessman Ghosh. According to the allegations circulating in connection with the audio, the discussion involved a proposed news report that could have damaged the businessman's reputation and a purported demand to prevent its broadcast. The claims have attracted attention because of the earlier coverage by the same

channel, which had accused Ghosh of involvement in drug trafficking. Those earlier allegations form part of the background to the present controversy, although they do not independently establish the truth of the claims made in the leaked conversation.

The reported exchange has raised questions about whether the possibility of broadcasting damaging material was allegedly used as leverage in a financial demand. At the same time, the circumstances surrounding the recording, including how it was obtained and whether it captures the complete conversation, have not been clarified in the information available. Without independent verification, the audio alone cannot conclusively establish the intent of the participants or confirm that an attempt at blackmail took place. The claims require examination alongside any supporting evidence and responses from those named in the allegations.

Rally in Manipur Expresses Support for Bimol Akoijam

Imphal, Oct 14: A large number of people gathered near Congress MP Angomcha Bimol Akoijam's residence in Keishamthong, Imphal West, on Wednesday, October 14 to protest sexual harassment allegations against him, describing them as politically motivated and an attempt at character assassination.

The protesters staged a sit-in outside the MP's residence before taking out a rally to the BJP headquarters at Keishampat. They raised slogans rejecting the allegations against Akoijam and criticising the BJP, with some participants asserting that the charges were baseless.

One of the protesters, Jeniffer, said the allegations were unacceptable and maintained that the people of Manipur would continue to support the Congress MP. She added that the law should take its course and that the truth would eventually emerge. The demonstrators also directed their criticism at the BJP during the rally to its headquarters at Keishampat. Their slogans highlighted their opposition to the allegations and their belief that the controversy had political motivations. However, the protesters'

claims about the motive behind the allegations remain their stated position and do not, by themselves, establish the circumstances surrounding the case. The demonstration comes amid a controversy surrounding the allegations against the Congress MP. The gathering outside his residence provided a platform for supporters to express their views and publicly defend him. By organising a sit-in followed by a rally, the protesters sought to draw attention to their concerns and demonstrate their continued backing for Akoijam. The participants repeatedly rejected the allegations, with some describing them as an effort to undermine the MP's reputation.

Their position was that the allegations should be examined through the appropriate procedures and that conclusions should not be drawn before the facts are established. The call for the law to take its course was a central point in the remarks made by Jeniffer and other supporters. Political controversies involving elected representatives can lenge the allegations against Akoijam and to communicate their support for him. demonstrat-criticise the ruling party.

Assam Trains 42 Social Auditors to Improve Welfare Accountability

Dispur, Oct 14: The Assam Society for Social Audit (ASSA), in collaboration with the Golap Barabara State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (GB-SIPRD), has trained 42 state- and district-level resource persons to improve the quality of social audits, strengthen documentation and ensure better follow-up of audit findings across the state.

The training programme is intended to build the capacity of personnel involved in examining the implementation of government schemes and assessing whether their benefits reach the intended recipients. By improving the skills of resource persons, the initiative seeks to make the social audit process more systematic, transparent and accountable. Social audits are an important mechanism for reviewing the implementation of public welfare programmes. They allow information about expenditure, delivery of benefits and the execution of development activities to be examined, helping identify discrepancies and areas where corrective measures may be necessary.

The training of 42 resource persons is expected to support these efforts by improving the quality of audit reports and strengthening the process through which observations are documented and addressed. The involvement of personnel at both state and district levels is also intended to support more consistent practices across different parts of Assam. Social audits help communities and public authorities



assess how government programmes are implemented on the ground. Unlike financial audits that primarily examine accounts and financial records, social audits can also focus on whether services and benefits are delivered as intended and whether implementation reflects the needs of eligible beneficiaries. For welfare schemes, the process can help identify gaps between official records and actual delivery. It can also bring attention to delays, incomplete work, irregularities or difficulties faced by beneficiaries in accessing services. However, the effectiveness of a social audit depends on the quality of the information collected, the accuracy of the documentation and the

ability of those conducting the exercise to present their findings clearly. The training organised by ASSA and GB-SIPRD is aimed at improving these aspects.

By equipping resource persons with the necessary skills, the programme seeks to strengthen the process through which audit observations are recorded, reviewed and followed up. Proper documentation is particularly important because audit findings must be supported by relevant information if they are to guide administrative action. Clear records can help offi-pate authorities must also examine the findings and take steps to address substantiated concerns.

Assam Swimmers Make Their Mark at Asian Masters Championship

Dispur, Oct 14: Two swimmers from Guwahati, Dolly Kaur Das and Himantaa Barbara, won medals while representing India at the second Asian Masters Swimming Championship, held in Bengaluru from October 4 to 10. The achievement has brought recognition to the two swimmers from Assam, who competed at the continental-level event alongside participants from other countries.

Their medal-winning performances highlighted their participation in masters swimming, a competitive category that provides opportunities for adult swimmers to continue pursuing the sport and test their abilities at major events. The championship, hosted in Bengaluru, brought together masters swimmers for a series of competitions over seven days.

For Dolly Kaur Das and Himantaa Barbara, the event offered an opportunity to represent India on an international platform and demonstrate their skills against competitors from across Asia.

Their success also draws attention to the participation of swimmers from Assam in competitions beyond the state and national levels. Guwahati has a growing sporting community, with

athletes from different disciplines seeking opportunities to compete at higher levels. The achievements of the two swimmers add to the visibility of masters swimming and the role of experienced athletes in competitive sport. Dolly Kaur Das and Himantaa Barbara travelled to Bengaluru to take part in the second edition of the Asian Masters Swimming Championship, representing India at the event held from October 4 to 10. Winning medals at an international championship is an important milestone for athletes, reflecting their performance in a competitive environment. For the two swimmers from Guwahati, the results mark a notable achievement in their sporting journeys.

Masters swimming allows adult athletes to continue participating in organised swimming competitions.

It provides a platform for swimmers to remain active in the sport, improve their performance and compete against others in their re-drawing participants for the continental competition. The event formed part of the wider masters swimming calendar, which encourages athletes to continue competing and developing their skills at different stages of life.

Rekha Gupta Questions CJP's Silence Over Punjab Activist's Killing

New Delhi, Oct 14: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday accused the youth-led Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) of functioning as the “B-Team” of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

She challenged the organisation to stage a protest in Punjab over the killing of anti-drug activist Parvinder Singh, popularly known as Jhota. Gupta's remarks brought the spotlight on the political debate surrounding the activist's death and the role of youth-led organisations in raising issues related to drug abuse and public safety.

By questioning the CJP's position, the Delhi Chief Minister sought to challenge the group over its response to the killing in Punjab. The allegation that the CJP was acting as AAP's “B-Team” formed the central point of Gupta's criticism. She questioned the organisation's stance and called on it to demonstrate its position through a protest in Punjab over Singh's killing. The remarks add a political dimension to the case, with Gupta linking her criticism of the CJP to the death of an activist known for opposing drug-related activities. Her challenge places the focus on whether the



organisation will respond to the issue through public mobilisation Gupta's comments centred on the CJP's alleged political association with the AAP. Describing the youth-led group as the ruling party's “B-Team”, she questioned its role and challenged it to take up the issue of Singh's killing in Punjab. The Chief Minister's statement was framed as a direct challenge to the organisation, asking it to protest over the incident rather than remain on the sidelines of the political debate. However, the available information did not indicate whether the CJP had responded to Gupta's remarks or announced any

plans for a demonstration. The CJP, whose full name is Cockroach Janta Party, is described as a youth-led organisation. Gupta's criticism has drawn attention to the group's political positioning and its response to an incident involving an activist who opposed drug-related activities.

Her remarks also connect the debate over the organisation's alleged political role with the broader issue of action against drugs in Punjab. The killing of Singh has become the immediate focus of her challenge to the group, although further details about the circumstances of his death were not provided

in the available information.. A key element of Gupta's statement was her call for the CJP to hold a protest in Punjab over Singh's killing. The challenge was intended to question the organisation's response to the incident and place its public position under scrutiny. By urging the group to organise a demonstration, Gupta shifted the discussion from its alleged political links to its willingness to take up the issue of the activist's death.

Her remarks suggest that she expects the organisation to demonstrate its position through visible public action. No information was immediately available on whether the CJP had accepted the challenge or planned any protest.

It also remained unclear whether the group would issue a formal response to the Chief Minister's allegation that it was acting as the AAP's “B-Team” The development highlights how the activist's killing has entered the political discourse, with leaders using the incident to question the positions and actions of other political organisations. Gupta's statement has placed the CJP under pressure to clarify its stance on the issue.

Air India Flight Cleared After Hijack Alert, Nothing Suspicious Detected

Jaipur , Oct 14: An Air India flight from Frankfurt to Delhi, which made an emergency landing at Jaipur International Airport following a reported hijack alert, has been cleared to continue its journey after security checks found nothing suspicious, airport officials said on Wednesday. Officials told IANS that passengers had been asked to board flight AI-2030 and that the aircraft was preparing to depart for Delhi. The flight made an emergency landing at Jaipur International Airport on Wednesday morning after Ahmedabad Air Traffic Control (ATC) reportedly received a hijack alert from the aircraft.

The alert was subsequently communicated to Jaipur ATC, following which the aircraft was diverted and made to land in Jaipur at around 9.45 a.m. Security agencies immediately initiated an inspection, and passengers were deboarded as a precaution. According to preliminary reports, approximately 300 passengers were on board. The aircraft was moved to an isolation bay, where security personnel, including a team from the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), conducted checks. The inspection reportedly lasted around two

and a half hours. No suspicious objects were found on board, according to officials.

Security agencies also questioned the pilot to establish how the alert was triggered. Initial reports suggested that the hijack alert might have been triggered accidentally when the pilot pressed the designated alert button. Another preliminary account indicated that a technical or system error could have generated the message.

However, sources said the pilot denied accidentally pressing the alert button during questioning. No official statement had been issued relating to the cause of the alert at the time of reporting.

Following the security inspection, agencies reportedly cleared the aircraft to proceed to Delhi. The precise circumstances surrounding the alert remained under investigation. According to information, the aircraft departed from Frankfurt at 9.45 p.m. on October 13 and was scheduled to arrive in Delhi at 10.40 a.m. on October 14. Although the aircraft was cleared after the inspection, the circumstances that led to the hijack alert remained under investigation. Security agencies

questioned the pilot to determine how the alert had been generated and whether it resulted from an operational mistake, a technical problem or another cause. Initial reports suggested that the alert could have been triggered accidentally if the pilot pressed the designated alert button. Another preliminary account indicated that a technical or system-related error might have generated the warning.

However, these explanations had not been officially confirmed at the time of reporting. Sources said the pilot denied accidentally pressing the alert button during questioning.

This left the precise cause of the warning unclear, with investigators continuing to examine the circumstances surrounding its transmission. No official statement had been issued establishing the reason behind the alert at the time of reporting. Consequently, the possibility of accidental activation or a technical malfunction remained unconfirmed. Authorities were expected to establish the sequence of events through their inquiries and any relevant technical checks.

MCD Survey Flags 21,000 Violators in Delhi

New Delhi, Oct 14: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has surveyed nearly 4 lakh properties across the national capital and identified around 21,000 residential buildings where commercial establishments are operating, according to people familiar with the matter on Wednesday.

The exercise has brought attention to the use of residential properties for commercial purposes and the civic body's efforts to assess such activities across Delhi. The survey covered properties in different parts of the city, with officials examining the nature of their use. The identification of around 21,000 residential buildproperty conforms to the applicable rules and whether further scrutiny is required. building use and ensuring compliance with applicable municipal regulations. Residential and commercial properties are generally violations were not immediately information about the extent to which residential premises are being used for commercial activities. Such information can help officials assess whether the use.

Metro 7A Construction Picks Up, AAI Approval Awaited

Mumbai, Oct 14: The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has resumed construction work on Metro Line 7A after suspending the project for several months over a breach of height restrictions in the air funnel zone of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA). However, the authority is still awaiting final clearance from the Airports Authority of India (AAI), officials said. The resumption marks a step forward for the metro project, which had faced delays because of concerns over construction height and aviation safety requirements.

The restrictions were imposed because the project falls within an area where the height of structures must comply with regulations governing aircraft movement around the airport. Although work has restarted, the pending clearance from the AAI remains an important aspect of the project's progress. The approval process is necessary to ensure that construction activities comply with the applicable aviation safety requirements and restrictions in the airport's air funnel zone. The suspension had brought construction to a halt while the issue surrounding the height

restrictions was addressed. With work now resuming, the project has moved into another phase, although the final regulatory approval remains outstanding. Metro Line 7A is part of Mumbai's expanding metro infrastructure network. Its construction is being undertaken by the MMRDA, which is responsible for developing major transport projects across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The work was suspended after a breach of height restrictions was identified in the air funnel zone of CSMIA.

Such zones are subject to specific limitations because buildings, cranes and other structures near airports can affect the safe movement of aircraft if they exceed permitted heights. The suspension reflected the need to address the issue before construction could proceed the remaining approval.

The pending clearance remains significant because the project must meet the relevant requirements governing construction within the airport's air funnel zone. Compliance with these restrictions is essential to ensuring that infrastructure development does not interfere with aviation operations.

India Set for 9.1% Salary Growth in FY27

New Delhi, Oct 14: Salaries in India are expected to increase by 9.1 per cent in 2026-27, with the non-banking financial companies (NBFC), energy, real estate and infrastructure sectors likely to drive the growth, according to a survey released on Wednesday.

The projection indicates that salary increases are expected to remain resilient despite geopolitical uncertainties and risks associated with global trade.

The anticipated growth reflects the expected continuation of pay increases across key sectors of the Indian economy. While global economic conditions remain uncertain, the survey suggests that employers are likely to maintain salary growth, supported by demand across industries and the need to attract and retain skilled employees. The NBFC, energy, real estate and infrastructure sectors have been identified as important contributors to the projected increase. These industries play significant roles and prevailing business conditions.

MCD Records 59,000 Tonnes of Silt Dumped at Singhola Site

New Delhi, Oct 14: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that 59,173.4 metric tonnes of silt was dumped again at the designated site in Singhola, north Delhi, over the past year, despite the location having been cleared earlier.

The disclosure has brought renewed attention to the management of silt disposal and the need to ensure that designated dumping sites are used in accordance with applicable environmental requirements. In its report submitted to the tribunal, the civic body stated that the site had been cleared before the latest round of dumping took place. However, the subsequent accumulation of more than 59,000 metric tonnes of silt indicates that substantial quantities of material were deposited at the location during the reporting period. The submission forms part of the proceedings concerning the silt dumping site in Singhola.

The NGT considers matters relating to environmental protection and compliance with relevant regulations, while reports submitted by civic authorities can help the tribunal assess the circumstances surrounding a site and the steps taken to manage it.

The quantity recorded by the MCD is significant in terms of the volume of material handled at the location. However, the information provided does not specify the sources of the silt, the number of dumping operations carried

out during the year or whether the latest deposits complied with all applicable conditions.

Silt is commonly removed from drains, water channels and other infrastructure as part of maintenance and desilting operations. Its disposal requires appropriate planning to ensure that the material is transported and deposited at suitable locations without creating environmental or public health concerns. When large quantities of silt are collected, civic authorities must coordinate its removal, transportation and disposal. The process may involve identifying suitable sites, maintaining records of the quantities handled and ensuring that the designated locations are managed appropriately. The quantity reported by the MCD provides an indication of the scale of silt disposal at the location. However, the information contained in the submission does not specify where the silt originated, how many dumping operations took place during the year or whether each deposit complied with the applicable conditions. It also does not, by itself, establish whether any environmental violation occurred. The disclosure has renewed focus on how municipal authorities handle the material removed during routine maintenance and desilting operations. Silt is commonly collected from drains, water channels and other infrastructure to maintain their capacity and facilitate the flow of water. Once removed, the



material must be transported and disposed of at suitable locations in accordance with relevant requirements. The MCD's report indicates that the designated site at Singhola received a substantial quantity of silt after it had previously been cleared. The recorded figure of 59,173.4 metric tonnes represents the total quantity reported as having been dumped at the location over the past year. The sequence of clearance followed by fresh dumping has placed the site back in focus during the tribunal proceedings. The available information, however, does not provide details about the exact dates of individual dumping operations or the arrangements under which the

material was brought to the location. The report also does not identify the particular drains, water channels or infrastructure projects from which the silt was collected. Without those details, the precise nature of the material's movement and disposal during the reporting period remains unclear. The MCD's submission provides the tribunal with information about the quantity deposited at Singhola, but further details would be required to establish the complete picture of the site's use and management. These could include records of transportation, the sources of the material and the conditions governing disposal at the designated location.

Sona Mohapatra Says She Faced Political Abuse After Questioning Rahul Gandhi

Mumbai, Oct 14: Singer Sona Mohapatra has alleged that she faced a barrage of abusive comments following her remarks about Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and the prevailing situation in Himachal Pradesh. On Wednesday, the singer shared a screenshot of comments posted by social media users, describing the response to her remarks as an “avalanche of political abuse”. In her post on the microblogging platform, Mohapatra said the online backlash had intensified since the previous day. She also reiterated her suggestion to Gandhi, presenting it as a genuine question and arguing that the outcome of his actions would ultimately demonstrate their effectiveness. The singer's post included screenshots of comments containing abusive language and politically charged criticism. The responses reflected disagreements over political affiliations, the Congress leader and the singer's own position on the issues she had raised. Mohapatra also compared the reaction to her remarks about Himachal Pradesh with the re-

sponse to an earlier social media post in which she had questioned indiscriminate mining in the hills of Odisha. She suggested that her comments on the environmental issue had not attracted a similar level of hostility. The episode has brought renewed attention to the increasingly confrontational nature of political exchanges on social media, where public figures can face sharp criticism after commenting on political leaders or government policies. In this instance, Mohapatra's post highlighted the abusive language she said she had received after raising questions involving Gandhi and Himachal Pradesh. Mohapatra shared a screenshot of the comments she said she had received after making her remarks. Alongside the image, she described the messages as the latest example of the political abuse directed at her since the previous day. In her post, the singer wrote that the comments represented an “avalanche of political abuse”. She also referred to her suggestion to Rahul Gandhi, saying it was a genuine one and adding that its



value should be judged by the results. Her remarks appeared to underline her position that political leaders should be assessed on the basis of their actions and outcomes. However, the post did not provide further details about the specific steps she expected Gandhi to take in response to the situation in Himachal Pradesh.

The screenshot included comments containing personal insults and political accusations. One message used profanity while questioning her understanding of Durga and accusing her of displaying allegiance expect Rahul Gandhi to address their concerns.

Karnataka Crime Branch Detains Two Over Videos Targeting Siddaramaiah

Bengaluru, Oct 14: The Central Crime Branch (CCB) cybercrime police in Karnataka have registered a first information report (FIR) and detained two people for questioning over the alleged circulation of videos targeting former chief minister Siddaramaiah.

The action follows concerns over the online dissemination of content directed at the senior Congress leader, although further details about the videos and the allegations surrounding their circulation were not immediately available. According to the information available, the CCB's cybercrime unit has initiated legal proceedings in connection with the matter. Two individuals have been detained for questioning as part of the investigation into the alleged



circulation of the videos. The police are expected to examine the circumstances surrounding the content's publication and distribution as they seek to establish the facts of the case. The registration of an FIR marks the formal initiation of a police investigation

into the reported incident. However, the specific provisions under which the case has been registered, the identities of the two individuals and the precise nature of the videos were not immediately disclosed in the information available. The case brings renewed at-

tention to the role of cyber-crime authorities in investigating content circulated through digital platforms. Social media allows information and videos to reach large audiences quickly, but allegations involving targeted or potentially unlawful online material may require investigators to establish who created, uploaded or distributed the content and whether any laws were violated.

The CCB cybercrime police have detained two people for questioning in connection with the alleged circulation of the videos targeting Siddaramaiah. Their questioning is expected to help investigators gather information about the content and the circumstances in which it was shared.



Price caps bring new hope for Northeast cancer care

The central government approving a cap trade margin of anti-cancer drugs at 30% of their maximum retail price is a much-needed reprieve for the Northeast, where cancer has become a public health crisis. The government’s move follows a sharp observation by the Supreme Court over exorbitant retail prices of anti-cancer drugs. The SC pointed out that a particular anti-cancer drug supplied to retailers for Rs. 2700 carried an MRP of Rs. 27000. The government claims that capping the trade margin at 30% is expected to reduce medicine prices by up to 70%. The capping will help cancer patients save Rs 2,500 crore annually, the government adds. The numbers lay bare the severe and unjustified financial burden imposed on cancer patients, while manufacturers and retailers in the value chain profited at their expense. The situation also explains why cancer treatment pushes many households in the region into debt and eventual devastation. The escalating incidence of cancer in the region pushes more households into the abyss of financial ruin, making it the area with the highest cancer prevalence in the country.

An official release confirms that the government has already imposed strict ceiling prices on essential cancer medicines included in the scheduled list. The new decision extends price protection to non-scheduled cancer medicines, which are outside that list, by limiting the margins added before they reach patients. It adds. As informed by the government to the apex court, an expert committee under the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) will finalise the list of medicines to be covered and the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) will then take a decision and issue the notification. While the government acknowledges that cancer treatment places a heavy financial burden on patients and their families, who often have to pay substantial amounts out of pocket, its decision to allow pharmaceutical companies and retailers to profit at the expense of these patients and families represents a policy failure that cannot be ignored. Pharmaceutical companies and retailers profiting at the expense of patients and their families exemplify a policy failure that demands attention. Official data highlights that NPPA’s analysis of market data found that non-scheduled anti-cancer medicines carry an average price mark-up of approximately 170%, reaching 700% or more in some cases. The SC has raised hopes for patients receiving treatment for various diseases by asking the government to establish modalities for capping the prices of all medicines, not just anti-cancer drugs, thereby reducing the treatment burden. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Chemical and Fertiliser also highlighted

the alarming trade margins, ranging from 600% to 1100%, and warned that the absence of control over these margins, particularly for non-scheduled drugs, creates opportunities for widespread profiteering at the expense of patients. As medicine costs alone account for 70% of the overall treatment cost in India, capping the trade margin of all medicines is critical to reducing the healthcare and treatment burden for patients’ households and making continuing treatment at an affordable cost feasible. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare expressed serious concern over the huge difference between the landing costs of medical devices or drugs and the MRP, although India is considered to be the pharmacy of the world. The Committee in its report strongly recommends that such a gap needs to be reduced to the extent that the quality medical devices and the drugs are made available at an affordable cost to the needy patients. The Committee recommends that the gap between the landing price and the MRP for medical devices and drugs should not exceed 20% to ensure that quality drugs and medical devices are available at an affordable cost. The Committee emphasises that formulating an essential medicine list must ensure that these medicines are available in adequate amounts and in appropriate dosages, with assured quality, which is fundamental to the very rationale behind the, with assured quality, which is fundamental to the very rationale behind compilation of the list. Essential medicines, by definition, are those medicines that satisfy the priority health care needs of any population, based on efficacy, safety, quality and the total cost of the treatment. The NLEM, as recommended by the parliamentary panel, must be basically a list of medicines that are safe and efficacious and collectively address a majority of the public health concerns of India and are cost-effective. Another critical gap flagged by the panel is that while Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) is primarily driven by outpatient (OPD) care and medicines, the current Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) framework, which exclusively covers inpatient hospitalisation, remains fundamentally inadequate. The government accepting and implementing the Committee’s recommendations for expanding PMJAY to comprehensively cover OPD treatments and essential medical supplies can bring down significantly the OOPE, especially for needy patients. Reducing treatment cost is critical to increasing accessibility of cancer care, and both judicial and parliamentary interventions have brightened hopes that long-ignored gaps in price regulation of medicines will be bridged with tangible outcomes.

New Ethiopian conflict threatens global security

As conflict returns to Ethiopia after a fragile peace of four years a devastating civil war started in 2020 and ended only in 2022 after the Pretoria Agreement was signed in November 2022 and threatens to widen, it is important to remember what is at stake here. One, Ethiopia is part of the Horn of Africa; its proximity to the Red Sea one of the most important corridors for global maritime trade means a wider conflict here can potentially disrupt global commerce further even as the Strait of Hormuz stalemate continues. And two, given the nature of the conflicts in the broader region, including parts of West Asia, the threat of deepening radicalisation can’t be completely eliminated. Ethiopia is currently witnessing fighting in its Tigray province that borders Eritrea, renewed tensions in Amhara, and the formation of an extraordinary alliance of armed groups opposed to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s government. What makes the situation particularly dangerous is that the old battle lines have shifted, and regional alignments around Ethiopia have been redrawn.

The Pretoria Agreement, signed under the African Union (AU)’s auspices, provided a framework for ceasefire after the two-year

civil war, but did not settle fundamental questions such as the status of Western Tigray, displacement rooted in the war, and the mistrust between the federal government and the Tigrayan leadership. In May 2026, the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) reasserted political authority and control in the region, while Addis Ababa accused it of violating the peace agreement. A striking feature of the current crisis is the shift in Ethiopia’s internal alliances. During the earlier war, the federal forces fought alongside Amhara militias against the TPLF. After the war, Abiy’s attempt to dismantle regional special forces and strengthen federal authority alienated sections of the Amharas, fanning a separate insurgency in the province. Meanwhile, the Oromo Liberation Army has continued its armed struggle in Oromia. Now, seven armed groups, including the TPLF and the Amhara Fano National Movement, have announced the Ethiopian Peoples’ Forces Alliance for Survival, seeking to remove Abiy’s government. The coalition includes groups from Oromia, Afar and Benishangul-Gumuz. Forces that fought each other during the last civil war are now allied. At its heart is the unresolved tension

between Ethiopia’s federal structure, based substantially on ethnic and regional identities, and Abiy’s effort to create a stronger, centralised national order.

The regional dimension further complicates the situation. Eritrea, which fought alongside Abiy against the TPLF in the earlier war, is now at odds with Addis Ababa. The relationship deteriorated after Eritrea was excluded from the Pretoria settlement and as Abiy increasingly asserted Ethiopia’s interest in obtaining access to the Red Sea. Asmara views Ethiopia’s sea-access ambitions with suspicion. Ethiopia, on the other hand, has accused Eritrea of supporting armed groups, including Fano. The accusations demonstrate how Ethiopia’s internal conflict is becoming entangled with the strategic contest over the Red Sea. In the larger Red Sea region, Egypt has another set of calculations. Its principal strategic concern remains the Nile and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The dam’s inauguration has not resolved the dispute between Addis Ababa and Cairo over water management and downstream security. So, Egypt has cultivated closer relations with Ethiopia’s regional rivals. Now at the Alamein consulta-

tions, Egypt led Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia in aligning on curbing Ethiopian ambitions on several counts. Sudan, similarly, adds another layer of instability. Its civil war has provided space for arms networks, refugees, and armed actors to move across the Ethiopia-Sudan border: the conflict in the two countries could increasingly interact rather than remain separate. Gulf States’ rivalry may also play a role. The UAE rivalry with Saudi Arabia prompted Abu Dhabi to build a relationship with Addis Ababa. At the same time, it has strategic and commercial interests across the Red Sea and the Horn, as well as in Sudan and Somaliland. Gulf powers have their own interests, and their relationships often cut across African rivalries. Where, then, do African institutions fit in? The AU has called for immediate restraint and direct talks. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has called for immediate return to the Pretoria framework, while urging neighbouring States not to contribute to escalation. The problem is regional organisations can mediate only when their members have sufficient political convergence; the Horn today is characterised by precisely the opposite.

India’s zorawar tank debate misses modern warfare realities

Zorawar was shaped by the 2020 Ladakh standoff. Heavier tanks struggled on the plateau, while China fielded Type 15 light tanks. Advocates of Zorawar see the tank as the way to rapidly place credible firepower on high ground. Critics, even as they agree on the need and operational logic of a light tank, focus their ire on limited numbers on order and armour upgrades that threaten the weight limit for airlift and mobility. They are worried that upgrades would cause delays that may push induction beyond 2028. These debates are not trivial. Weight, protection (STANAG levels), power-to-weight ratios, and numbers matter for any armoured force. Yet, they address the wrong end of the problem. Zorawar fits the battlefield of yesteryear: one defined by terrain constraints, the need to manoeuvre heavy metal across passes and ridges, and the assumption that placing a gun-armoured vehicle on high ground confers decisive advantage. The modern battlefield, saturated with drones and robotic precision, cares far less about traditional terrain. Mobility that ignores mountains, valleys, and ridgelines is already routine in the modern battlefield.

The problem statement as articulated by Lt Gen Brar in his interview is to threaten the passage of Chinese forces transiting through valleys and passes. Zorawar solves the problem by placing armoured firepower (a 105 mm gun and supporting weapons) on commanding hilltops so that the tanks can dominate those approaches by direct and indirect fire. This works in theory, but it is a heavy, slow, and manpower-intensive way of solving a problem that is primarily about observation, timing, and rapid precision effects. A purpose-built high-altitude drone array (with adequate firepower), coupled with a meshed communication architecture, would address the same prob-

lem through persistent overwatch, rapid concentration of fires, and the ability to strike from any direction without first occupying the high ground. The advantages appear across cost, manpower, time-and-space, and command-and-control. The tanks, once placed on a hilltop, are easy to identify and target. The room for defensive manoeuvre and relocation on the mountaintop is limited. Zorawar would come fitted with counter-UAS measures such as an active protection system (APS) and close-in weapon system (CIWS). However, limited magazine depth would make them vulnerable to drone swarms and attackers arriving in different azimuths and planes. However, the drones are not a panacea. They come with their own challenges. Heavy electronic jamming and extreme weather (cold, high wind speed, icing) can severely degrade their performance. Operationally, small payload and inability to persist and stay can be limiting. Tanks, on the other hand, can continue firing under electronic jamming and weather. They also serve an operational purpose in peacetime, as they occupy terrain, signal intent, proffer deterrence, and mark possession. India’s operational problem of denying Chinese freedom of manoeuvre through valleys and passes comprises three sub-challenges: deterrence, observation, and response. Positioning of tanks on overlooking hilltops conveys intent and should deter the adversary. Should that fail, and the adversary makes a move we must be able to observe force buildup and respond before the enemy can. A Zorawar tank only takes care of the first. India needs a network of networks and a drone array to take care of the other two. The discussion on Zorawar must move toward a solution that fits into the battlespace of the future. A tank alone is not enough. India

must build a drone array, including a heavy strike drone (provisionally named Zorawar). This must be complemented with a networked communication architecture that receives and feeds information from/to all other sensors, including the Zorawar tank and the Zorawar drone.

The parallel with an earlier crisis of manoeuvre is instructive. During World War 1, European armies entered the war configured to move. However, advances in machine guns and heavy artillery soon made exposed ground movement extraordinarily difficult. The ensuing trench warfare proved costly in blood and treasure, without any decisive advantage to warring sides. The fronts froze, and fighting turned into positional warfare. Massed artillery to clear the way for infantry only drove casualties higher without restoring decisive manoeuvre. The interim solution was not thicker armour but a leap in mobility and tempo. Speed enabled surprise, limited the defender’s ability to organise, and enabled the manoeuvring force to set the pace of battle. Blitzkrieg (German for lightning war) proved immensely successful. Lighter, faster tanks often proved more effective than heavier, better-protected ones because they could act before the enemy could respond coherently. Ukraine has produced a similar rupture. Response time trumps level of armour protection. Drones and robotic precision weapons fill the battlespace detecting and destroying tanks and large vehicles before they can mass for effect. Armoured vehicles are proving to be vulnerable just because they are less manoeuvrable relative to drones. Unmanned systems also enjoy advantages in terms of observation, mobility, and concentration of firepower. Combined-arms massed-offensive operations are becoming less

frequent. Notwithstanding the advances in dronery, manoeuvre still remains essential for shattering enemy cohesion through penetration, flanking, and envelopment. Restoring its primacy requires platforms that match the response time of networks, speed of drones, and achieve genuine terrain independence. During Ukraine’s Operation Vivaldi, the Ukrainian Third Army Corps successfully broke through the drone-imposed battlefield deadlock near the Lyman sector. They achieved manoeuvre capability despite pervasive Russian drone threats by systematically dismantling the enemy’s reconnaissance-strike loop through dominating the manoeuvre in the third dimension. Delta (Ukraine’s situational awareness and battlefield management network) played an indispensable role in the coordination of joint fires, Op-logistics, and the eventual success of Operation Vivaldi.

The success came when tanks worked in cohesion with drones and networks. Recent European exercises make the practical consequences clear. During NATO’s Hedgehog 2025 in Estonia, involving more than 16,000 troops, a small Ukrainian drone team, acting as a Red team, ‘destroyed’ 17 armoured vehicles and conducted around 30 additional strikes in about half a day. Two battalions were rendered combat-ineffective. Comparable results appeared in other drills. Ukrainian operators from units such as the 412th Nemesis Regiment repeatedly ‘eliminated’ a US armoured brigade during Combined Resolve exercises in Germany. The rate of destruction was such that exercise directors had to restore vehicles to continue the exercise. Similar outcomes were reported against British, Estonian, Swedish, and other forces. These were simulations, yet the pattern matches Ukrainian bat-

tlefield experience: well-equipped armoured formations struggle against cheap, numerous, adaptable drones in capable hands. In all these exercises, Ukrainian forces used networked systems including the Delta battlefield-management tool for real-time fusion of intelligence and rapid coordination.

For India, the high-altitude frontier presents distinctive problems of positioning credible firepower among low air density, extreme cold, and limited infrastructure. Zorawar addresses them through its light weight, high power-to-weight ratio, weapon suite, and air transportability. Existing operational logic favours a lighter, reasonably well-armed, well-protected tank over a heavy MBT. Unfortunately, current battlefield reality makes both vulnerable to systems that largely ignore tonnage, terrain, and protection. Indian Army is seized of the challenge as well as the opportunity. It has already begun building relevant capability. The Army recently ordered 225 first-person-view drones from AeroDrone Robotics after competitive evaluation and field trials that included operations at altitudes up to 17,500 ft. These systems were assessed for endurance, accuracy, and performance in conditions relevant to Ladakh and similar terrain. Scandron platforms were tested until 18,000 ft with substantial payloads (reported examples include 50 kg in extreme conditions of cold and wind). Their CargoMax series drones offer high-altitude logistics with ceilings around 6,000 m AMSL and high payload capacity. Bajrang UAV tested a heavy-lift platform with a 30 kg payload at 16,000 ft in Ladakh. Other systems manufactured by NewSpace Research, Optiemus Vajra, and BonV Aero platforms have also been evaluated at passes such as Umling La (19,000 ft) with useful payloads and ranges.

The uncontrolled mind and the cycle of rebirth

Imagine yourself riding in a chariot travelling along a road of peace, bliss and liberation (Kathopanishad 1.3.3-4). You have decided to give the reins (mind) to the chariot driver (intelligence). The mind is uncontrolled; that is, the reins are loose. The chariot driver is foolish and allows this to happen. The horses (senses) go crazy, attracted by the illusions of the material world (The Bhagavad-Gita 7.14). They leave the road and enter a wild forest full of ferocious animals

(lust, greed and anger). All are devoured; the soul loses its material body and takes rebirth with the same senses, mind and intelligence (15.8) in a new body (chariot), and another journey begins.

What should have been done? The soul, a part of God (15.7), should have taken shelter in God the Almighty-while travelling on the road full of dangers (8.15) all around it. God would then have become the chariot driver of life, as Lord Krishna became for Ar-

juna. The mind would have been controlled with the help of God — the Omniscient. The senses would have been forced to behave and not get distracted by the all-pervading ‘Maya’ (material attractions). And the soul would have continued along the road of peace (18.62), bliss (5.21) and liberation (18.62). For this to happen, one must be very determined. Let us consider the degree of difficulty. What is the mind like? It is a faculty created by God for us souls to think, feel

and will freely. The mind is part of our subtle body (7.4), along with intelligence and ‘ahankar’ (ego). It is fickle, forceful, strong and obstinate. It is extremely difficult to control (6.34), being subtle and, therefore, very powerful. It must be controlled; otherwise, it can cause a great deal of trouble, and it does.

Why is the mind so difficult to control? Because it has to be purified through spiritual practices, especially chanting (10.23). Ahankar will not let

us take shelter in God, who alone can help us control the mind (7.14). Without God’s help, our nature, controlled by the three modes, would not even allow us to want to control the mind. What happens as a result of an uncontrolled mind? The mind favours the world over God, and thus the soul becomes bound to the world. Lust is already present in the mind, intelligence and body (3.40). One comes under the control of lust, greed and anger (16.21), and one be-

comes one’s own enemy (6.6). Diseases are caused by imbalances in ‘kapha’ (cough), ‘pitta’ (acidity) and ‘vata’ (gas). Greed causes cough, anger causes acidity, and lust causes gas (Shri Ramcharitmanas, Uttar Kand, 120 Kha 15). Mental diseases take charge. How, then, can the mind be controlled? Lord Krishna has given detailed instructions in the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita. Spiritual practices, especially meditation, really help, as does ‘pranayam’.

Jio Platforms IPO: Anchor book to draw bids over \$20 billion

New Delhi: Jio Platforms Ltd said to receive more than \$20 billion in bids for its proposed initial public offering (IPO), which could become India’s biggest IPO, Bloomberg reported, citing people familiar with the matter. Bloomberg had earlier reported that Jio Platforms could sell its shares in the price band of Rs 1,065-1,119 per share. Jio is seeking a valuation of up to Rs 10.3 lakh crore (\$108 billion), after earlier expectations had reached as high as \$170 billion. At the upper end of the price band, the IPO could raise a little more Rs 30,200 crore, according to Bloomberg calculations. However, the process is continuing and no final decision has been made



and announced officially yet. Global investors including Fidelity, Allianz and Capital Group, along with other international and domestic firms, have indicated interest in the offering, the report said. The people cited in the report asked not to be identified as the information is private. The final list of anchor investors is likely

to be decided in the coming days.Akash Ambani, the 34-year-old managing director of Jio Platforms and son of Mukesh Ambani, has been leading the deal. He has held meetings with investors in Hong Kong, London and New York in recent weeks. During the roadshow, investors questioned Ambani and his team about

the valuation target and the company’s plans to charge for its digital services and various platforms, according to people who attended the meetings. The share sale is expected to open next week, with the IPO planned before October 30. The draft prospectus shows that the offering will be entirely a primary issue.None of Jio Platforms’ existing investors, including Meta Platforms, Alphabet, Mubadala and Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund, is seeking to sell shares in the IPO. Representatives for Jio’s parent, Reliance Industries Ltd, and Fidelity did not respond to requests for comment. Allianz and Capital Group declined to comment.

Hyundai Motor Group to invest \$15.5 billion in India by 2032

New Delhi: South Korean automotive major Hyundai Motor Group on Tuesday committed \$15.5 billion in investments in India between 2026 and 2032, as it looks to expand manufacturing capacity, build local research and development (R&D) capabilities and strengthen the country’s position as a global export and automotive technology hub.The seven-year investment plan will cover Hyundai Motor India and Kia India, besides supplier development and emerging mobility businesses. The announcement follows a meeting between Hyundai Motor Group Executive Chair Euisun Chung and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Tuesday. “India remains one of Hyundai Motor Group’s most important and strategic markets globally,” Chung said, adding that the investment reaffirmed the group’s commitment to the country for the next 30 years and beyond. The group, which employs more than 24,000 people in India, expects the investment to generate employment across manufacturing, engineering, R&D and the supplier network. The group will establish a dedicated investment entity in India to coordinate capital deployment across its automotive ecosystem, identify local partners and facilitate strategic collaborations with suppliers. Manufacturing expansion at Hyundai Motor India and Kia India will be a key component of the plan, with the group

aiming to support higher volumes and increase parts localisation. The investment is also expected to strengthen India’s role as a production base for global markets. Around \$700 million is earmarked for R&D infrastructure, including a vehicle testing track. The group plans to expand its Indian R&D centre, develop local technical talent and establish a more comprehensive research system to accelerate next-generation automotive technologies. The investment will also extend to future mobility businesses, including electric vehicle charging infrastructure, end-of-life vehicle recycling and specialised automotive financing. Hyundai Motor Group intends to support high-potential startups and develop new mobility services alongside its core vehicle business. The group’s combined passenger vehicle market stands at 18.8% at the end of FY26, with Hyundai Motor India accounting for 12.6% and Kia India 6.2%. The group has not clarified how much of the \$15.5 billion commitment represents fresh investment over and above Hyundai Motor India’s previously announced plan to invest Rs 45,000 crore between FY26 and FY30. It has also not disclosed the annual investment schedule, additional capacity to be created or the number of jobs expected from the expansion..

FPIs favour IPOs over listed stocks for 3rd year running

New Delhi: While foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have been net sellers in the secondary market for the third year now, they have continued to pour money into primary markets, signalling a clear preference for IPOs even as they pare their exposure to listed stocks. In 2026 alone, FPIs have poured in ₹55,524 crore into the primary market, while selling in the secondary market hit a record ₹3.15 trillion till September so far, according to Prime Database data. In the last two years, too, FPI flow trend has followed the same trajectory. For instance, in 2025, they sold Indian stocks worth ₹2.40 trillion but bought IPO market shares worth ₹73,910 crore. In 2024, their selling on Dalal Street was ₹1.21 trillion and buying in the IPO market was ₹1.22 trillion, helping clock positive FPI flows for the year of ₹427 crore. While it is often believed that secondary market moves have a rub-off effect on the primary market, the same does not appear to be true. Apurva Sheth, head of market perspectives and research at SAMCO Securities, said part of this trend is structural in nature.

In the primary market, FPIs can only buy; they can sell only if they hold a stake through pre-IPO, private equity, or venture capital investments. “At worst, FPIs stop buying; they rarely become sellers.” FPIs have remained net buyers in India’s primary market in every calendar year since December 2009, except 2011, when NSDL began reporting the split. Additionally, Sheth said that many platforms, such as fintech and new-age manufacturing businesses, are unavailable in the secondary market, so FPIs are churning out of slower-growth listed companies into high-growth names coming to market. FPIs are participating where they see a specific company, valuation or allocation opportunity, not necessarily making a broad bullish call on Indian equities, said Devarsh Vakil, Head of Research, HDFC Securities.Apart from access to booming sectors, analysts believe time spent is another consideration for FPIs. Prasenjit Paul of 129 Wealth Fund said a meaningful part of IPO participation is tactical, where FPIs look for quick listing gains, while secondary-market buying is generally done with a longer holding period.

Tata Elxsi shares jump 8% after Q2 results; ‘Sell’ stock, says 5 analysts; target prices

New Delhi: Tata Elxsi Ltd shares rallied 8 per cent in Wednesday’s trade on hopes that the second half of FY27 will be better for the IT firm in terms of revenue growth than the first half. That said, at least five brokerages suggested a ‘Sell’ on the stock. The Bloomberg consensus target price of Rs 3,442, based on a dozen brokerage updates, implied a potential downside of 5.8 per cent over the next 12 months. On Wednesday, the Tata Elxsi stock rose 8.16 per cent to hit a high of Rs 3,706 apiece as the Tata group firm reported a sequential improvement, with revenue growing 2.3 per cent in constant currency (CC) terms and EBIT margin expanding 70 basis points to 19.7 per cent despite wage hikes. Growth was broad-based, led by Media & Communications (up 3.4 per cent), HLS (up 3.5 per cent) and Transportation (up 2 per cent). The scrip was last up 7.78 per cent at Rs 3,693 apiece on the BSE.



Weak automotive demand in Europe and delayed deal conversions constrain near-term growth, while Aerospace & Defence programmes remain two to three quarters away from making a meaningful contribution, Choice Institutional Equities said. Broad-based sequential growth and better-than-expected margins were encouraging, but uncertainty in the automotive segment continued, JM

Financial said, citing risks to consensus estimates. The deal pipeline provides visibility, but conversion and ramp-up remain key monitorables, MOFSL said, adding that European automotive demand is likely to remain a key growth constraint.Demand across Europe remained subdued, with automotive engineering spending and deal closures affected by cautious customer spending and delayed deci-

sion-making. The US and India are expected to remain relatively supportive, while growth across other verticals and geographies should partly offset continued weakness in Europe, MOFSL said. The brokerage maintained its ‘Sell’ rating on the stock with a target price of Rs 2,970.Choice maintained its ‘ADD’ rating on Tata Elxsi with an unchanged target price of Rs 3,520. Stronger transportation growth, European deal conversions and structural margin levers remain key catalysts, it said. Sameer Pardikar of Mirae Asset Securities suggested a ‘Sell’ on the stock with a target price of Rs 3,020. Among other ‘Sell’ calls, Kawaljeet Saluja of Kotak Securities set a target price of Rs 3,200, while Pulkit Chawla of 360 ONE Capital set a lower target of Rs 2,840, the lowest on the Street following the Q2 results. Ravi Menon of Axis Capital has the highest target price so far, at Rs 4,950.

Transformers and Rectifiers stock surges 13% on Q2 earnings; fresh price targets and more

New Delhi: Shares of Transformers and Rectifiers (India) Ltd (TARIL) zoomed over 13% in early deals on Wednesday after the firm reported its Q2 earnings. TARIL shares rose over 13% to Rs 344 against the previous close of Rs 303.80.Quarterly revenue came at Rs 709 crore, reflecting a 66% YoY rise. Profit After Tax rose 338% YoY to Rs 75 crore. Its total order book stood at Rs 7,237 crore in Q2. Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) rose over 100% to Rs 128.8 crore in Q2 from Rs 58.9 crore in the year-ago period. EBITDA margin rose to 17.4% from 12.8% a year earlier, reflecting improved operating efficiency. Q2 profit included an exceptional gain of Rs 131.5 crore.For FY27, the company maintained its financial guidance, projecting revenue growth of 25%, an EBITDA margin of 16%, and a profit after tax (PAT) margin in the range of 9% to 10%. Order inflows in H1 of FY27 surged 161% year-on-year to Rs 3,283 crore. Meanwhile, the unexecuted order book expanded 32% from a year earlier to Rs 7,237 crore as of September 30, 2026, providing visibility into future execution. The company also reported an inquiry pipeline worth Rs 21,000 crore, comprising projects currently under negotiation. Revenue from operations rose 35% YoY



to Rs 1,268 crore during H1FY27. EBITDA came at Rs 185 crore during H1FY27, logging a growth of 47% YoY. Profit rose 62% to Rs 125 crore during H1FY27.Q2FY27 performance reflects better execution, improved capacity utilisation, and operating leverage across manufacturing facilities. Price targetAntique Broking maintained a buy call on the TARIL stock with a target price of Rs 449.With a strong tender pipeline of Rs 21,000 crore, a healthy order book of Rs 7240 crore (2.6x TTM sales) and disci-

plined execution, management has retained its FY27 guidance of 25% revenue growth, a 16% EBITDA margin and a 9–10% PAT margin “We have marginally tweaked our FY27E/FY28E/FY29E EPS estimates and maintain a BUY rating on the stock with a revised target price of Rs 449 (earlier Rs 447), based on an unchanged PE of 30x 1HFY29E EPS,” said Antique. Incred Equities maintained a reduce call on the stock with a price target of Rs 200

The management aims for 90% utilisation by FY28F on 75,000 MVA of expanded capacity at Rs 0.7 mn/MVA. Rs 1.2 billion backward integration capex (CTC, press-board, bushings, fabrication, CRGO, etc.), plus reactors and other components shall be 60% captive, so it should lift margins rather than growth. “We see revenues peaking at Rs 60-65 billion, which makes the \$ 1 bn target unrealistic without fresh organic capex or inorganic growth avenues which would likely need funding through a QIP, OFS and/or debt, in our view and therefore the math doesn’t add up. Since our January 2026 downgrade to REDUCE, TARIL has stayed largely flat while high-voltage peers (CG Power, GV T&D, Hitachi Energy, Siemens Energy, etc.) have gained 15-60% YTD,” said the brokerage.About Transformers and Rectifiers The Ahmedabad-based Company manufactures a comprehensive range of transformers including power, distribution, furnace, specialty, rectifier transformers and shunt reactors, solar application transformers, earthing transformers. TARIL’s product capabilities span 5 kV to 1,200 kV and 0.5 MVA to 500 MVA, serving utilities, EPC players, industrial customers and renewable energy sectors.

Fusion CX IPO opens Should or avoid

New Delhi: The initial public offering (IPO) of Fusion CX opens for bidding on Wednesday, October 14. The business process solutions player shall be selling its shares in the range of Rs 275-289 apiece. Investors can apply for a minimum of 51 equity shares and its multiples thereafter. The issue will close for bidding on Friday, October 16. Fusion CX shall raise a total of Rs 702 crore from its IPO, which includes a fresh share sale of Rs 500 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of up to Rs 202 crore. Net proceeds from the fresh issue shall be used towards repayment of debt, investment in subsidiaries for upgrading IT tools, inorganic growth through unidentified acquisitions, strategic initiatives and general corporate purposes.Kolkata-based Fusion CX is a customer experience (CX) and business process solutions provider offering multichannel customer support through voice, email, chat, social media and messaging. It provides AI data infrastructure services, including data collection, data annotation, image and video labelling, and robotic teleoperations.

Ahead of its IPO, Fusion CX raised a total of Rs 315.9 crore from 19 anchor investors as it allocated 1,09,30,795 equity shares at Rs 289 apiece. Investors like Kotak Mahindra Trustee, Motilal Oswal MF, ICICI Pru MF, ITI MF, Quant MF, Bengal Finance & Investment, Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance, Natixis International Funds, JM Financial MF and others participated

in the anchor book. Fusion CX reported a net profit at Rs 55.70 crore, with a revenue of Rs 503.85 crore for the June 2026 quarter. Its net profit came in at Rs 169.84 crore, with a revenue of Rs 1,851.83 crore for the financial year ended on March 31, 2026. At the current valuation, it is commanding a market capitalization of Rs 4,172 crore. Fusion CX has reserved 75 per cent shares of qualified institutional bidders (QIBs), while non-institutional investors (NIIs) will have 15 per cent allocations. Retail investors will get only 10 per cent allocation in the IPO. Ahead of its IPO, Fusion CX was commanding a grey market premium of Rs 33-35 apiece, suggesting a 11-12 per cent listing pop for the investors. Nuvama Wealth Management, IIFL Capital Services and Motilal Oswal Financial Services are the book running lead managers for Fusion CX IPO, while Kfin Technologies Ltd. is the registrar of the issue. Shares of the company shall be listed on both NSE Ltd and BSE Ltd on Thursday, October 22. Here’s what a host of brokerage firms say about the IPO of Fusion CX: Compared with listed peers such as Firstsource Solutions, eClerx Services, Sagility and Hinduja Global, the valuation appears reasonable considering Fusion CX superior revenue growth trajectory, expanding margin profile, strong return ratios and increasing contribution from technology-enabled solutions, said Anand Rathi with a ‘subscribe for long-term’ rating for the issue.

BEL shares: Macquarie maintains ‘Outperform’, sees 44% upside; check target price, Q2 preview

New Delhi: Shares of Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) were last seen trading 0.53 per cent higher at Rs 381.90 in Wednesday’s trade. Macquarie maintained its ‘Outperform’ rating on the defence PSU stock, with a 12-month target price of Rs 550, implying a potential upside of 44.01 per cent from the mentioned market price. In its flash note, Macquarie said BEL has secured new orders worth Rs 530 crore since its last disclosure on September 17. The orders include communication equipment, avionics, cybersecurity solutions,



drones, jammers, software solutions, upgrades, spares and services.With these additions, BEL’s order inflow for FY27 stood at Rs 7,400 crore, down 53 per cent

year-on-year (YoY). Macquarie’s ‘Outperform’ rating is supported by BEL’s strong order backlog of Rs 72,300 crore and the brokerage’s FY27 order inflow forecast of Rs 55,000 crore. JM Financial expects BEL to report 10per cent YoY revenue growth in the second quarter of FY27, in line with the company’s typical quarterly seasonality. The brokerage believes gross margin could remain stable sequentially, while operating leverage could lead to an improvement in EBITDA margin quarter-on-quarter (QoQ). JM Financial estimates BEL’s Q2 FY27 order inflows at Rs 3,100 crore. Along with the Rs 3,750 crore of order inflows reported in Q1 FY27, this would account for 27 per cent of the management’s order inflow guidance of Rs 25,000 crore, excluding the Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) programme.“Any updates on the timeline of potential order for Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) would be the key to monitor for the quarter,” JM further stated.

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Enter the Zachbot: Trump’s new press secretary malfunctions on podium debut

Washington: Well, that was weird. Katie Zacharia, the new White House press secretary, made her debut on the podium on Tuesday with all the warmth, wisdom and political dexterity of an AI avatar.

Zacharia was all stilted delivery, nervous tics and lack of eye contact. With an eerie lack of emotion, she served up pro-Trump talking points, took only three questions and vanished after 14 minutes. It was like the West Wing had turned into uncanny valley.

The Zachbot’s past is indeed a bit of a mystery. The 41-year-old claims to be a lawyer but later a reporter asked when she passed the bar exam and she gave the unconvincing answer: “When I moved to China.” She was plucked from relative obscurity for the White House job after a brief gig at the Department of Homeland Security and a stint at the Trump Media and Technology Group.

Wearing a dark jacket with big gold buttons on Tuesday morning, she entered the standing-room-only briefing room and stepped on to the podium as Trump’s sixth press secretary.

For James Bond fans, that means we’ve reached the Daniel Craig era. For Doctor Who fans, it means the regeneration that brought us Colin Baker (not the show’s golden age).

Zacharia has the blond hair, glossy makeup and Fox News aesthetic of her immediate predecessors Kayleigh McEnany and Karoline Leavitt (her name also begins with a “K” – surely a tell to the AI detectors). But it was Trump’s first press secretary, Sean Spicer, to whom she inadvertently paid homage.

“Attendance is at record highs as enthusiastic, hard-working Americans are lining up and packing arenas to support President Trump and Republicans,” she said of Trump’s campaign rallies, echoing Spicer’s debut that falsely boasted of the biggest inaugural crowd ever.

In truth, there have been plenty of empty seats at Trump’s rallies this time around and an unusually high number of interruptions from protesters.

The Zachbot read from prepared notes about Trump’s many great accomplishments, awkwardly glancing up at her audience less than she should, smiling at odd moments and putting the emphasis on all the wrong words. “A great relationship ...” (looks down, sighs, sounds like her cat just died) “with Venezuela”.

It was bad. Toe-curlingly, don’t-know-where-to-look bad. At least Leavitt had delivered her propaganda hot. Evidently Trump’s communications team



have found new and ingenious ways to torture reporters.

Then came questions, first from rightwing Breitbart News, then rightwing Fox News, whose correspondent Peter Doocy wondered whether the US had stopped sharing intelligence with Ukraine. The Zachbot froze for a millisecond. “I will have to get back to you on that,” came the auto response.

Next up was the rightwing Daily Mail, asking about an alleged bribery scandal involving Kimberly Guilfoyle, the US ambassador to Greece, ex-fiancee of Donald Trump Jr and notorious screamer of “The best is yet to come!” The Zachbot said coldly: “We have asked Ambassador Guilfoyle to resign. She has

been a wonderful asset to the team and we wish her well.”

She nodded awkwardly. It was like every dystopian sci-fi film where the machine informs some hapless human that they will be terminated in 10 seconds.

The Mail followed up with “a personal question” that would surely never be asked of a male press secretary: “Your family is in California. Your husband, your four children. I’m wondering how you are going to manage that.”

The Zachbot gave her husband a shout-out and said she loved being with her children. “The idea of not spending evenings with my kids is completely unacceptable. So my president – excuse me, my husband – that’s a good one.”

A slip of the tongue! A glitch! Had someone spilled coffee on a cool, pitiless datacenter somewhere out in the California desert?

The Zachbot went on: “President Trump is the most family-friendly president we have ever had. He has hired more women with families and the fact that he knew I had four kids and he knew this job would be

demanding and still placed his trust in me shows I know I’m capable of being able to step up to that.”

Then she stunned everyone by wrapping it up and pledging that Trump would soon answer questions on the South Lawn. It was a tacit admission that the press secretary job is pointless when there is a president who talks all the time. But ironically, although the Zachbot took far fewer questions than others on their debut, she made more news with her Guilfoyle announcement.

How long can she last? Trump said soon after: “I thought she was very good.” But the Lincoln Project, an anti-Trump group, tweeted an image of the Zachbot beside a lettuce to evoke Liz Truss, who lasted only 49 days as British prime minister.

And Anthony Scaramucci, who was Trump’s communications director for just 11 days, a period now known as “a Scaramucci”, tweeted: “The clock is running. Thus far 1/11th of a Scaramucci.”

When the Mooch is giving you the Grim Reaper treatment, it might be time to self-terminate.

Businesses could be barred from non-essential water use amid supply threat

England: Three water companies are seeking to impose severe restrictions on businesses as the drought continues across most of England, putting rivers and wildlife under huge pressure.

Golf clubs and private schools could be barred from using mains water to irrigate playing fields and courses, and commercial car washes stopped from operating, under “non-essential use bans” being sought by the companies.

Eleven areas of England are still in drought, rivers are suffering from low flows, groundwater levels are declining and reservoir levels are at 54% – 21% below what is expected in the autumn.

Yorkshire was the latest area to move into drought status on 9 October. Parts of Wales are experiencing the first signs of drought recovery after the whole country was declared in drought in July.

Nineteen reservoirs or reservoir groups in England and Wales are less than 50% full, and eight are exceptionally low, up from five in August.

The Met Office says above-average rainfall is needed over a sustained seven-month period to bring all areas out of drought. But last month England received about 65% of its typical September rainfall, with eastern and southern areas experiencing the greatest deficit.

Businesses in drought-hit areas have been excluded from the hosepipe restrictions imposed on the public



for the past three months. But South East, Southern and South West Water have applied to extend restrictions on water use to businesses via non-essential use bans in parts of their regions. If granted, water restrictions can be placed on golf clubs, private schools and commercial car washes to cut water use. Power hoses in car washes can use up to 25 litres of water per minute.

Permission from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is required, but the government has yet to respond to the water companies’ requests.

Pressure on wildlife and the environment from the drought is continuing. River flows in seven areas in England are exceptionally low, according to the latest Defra figures, affecting habitats, fish and wildlife. They include the River Derwent in the north-east, the rivers Yare and Ely Ouse in east England, and the River Tone and the Hampshire Avon catchments in south-west England.

When river flows fall to low flow levels they can take years to recover, with potentially severe effects on fish spawning and river health.

Mark Owen, the head of fisheries at the Angling Trust, said: “When rivers and fish are suffering from the ongoing effects of a severe drought, the Angling Trust supports further restrictions on non-essential water use, alongside urgent action to reduce huge leakage from water companies and unsustainable abstraction from rivers.

“We must continue to reduce unnecessary demand

for water. It makes little sense to ban people from washing cars at home while commercial car washes can continue operating.”

In Hampshire, where the chalk aquifer is exceptionally low, Southern Water is seeking a drought order that would allow it to draw water from an internationally prized chalk stream and rare salmon habitat, even at levels below what is deemed ecologically safe. Southern said it was applying for the permit for the River Test owing to “a clear threat to supplies” in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

The company is seeking a non-essential use ban on commercial premises and businesses to reduce demand as it seeks to draw more water from the Test.

As they seek permission to put restrictions on businesses’ water use, South

East Water and South West Water have been allowed to alter the amount of water they draw from rivers to try to conserve water in their reservoirs.

The Ardingly reservoir, near Haywards Heath in West Sussex, which serves 280,000 people, is exceptionally low, holding 1.05bn litres of water. Its total capacity is 5.2bn litres.

In the south-west, Colliford reservoir on Bodmin Moor, which serves 255,000 households in Cornwall, is 37% full, holding 10.68bn litres against a total capacity of 28.5bn litres. Wimblesball in Somerset, which provides water for 390,000 people, is 18% full, with 3.8bn litres against a total capacity of 21.3bn litres.

Sam Bottomley, South West Water’s director for drinking water services, said the region was entering a critical phase of an exceptionally prolonged drought.

“Every day we continue to draw on our reservoirs to keep water flowing to homes, businesses and communities while river flows remain below the levels needed to support public water supply,” he said.

“Many people understandably think a drought is over once it starts raining. In reality, recovery takes much longer.

“Some rivers still remain at their lowest levels and with no significant rain forecast for the coming weeks, the immediate challenge is reducing demand and preserving enough stored water to maintain supplies until river flows and reservoir levels recover.”

“In just a few days.” He said using force was “obviously not what we want to see happen”, adding: “We want to see these individuals picked up off the boats in a sensible and reasonable way, and taken straight back to France.”

The defence minister Luke Pollard called the comments “disgusting and illegal”, and said that the armed forces were not allowed to accept “an illegal order”.

the peace, Cyndi Hinojosa, told the Associated Press that an autopsy would be performed.

From the age of 15, Mitte played Walter White Jr, the son of Bryan Cranston’s high school chemistry teacher turned drug kingpin, Walter White, on 56 episodes of the acclaimed AMC show, which is often cited as one of the best television series of all time.

In 2015, he spoke to the Guardian about being a disabled actor who played disabled characters. “You accept the risks and you accept these will be the parts you play. But it’s all about how you play those parts – you have to show the inner strength that people have,” he said.

Mitte’s co-stars paid tribute to him after news of his death broke, including Cranston, who wrote a lengthy tribute on Instagram. Cranston described

RJ Mitte, actor best known for Breaking Bad, dies aged 34

America: The actor RJ Mitte, whose personal experience living with cerebral palsy informed his role as Walter White Jr in the television series Breaking Bad, has died aged 34 in Brownsville, Texas.

“It is with profound sadness that we share the tragic passing of beloved actor, philanthropist, and passionate disability rights advocate RJ Mitte,” Mitte’s representatives said in a statement. “Drawing from his own experience living with cerebral palsy, Mitte brought authenticity to the role and built a platform on disability awareness and inclusion.”

A publicist for the actor confirmed news reports that Mitte took his own life. No further details about the circumstances were given.

The Brownsville police department said no foul play was suspected. The Cameron County justice of

the peace, Cyndi Hinojosa, told the Associated Press that an autopsy would be performed.

From the age of 15, Mitte played Walter White Jr, the son of Bryan Cranston’s high school chemistry teacher turned drug kingpin, Walter White, on 56 episodes of the acclaimed AMC show, which is often cited as one of the best television series of all time.

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Mitte’s co-stars paid tribute to him after news of his death broke, including Cranston, who wrote a lengthy tribute on Instagram. Cranston described

him as “my sweet son on Breaking Bad”, a “fine actor” and a “vocal advocate for performers with disabilities”.

“It is especially devastating to hear that he took his own life,” Cranston wrote. He said he and Mitte had been texting each other a few weeks ago about possibly meeting for lunch. “I don’t know if that lunch would have changed his future,” Cranston wrote.

“But I do know that I loved him, and thoroughly enjoyed being with him throughout the years on the series, and after the spotlight on Breaking Bad dimmed. I’ll miss you, son.”

He said Mitte “never – ever – allowed [his disability] to be an excuse for anything” during the show’s production. “He met the demanding shooting schedule head-on with great determination.”

Middle East and Central Asia’s economy to shrink in 2026 amid war, IMF says

Kuwait: The economy of the Middle East and Central Asia is set to shrink in 2026 amid the fallout of the US-Israel war on Iran, with countries such as Kuwait and Qatar facing double-digit contractions, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The region’s gross domestic product (GDP) is forecast to contract by 0.3 percent this year, a sharp downgrade from the 1.9 percent expansion projected in April, the IMF said in its latest economic outlook on Tuesday. The IMF cited the prolonged disruption to shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, a conduit for one-fifth of global oil supplies in peacetime, for the downgraded outlook.

Kuwait, Iraq and Qatar are forecast to have the most severe economic contractions, with their GDPs expected to shrink by 16.7 percent, 16 percent and 15.6 percent,

respectively.

Bahrain’s GDP is forecast to contract by 11.3 percent, while Iran’s economy is projected to shrink by 7.6 percent.

Saudi Arabia, which has partially offset the hit to its energy sector by boosting oil exports through the East-West pipeline, is projected to record negative growth of 3.3 percent.

Kyrgyzstan is expected to have the strongest growth in the region, with GDP forecast to expand 9 percent.

The Middle East and Central Asia is the only region that is expected to experience negative growth in 2026. Emerging and developing Asia’s GDP is forecast to grow 5.1 percent, while the economies of Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean are projected to expand 4.5 percent and 2.3 percent, respectively. The United States and China, the

world’s two largest economies, are forecast to register growth of 2.3 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively, while the eurozone’s GDP is estimated to grow 1.1 percent.

The IMF said it expected global GDP to grow 3.1 percent, up from 3 percent in its previous outlook.

The Washington, DC-based institution said while economic activity had proved resilient this year, the global economy faced multiple risks.

“Further escalation in conflicts, a reassessment of expectations surrounding artificial intelligence (AI), renewed trade tensions, and fiscal vulnerabilities could weaken growth,” it said.

“On the upside, stronger momentum in AI investment and productivity gains from AI or a sustained easing of geopolitical and trade tensions could strengthen growth.”

Farage denies Reform would let troops shoot small boats

UK: Nigel Farage has denied that a Reform UK government would authorise lethal force against migrant crossings in the Channel, hours after one of his MPs said the Royal Marines should be permitted to fire on the boats.

Robert Jenrick, a Reform UK MP who defected from the Conservatives, had told TalkTV that the party would deploy the Royal Marines to

take boats back to France.

“What we are going to do, and we’re the only political party that has the courage to say this, is deploy the Royal Marines into the Channel. If they need to use lethal force, then they’ll be able to do so,” he said.

But speaking on LBC, Farage said he would not authorise routine use of force, that it would be used only if soldiers were fired at, and

that Jenrick was being “utterly misconstrued”.

“Anybody wearing British military uniform who gets fired at has the right to respond. That’s what he was saying,” he said. “Remember, in these camps, every week there are shootings, there are stabbings.

“We are dealing here with very, very serious international criminal organisations, and what we’re saying is, we

will, if we win the next election, pick these people up and take them back to France.

“There is a possibility that initially that might be met with some force. If it is, force will be met with force. But I tell you something: within two weeks of boats being taken back to France, the boats will stop coming.”

Jenrick had said that allowing the use of force would mean the problem would end

Plant 7 Microgreens This October to Start a Mini Kitchen Garden



October presents an opportune and invigorating period to establish a modest culinary garden right in your own home, with microgreens representing among the most accessible and rewarding botanical specimens for effortless cultivation during the autumn transition. These nascent, consumable leafy vegetables—harvested just as their first true leaves appear—may be successfully gathered within a remarkably short span of several days to a couple of weeks following germination, rendering them particularly suitable for novice gardeners seeking fresh, nutrient-dense, domestically-produced provisions without requiring extensive outdoor garden space, specialized tools, or substantial temporal investment. Their straightforward cultivation may be accomplished with ease inside shallow trays or containers positioned conveniently on a sunlit balcony, a bright window ledge, or a cozy kitchen surface, contingent primarily upon the provision of sufficient natural illumination, well-draining soil or growing mats, and gentle air circulation to prevent moisture stagnation. Furthermore, growing these vibrant greens allows you to enjoy a continuous, home-harvested supply of intense flavors and vital nutrients to elevate your daily meals, all while offering a deeply satisfying horticultural project that thrives wonderfully as the weather cools.

Radish Microgreens

Radish microgreens stand out as an exceptionally rewarding and resilient choice for first-time indoor gardeners because they germinate with remarkable speed, typically bursting to life within just twenty-four to forty-eight hours and reaching maturity for harvest in around seven to ten days. Their signature crisp texture and delightfully sharp, peppery flavor profile make them a vibrant, culinary-enhancing addition to fresh garden salads, artisan sandwiches, loaded wraps, and savory grain bowls, providing both a visual punch and a zesty kick. To cultivate a successful crop at home, begin by spreading your radish seeds evenly across a damp, nutrient-rich growing medium—such as organic potting soil, coconut coir, or specialized hemp mats—ensuring they are nicely distributed without piling on top of one another. Once the seeds sprout and shed their seed coats, transfer the cultivation tray to a bright, well-ventilated spot that receives ample indirect sunlight or proper LED grow lights coupled with gentle air circulation to keep the stems robust and upright. It is crucial to monitor seed spacing and avoid overcrowding your tray, as dense, cramped growth traps humidity and creates stagnant pockets of air that actively encourage mold, damping off, and fungal issues, ultimately ensuring your harvest remains clean, healthy, and abundant.

Mustard Microgreens

Mustard is another easy option for an October kitchen garden. These greens have a slightly sharp, spicy flavour that works well in salads, sandwiches and homemade garnishes. Sow mustard seeds close together but avoid piling them on top of one another. Keep the growing medium moist without soaking it. Depending on the variety and growing conditions, mustard microgreens can be ready to harvest in approximately 7-12 days.

Fenugreek Microgreens

Fenugreek, commonly known as methi in India, is a familiar and cherished kitchen ingredient that can also be brilliantly cultivated as a fast-growing microgreen, bringing authentic, aromatic heritage right to your indoor culinary garden. Its tender, vibrant green leaves possess a distinctive, mild, and pleasantly bitter flavor profile that adds incredible depth when incorporated into crisp salads, stacked sandwiches, savory parathas, and various other homemade dishes. To successfully grow them at home, begin by sowing your fenugreek seeds evenly in a shallow tray filled with a clean, well-aerated growing medium such as organic potting mix or a coco coir mat, ensuring proper seed-to-soil contact for uniform germination. Water the tray gently using a spray bottle or fine mister, and always ensure that your container features adequate drainage holes so excess moisture can easily drain away, preventing waterlogged roots. Depending on indoor temperature, ambient humidity, and light levels, methi microgreens typically take around eight to fourteen days to reach their ideal harvest size, rewarding your minimal effort with a fresh, nutrient-packed yield that elevates your everyday cooking.

Sunflower Microgreens

Sunflower microgreens have earned widespread popularity among home growers and culinary en-

thusiasts alike for their delightfully thick, crunchy stems and rich, mild, nutty flavor profile that elevates everyday cooking with both substance and gourmet appeal. They can add incredible texture and visual contrast to fresh green salads, hearty grain bowls, and stacked artisan sandwiches, transforming simple meals into restaurant-quality creations. To achieve the best results when cultivating them at home, it is essential to use untreated sunflower seeds that are specifically packaged and certified as suitable for growing edible shoots, ensuring safety and optimal germination rates. Because certain sunflower varieties possess exceptionally hard seed shells that can cling stubbornly to the emerging cotyledons, you should carefully follow your seed supplier's specific instructions regarding pre-soaking and shallow sowing techniques to soften the hulls and encourage uniform sprouting. Furthermore, keep in mind that these robust microgreens generally require more growing space than tiny-seeded varieties like mustard or broccoli so their larger leaves can fully expand, and they typically take around eight to fourteen days from planting to reach the ideal stage for harvest, rewarding your patience with a remarkably crisp and satisfying home-grown yield.

Pea Shoots

Pea shoots are an exceptionally rewarding and versatile option to cultivate indoors if you enjoy tender, succulent greens that burst with a wonderfully fresh, sweet flavor reminiscent of freshly shelled garden peas. They are especially useful for adding an instant gourmet crunch and vibrant green color to crisp salads, quick stovetop stir-fries, and layered sandwiches, elevating your home-cooked meals with both unique texture and delightful taste. To get started on growing your own batch, make sure to choose untreated seeds specifically sold for edible shoots, and carefully follow your supplier's guidance on pre-soaking the seeds in water to soften their tough outer hulls and accelerate uniform germination. Next, sow them densely in a shallow tray filled with a suitable, well-draining growing medium, making sure to provide good airflow and adequate indirect light to keep the developing stems strong and healthy. Depending on the specific variety, ambient indoor temperatures,

and lighting conditions, pea shoots usually take around ten to fourteen days or even slightly longer to fully develop and reach their peak tenderness. Unlike many tiny microgreens that are harvested solely at the cotyledon stage, these vigorous shoots can also be allowed to grow slightly larger and even snipped back for a second smaller harvest, providing an abundant and continuous supply of fresh homegrown greens for your kitchen.

Broccoli Microgreens

Broccoli microgreens have emerged as an exceptionally popular and rewarding choice for home growers and health enthusiasts alike because they boast a wonderfully mild, versatile flavor that complements a wide array of dishes without overpowering them, making them a fantastic addition to fresh salads, stacked sandwiches, and nourishing savory bowls. To embark on your indoor growing journey, begin by acquiring quality seeds specifically intended and packaged for microgreen cultivation, ensuring high germination rates and freedom from harmful chemical treatments, and then sow them evenly across a shallow, clean cultivation tray. It is essential to keep the underlying growing medium consistently moist yet never waterlogged, maintaining a delicate balance that encourages root development without inviting mold or root rot. Once the tiny seeds sprout and cast off their seed shells, provide adequate bright indirect light or appropriate LED grow lights coupled with gentle air circulation to ensure strong, upright growth and vibrant green pigmentation. Typically reaching maturity in around eight to fourteen days, these nutrient-dense greens offer a swift and satisfying harvest that brings farm-to-table freshness directly to your kitchen counter with minimal effort.

Amaranth Microgreens

Amaranth microgreens can add a spectacular and vibrant splash of color to your indoor kitchen garden, with many stunning varieties producing intensely attractive reddish, magenta, or purple-tinged leaves that look as ornamental as they are delicious. Their exceptionally mild, earthy flavor makes them wonderfully versatile and suitable for tossing into fresh salads, using as a colorful edible garnish, or scattering over nourishing grain bowls to instantly elevate the visual presentation of your meal. To successfully cultivate these jewel-toned greens at home, they require consistent moisture in the growing medium, plenty of bright indirect light or grow lights, and careful watering techniques so the delicate seedlings are not washed away. Because the seeds are exceptionally tiny, you must remember to sow them thinly across your growing tray and avoid burying them under too much growing medium, as they need light and minimal obstruction to germinate successfully. While harvest time can vary slightly depending on the specific cultivar, many types generally take around ten to fifteen days or a bit longer to reach a harvestable height, rewarding your gentle care with a striking, nutrient-rich crop that brings both beauty and farm-to-table freshness right to your fingertips.

Six Exceptional Designs for Dandiya and Garba Celebrations

Navratri observances remain incomplete without resplendent festive garments, conventional adornments, and artistically embellished hands, and whether one is conducting Durga Puja ceremonies, participating in dynamic Dandiya gatherings, or engaging in Garba festivities with companions, an exquisite mehndi application serves as the quintessential complement to one's celebratory appearance, seamlessly blending cultural tradition with personal flair. Ranging from elaborate, comprehensive Rajasthani patterns that feature intricate portraits of instruments, dancers, and traditional motifs to expeditious, understated Arabic embellishments characterized by bold, flowing diagonal trails, and contemporary Indo-Western compositions that merge geometric precision with classic florals, the selection of an appropriate design substantially enhances one's overall presentation and boosts festive confidence throughout the nine nights of reverence and dance. To help you navigate the myriad artistic possibilities, the following comprises six refined Navratri mehndi designs specifically curated to accommodate diverse attire selections and individual preferences, starting with the classic traditional motif layout that honors goddess iconography through lotus and peacock elements, moving toward modern minimal finger patterns for those who prefer understated elegance, incorporating rich paisley-heavy wristbands that mimic traditional silver jewelry, highlighting delicate mandala centerpieces symbolizing the cyclical nature of the cosmos and seasonal transitions, featuring elaborate heavy bridal-style coverage for ultimate festive grandeur, and concluding with fusion botanical trails that weave together traditional vines with contemporary negative-space aesthetics to ensure your hands captivate every onlooker under the sparkling Garba lights.

Featuring intricate peacocks, delicate jaali work, floral motifs, and detailed strokes, Rajasthani mehndi covers your palms completely in a breathtaking tapestry of traditional artistry that demands hours of meticulous application and patient stillness, ensuring every fine line and shaded corner reflects the timeless heritage of festive celebration. It pairs beautifully with heavily embroidered chaniya cholis, rich bandhani dupattas, and ornate bridal sarees, creating a harmonious and striking visual symphony that elevates your entire ethnic ensemble to royal proportions. Because this elaborate style requires absolute precision, you must plan ahead and allocate several hours for both the application process and the drying phase, allowing the rich henna paste to stain deeply into the skin so that the final maroon color achieves its maximum vibrancy just in time for the grand celebrations. Furthermore, the dense network of paisleys, dancing figures, and geometric lattices requires an experienced artist who can execute the complex composition flawlessly, making it an investment of both time and patience that pays off handsomely when you step onto the dance floor and your hands become the center of endless admiration and festive joy. For a graceful look without heavy coverage, traditional Indian designs feature a round central tikki, surrounding flowers, and patterned fingertips that collectively create an air of refined sophistication and timeless charm, making it an ideal choice for those who prefer understated elegance during the vibrant



festivities. It offers a neat, highly adjustable option that can be effortlessly scaled up or down to match your comfort level while beautifully complementing ethnic sarees, classic Kurtis, and subtle festive bangles that chime softly with every movement of your hands. The simplicity of the central mandala or tikki allows the natural skin to breathe while framing the wrist and fingers with delicate floral chains and intricate fingertip shading, ensuring a balanced composition that looks impeccably neat even as the henna starts to fade. Additionally, this streamlined pattern requires significantly less drying time compared to fully packed arms, giving you the freedom to finish your make-up, drape your heavy dupattas, and join the Dandiya raas without worrying about smudging intricate lines, all while radiating a chic, culturally rooted aesthetic that captures the true essence of Navratri celebrations.

Capture the spirit of Navratri with Gujarati-style mehndi incorporating figures of women playing Garba, crossed Dandiya sticks, and vibrant folk motifs that vividly tell the story of joyous communal celebration and devotion, bringing the energetic atmosphere of the festival directly to your hands through dynamic narrative art. This festive design pairs seamlessly with colourful ghagras, mirror-work cholis, and oxidized silver jewelry, instantly enhancing your lively Dandiya night ensemble by reflecting the rhythmic beats and swirling colors of the dance floor in every finely drawn line and expressive silhouette. The intricate depiction of dancers frozen in mid-twirl, surrounded by blooming lotuses and traditional toran borders, transforms your skin into a canvas of cultural storytelling that honors ancient Gujarati traditions while letting your personal festive spirit shine brightly. Moreover, the detailed engagement required for these folk motifs ensures that your hands become an instant conversation starter among fellow revellers, drawing appreciative glances and setting the absolute benchmark for authentic Navratri styling as you dance effortlessly under the festive lights until the early hours of the morning.

Ideal for women who love delicate patterns and subtle sophistication, floral mehndi highlights soft leafy trails and blooming flowers that gracefully meander across the back of the hand or wrist,

creating an ethereal aesthetic reminiscent of spring gardens and natural beauty. Whether rendered as a single sweeping vine that climbs elegantly toward your index finger or a charming central flower anchoring a minimalist wristband, it offers a fresh, romantic touch suitable for any outfit, ranging from contemporary pastel lehengas to classic ethnic anarkalis and fusion Indo-Western wear. The airy negative spaces characteristic of this botanical style allow your skin to peek through harmoniously, giving the entire application a light, uncluttered feel that is both modern and timelessly chic. Furthermore, this breezy design philosophy requires minimal drying time and maintenance, making it exceptionally practical for busy festival schedules while ensuring you radiate effortless elegance and understated charm as you celebrate the vibrant nights of Navratri with friends and family. Defined by bold flowers, flowing vines, and strategic negative space, Arabic mehndi sweeps diagonally across the palm. It creates a striking visual impact quickly, making it a favourite for those wanting fast yet stunning festive hands. Centered around a captivating circular mandala wheel that anchors the palm with geometric precision and intricate symmetry, complemented by lightly decorated fingertips, this style provides an exceptionally elegant and clutter-free look that celebrates minimalist beauty without sacrificing festive charm. It is an ideal choice for fast application on busy Puja days when you are short on time, allowing you to achieve a polished, culturally appropriate appearance in a fraction of the duration required for fully packed traditional patterns. The open spaces surrounding the central wheel create a breathable, modern aesthetic that pairs wonderfully with contemporary fusion wear, lightweight cotton sarees, or traditional ethnic attire, ensuring your hands look sophisticated and thoughtfully adorned. Moreover, because the design focuses heavily on a single focal point and simpler finger details, it dries remarkably fast, minimizes the risk of accidental smudging during frantic festive preparations, and fades evenly, giving you maximum convenience while you manage rituals, welcome guests, and immerse yourself fully in the joyous celebrations of the season.

Why Do Yellow Pillows Occur

Even pristine pillowcases remain susceptible to the penetration of body oils, perspiration, and residual moisture, which gradually accumulate deep within the fabric fibers and produce stubborn yellow discoloration over extended periods of regular use. Fortunately, straightforward cleaning methodologies—such as pre-treating stained areas with an enzyme-based detergent, washing the linens in the hottest water temperature recommended on the care label, and incorporating natural boosters like baking soda or oxygen bleach—effectively eliminate embedded bacterial colonies, dissolve stubborn grease buildup, and completely strip away unsightly yellow buildup. By routinely implementing these deep-cleaning practices, you not only restore hygienic freshness and a crisp, inviting appearance to your bedding, but you also significantly prolong the functional lifespan of your favorite pillowcases, ensuring a cleaner, healthier, and more comfortable sleeping environment night after night. Body sweat, facial oils, drool, and hair products seep through pillowcases into the filling during sleep. Over time, accumulated fats, proteins, and moisture create yellow stains while attracting dust mites and unpleasant odors. To effectively banish stubborn yellow stains and lingering odors from your cherished bedding, mix equal parts of baking soda and pure water in a small bowl to form a smooth, workable paste that adheres easily to fabric surfaces. Carefully apply this homemade paste directly onto the affected discolored areas of the pillowcase, gently massaging it into the fibers, and let it sit undisturbed for thirty minutes so the natural alkaline properties can break down deep-seated grease and organic residues. Afterward, lightly mist the treated areas with white vinegar, which will trigger a gentle, fizzing chemical reaction that helps lift the loosened grime out of the fabric

weave. Finally, toss the pillowcases straight into the washing machine for a standard hot cycle, and you will find that this straightforward multi-step process effortlessly lifts stubborn discoloration, neutralizes persistent odors, and leaves your bedding looking remarkably bright and hygienically fresh. Combine one part lemon juice with two parts warm water or white vinegar. Spray the liquid onto stained areas and leave the pillow in direct sunlight for a few hours, allowing natural ultraviolet rays to act as a bleach. To maintain a pristine, hygienic, and allergen-free sleeping environment, you should establish a disciplined laundry routine by washing your pillowcases weekly to eliminate accumulated surface oils, dust mites, and dead skin cells, while also committing to deep cleaning your actual pillows every three to six months through proper washing and thorough drying. Beyond regular laundering, installing a high-quality, breathable waterproof pillow protector creates an impenetrable yet comfortable protective barrier against sweat, facial oils, drool, and hair products, successfully preventing these fluids from seeping deep into the core stuffing and causing stubborn, permanent stain absorption.

By proactively shielding your pillows with these washable covers, you significantly extend the usable lifespan of your bedding, protect yourself from nighttime allergens, and ensure that both your pillows and pillowcases remain fresh, clean, and inviting for years to come. Even with regular care, pillows gradually lose structural support and trap invisible allergens over time. Sleep experts recommend replacing bed pillows every 18 to 24 months to maintain proper spinal alignment and optimal hygiene. Taking care of your pillows requires just a little extra attention during your laundry routine.

ENTERTAINMENT

Vignesh Shivan clarifies rumours on Nayanthara’s political entry



Chennai : Speculation about Nayanthara’s possible entry into Tamil Nadu politics has resurfaced in Kollywood, with comparisons to actress Trisha also doing the rounds. Following actor

Vijay’s political entry, discussions about film celebrities venturing into public life have gained momentum. However, there is no official confirmation that Nayanthara is planning to enter pol-

itics. According to reports, her husband, filmmaker Vignesh Shivan, has indicated that she has no immediate plans to take the political plunge. Nayanthara is reportedly

focused on motherhood, family life and her acting career, suggesting that politics is not on her immediate agenda. Trisha’s name has also figured in similar speculation, with comparisons being drawn to former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa, who successfully transitioned from cinema to politics. Nayanthara, popularly known as Lady Superstar, commands a considerable fan following across Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam cinema. Her popularity has inevitably fuelled curiosity about a possible political career, but there is no confirmation of such a move. On the work front, Nayanthara’s recent release ‘Toxi’ failed to make a mark at the box office, while ‘Hi’ also failed to emerge as a money-spinner. Whether she will eventually explore politics remains an open question.

Niti Taylor opens up about disturbing casting couch ordeal



Mumbai : Actress Niti Taylor has opened up about a disturbing casting couch experience she allegedly faced while working in the South Indian film industry. The actress revealed that a director she had previously worked with reportedly made an inappropriate proposition when he approached her for another film. In a recent interview, Niti Taylor recalled that she had worked in just two films in the South. After completing her first project, the same director reportedly approached her for a second film. However, she was shocked when he allegedly asked her to have a physical relationship with him as a condition for being cast in the project. Niti said she was caught off guard by the proposition and did not know how to react initially. Rather than confronting the director, she decided to block his phone number. The incident left her deeply distressed, as she had entered the industry hoping to earn opportunities through her talent and passion for acting. Recalling the emotional impact of the experience, Niti reportedly said she broke down while sharing the

incident with her mother. The actress added that facing such a situation early in her career was particularly painful, given her enthusiasm for films and her expectations of the industry. Niti Taylor made her Telugu debut with Tanish’s ‘Mem Vayasuku Vachham’ in 2012. She later appeared in films such as ‘Pelli Pustakam’ and ‘Love Dot Com’.

Her account has once again drawn attention to the casting couch issue and the inappropriate demands that aspiring actors may encounter while seeking opportunities in the film industry.

Watch koffee with Karan on Jiohotstar

Mumbai : After entertaining audiences for over two decades with candid celebrity confessions, rapid-fire rounds, and conversations that often made headlines, Karan Johar’s Koffee With Karan is ready to serve its final cup of coffee. The filmmaker-host is returning with Season 9 of the popular chat show, which will bring his long-running journey with Bollywood celebrities to a close. With Salman Khan set to kick off the farewell season, here’s everything you need to know about the premiere date, streaming platform, and what to expect from the final chapter.

The ninth season of Koffee With Karan will premiere on October 14, 2026, at 7 PM IST on JioHotstar, marking the beginning of the chat show’s final outing. Salman Khan will take the famous couch for the opening episode, returning to the show after years. As Karan Johar prepares to bring the much-loved celebrity series to an end, the farewell season promises a trip down memory lane, with candid conversations, personal revelations and the witty banter that has kept viewers hooked over the years. Salman Khan will be appearing solo on the celebrity chat show. His association with the series goes back several seasons. In Season 4, he appeared alongside his father, veteran screenwriter Salim Khan. He later joined his brothers, Arbaaz Khan and Sohail Khan, for the show’s landmark 100th episode in Season 5.

Actor Sidharth Malhotra sustains leg injury during production



Mumbai : Actor Sidharth Malhotra on Tuesday shared a picture of his injured leg on social media, joking that he took the idiom “break a leg” too seriously.Malhotra uploaded the picture on his

Instagram handle, which featured his leg covered in black plaster. “I took ‘break a leg’ too seriously,” he wrote in the caption along with a hospital emoji. The “Student of the Year” actor didn’t

share further details about the injury. Malhotra recently featured in “The Vvaan: Force of the Forrest”. His post comes days after he and wife Kiara Advani announced that they were expecting their second child.

Ram Charan and director Sukumar officially launch their upcoming project RC 17

Hyderabad : Tollywood took the first major step towards one of its most anticipated reunions on Wednesday, as Ram Charan and Sukumar came together to launch their upcoming film, tentatively titled RC17. The project began with a grand pooja ceremony at the film’s production office, formally marking the start of pre-production. The film reunites the actor-director duo eight years after their landmark collaboration, Rangasthalam. Few actor-director pairings in contemporary Telugu cinema carry the weight of Ram Charan and Sukumar. Their first collaboration transformed the RRR star’s screen persona through the raw, rooted character of Chitti Babu, while giving Sukumar one of his most celebrated di-

rectorial achievements. Rangasthalam emerged as a blockbuster and, at the time of its release, ranked among the highest-grossing Telugu films, behind the two Baahubali instalments. Sukumar has since strengthened his position as one of Indian cinema’s most commercially successful filmmakers. Following Rangasthalam, he directed Pushpa: The Rise, which became one of the biggest Indian box-office hits of 2021, and followed it with Pushpa 2: The Rule, another major commercial success. The reunion comes at a significant point in Ram Charan’s career. Following Peddi, the actor is looking to build on his standing as one of Telugu cinema’s leading stars. His reported recovery from a right-wrist injury sustained



during the film’s shoot, which involved surgery and subsequent rehabilitation, has also drawn attention as he prepares for his next project. Sukumar had previously expressed the view that Charan deserved a National Award for his performance in Rangasthalam. With RC17, expectations extend

beyond the scale of the production to whether the filmmaker can once again draw out a career-defining performance from the actor. Meanwhile, speculation on social media suggests that Anirudh Ravichander could compose the film’s music. However, neither the makers nor the composer has officially confirmed his involvement.

Nani’s bold reinvention solidifies his status as a box-office force

Hyderabad : In Bloody Romeo, ‘Natural Star’ Nani plays a London-based chef leading a double life. By day, he works in a kitchen; by night, he operates as a gangster. While the premise may sound familiar, director Sujeeth, known for Saaho and They Call Him OG, is expected to bring a distinctive treatment to the story. Nani recently revealed that Sujeeth has given the narrative a distinctive spin. The film is expected to blend high-octane action with sharp, dark humour, shaping it into a grand theatrical

experience that places a premium on visual flair and polished presentation.Nani will also sport a new look. While The Paradise embraced a raw, ultra-violent aesthetic, Bloody Romeo is expected to take a different approach. Its action choreography is set to have a flavour of its own, with a more stylised and heightened treatment. Bloody Romeo arrives at a crucial juncture in Nani’s career. Over the past few years, he has steadily expanded his reach beyond his core audience. Rather than relying on safe, familiar roles, he

has increasingly gravitated towards ambitious projects that challenge his established screen image. His appetite for action-driven stories is particularly striking. Nani has shown a willingness to pursue scripts that excite him, regardless of how they might be received by online trolls. This readiness to experiment has strengthened his standing in the industry while helping him cultivate a loyal audience.The strategy appears to be paying off. The Paradise became the biggest grosser of his career, report-

edly crossing Rs 150 crore. The performance suggested that his commercial reach could extend well beyond the limits of his earlier successes. That makes Bloody Romeo an important next step. It will test whether the audience he has gained through his recent choices is ready to follow him into another distinct cinematic world. If the stylised gangster drama connects at the box office, it could reinforce the impression that Nani’s commercial growth represents a sustained shift rather than a one-off success.



Vidhi Ghodaonkar to direct Krithi Shetty in ‘Hum Tere Pyaar Mein’

Mumbai : Vidhi Ghodgaonkar’s success has prominently shone in B-Town with her crucial casting decisions across several blockbusters as well as her work as an assistant director. So, while she will officially be making her Bollywood directorial debut, her established presence makes her feel like a recognised talent. What Vidhi is also known for is being a chief assistant director, writer, and a long-time protege to the acclaimed filmmaker Rohit Shetty. She has served as the assistant director in a multitude of films like Golmaal 3(2010), Singham (2011), Chennai Express (2013), Dilwale (2015), Golmaal Again (2017), and much many more. Talking about her upcoming title, Hum Tere Pyaar Mein will reportedly be produced by Abhishek S Vyas under the banner of AVS Studios, which is in association with



Tudip Entertainment. Vidhi Ghodgaonkar will not be the only person making her full-fledged appearance, with Krithi Shetty taking a long stride to join her in this momentous step. While she was

previously seen in the Hrithik Roshan-starrer Super 30 (2019), her role was relatively small.Krithi Shetty has an impressive body of work in Telugu films, including the likes of Uppena (2021), Shyam Singh Roy (2021), Bangaraju (2022), and Custody (2023), as well as featuring in the Malayalam film Ajayante Randam Moshanan (2024), among others. With a strong backing from the hit action director Rohit Shetty and under the direction of Vidhi Ghodgaonkar, Krithi Shetty is all set to commence her run in Bollywood. Rohit Shetty is all geared up to bring laughter, fun, joy, and happiness with the release for this upcoming project, Golmaal 5 scheduled for a release on January 8, 2027, with Sharman Joshi making his after appearing in the first instalment and Akshay Kumar making his debut in the franchise.

Ramayana headed to Rashtrapati Bhavan: Ranbir, Yash & Sai Pallavi expected

Mumbai : With Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana: Part 1 gearing up for its worldwide theatrical debut, the film could have a special audience at one of the country’s most prominent official residences. According to a recent report, the makers are planning a private screening of the Ranbir Kapoor and Yash-starrer for political leaders at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on November 5, the film’s scheduled release date. The mythological epic features Ranbir as Lord Ram and Yash as Ravana, alongside Sai Pallavi as Sita, Ravie Dubey as Lakshman and Sunny Deol as Hanuman. According to Mid-Day, Ramayana: Part 1 is reportedly set to be screened at Rashtra-



pati Bhavan in Delhi for political leaders on November 5, the day of its worldwide theatrical release. The makers are currently seeking the necessary permissions for the special screening. The event has not yet been officially confirmed. A source told the portal, “The Rashtrapati Bhavan screening is being planned for the same

day as the film’s worldwide release, adding a high-profile engagement to the launch of Indian cinema’s most ambitious project. The event is yet to be officially confirmed, with the team understood to be pursuing the necessary permissions." Ranbir Kapoor, Yash and Sai Pallavi are expected to attend the special screening

alongside director Nitesh Tiwari. Meanwhile, reports suggest that the makers are planning two premieres for the mythological epic, one in Mumbai and another in Delhi. The Mumbai premiere is reportedly being planned at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC). An official confirmation regarding the screenings and attendees is awaited. Meanwhile, the film also stars Rakul Preet Singh, Lara Dutta, Vivek Oberoi, Sheeba Chadha, Arun Govil, Indira Krishnan and others. Ever since the trailer was unveiled, anticipation for Ramayana has been building, with audiences eagerly waiting to experience the mythological epic on the big screen.

Yashasvi Jaiswal’s Wicket-Keeping Experiment Smart Move or Risky Detour

New Delhi: Yashasvi Jaiswal’s reported decision to work on his wicket-keeping skills has prompted scepticism among cricket observers, with questions emerging over whether the move could help him strengthen his position in the team or create an unnecessary detour in his career.

The development has drawn attention to the challenges players face when attempting to expand their roles in a competitive cricketing environment.

The reaction to Jaiswal’s wicket-keeping experiment reflects the uncertainty surrounding such a decision, particularly when a player has primarily been recognised for a different role. While developing additional skills can provide cricketers with greater flexibility, the move also raises questions about the time and effort required to become proficient in a specialised position. A comparable example can be found in Mumbai cricket, where Ranji Trophy captain Siddhesh Lad has expressed his desire to take up wicket-keeping in the future.



Lad has said he wants to keep wickets for both Mumbai and India, despite not having performed the role even during his age-group cricket career. Lad’s aspiration is particularly noteworthy because his cricketing reputation was built around a different set of skills. He was known as an all-rounder who could contribute with leg-spin, rather than as a wicket-keeper. His interest in taking up the role therefore represents a potential change in direction for a player whose earlier achievements were associated with batting and bowling. The comparison highlights how cricketers can explore new responsibilities at different stages of their careers.

However, a stated ambition to become a wicket-keeper does not automatically translate into readiness for the role at the highest level. Wicket-keeping requires specialised technique, quick reflexes, consistency and the ability to maintain concentration throughout an innings. Lad’s cricketing journey has included notable performances that established his reputation as a capable all-rounder from a young age. One of his

most memorable school-level achievements came in 2015 during a Giles Shield match, when he produced an exceptional performance with both bat and ball. During that match, Lad scored an unbeaten 319 and also claimed 13 wickets, setting an all-round schools record.

The performance demonstrated his ability to make a substantial contribution in both departments of the game and became one of the defining achievements of his early cricketing career. His success with the bat, combined with his effectiveness as a leg-spinner, helped shape his identity as a player who could influence a match in multiple ways. Such performances contributed beyond his established responsibilities. However, the transition would require dedicated training and practical experience.

Wicket-keeping involves technical demands that differ considerably from those of batting and bowling. Players must develop reliable glove-work, may deviate unexpectedly.

Karnataka Crime Branch Detains Two Over Videos Targeting Siddaramaiah

Bengaluru, Oct 14: The Central Crime Branch (CCB) cybercrime police in Karnataka have registered a first information report (FIR) and detained two individuals for questioning over the alleged circulation of videos targeting former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The development marks the beginning of a formal investigation into the online dissemination of the content directed at the senior Congress leader.

The police action follows concerns over the circulation of the videos, although details regarding their contents, the circumstances in which they were shared and the allegations surrounding their distribution have not been disclosed in the information available. Investigators are now expected to examine the matter to establish the facts and determine whether any laws were violated. According to the available information, the CCB’s cybercrime unit has initiated legal proceedings in connection with the alleged circulation of the videos. Two people have been detained for questioning as part of the inquiry.

Their identities and the nature of their alleged involvement have not been made public. The registration of the FIR provides a formal basis for the police investigation. However, the specific legal provisions invoked in the case remain unclear, and no further details have been provided



about the individuals being questioned or the material under investigation. The case highlights the role of cybercrime units in examining allegations involving content circulated through digital platforms.

With videos and other forms of online material capable of reaching large audiences within a short period, investigators often need to establish how the content originated, who shared it and the circumstances surrounding its distribution. The CCB’s cybercrime police are investigating the alleged circulation of videos targeting Siddaramaiah. The detention of two individuals for questioning is part of the process of gathering information about the material and tracing the circumstances in which it was

distributed. Investigators may examine available digital evidence and seek information that could help establish the source of the videos and the manner in which they reached online audiences.

The inquiry is expected to focus on determining the facts surrounding their circulation. However, the information available does not specify whether the videos were originally created by either of the detained individuals or whether they were allegedly involved only in sharing the content. It is also unclear which digital platforms were used to circulate the material, being questioned. Detention for questioning does not, by itself, establish guilt or confirm that an offence has been committed.

Shikhar Dhawan Angry Over Team Listing, Considers Legal Steps



New Delhi : Former India opener Shikhar Dhawan has vowed to pursue legal action against the organisers of the World T20 Continent Cup after his name appeared on the tournament’s list of participants.

Dhawan took to social media on Tuesday to object to the listing, warning against the circulation of misleading information about his alleged involvement in the competition. The former Indian cricketer made it clear that he had no association with the tournament and urged fans not to believe or share reports suggesting that he would participate. His statement came after reports indicated that he was set to represent the Asia Warriors, a team that reportedly includes several Pakistani players. Dhawan strongly disputed the claims and distanced himself from the event.

By warning of legal action against the organisers, he signalled that he intended to challenge the use of his name in connection with the tournament.

The controversy centres on the inclusion of Dhawan’s name in the reported participant list despite his denial of any involvement.

His public response sought to clarify his position and prevent further circulation of information linking him to the competition.

Dhawan’s statement on social media was aimed at correcting reports about his alleged participation in the World T20 Continent Cup. The former India opener urged fans to exercise caution and avoid sharing unverified information about his involvement. His reaction followed reports that he would be part of the Asia Warriors squad.

The team was reportedly set to feature several players from Pakistan, adding another dimension to the discussion surrounding the listing.

However, Dhawan categorically denied any connection with the tournament. His clarification made it clear that he did not want his name to be associated with the competition or its reported team arrangements.

Rahul Gandhi Assures Students of Action Over Alleged Police Assault

Mumbai, Oct 14: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday appealed to students who participated in a protest demanding the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar to document their experiences and preserve evidence of alleged police excesses.

He urged the protesters to record videos and share the material with the Congress, assuring them that those found responsible for wrongdoing would face consequences. Gandhi’s appeal came amid allegations of police misconduct during the demonstration. Addressing the students, he emphasised the importance of preserving evidence that could help establish what happened during the protest. He called on those who witnessed or experienced alleged excesses to record relevant incidents and submit the material to the Congress for further examination. The Congress leader maintained that accountability would be pursued if evidence established that wrongdoing had occurred. His remarks sought to encourage students to document their experiences rather than allow allegations of misconduct to go unrecorded.

The protest centred on the demand for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

The demonstration brought students into a political debate over the functioning of the Election Commission and the concerns raised by protesters regarding electoral processes. Gandhi’s statement placed the spotlight on



the conduct of law enforcement personnel during political demonstrations and the importance of documenting incidents that may require investigation.

However, the specific allegations against the police, the number of students affected and the details of any injuries or arrests were not provided in the information available. Gandhi asked the students to preserve any material that could help establish the circumstances surrounding the alleged police excesses.

He specifically encouraged them to record videos and send the evidence to

the Congress. Such recordings could potentially help establish the sequence of events during the demonstration, including the actions of protesters and police personnel. Any assessment of alleged misconduct, however, would depend on examining the available material and verifying the circumstances in which it was recorded.

The Congress leader’s appeal also underlined the importance of retaining evidence that might otherwise be lost or become difficult to access after a protest. Video footage, photographs and eyewitness accounts can be relevant when authorities or other bodies examine allegations involving the conduct of security personnel.

Gandhi said those responsible for wrongdoing would be punished, expressing confidence that accountability could follow if the allegations were substantiated. His statement signalled the Congress’s intention to pursue the matter and draw attention to the claims made by the protesting students.

Man United Board Under Fire From Lisandro Martinez

New Delhi: Manchester United’s defeat to Atletico Madrid has opened up another debate at Old Trafford, this time over the people running the club rather than just those on the pitch. United centre-back Lisandro Martinez has publicly questioned the hierarchy’s recruitment, but his comments have also drawn criticism from former United players who believe he risked unsettling the dressing room at a difficult time.

The disagreement highlights the tension that can emerge when a club faces disappointing results and questions about its wider strategy. Players are often expected to focus on performances and results, while decisions relating to transfers, squad planning and long-term development fall primarily to the club’s leadership. However, when recruitment concerns, or should such issues be addressed internally to avoid creating additional pressure on the team.

JNU Case Akoijam Asked to Appear Before Delhi Police Tomorrow

New Delhi , Oct 14: Delhi Police have issued a notice to Congress MP Angomcha Bimol Akoijam, summoning him for questioning on Thursday in connection with sexual harassment allegations linked to Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). The case is being investigated following the registration of a first information report (FIR) based on a complaint submitted by the university’s Chief Security Officer on October 11. According to police officials, the FIR was registered at the Vasant Kunj North police station under Sections and 79 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).



Akoijam, a Congress MP and former JNU professor who was dismissed by the university, has been named in the case. Officials confirmed that the matter is under investigation. The notice requires Akoijam to appear before the police for questioning as part of the ongoing inquiry into the allegations. The issuance of the notice does not establish the allegations as proven, and

the investigation will determine the facts of the case. The case has drawn attention because of the nature of the allegations and the political debate that has followed. Reports have stated that several female students had submitted complaints against Akoijam earlier this year, prompting an inquiry at the university before the decision to dismiss him.

The police case was registered on October 11 following a complaint from JNU’s Chief Security Officer. The FIR was filed at the Vasant Kunj North police station under

the specified provisions of the BNS, which relate to offences involving sexual harassment and conduct alleged to insult the modesty of a woman. Akoijam has been named in the FIR, and Delhi Police are examining the allegations. His summons for questioning forms part of the investigative process, during which officers are expected to seek information relevant to the complaint. The specific circumstances described in the FIR have not been fully detailed in the information available. Police have not disclosed further

particulars about the evidence collected so far or the precise questions that will be put to the Congress MP. An FIR marks the formal recording of information about an alleged offence and the beginning of the police investigation. It does not, by itself, establish guilt.

The allegations will have to be examined in accordance with the law, with conclusions depending on the evidence and findings of the investigation. According to media reports, at least 11 female students submitted sexual harassment complaints against Akoijam in May.

The complaints reportedly alleged that he invited students to his campus residence under the pretext of meetings or gatherings and attempted to sexually harass them. Some students also reportedly accused him of making obscene and inappropriate remarks in the classroom. These allegations were said to have been examined during an inquiry conducted before JNU decided to dismiss him

from his position as a professor. The complaints and the university’s subsequent action have now become part of the broader context surrounding the police investigation. However, the precise findings of the university inquiry and the extent to which its findings overlap with the allegations in the FIR have not been detailed in the available information.

The allegations remain subject to investigation, and their inclusion in media reports or a police complaint does not amount to a judicial finding.

The police inquiry is expected to establish the circumstances surrounding the reported incidents and assess the information available to the authorities. The notice issued to Akoijam signals that investigators intend to question him in connection with the case. Further developments will depend on the course of the investigation and the evidence examined by the police.

Barcelona, Arsenal Win as Bayern and Man United Suffer

New Delhi: Barcelona recovered from an early setback to secure a convincing victory over Galatasaray in the Champions League on Tuesday, while Arsenal cruised past Lille. Bayern Munich, meanwhile, suffered a dramatic setback after conceding a late equaliser against Viking in a 3-3 draw in Norway.

Manchester United endured another disappointing outing, adding to their recent struggles. Barcelona’s perfect start to the season appeared to be in danger after Galatasaray took an early lead in Istanbul. However, the Spanish champions responded strongly to turn the contest around and claim a 4-1 victory.

The result preserved their winning momentum after an initially difficult start against the Turkish side. Bayern Munich experienced a far more complicated evening against Viking. The German giants found themselves trailing 2-0 at half-time and faced the prospect of a damaging defeat.

Harry Kane then produced a decisive response after the break, scoring twice to bring Bayern back into the contest. Luis Diaz appeared to complete the turnaround, putting Bayern in a position to secure victory after recovering from the two-goal deficit.

However, the match took another unexpected turn when Michael Olise was sent off. Viking capitalised on the late opportunity, with Herman Haugen scoring in the 90th minute to secure a 3-3 draw. While Barcelona and Arsenal had reasons to celebrate, Bayern were left frustrated after allowing their comeback to slip away. Manchester United also endured another difficult result, making it a mixed night for some of Europe’s prominent clubs. Barcelona entered the match looking to maintain their flawless start to the season, but Galatasaray quickly made the contest challenging. Playing in Istanbul, the Spanish side fell behind 1-0, leaving

their winning record under immediate pressure. The early goal gave Galatasaray an opportunity to put Barcelona on the defensive and raised the possibility of an upset. However, the visitors responded with greater attacking intent and gradually took control of the match. Barcelona’s ability to recover demonstrated their resilience after falling behind away from home. Rather than allowing the early setback to disrupt their approach, they found a way to turn the contest in their favour and finish with a commanding 4-1 scoreline. The victory was particularly important because it kept Barcelona’s perfect start to the season intact. A defeat or draw would have interrupted that run, but their response ensured that they continued their campaign on a positive note. Recovery from a one-goal deficit allowed them to avoid a potentially damaging result and maintain their momentum.

West Indies Rest Key Batter Shai Hope For Bangladesh Tests Amid WTC Race

New Delhi: West Indies have rested Shai Hope for their upcoming two-Test series against Bangladesh, with the visitors making several changes to their squad for their final assignment in the ongoing 2025-27 World Test Championship (WTC) cycle. Opening batter John Campbell has returned to the Test squad after recovering from the hamstring injury that forced him to miss the home series against Pakistan.

Fast bowler Alzarri Joseph has been withdrawn from the squad following a routine medical assessment and specialist consultation, Cricket West Indies (CWI) said. All-rounder Keemo Paul has been named as Joseph's replacement for the Tests, while Barbados batter Kevin Wickham has earned his maiden call-up following an impressive run in the domestic four-day com-



petition. Wickham scored three centuries in as many innings in the West Indies Championship, registering 105, 153 and an unbeaten 108 for Barbados. He finished as the third-highest run-scorer in the competition, earning a reward for his consistent performances. The two-Test series will be West Indies' final assignment in the 2025-27 WTC cycle. Although they are out of contention for a place in the final, the Carib-

bean side will look to finish their campaign on a positive note and give their emerging players an opportunity to establish themselves at the highest level. Bangladesh, meanwhile, will be keen to capitalise on home advantage and put pressure on the visitors. Their familiarity with local conditions, while West Indies will need greater consistency from their batters to challenge the hosts over five days. The first Test is scheduled to

begin in Mirpur on October 28, with the second match set to be played in Sylhet from November 5. West Indies squad for Bangladesh TestsThe race for the 2027 WTC final has intensified following Australia's commanding 214-run victory over South Africa in the first Test in Durban. Australia moved further clear at the top of the standings with nine wins from 11 matches and a points percentage (PCT) of 81.82. New Zealand climbed to second with a PCT of 72.22, while South Africa slipped to third at 60 per cent. Bangladesh, currently fourth with a PCT of 55.56, have an opportunity to strengthen their position through the home series against West Indies. India are fifth at 51.52 per cent, leaving the contest for the remaining qualification spot open as the cycle progresses.

South Africa Set For Kagiso Rabada Boost In Gqeberha Test Following Defeat

New Delhi: South Africa are poised to receive a major boost with Kagiso Rabada closing in on a return for the second Test against Australia in Gqeberha after missing the series opener in Durban due to a hamstring injury. The Proteas will hope the fast bowler's availability can help them bounce back after suffering a 214-run defeat at Kingsmead. Captain Temba Bavuma offered an encouraging update on Rabada's recovery, suggesting his absence from the first Test was a precautionary decision rather than a setback in his rehabilitation. The second Test begins on October 18 at St George's Park, with South Africa needing a strong response to level the series. "KG? looks good. I think Super Sport (TV) kept showing him on the big screen bowling. He's as bubbly as ever within the changing room," Bavuma said. "His non-selection was more from a precautionary point of view given the extra couple of days. So he's got the extra couple of days. We'll see how he continues to improve. But KG? KG is very good," Bavuma added. Rabada's absence was keenly felt as Australia recovered from 124 for 6 to post 390 in their first innings, with Matt Ren-



shaw scoring a career-best 190 to put the visitors in control. Josh Hazlewood then delivered a match-winning performance, taking six wickets for 49 runs in the second innings as Australia bowled South Africa out for 206 while chasing a target of 421. The visitors sealed a commanding victory to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. Rabada's potential return would give South Africa a more potent pace attack alongside Marco Jansen and Anrich Nortje. However, the hosts must also address their batting shortcomings. Aiden Markram's second-innings 75 was the only half-century by a South African batter in the

match, while several others struggled to build substantial partnerships. Rabada has not played competitive cricket since featuring for Gujarat Titans in the IPL final against Royal Challengers Bengaluru on May 31. If declared fit, Rabada could return to the playing XI for the Gqeberha Test, potentially at the expense of Anrich Nortje, who made his long-awaited return to Test cricket in Durban. South Africa will hope their premier fast bowler can provide the cutting edge needed to challenge Australia's formidable batting line-up and keep their hopes of winning the series alive.

Sreejesh Questions India Asian Champions Trophy Squad Selection And Decisions



New Delhi: Former India goalkeeper PR Sreejesh has questioned India's decision to field its established players at the Asian Champions Trophy after their Asian Games gold medal triumph. He believes the tournament presents an opportunity to test the team's bench strength and prepare younger players for the challenges ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. The Asian Champions Trophy will be India's third major tournament in roughly three months, following the World Cup and the Asian Games. With only around two weeks between the World Cup and the Asian Games, followed by a gap of just three weeks before

the Asian Champions Trophy, Sreejesh has questioned whether the squad needs another demanding campaign with its key players. "We've won Asian Games gold, yet we're back with our best players for the Asian Champions Trophy. Is this tournament really worth the risk of exhausting our key players when bigger challenges lie ahead?" Sreejesh wrote in a post on X. "Even Pakistan isn't participating! Why not rest our stars, test our bench strength, and give young players a real opportunity to prove themselves?" he added. He also questioned whether the team's approach was driven by long-term planning or the pursuit

of another trophy, while raising concerns about the chief coach's position and the possibility of senior players approaching the end of their international careers. "Do we have a genuine second line-up, or are we simply afraid to test it? Or is another trophy the perfect way for the chief coach to secure another two years in the hot seat? We are 8th in the world ranking. Are we building a team for the future, or protecting positions in the present?" he added. Sreejesh's remarks about a possible farewell tournament come amid reports that Mandeep Singh, Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh and Nilakanta Sharma could be playing their final matches for India during the Asian Champions Trophy as Hockey India looks to refresh the squad ahead of the Olympics. "Or, as the rumour goes, is this tournament a platform for some big names to say goodbye? If that's the real plan, then I genuinely appreciate it! Legends deserve a proper farewell!" Sreejesh wrote. However, reports have suggested that the four players were caught off guard by the

news and had not been consulted. Their reported desire to continue representing India has added another layer to the questions surrounding the team's transition. India have made some room for fresh faces in the squad, with young defender Amandeep Lakra and forward Aditya Arjun Lalage receiving opportunities, while goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak has returned to the side. However, the core of the Asian Games-winning team remains intact. The tournament will also mark the return of international hockey to Punjab, with matches scheduled in Jalandhar and Mohali. Sreejesh's message is that winning another title should not come at the expense of preparing the next generation. "Trophies are important. Building a team that keeps winning is even more important," he wrote With India having secured direct qualification for the 2028 Olympics through their Asian Games triumph, the Asian Champions Trophy, which begins on October 27 offers an opportunity to assess the squad's depth while maintaining their competitive edge.

East Bengal Fall To 10-Man Al Shorta Despite Lalhlansanga Brace



Kolkata: East Bengal's return to continental football began with disappointment as they went down 3-2 to Iraq's Al Shorta after letting a two-goal first-half contribution from David Lalhlansanga go to waste on Tuesday. The Kolkata club had the advantage at the break but conceded three times after half-time, allowing their opponents to snatch victory in the AFC Champions League Two, Asia's second-tier club competition. Lalhlansanga struck in the eighth minute and again just before half-time to give East Bengal the edge. However, Al Shorta responded through Ahmed Yahya, Hussein Al Saedi and Kingsley Kuku to turn the match around. Even after the Iraqi visitors were reduced to 10 men late in the game, East Bengal could not find a way back. For the hosts, the defeat

will sting given the position they had worked themselves into. They created opportunities to extend their advantage in the first half, but a decisive spell after the interval left them chasing the game. East Bengal took the lead when Lalhlansanga received Hardik Bhatt's pass from the right, turned towards goal and beat goalkeeper Jalal Hassan with a shot in the eighth minute. Al Shorta did not take long to respond. Six minutes later, Ruben Ramrez delivered a looping ball from the right side of the box, and Yahya connected with a downward header that beat Prabhsukhan Singh to make it 1-1. The contest opened up as East Bengal looked to restore their advantage. Hassan denied Lal Chungnunga with a one-handed save from a 35-yard attempt in the 21st minute and then stopped Lalhlansanga's follow-up

half-volley. The goalkeeper was beaten again five minutes before the interval. After Hassan parried Daniel Ramirez's free-kick, East Bengal captain Basim Rashid recovered the ball near the by-line and back-heeled it into the path of Lalhlansanga. With the goal unguarded, the forward finished from close range to put East Bengal 2-1 ahead at half-time. Al Shorta emerged from the break with renewed intent and were back on level terms within six minutes. Yahya worked his way down the left before sending the ball across the face of goal, allowing Al Saedi to tap in from close range. The comeback was completed in the 53rd minute. Kuku powered a header towards goal from a corner, with the ball deflecting off Prabhsukhan's arm before crossing the line to give the visitors a 3-2 lead. East Bengal needed a response and began pressing for another equaliser. But Hassan proved difficult to beat, producing two more saves in quick succession in the 67th minute to keep out efforts from Edmund Lalrindika and Lalhlansanga. Al Shorta were forced to finish the match with 10 players after Abdoul Moumouni received a second yellow card for a challenge on Jay Gupta in the 76th minute. The dismissal gave East Bengal a numerical advantage during the closing stages, but they failed to turn it into a goal. There was further frustration for the visitors when Kuku found the net on the stroke of full-time, only for the effort to be ruled out for offside.

Gulveer Singh's Former Coach Mohammad Yunus Khan Provisionally Suspended By NADA

New Delhi: Mohammad Yunus Khan, the athletics coach who guided distance runner Gulveer Singh during his formative years, has been provisionally suspended by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) over an alleged anti-doping rule violation involving complicity. Khan, a middle- and long-distance coach at the Army Sports Institute (ASI) in Pune, has been charged under Article 2.9 of the NADA Rules, which prohibits intentional complicity in an anti-doping rule violation. The specific allegation against him has not been disclosed.

The 28-year-old former national-level distance runner also coached other prominent Indian athletes, including Kartik Kumar and marathon runner Sawan Barwal, during their formative years. NADA has separately provisionally suspended seven track and field athletes, along with three wrestlers and two weightlifters. Khan, who won medals at national events before moving into coaching, spotted Gulveer



during a cross-country race in Arunachal Pradesh in 2021. Gulveer, who joined the Indian Army in 2018, received guidance from Khan during his early years at the elite level. Article 2.9 of the NADA Rules covers assisting, encouraging, aiding, abetting, conspiring, covering up or other forms of intentional complicity or attempted complicity in an anti-doping rule violation. Gulveer has since established multiple national records. At the recent Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, he won silver medals in the 1,500m and 10,000m and a bronze in the 5,000m. He had also claimed bronze

in the 10,000m at the 2022 Asian Games. n 2024, Gulveer moved to Colorado Springs in the United States to train under Scott Simmons and has since spent much of his time training abroad. Khan also helped identify and develop Kartik Kumar, who won silver in the 10,000m at the 2022 Asian Games. Kartik accepted a three-year ban from the United States Anti-Doping Agency in November 2025 after testing positive for several prohibited anabolic agents in out-of-competition tests. Marathon runner Sawan Barwal also trained under Khan at the ASI during his formative years.

Khan was among the coaches who advised Barwal to switch from other distance events to the marathon. Barwal broke Shivnath Singh's 48-year-old national marathon record in Rotterdam in April and later improved his own mark while winning silver at the Asian Games in Japan. NADA has also provisionally suspended seven track and field athletes, mostly in cases involving alleged steroid doping. They are hammer thrower Samir Deshmukh, 800m runners Aditya Patial and Shiva Tomar, 400m runner Mehardeep Kaur, 1,500m runner Sakir, javelin thrower Amit Majumdar and shot putter Rahul. Wrestlers Kushant Ambaji Tambulkar, Avinash and Chirag have also been provisionally suspended, along with two weightlifters, Bhawana and a minor. Khan's suspension remains provisional, and the precise nature of the allegation has not been made public. The charge does not, by itself, establish that he personally tested positive for a prohibited substance.

Iga Swiatek Surpasses Serena Williams With Dominant Wuhan Open Victory

New Delhi: Iga Swiatek produced a commanding performance to defeat Magdalena Frech 6-2, 6-1 and storm into the Round of 16 at the Wuhan Open 2026 on Wednesday. The Polish star also registered her 40th win of the season, extending her remarkable consistency on the WTA Tour. The victory saw Swiatek move past tennis legend Serena Williams in the list of players with the most WTA 1000 main-draw match wins since the format was introduced in 2009. With 149 victories, Swiatek climbed to seventh on the all-time list, moving ahead of Williams, who finished her career with 148 wins in the category. The result also extended Swiatek's impressive record of consistency. She has now recorded at least 40 victories in five consecutive seasons, underlining her ability to remain among the leading players in women's tennis. Swiatek, who has been working on maintaining consistency in her game, was pleased with how she handled the



challenge posed by Frech. "We know each other pretty well. I just wanted to focus on being consistent and playing as well as possible. She runs to every ball and sometimes uses the opponent's power against them. I wanted to avoid playing too aggressively and instead stay solid. I'm happy I did that," Swiatek said after the win. Swiatek had to recover from an early break in the opening set but quickly found her rhythm and began dictating play from the baseline. Her powerful groundstrokes and consistency put Frech under sustained pressure, allowing

atek dominated Magdalena Frech 6-2, 6-1 at the 2026 Wuhan Open, advancing to the Round of 16 and marking her 40th win this season. Swiatek surpassed Serena Williams with 149 WTA 1000 main-draw wins, ranking seventh all-time. Known for her consistency, she has now achieved 40+ victories in five consecutive seasons. Swiatek's powerful and strategic play underpinned the victory. She will next face the winner between Ashlyn Krueger and Lanlana Tara-rudee, aiming to build momentum in the tournament. India's Maaya Rajeshwaran Revathi scripted a memorable chapter in Indian tennis history on Sunday, October 11, by winning her maiden professional singles title at the W35 Lagos tournament in Portugal. The 17-year-old defeated Spain's Celia Cervino Ruiz 6-4, 6-2 in the final to become the youngest Indian woman to win a W35-level singles title, surpassing a record held by Sania Mirza for 22 years.