

Arunachal Food Commission Chief inspects dilapidated Deomali FCI foodgrain godown

Itanagar, Sept 16: Arunachal Pradesh State Food Commission (SFC) Chairman Tarh Tarak conducted a surprise inspection of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) godown in Deomali under Tirap district today, expressing severe concern over the dilapidated condition of the storage facility and the immediate risk it poses to essential foodgrains.

Accompanied by Commission members Maji Chokar and Ngasah Tangjang alongside district administration and civil supplies officials, the team reviewed the physical condition of the godown and evaluated stock management under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). The inspection revealed extensive structural deficiencies, including leaky roofs, cracked flooring, and inadequate moisture-proofing, which threaten



to spoil hundreds of metric tonnes of rice and essential commodities stored for public distribution.

Addressing officials on-

site, Chairman Tarak issued firm directives to the FCI and the Department of Food and Civil Supplies to immediately undertake comprehensive

repairs and renovation works before monsoon seepage causes widespread grain damage. Key instructions and observations issued during the

review include: The Commission mandated that godown floors must be devoid of cracks and lined with protective plastic sheets to prevent ground moisture from spoiling stacked grain bags.

Tarak ordered that all incoming and repacked foodgrain stocks must undergo mandatory certification by quality control officers, warning that unsealed or damaged bags will be rejected. District authorities were instructed to expedite Aadhaar-based e-KYC updates for all Priority Household (PHH) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) beneficiaries to eliminate leakages. Emphasizing the difficult terrain of Tirap district, the Chairman directed local supply officers to maintain mandatory buffer stocks to prevent artificial shortages across remote Fair Price Shops (FPS).

Japanese ethnographer Yuzo Morita's 1979 Nagaland photos exhibited

Kohimai, Sept 16: A rare historical collection of photographs captured by Japanese ethnographic photographer and ethnologist Yuzo Morita during his extensive travels through Nagaland in 1979 went on public display today at the Directorate of Art and Culture in Kohima. Titled Time Travel to Nagaland, 1979: A Japanese Photographer's Record of Life and Tradition, the four-day exhibition offers visitors a unique visual window into the region's cultural heritage, landscapes, traditional attire, and village life as documented over four decades ago.

Inaugurating the event as the special guest, Advisor for Art & Culture K. Konngam Konyak highlighted the collection's immense archival value, noting that the images serve as vital records of the state's collective cultural memory rather than simple historical snapshots. Jointly organized by the Nagaland State Museum and



the National Museum of Ethnology (NMoE), Osaka, the showcase stems from a formal bilateral statement of cooperation signed in August 2025 aimed at joint research, documentation, and international cultural exchange.

The event also marked the official launch of two comprehensive digital resources: the Database of the Naga Collection at NMoE, Osaka, and the Digital Archives of Mor-

ita's Photography Collection. NMoE Associate Professor Emi Okada revealed that the Japanese institution houses approximately 250 Naga cultural artifacts—including traditional shawls, headdresses, and ornaments presented to Morita during his 1979 journey—alongside nearly 4,000 digitized photographic prints that are now accessible to researchers and future generations worldwide.

Conrad clears air on BJP



Shillong, Sept 16: Meghalaya Chief Minister and National People's Party (NPP) national president Conrad K. Sangma has firmly dismissed growing speculation regarding political instability and alliance realignments within the ruling Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA-II) government.

Addressing reporters in Shillong, Sangma downplayed widespread reports that several legislators from the United Democratic Party (UDP)—the second-largest constituent in the governing alliance—were in talks to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The Chief Minister categorized the ongoing narrative as unverified social media chatter, emphasizing that no official communication or concrete development had taken place regarding any inter-party merger or realignments. He noted that making policy decisions or administrative assumptions based on unconfirmed online reports would be impractical, reiterating that the state leadership acts solely on verified political facts.

Reassuring coalition partners and citizens of the administration's longevity, Sangma highlighted that the ruling NPP commands an absolute majority on its own within the 60-member Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. Holding 33 seats—two past the simple majority mark of 31—the Chief Minister reaffirmed that the NPP-led government remains completely stable and intact regardless of external political movements or legislative realignments among minor coalition partners. He added that the ruling party remains fully focused on its governance agenda, electoral preparations for upcoming local body polls, and regional development programs without internal disruption. Addressing the wider context of coalition politics, Sangma underlined that the alliance functions smoothly on mutual respect and structural consultation.

PM decided to prostrate before Trump, says Rahul on UPI charge

Kohimai, Sept 16: Stepping up his attack on the Centre's revised payment framework, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "prostrating" himself before US President Donald Trump by levying a Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions. In a video message released on Wednesday, Gandhi demanded an immediate rollback of the policy shift, terming the 0.4% fee on

merchant transactions over ₹2,000 a direct tax on ordinary citizens that surrenders Indian public digital infrastructure to foreign corporate interests.

Recalling a historic anecdote involving former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi—who famously stated she stood straight rather than leaning left or right—the Congress leader alleged that the current administration had adopted a posture of complete submission to Washington. Gandhi argued that while person-to-person transfers

remain exempt, merchant transactions account for nearly 65% of total UPI value, meaning shopkeepers will inevitably pass the operational overhead down to everyday consumers through higher retail prices. Joining the criticism, Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh alleged that the decision directly satisfies longstanding demands by US card giants to undermine India's zero-MDR regime, describing the move as part of an ongoing policy of appeasement.

Lekang students oppose using local schools as recruitment exam centres

Namsai, Sept 16: Student organizations and community youth bodies across Lekang circle in Arunachal Pradesh's Namsai district have raised strong objections against the requisitioning of local government schools as examination centres for state competitive recruitment tests.

In a formal representation submitted to the Namsai Deputy Commissioner, representatives from local student unions highlighted that converting active educational institutions into testing venues causes severe disruption to regular academic schedules.



The student bodies pointed out that public recruitment examinations conducted by state agencies frequently require multi-day classroom

closures, security deployments, and administrative takeovers, leaving primary and secondary school students without routine instruc-

tion. Furthermore, student leaders expressed deep concern over the strain placed on basic school infrastructure, noting that repeated large-scale examinations lead to furniture damage and sanitation issues that local schools lack the financial resources to rapidly repair. The delegation urged district authorities and the state education department to explore dedicated public halls or university campuses for future recruitment drives, allowing school curricula to proceed without frequent operational halts.

Papum Pare administration bars donation requests to government offices

Yupia, Sept 16: In a stern administrative crackdown aimed at curbing unsolicited financial demands, the Papum Pare district administration in Arunachal Pradesh has officially prohibited individuals, associations, and non-governmental organizations from seeking subscriptions, donations, or financial contributions within govern-

ment offices across the district.

The formal order, issued by Papum Pare Deputy Commissioner under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), follows growing reports of unauthorized groups frequently approaching government employees during official duty hours. Admin-

istrative officials noted that such unannounced donation drives not only disrupt official workflow and public service delivery but also place undue financial pressure on government staff.

Under the new directive, head of offices and administrative officers across all departments in Yupia and surrounding circles have

been instructed to strictly enforce the ban within their respective premises. The administration warned that any individual or organization found soliciting funds or distributing donation slips without prior written permission from the competent authority will face immediate legal action under relevant statutory provisions.

Centre declares Shahzad Bhatti Network terrorist group

New Delhi, Sept 16: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has officially designated the Pakistan-backed Shahzad Bhatti Network as a terrorist organization under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, citing its involvement in cross-border smuggling of arms, explosives, and narcotics alongside targeted violence across India.

Issued under Section 35(1) (a) of the UAPA, the gazette notification places the network into the First Schedule of the

Act, formally classifying it as the country's 46th designated terrorist outfit. According to the ministry's assessment, the syndicate—headed by Pakistan-based gangster-turned-terrorist Shahzad Bhatti under the direction of Inter-Services Intelligence—operates by radicalizing vulnerable youth and local criminals to conduct espionage, carry out grenade and improvised explosive device attacks, and disrupt public order. Official notifications highlighted that the group actively

deployed digital platforms to disseminate provocative propaganda, posing a direct threat to India's internal security and democratic framework. The statutory ban follows a massive nationwide crackdown launched by central intelligence agencies and state police forces. The coordinated multi-state operation resulted in over 250 detentions across 14 states and the registration of more than 80 criminal cases under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Arms Act, and Explosives Act.

Telangana CM urges Supreme Court to quash 2015 cash-for-vote FIR

Hyderabad, Sept 16: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has urged the Supreme Court to quash the First Information Report (FIR) and criminal proceedings registered against him in the infamous 2015 cash-for-vote case, contending that offering a bribe was not a statutory offence under the pre-amendment Prevention of Corruption Act.

Appearing before a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, representing the Chief Minister, submitted that the alleged incident occurred in May 2015, well before Parliament amended the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act in 2018. Defense counsel argued that under the statutory framework existing at the time of the alleged offence, Section 12 of the Act—which pertained to the abetment of corruption offences—applied strictly to bribe-takers rather than bribe-givers, rendering the criminal charge legally unsustainable against the primary

accused.

The legal challenge arises from a May 2015 trap operation conducted by the Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), in which Reddy—then a Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MLA—was arrested for allegedly offering a ₹50 lakh bribe to nominated legislator Elvis Stephenson to secure support for a TDP candidate in the Legislative Council elections. The defence further submitted that a recent top court ruling quashing charges against a co-accused in the same case underscored the absence of foundational evidence linking the accused to statutory corruption. Opposing the plea, counsel representing rival political leaders maintained that chargesheeted allegations of criminal conspiracy under IPC Section 120B warrant a full criminal trial. The apex court has scheduled detailed arguments on the quashing petition for further hearing next week. Expanding on the constitutional and statutory arguments presented before the apex court, senior counsel

asserted that casting a vote in a Legislative Council election does not constitute an "official act" under the pre-amendment anti-corruption framework. Written submissions filed on behalf of the Chief Minister highlighted that Members of the Legislative Assembly cast their franchise in an ex officio capacity under Article 171 of the Constitution. Consequently, an MLA merely acts as a qualified elector rather than performing a public duty under Section 7 of the 1988 Act.

Defence lawyers further contended that the 2015 sting operation was plagued by fatal procedural defects, pointing out that the Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau laid a physical trap and conducted seizures prior to registering a formal First Information Report or making entries in the station General Diary. Describing the decade-old case as politically motivated, the defense maintained that proceeding with the trial violates fundamental principles of criminal jurisprudence against retrospective penal application.

Huge quantity of expired goods seized in Palin market inspection

Palin, Sept 17: In a major public health enforcement drive, a joint inspection team led by the Kra Daadi district administration seized a substantial quantity of expired food items, packaged snacks, and compromised consumer goods during a surprise raid across Palin market.

The market checking operation was carried out under the supervision of local executive magistrates alongside officials from the Department of Trade and Commerce, Food Safety, and local police personnel. The inspecting team targeted grocery stores, general merchants, and wholesale establishments in the commercial center to verify product shelf life, storage hygiene, and business license compliance. Officials discovered numerous shops stocking and displaying consumable items past their expiry dates, posing immediate health hazards to local consumers. All confiscated expired goods were impounded on the spot for destruction in



accordance with statutory safety guidelines. The administration issued strict warnings to default shopkeepers, directing commercial establishments to immediately audit their inventory, display manufacturing and expiry details clearly, and refrain from selling compromised goods under threat of business license cancellation and heavy financial penalties. Administrative authorities reiterated that rigorous sur-

prise inspections will continue regularly across Palin and adjoining townships to protect consumer rights and enforce strict adherence to food safety standards.

Highlighting the wider implications of market enforcement, consumer rights advocacy groups across Kra Daadi district welcomed the swift administrative action while urging long-term structural reforms.

Representatives noted that remote interior markets often become dumping grounds for expired packaged foods, dairy products, and infant supplements due to supply chain delays and minimal local oversight. They emphasized that establishing permanent vigilance committees comprising local youth and trade union members would provide continuous monitoring between scheduled government drives.

NE/EAST

According to the IFR Report, there will be no rhino poaching in 2025 a significant achievement



Dispur , Sep 16 : According to the International Rhino Foundation's (IRF) 2026 State of the Rhino report, Assam, which is home to about 80% of the world's greater one-horned rhinoceros population, achieved a significant conservation milestone in 2025 by reporting zero documented rhino poaching incidences.

With this accomplishment, Assam has completed a year without a known rhino poaching occurrence for just the second time since the 1970s. The milestone was previously reached by the state in 2022. Assam is the greatest global stronghold of larger one-horned rhinos, with an es-

timated 3,260 of these animals. Manas National Park is home to about 40–50 rhinos, whereas Kaziranga National Park is home to over 2,600 rhinos, or 70% of the world's one-horned rhino population. Considering the history of organized rhino poaching in Assam, the most recent accomplishment is noteworthy.

The state had years in the mid-2010s when about thirty rhinos perished in a single year. Stronger intelligence collection, better monitoring, coordinated enforcement, and increased alertness by local communities and frontline forest workers have all been credited with the reversal. The world's population is rebounding.

Assam's conservation efforts coincide with the global greater one-horned rhino population's steady recovery. According to the most recent estimate from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), there are roughly 4,075 people on the planet, up from 4,014 in 2022. The species is still considered vulnerable despite the increase because poaching, invasive plants, and habitat loss are still risks. As a result, Assam's conservation issue goes beyond stopping poaching to include making sure the ex-

panding rhino population has enough healthy habitat. The state's attempts to conserve rhinos continue to revolve around Kaziranga. The park is home to the biggest single population of rhinos in the world, numbering over 2,600. The rhino has become a significant symbol of Assam's efforts to safeguard wildlife and a big draw for the state's tourism industry due to its conservation achievements.

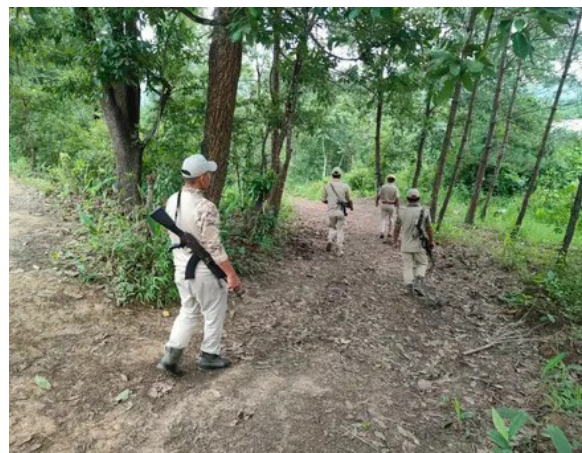
Manas becomes a success story in conservation. Rebuilding rhino populations in different environments has also been a focus of conservation efforts, with Manas National Park emerging as a significant example of translocation and rewilding. Twenty orphaned or injured greater one-horned rhinos were rewilded after being relocated to Manas from different regions of Assam between 2006 and 2021.

Since then, the population has started reproducing, which the paper notes as a significant sign that the reintroduction program is progressing from merely guaranteeing survival to creating a self-sustaining population. Grasslands and water sources are being preserved by conservation organizations in Manas.

Kuki strongly condemns the killings of civilians in Tamenglong, Manipur

Imphal , Sep 16: The killing of two Kuki women at Leisangphai village, also known as Muktokhal, in Manipur's Tamenglong district, has triggered widespread condemnation from Kuki political leaders, legislators, civil society organisations and student bodies, with calls for stronger security, an independent investigation and action against those responsible.

The victims have been identified by Kuki organisations as Kimjalhai Singson, 28, a recent nursing graduate, and Phalneichong Sitlhou, 76. According to the organisations, the two women were killed on September 15 while engaged in routine agricultural activities. The incident occurred a few days after separate occurrences in Tamenglong and Noney districts on September 13



purportedly resulted in the deaths of four civilians, including two women, and the injuries of two others, including a minor, according to statements released by the Kuki organizations.

Nemcha Kipgen, the deputy chief minister of Manipur, called the killings "deeply shocking and heartbreaking" and stated that civilian safety

must continue to come first. She called on the authorities to take all necessary steps to stop future attacks and make sure the perpetrators are held accountable. The Kuki-Zo Council (KZaC) demanded tough and legal action against armed groups accused of targeting people, stating that the most recent killings aroused grave wor-

ries about the safety of Kuki civilians.

In the meantime, the Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU) denounced the murders and called for their apprehension. The organization expressed concerns about the deployment and operational pattern of security troops in Manipur and questioned the security provisions in the area.

The Kuki Inpi Jiribam, Tamenglong, and Noney said that the murders took place in spite of prior promises of improved security measures. The group asked for the start of a procedure to revoke the ceasefire agreement with the alleged culprits and demanded action against them, including arrest and prosecution. would not be accepted for final rites until their demands for justice were addressed.

The chief minister of Manipur has announced a one time concession for delinquent accounts and an increase in the pension for journalists

Imphal , Sep 16: The chief minister acknowledged the importance of journalists in society and stated that the planned increase was intended to support the journalism community. He stated that the state Cabinet would be asked to consider raising the pension. One-time leisure for conflict-affected journalists. Additionally, Khemchand announced a one-time waiver for journalists who were unable to contribute to the DIPR Journalist Pension Scheme during the protracted Manipur conflict. On Wednesday, Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh declared that the family pension will increase from Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,000 and the monthly pension for journalists would increase from Rs 8,000 to Rs 10,000. While during the All Manipur Working Journalists' Union's (AMWJU) 52nd Foundation Day cele-



bration at the Manipur Press Club in Imphal, Khemchand made the announcement. The chief minister acknowledged the importance of journalists in society and stated that the planned increase was intended to support the journalism community. He stated that

the state Cabinet would be asked to consider raising the pension. One-time leisure for conflict-affected journalists. Additionally, Khemchand announced a one-time waiver for journalists who were unable to contribute to the DIPR Journalist Pension Scheme

during the protracted Manipur conflict. He stated that people will be able to reactivate their pension accounts if they were unable to make their contributions during the crisis.

The idea would also be presented to the Cabinet, according to the chief min-

ister. Speaking about the state's protracted dilemma, Khemchand stated that between 2023 and 2026, Manipur's GST revenue collection fell by more than Rs 1,200 crore, severely straining the state's economy. He urged civil society organizations to refrain from using bandhs and blockades as a form of protest, claiming that these tactics had a negative impact on development and economic activity. Speaking about the state's protracted dilemma, Khemchand stated that between 2023 and 2026, Manipur's GST revenue collection fell by more than Rs 1,200 crore, severely straining the state's economy. He urged civil society organizations to refrain from using bandhs and blockades as a form of protest, claiming that these tactics had a negative impact on development and economic activity.

Devotees flock to the Nalbari area of Assam for the five-day Ganesh Festival



Nalbari, Sep 16: The Shri Ganesh Jannotsav Aayojan Samiti is organizing a five-day Ganesh Jannotsav celebration at Purana Station Road in the Nalbari district of Assam. The celebrations started on September 13 with a procession that carried the idol of Lord Ganesha from the temple to the Marwari Panchayat Dha-

ramshala, where the idol was installed amid devotional activities. Daily Aarti and special prayers are part of the festival routine. On September 14, devotees performed a Maha Aarti after offering 1,008 laddus as prasad. In the evening, a Bhajan Sandhya with Siliguri's Vikas Parikh as a guest artist was also

planned. Community-focused activities have also been added by the organizers to the festivities. On September 15, there will be musical chair and Matki Phod competitions. On September 16, there will be a Housie performance in addition to the customary religious observances and refreshments.

74 CAPF companies are deployed for Village Committee polls as Tripura steps up electoral security

Agartala, Sep 16: For the upcoming Village Committee elections under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), the Tripura State Election Commission has increased security and election monitoring. To support the peaceful polling process, 74 companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) have been deployed throughout the state.

The extensive security deployment coincides with the Commission's evaluation of election-related measures, including voter security, campaign limitations, law and order, and electoral process monitoring.

On Wednesday, the State Election Commission convened twice. Tripura's Director General of Police, the Inspector General of Police (Law and Order), District Election Officers/District Magistrates, and Superintendents of Police from several districts attended the first, which was held in a hybrid format. The Commission claims that district administrations and security services have made steps to uphold regular law and order during the election season and guaranty that candidates and political parties have an equal opportunity to compete. As part of the larger security

plan, CAPF personnel will be stationed prior to, during, and following the polling. Election and police authorities oversee the regular flag marches and area-dominance drills that are held in several regions. The Commission has directed District Magistrates, Collectors and SPs to ensure a peaceful environment and build confidence among voters so that they can cast their votes without fear or intimidation.

Special arrangements have also been made to facilitate the timely movement of representatives of participating political parties to their designated polling stations on polling day.

The Commission has imposed restrictions under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and the Representation of the People Act, 1951. These restrictions will come into force from 4 pm on September 26 and remain in effect until 6 am on September 28, 2026. Strict adherence to the required 48-hour period of silence prior to the conclusion of polling has been mandated by the Commission. Campaigning and canvassing will be forbidden during this time, and election-related con-

tent meant to sway voters cannot be broadcast on television, radio, cable networks, social media, internet platforms, or print media within polling places. Additionally, during the limited period, news organizations have been told not to publish debates, discussions, comments, opinion polls, or any other anything that can sway voters. Penalties may be imposed under relevant statutes for violations. The Commission has also reaffirmed that loudspeakers may only be used between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., and authorities have been directed to prevent children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from being harmed by excessive noise. District Election Officers have also been asked to ensure basic facilities at every polling station, including drinking water, electricity and essential furniture.

In a separate meeting, the Commission briefed election observers appointed for the Village Committee polls about their responsibilities. The observers will monitor the electoral process in their respective areas, with emphasis on transparency, uniformity and adherence to election rules, and submit reports to the Commission.

Three remains from the 2011 disappearance of a Tripura teacher will be dug up in Sribhumi, Assam, for a DNA test



Dispur , Sep 16 : The inquiry into the disappearance of a schoolteacher from Agartala, Tripura, will involve the exhumation of three unidentified bodies that were buried in the Sribhumi area of Assam around fifteen years ago. In accor-

dance with a court order, the bodies will be dug up to see if any of them are connected to Ashish Som, a teacher who vanished from Agartala in 2011.

DNA samples from Som's relatives in Agartala will be compared with samples

taken from the bodies. The information that is currently accessible indicates that Som vanished in 2011. His family then filed a missing person complaint when they were unable to locate him for an extended amount of time. Subsequently, claims

surfaced that he had been kidnaped and that his family had been demanded to pay a ransom of Rs 25 lakh. After Som's family failed to make the required payment, investigators began to think that Som might have been murdered.

Around the same period, an unidentified body was recovered from the Sonbel area of Sribhumi. After completing the necessary legal procedures, police buried the body. It is understood that three unidentified bodies were buried in the area during that period. Nearly 15 years later, the issue has resurfaced during the investigation into Som's disappearance. A team of Tripura Police has reached Sribhumi as part of the probe following the court's directions. However, investigators have not been able to establish which of the three graves could potentially contain Som's remains.

Himanta Biswa Sarma Applauds the Free Civil Service Mentorship Program of the Kokrajhar Administration



Guwahati, Sep 16: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma commended Kokrajhar Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Chakravarty today for starting a free mentorship program to

assist prospective government servants in getting ready for competitive exams. Sarma claimed on Twitter that the Kokrajhar district government had implemented a "great model" to assist youth in getting ready for civil service exams.

The six-month mentorship programme is being conducted free of cost and is led by serving government officers. It aims to provide aspirants with practical insights, guidance and a better understanding of the demands of civil service examinations, going beyond conventional rote learning. Himanta Biswa Sarma extended his best wishes to all the participating aspirants and commended the initiative for making guidance more accessible to young people aspiring to join the civil services. The programme is intended to help candidates strengthen their preparation by gaining insights from serving officials and understanding the practical aspects of public administration.

"25 years in power equates to responsibility Debabrata Saikia, a Congress politician, criticizes the Modi administration

Dispur , Sep 16 : As Prime Minister Modi celebrates 25 years in office, senior Congress leader and former Leader of the Opposition in the Assam Legislative Assembly Debabrata Saikia has voiced a number of concerns about the government's performance in terms of democracy, constitutional institutions, civil liberties, economic policy, and governance.

After taking the oath of office as chief minister of Gujarat in October 2001, Modi began his 25th year in office in October 2025. According to official government records, he also became India's longest-serving elected prime minister in terms of continuous tenure

in June 2026. The state of democratic institutions, constitutional rights, civil liberties, economic security, and the lives and livelihoods of common residents should all be taken into consideration while evaluating 25 years of public government, according to a statement from Saikia.

Saikia cited the passing of significant legislation without thorough committee review or discussion as evidence of what he called a decreasing area for parliamentary oversight. He specifically mentioned the three farm regulations that were passed in 2020 but were later revoked in 2021 as a result of protracted farmer protests. He also questioned

the government's handling of the 2019 changes relating to Jammu and Kashmir, including the abrogation of Article 370 and the reorganisation of the erstwhile state into two Union Territories. According to Saikia, decisions involving significant constitutional and political changes should be accompanied by greater transparency, consultation and protection of civil rights. On civil liberties, the Congress leader raised concerns over the use of stringent laws, investigations involving civil society organisations and allegations relating to surveillance. He also referred to the Pegasus controversy and restrictions allegedly affecting journalists, activists and government critics.

A Delhi man was killed for not lending a matchstick to light a cigaret

New Delhi, Sep 16: In northwest Delhi, a seemingly insignificant reluctance to offer a matchbox to light a cigaret turned into a deadly altercation and stabbing incident that left a 30-year-old man dead and another injured, according to police on Wednesday. The victims, Bhawani and Asha Ram, reportedly got into a fight with three persons on Tuesday in front of a wine shop in the Keshav Puram area after they were asked for a matchbox to light a cigaret. The accused and the victims got into a verbal altercation, according to the police, after they denied having a matchbox. After the heat-



ed altercation, the accused allegedly attacked the two guys with knives and fists, according to a senior police officer. Bhawani was rushed to Deep Chand Bandhu Hospital, where he was declared brought dead. He had sustained a deep wound on the left side of his back, the officer said. Asha Ram, 32, was receiving treatment for a stab wound to his left lower chest. He was deemed incapable of making a statement.

At the Keshav Puram police station, a case was filed under BNS sections 103(1) (murder) and 109(1) (attempt to murder). To identify individuals responsible for the attack, police claimed to have collected local intelligence and analyzed technical data. According to the police, Tarun (19), a juvenile, and the primary culprit, Naresh Bahadur alias Nepali (19), were all taken into custody. Tarun and the young person beat them with their fists as Naresh stabbed both victims with a knife. At Naresh's request, we have found the weapon used in the crime," the officer stated.

Increased fares are pushing Rapido's center to take action

New Delhi, Sep 16: After the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) discovered that Rapido's app encouraged users to pay more while their reservations were still being processed, the ride-hailing service is being sued. Ropen Transportation Services Pvt Ltd, the company that runs Rapido, has been fined ₹10 lakh by the consumer watchdog for using dark patterns, deceptive advertising, unfair trade practices, and unreasonable contract terms. The action came after the CCPA investigated bike-taxi and taxi aggregators over dynamic pricing and pre-ride tipping. In accordance with the 2023 recommendations on dark patterns, the authorities has also sent notices to Uber, Ola, Rapido, and Namma Yatri. According to reports, the investigation against Uber and Ola is still ongoing. The CCPA found that Rapido displayed messages such as "Higher the price, higher the chance of getting a ride" and "Captains aren't accepting at ₹60. Try adding +10, +20, +30" while riders were

waiting for their bookings to be confirmed. The authority claims that after providing a rate quote, Rapido encouraged passengers to raise it by implying that drivers would not take the initial payment. According to the CCPA, this gave the impression that passengers had to pay more to get a trip. The approach was categorized as "Confirm Shaming," a sinister trend that instills a sense of urgency or fear of losing a service if a customer declines to pay extra. Rapido's "Set your price" slider was also scrutinized by the authority. According to the Hindustan Times, when users moved the slider upward, the app showed the message that greater fares increased the likelihood of getting a ride in green. Red or orange alerts were displayed for lower fares, and the interface allowed for more fare increases than reductions. The CCPA classified this as "Interface Interference", another dark pattern that uses design elements to influence a consumer's choice. The regulator re-



jected Rapido's explanation that the prompts were part of real-time negotiations between riders and drivers. It said the platform generated the fare and controlled both sides of the transaction. The CCPA also questioned Rapido's practice of asking riders for an additional payment before the journey began. It stated that the fare displayed at the time of booking already takes into account variables including journey time, distance, traffic, tolls, and the driver's compensation. According to the authority, tipping is typically optional and shouldn't be offered as a requirement for rendering a service. The Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines, 2025, which specify that gratuities should be given after the trip rather than at the time of booking or the ride, were also mentioned.

On PM Modi's 76th birthday, Chandrababu Naidu will be present at the Seva Sankalp event

New Delhi, Sep 16: Chandrababu Naidu, the president of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, will visit Varanasi on September 17 to participate in the festivities commemorating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 76th birthday. This will bring a significant NDA ally to the prime minister's parliamentary constituency on a day of national political significance.

At 10.05 am, a special flight is scheduled to take 76-year-old Chandrababu Naidu to Varanasi. He will take part in the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan program at the Rudraksha International Convention Center at approximately 1 pm, along with prominent officials attending the festivities, according to Andhra Pradesh government sources. Before heading back to Vijayawada in the evening, he is also expected to visit the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. Chandrababu Naidu's presence in Kashi takes significance for the NDA, given his long political association with the BJP and his relationship



with PM Modi. The visit highlights the political association between two leaders with decades of experience in public life. PM Modi has served as Gujarat Chief Minister from October 2001 to May 2014 and has been Prime Minister since May 2014. He is now serving his third consecutive term as Prime Minister. The BJP has described September 17 as the beginning of a month-long campaign marking 25 years of PM Modi's public service in elected office.

In the past, notably under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA administration, the TDP and BJP collaborated at the national level. When he and Prime Minister Modi

ran as coalition partners in the 2014 elections, Chandrababu Naidu once more joined forces with the BJP. Following the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Chandrababu Naidu became a key ally in the creation of the Modi-led government, and the TDP later rejoined the NDA. The TDP, BJP, and Jana Sena Party joined forces to fight the 2024 Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh as a result of their restored relationship. Since PM Modi was born in Vadnagar, Gujarat, and Varanasi is his Lok Sabha constituency, the September 17 program has an additional symbolic significance. To commemorate PM

Modi's 25 years in public life, the BJP has organized a month-long Seva Sankalp Abhiyan from September 17 to October 17.

Service projects, welfare outreach, beneficiary programs, youth-focused events, cleanliness campaigns, and other public initiatives are all part of the campaign. The campaign in Kashi begins on September 17 and includes events like a bike ride from Kashi to Vadnagar after a ceremonial jalabhishek at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. In light of this, Chandrababu Naidu's visit to Varanasi puts the TDP leader at a high-profile event with the BJP leadership and provides a noticeable public demonstration of cooperation between the NDA's main allies. The Prime Minister's birthday program for Chandrababu Naidu and the TDP emphasizes the two parties' renewed political cooperation, and their continued affiliation with the NDA sends a clear message to the state, where the TDP, BJP Janase-na, and assembly elections will be held jointly in 2029.

To strengthen military ties, the army head starts a visit to Russia



New Delhi, Sep 16: The army announced that General Dhiraj Seth, the head of the army, started a three-day official visit to Russia on Wednesday with the goal of enhancing the two nations' military-to-military cooperation and defense relationship. Russia is one of India's main suppliers of weaponry and defense equipment, therefore the visit is important.

He will honor the fallen soldiers at Moscow's "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier" and receive a ceremonial Guard of Honor during the visit. According to an army release, he will speak with Russian Land Forces Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Andrei Nikolayevich Mordvichev on a variety of topics of shared interest, such as professional military cooperation and training. Seth will meet with senior Russian defense ministry officials at the National Defense Control Center in Moscow, including deputy defense minister Vasily Sergeyevich Osmakov, who is in charge of defense procurement and industry. The interactions will offer a chance to discuss current military advancements and ways to improve defense cooperation. The visit demonstrates the value that both nations place on ongoing military diplomacy and army-to-army interaction, the army continued.

Seth will also visit the Mikhailovskaya Military Artillery Academy in Saint Petersburg and engage with its teachers and administration. According to a March report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri), Russia was India's biggest supplier of military weapons from 2021 to 2025. According to the report, Russia accounted for 40% of India's weaponry purchases between 2021 and 2025.

The visit coincides with joint Exercise Yudh Abhyas between India and the US at the Mahajan field firing range near Bikaner and Auli in Uttarakhand. With a focus on infantry-dominated operations, the exercise aims to improve both armies' combined military capabilities for using integrated battle groups (IBG) in mountainous and semi-mountainous terrain.

Rahul Gandhi calls on Indira and requests that PM Modi quickly reverse the UPI tax



New Delhi, Sep 16: Rahul Gandhi, a Congress MP and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, called for the urgent repeal of what he called the "UPI tax," a system that modifies the fees associated with specific merchant transactions when using UPI. The government claims that although the new framework imposes a 0.4% merchant discount rate (MDR) on certain merchant transactions over ₹2,000, customers would not be charged MDR.

He sent a video message on X with the remark, "Modi ji, roll back the UPI tax." Rahul Gandhi claimed that by taxing UPI and "giving huge amount of money to the United States," Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taxed every Indian. The remarks come amid a political row over the government's new UPI framework. The government has set a 0.4% MDR on merchant UPI payments above ₹2,000, with the fee capped at ₹300 for transactions of ₹75,000 and above. Opponents of this action contend that retailers may eventually raise prices to cover the additional expense, but the government has insisted that the levy only affects merchants and not customers directly. Rahul accused the Prime Minister of "surrendering" before President Donald Trump and the United States over the government's new framework per-

mitting MDR charges on some UPI transactions. Rahul compared himself to former prime minister Indira Gandhi, saying, "Indiraji was once asked whether she leaned to the left or the right." "I don't go left or right, I stand straight," was her reply. Rahul made fun of Modi by saying, "Modiji is completely different." He is not on the left or right. In front of Donald Trump, he has made the decision to prostrate himself and lie down straight.

Rahul also said that Indians would be burdened by the government's UPI policy. He claimed that by taxing UPI and sending enormous sums of money to the US, "he has put a tax on every single Indian person." The Congress leader called on PM Modi to "have a spine," "stop lying down in front of the United States," and drop the UPI accusation.

The BJP calls Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay's travel to London a leisure excursion and calls the investments claim a total fabrication

Chennai, Sep 16: Nainar Nagendran, the BJP president of Tamil Nadu, stated on Wednesday that Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay's recent trip to London was a "pleasure tour." This followed the cancellation of the chief minister's event in London due to safety concerns. In an effort to draw investments to Tamil Nadu, Vijay is heading a state delegation to the UK.

Nagendran claimed in an interview with reporters in Chennai that the state government was portraying already-existing businesses as brand-new industrial investments obtained while Vijay was abroad. "Chief Minister Vijay's journey to London ought to be considered merely a leisure excursion. The claim that CM Vijay brought investments to Tamil Nadu is wholly untrue. According to Nagendran, "they are pointing out already-existing companies as new industrial investments." Additionally, he criticized Vijay for the Tamil Nadu Secretariat's projected move to Pattinapakkam, claiming that it might have an impact on the local



fishermen's interests.

"Vijay made a movie as a friend of fishermen while he was an actor, but now as Chief Minister, he is trying to bring the Secretariat to Pattinapakkam against the fishermen," he stated. The Metropolitan Police expressed worries about public safe-

ty, therefore Vijay's planned meeting with Tamil diaspora members in London was canceled. Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) IT wing said on social media that the police request prevented the meeting from proceeding. Additionally, the party requested that supporters refrain from congregating outside Vijay's hotel or along his travel routes. On Tuesday, hundreds of supporters flocked to London's The Shard to witness the ceremony. Later on, the program was canceled. The TVK IT wing stated, "The chief minister will not be able to meet you, keeping public safety in mind and following the guidelines of the London Metropolitan Police." During Vijay's visit to London, the Tamil Nadu government first announced investment commitments totaling approximately ₹12,300 crore. The projects are allegedly projected to generate approximately 10,000 employment. Global capability centers, electrical equipment, technology, and automobile production are all covered by the obligations. Samvardhana Motherson made the

largest investment commitment, signing a Memorandum of Understanding to invest over ₹11,000 crore over five years in Tamil Nadu and generate roughly 7,000 jobs. EY agreed to invest ₹1,000 crore in a Global Capability Center in Chennai, which is anticipated to generate around 2,000 employment. About 600 employment will be created as Sigma Technology Group, a Swedish company, expands its centers in Chennai and Tiruchirappalli.

A Memorandum of Understanding was inked by UK-based Wilson Power Solutions for a ₹300-crore manufacturing facility in Tiruvallur that is anticipated to generate roughly 400 employment. An additional letter of intent worth ₹3,000 crore from a European auto-parts manufacturer increased the total investment commitments to approximately ₹15,300 crore. The business was not identified.

The state also emphasized a previous Memorandum of Understanding worth ₹2,500 crore that was signed in August at the VETTRI Tamil Nadu Investors Conference with Ashok Leyland.

India's High-Speed Rail Plan Develops: Delhi to Varanasi in Less Than Four Hours

New Delhi, Sep 16: The Ministry of Railroads is working on an ambitious high-speed rail project that could significantly reduce travel times between major cities. It is anticipated that the trip from Delhi to Varanasi will only take three hours and fifty minutes, while the trip from Mumbai to Pune will take forty-eight minutes.

is carried out, long-distance rail travel will be revolutionized, bringing important cities and economic centers closer than previously. According to a statement by the Ministry of Railways, among the proposed projects is the Delhi-Varanasi high-speed corridor, while a Varanasi-Patna-Siliguri corridor is expected to cut travel time between Varanasi and Siliguri to about 2 hours 55 minutes. The Railways says these routes could improve connectivity across Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal while boosting tourism and economic activity. The pro-

jected Mumbai-Pune link might reduce travel times in western India to 48 minutes. Additionally, a high-speed link between Pune and Hyderabad is planned, with an estimated travel duration of one hour and fifty-five minutes. Additionally, a southern high-speed rail network connecting Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Chennai has been suggested by the government. Bengaluru-Hyderabad travel could take two hours, while Chennai-Bengaluru travel is predicted to take one hour and thirteen minutes. In addition to high-speed rail, the

budget calls for four-line route expansions, the Rishikesh-Karnaprayag railroad line in Uttarakhand, a 40-kilometer underground rail corridor in the North-east, and enhanced connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir, including planned extensions into Uri. The projected East-West Dedicated Freight Corridor, which will connect Dankuni in West Bengal with Surat in Gujarat, is another way that the Railroads intends to improve freight transportation. The suggested travel times are not current services; rather, they reflect the Railroads' long-term goals.

At the Meghalaya athletics championship, Ri-Bhoi maintains their lead as districts compete for gold

Shillong, Sep 16: After a thrilling second day of the Meghalaya State Senior Athletics Championship 2026 in Shillong on September 15, Ri-Bhoi maintained the lead spot in the medals table. Ri-Bhoi has earned six bronze, three silver, and eight gold medals thus far. Eastern West Khasi Hills dropped to third place with three gold, two silver, and three bronze, while East Khasi Hills advanced to second place with four gold, four silver, and one bronze. The Meghalaya Athletics Association (MAA) is hosting the three-day competition at the Sports Authority of India center on the NEHU campus in Shillong, with assistance from the Directorate of Sports and Youth Affairs. East Khasi Hills enjoyed a strong day, winning the men's and women's 4x400m relay events and the men's 5000m. Daniel L Wahlang claimed gold in the men's 5000m, while



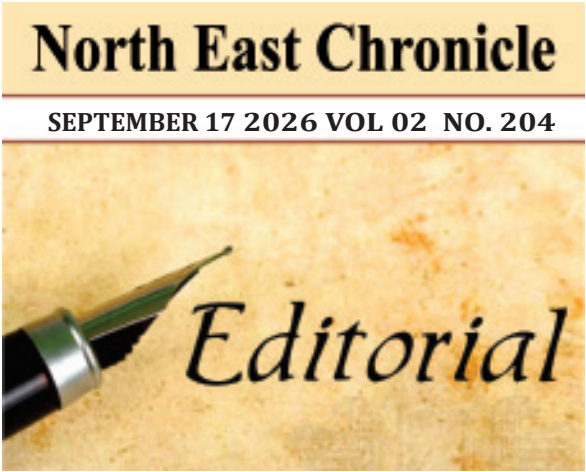
Balasiewdor Pathaw won the women's 5000m by finishing around one-and-a-half minutes ahead of her closest competitor.

Ri-Bhoi added two more gold medals to their tally, with Anrisha Klein winning the women's long jump and Banistar Syiem taking the men's shot put title.

West Jaintia Hills dominated the 4x100m relays, with its men's and women's teams both finishing first. East Khasi Hills finished runners-up in both events.

On the second day, the competitors from Garo Hills also gave a great performance. North Garo Hills' Tushal M. Sangma won the men's javelin, while South Garo Hills' Dilme Ch. Marak won the women's discus and Nokme Ch. Sangma won the women's javelin. Eliam Bonkam G Sangma won the men's long jump, earning South West Garo Hills their first championship medal. Lastly Surong of East Jaintia Hills won the gold in the men's 400m, while Tengsilchi B Marak won the women's 400m. After two days of competition, each district has officially opened its medal account.

Athletes will have further chances to contribute to their districts' totals and bolster their case for selection ahead of the 39th National Games, which are set to take place in Meghalaya, with a number of events remaining on the last day.



Examine the Yarlung Tsangpo mega-dam

A transboundary lifeline can become a geopolitical fault line due to an ill-considered dam, but rivers do not recognize political boundaries. Therefore, there should be constant international supervision of China’s proposed massive hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet. The Paizhen Fault, an active geological fracture, is located beneath or close to the proposed project location, according to reports quoting a 2026 study by Chinese geologists. Such a massive project might jeopardize roads, reservoirs, tunnels, and dams in the seismically active Himalayan region. Any earthquake or dam failure might cause devastating floods downstream, with Bangladesh and India bearing the brunt. The apprehensions are not merely speculative. Sudden alterations in river discharge, sedimentation, lean-season flows, and flood management could imperil agriculture, ecology, and millions of downstream livelihoods. India’s strategic vulnerability is particularly acute because the river becomes the Siang and subsequently the Brahmaputra after entering Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. China must come clean on the project’s design, seismic risk assessments, environmental impact studies, emergency protocols, and reservoir operations. It should also resume sharing real-time hydrological data with downstream countries. A multinational expert panel comprising specialists from China, India, Nepal, Bhutan, and international institutions should independently scrutinise the project and its possible ramifications. I therefore request the concerned authorities to inspect the spot and repair the damaged portion at the earliest. Immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of commuters and patients and to prevent any untoward incident. Democratic principles are ingrained in every Indian’s psyche due to the mutual trust between the government and the people. In general, the “trust” tends to hold only if the stated principles of democracy-equality, justice and liberty-are upheld by the governments in power. Inclusive governance is the key for a democratic institution to thrive. Electoral participation and government-citizen interactions contribute to the success of inclusive governance.

That being said, the success of democracy also hinges on choosing wisely. Therefore, education and awareness are non-negotiable for sustaining democracy. “Raising hands and voices - Fostering Agency and Ownership through Deliberative Democracy” is a self-explanatory theme declared by the United Nations for the “International Day of Democracy” on September 15. On this day, it is important to remember that democracy is never a done thing; it is a continuous process. Indifference and interference are its roadblocks, and to understand the value of democracy, one only has to look at a dictatorship.

The incoming ‘super’ El Niño will create chaos around the world

If you think you have heard enough about the growing “super” El Niño, trust me, you are going to hear a lot more. What is happening in the equatorial Pacific is jaw-dropping and could well mark one of the biggest global weather upheavals in a millennium. It will spawn a string of weather catastrophes around our world in what remains of this year and in 2027, and there is no reason to think the UK will be immune. To recap briefly, El Niño involves a heating of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific ocean. It happens every few years and is part of a natural cycle termed the El Niño southern oscillation, which switches between warm (El Niño) and cool (La Niña) phases. El Niños that see heating reach or exceed 2C are defined as “super” but this one, which is forecast to top-out at an astonishing 4C later this year, is so much bigger, the term “hyper” might be more appropriate. El Niño is nothing new. Evidence for

its existence extends back hundreds of millions of years and its ramifications have always been negative and disruptive. The difference today is that it is happening at a time when our world is heating more rapidly than ever before, and it is being supercharged as a result, leading to increasingly extreme weather. Figuring out how much global heating alone is influencing El Niño is not straightforward, as its strength and other characteristics change naturally over time. Both El Niños and La Niñas, for example, have been steadily increasing in duration over the last 7,000 years. This is bad news in its own right, as it means the world’s weather is knocked out of kilter for even longer, but added to this, stronger El Niños are becoming more frequent as we continue to add CO2 to the atmosphere. There is no straightforward correlation between El Niño’s strength and the magnitude of impacts in any given part

of the planet. But given the unprecedented amount of extra heat being added to the atmosphere over the Pacific, it would be reasonable to expect the world to experience exceptionally hazardous weather over the course of the next several months. How, then, is the UK likely to fare?

The Met Office has already warned of the increased likelihood of a stormy and wet autumn and early winter, so it would be judicious to start preparing now for flooding on a serious – perhaps even epic – scale. After all, the last big El Niño, in 2015–16, resulted in the most extreme UK floods on record. Stronger winds are also a big worry, as many trees weakened by this summer’s extreme drought conditions could be brought down in the powerful storms to come. A strong El Niño could also bring Arctic air to the UK later in the winter, although this is far from set in stone. Whether El Niño fosters

more record-breaking heat next summer also remains to be seen. But there are likely to be indirect impacts on the UK too, thanks to the devastating effects strong El Niños have on the global economy. While the great recession of 2008 resulted in global GDP reducing by around \$2tn, the 1997–98 super-El Niño resulted in losses of \$5.7tn. Much of this was due to the suppression of economic activity that can last for up to 14 years after a strong El Niño. The late-90s El Niño – the most powerful of the 20th century – peaked at 2.4C; the current one is already at 2.7C, meaning significant impacts on UK food security, cost of living and general economic wellbeing would not be a surprise. However the UK fares in the coming months, its challenges are likely to be small beer compared with elsewhere on the planet. The effects of the strengthening El Niño are already being keenly felt, particularly across In-

dia, which is experiencing its weakest monsoon for 20 years. As El Niño peaks later this year, and slowly subsides, the west coast of South America and the western US can expect torrential rains, severe flooding and mudslides. Meanwhile, heatwaves, drought and wildfires will be the order of the day across the Amazon, south and south-east Asia and much of Australia. One tiny positive is that Atlantic hurricane activity tends to be damped down during El Niño years, but this is more than made up for by the revving up of Pacific typhoons. California, in particular, is bracing itself for the worst, primarily because past super-El Niños have brought some of the wettest periods in the history of the state. This is because El Niño years tend to favour the formation of “atmospheric rivers” – streams of exceptional precipitation that track across the state from the Pacific for days at a time, dumping colossal

amounts of rain. Such conditions contributed to the great flood of 1862, which left a vast area of the state under water, including a 480km-long stretch of the Central Valley. The biggest worry is that this unprecedented El Niño will see the realisation of a megastorm worst-case scenario known as the ArkStorm. If it does, expect millions of homes and businesses to be flooded, long-term damage to infrastructure, and economic losses totalling almost \$1tn. Given, too, that tech companies would be severely impacted, the knock-on effects could result in another hammer blow to the global economy. The effects of the El Niño will be felt well into 2027, almost certainly ensuring that next year is the hottest ever recorded, possibly by some margin. It would not be unexpected for the average global temperature to reach at least 1.6C above preindustrial levels, and quite possibly 1.7C or more.

Sweden’s far right is down, but not yet out- Left and centre leaders must seize this opportunity

After the previous Swedish general election, in 2022, the leaders of the two biggest Swedish parties made a risky decision. Jimmie Åkesson, the leader of the far-right Sweden Democrats (SD), chose to support the rightwing minority government of the Moderate party prime minister Ulf Kristersson, while Magdalena Andersson, the Social Democrats’ leader, decided to copy the “Danish model” in an attempt to regain power. In both cases, the strategy led to electoral loss but political success. After the general election in the country on Sunday, the Social Democrats (often referred to as S or Sap), in common with its Danish counterparts, will probably lead the new government despite an electoral defeat, losing roughly 2%, its worst result since 1908. The party’s return to power is purely a result of Swedish bloc politics and the victories of its likely coalition partners: the Left party (V), the Green party and the Center party (C), which all increased their support by 1.5%, 1.7% and 0.4% respectively. Together, this left bloc has a majority of just three seats in the new parliament. So while Andersson will probably return to power, she is also in a very vulnerable position. While the three leftwing parties agree on a lot of socioeconomic issues, particularly undoing some of the worst rightwing policies of the past years and investing more in the public

sector, they hold very different views on issues like crime and immigration. Should Andersson continue to demand strict immigration rules and link crime to immigration, this could lead to significant tensions in her coalition, similar to those that her Danish counterpart, Mette Frederiksen, faced in her first government. At the same time the small Center party, the least leftwing of the left bloc, has ruled out a (formal) coalition with the “radical” Left party, and will want to protect the market from too much state intervention. This will create further tensions within the left bloc in a probable minority government. Given that format and the inevitable internal tensions, a majority of just three seats would require almost unrealistic levels of discipline for the minority government to sit out a full term. On the other side of the political spectrum, the Sweden Democrats had their first loss in a national parliamentary election. Still, there is little reason to assume that Åkesson will face a backlash. First, he was the only leader who had any significance to a majority of his party’s electorate. Second, his support strategy worked: the Sweden Democrats is now completely normalised within the right bloc, as the leader of the Moderate party (or M), Kristersson, had already announced before the election that the Sweden Democrats would be part of a next rightwing government. Third, the

party’s nativism is now shared by all the major parties, albeit in lighter form, from the Moderates on the right to the Social Democrats on the left. We should also not forget that the 2022 election campaign offered the perfect political context for the Sweden Democrats, given that it was dominated by two themes: immigration and the acceptance of the Sweden Democrats. As we know from other elections (such as in the Netherlands in 2023), when opposition to immigration and the acceptance of the far right dominate the political agenda, the far right wins big. This time round, those topics were still there, but they did not dominate the campaign – in fact, no single issue did. On top of that, the Sweden Democrats were linked to some scandals close to the election, which might have further decreased support for the party. Still, it held on to 78% of its 2022 electorate, more than the centre-right Moderates (59%) and centre-left Social Democrats (73%). While Andersson may try to convince her party, and herself, that the “Danish model” has worked, she should take a better look at her small neighbour to the west. The Danish Social Democratic party has hit historical lows in national and local elections (notably in the capital, Copenhagen). And although Frederiksen in Denmark is such a convincing nativist that even far-right leaders in other countries hail her as an example, the

far right is barely less popular than before – just more divided. Interestingly, while Andersson thanked the youth and student branches for their great work in her election night speech, the Social Democrats scored significantly lower among first-time voters than among the electorate as a whole (21% and 28%, respectively). In contrast, the Left and the Greens did significantly better among the youth. This reflects a development we see across Europe, namely that young people prefer outspokenly leftwing parties over centre-left parties. The Social Democrats were the most popular among Swedes with non-European roots, however, gaining no less than 38% of support within this growing part of the electorate. No doubt this group is also not looking for more nativist policies and rhetoric. In short, even if the Social Democrats have regained power because of the “Danish model”, which is in itself debatable, this same strategy will be a risk for the new coalition and for the electoral future of the party. Rather than continuing to be a “moderate” or “sensible” alternative to the Moderates, Andersson should fully commit to a progressive political agenda, both on socioeconomic and socio-cultural policies. That way she not only has a better chance of holding her coalition together, but also might make her party attractive to new and younger voters again.

Democracy: The Essential Foundation of Equality, Freedom, and Peace

Voting on a ballot paper is only one aspect of democracy. It is the conviction that each and every person should be able to contribute to the development of their country while also upholding their rights and dignity. In this way, democracy is a cornerstone of freedom, equality, peace, and harmonious cohabitation. The International Day of Democracy, which is observed on September 15 each year, offers a chance to deepen this democratic awareness. The day was created by the UN General Assembly in 2007 and has been commemorated since 2008. “Bring Human Rights to the Heart of Democracy” is the subject that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has selected for 2026. The message is clear: human rights are not decorative features of democracy; they are its essential foundation. Without the protection of human rights, democracy remains incomplete, even when elections, parliaments and constitutions are in place.

The most fundamental question confronting democracy today is whether it survives merely as an institutional framework or whether citizens’ freedoms, equality, justice, dialogue and human dignity are genuinely protected within it. Democracy cannot be confined to elections alone. Human rights, the rule of law and meaningful citizen participation are integral to its very spirit. The beauty of democracy lies in the fact that the ultimate source of political power is the people. Yet its vulnerability also begins here. When citizens forget their responsibilities, remain conscious of their rights but

indifferent to their duties, or allow elections to be influenced by caste, religion, region, money power, muscle power or misinformation, the outward structure of democracy may survive while its soul gradually weakens. Across the world, democratic institutions are facing serious challenges. Political polarisation is deepening, questions are being raised about institutional independence, freedom of expression and civil liberties are under pressure, and those in power are becoming increasingly unaccountable; the tendency towards concentration of power is becoming a matter of concern in many societies.

Simply holding elections in the name of democracy is not enough. If citizens’ voices are ignored after elections, the opposition is treated as an enemy, the media loses its independence, the judiciary comes under pressure, and those in power become increasingly unaccountable, then democracy can gradually turn into the tyranny of the majority. Mahatma Gandhi’s vision of democracy remains profoundly relevant in this context. He believed that the weakest person in a democracy should receive the same opportunity as the most powerful person. For Gandhi, democracy was not merely a mechanism for acquiring political power; it was a system designed to ensure dignity, opportunity and justice for even the most vulnerable. He linked democracy with non-violence, discipline, self-restraint and responsible citizenship. His thought reminds us that democracy cannot survive on the foundations of violence

and falsehood. Winston Churchill’s celebrated observation also helps illuminate the nature of democracy: “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried.” The statement acknowledges democracy’s imperfections while highlighting its comparative strength.

Democracy is not a perfect system, but it possesses the capacity for self-correction. People can elect a government, question it, criticise it and, when necessary, replace it. This is perhaps democracy’s greatest strength- the peaceful transfer of power. When people can change governments through the ballot instead of violence, revolution, or bloodshed, the roots of democracy grow stronger.

But such a system requires free and fair elections, an independent judiciary, a free media and an active civil society. Today, democracy also faces a new and complex challenge in the form of artificial intelligence and digital technology. Technology can make democracy more participatory, transparent and responsive. AI can help monitor public schemes, address citizens’ grievances, analyse data for policymaking and communicate public opinion to institutions of governance. Yet the same technology can also become a powerful vehicle for misinformation, deepfakes, targeted disinformation, hate speech and manipulation of public opinion. The democratic future of technology, therefore, will not be determined merely by technological capability but by the strength of human judgement behind it. AI must not

become a substitute for democratic wisdom; it should serve as an instrument to strengthen it. Technology must empower citizens rather than become a tool for controlling them. That should be the true test of a democratic digital culture. Another vital requirement of democracy is a culture of dialogue. Dissent is not a weakness of democracy; it is one of its greatest strengths. Questioning the government is not anti-national; criticising the opposition is not anti-democratic; and the media demanding accountability from those in power is not an attack on the system.

These are signs of a living democracy. When dissent is suppressed, democratic dialogue disappears and fear takes its place. For this reason, internal democracy within political parties is equally important. Political organisations that avoid consultation, transparency and healthy leadership transitions within their own structures cannot credibly cultivate democratic values in society at large. Democracy must begin not merely in Parliament, but within political parties and civil society. Likewise, democracy should not be confined to national institutions. Panchayats, municipalities and local bodies are the real classrooms of democracy. If ordinary citizens are excluded from decisions affecting their villages, towns and neighbourhoods, democratic decentralisation remains incomplete. Gandhi’s vision of Gram Swaraj represented precisely this broader democratic ideal- the flow of power not merely from the top downward, but from the grassroots upward.

PNC Infratech shares hit fresh

New Delhi: Shares of PNC Infratech Ltd continued their sharp drop in Wednesday's trade, sliding 17.20 per cent to hit a fresh one-year low of Rs 116.25. At this level, the stock has cracked 33.76 per cent in two days. The steep decline came after the company informed the bourses on Monday that the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) extended the debarment of Awadh Expressway Pvt Ltd, its concessionaire, to the company as its promoter. In a regulatory filing, PNC Infratech said it received a letter from NHAI on September 11 extending the debarment of Awadh Expressway for three years and extending it to PNC Infratech.

The company said it would consequently not be able to participate in any bids floated by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), NHAI and their executing agencies for a period of three years. "NHAI vide its letter dated 11.9.2026 extended the debarment of the Concessionaire to the Company, being

its Promoter. The Company received a letter from NHAI (Authority) on 11.9.2026," PNC Infratech said.

The company said it is evaluating legal remedies in the matter. At the same time, PNC Infratech said the development would not affect its status as a going concern or the execution, operation and maintenance of its ongoing projects," the company said. PNC Infratech added that it would disclose any financial implications, if applicable, as clarity emerges. The latest development follows the company's earlier disclosure dated August 6, 2026, about the concessionaire's debarment.

"In continuation of our earlier intimation dated August 6, 2026 and as required as the per sub-para 19/20 of Para A of Part A of Schedule III of SEBI Listing Regulations, 2015, read with SEBI Circular No. SEBV HO/49114114(7) 2025-CFD-POD-



2fil376212026 dated January 30, 2026, it is informed that PNC Infratech Limited (the "Company") received a letter from NHAI on 11.09.2026, extending the debarment of Awadh Expressway Private Limited (the "Concessionaire") for a period of three years, to the Company being Promoter of the Concessionaire. The Company/Concessionaire is evaluating legal remedies in the matter," PNC Infratech stated in an exchange filing.

Nifty Smallcap 100 extends fall for 5th day; Afcons, FSL skid up to 14%

New Delhi: Shares of smallcap companies remained under pressure, with the Nifty Smallcap 100 index quoting lower for the fifth straight session on a sharp sell-off in equities. The Nifty Smallcap 100 index was down 2 per cent in Wednesday's intra-day deal. In the past week, the index has underperformed the market, falling 5 per cent compared to the Nifty 50's 2 per cent decline. Prior to that, in the past six months, the Nifty Smallcap 100 index outperformed by zooming 25 per cent, against a 1.6 per cent decline in the Nifty 50. Individually, Afcons Infrastructure tanked 14 per cent in intra-day trading today, while Pine Labs, Tata Chemicals, Firstsource Solutions, Welspun Corp, Data Patterns (India) and Narayana Hrudayalaya were down in the range of 4 to 6 per cent. Whirlpool of India, Irocon International, Brainbees Solutions and Afcons Infrastructure shares hit their respective 52-week lows, data showed.

Notably, global markets are showing a cautious tone ahead of the US Federal Reserve's policy decision. Investors will closely track the Fed's rate decision and forward guidance, which could influence global risk sentiment and near-term market direction. FIIs continue selling streak. Meanwhile, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) continued their selling streak for the fifth consecutive session,

recording net equity sales of ₹2,977 crore on September 15th 2026. In contrast, domestic institutional investors (DIIs) remained supportive, making net purchases of ₹2,686 crore during the session. The near-term setup remains defensive, with persistent institutional selling and weak price structure keeping sentiment under pressure. Oversold conditions in Nifty may trigger intermittent relief rallies, but these could remain vulnerable to selling at higher levels. Sustained stabilization and stronger participation from buyers would be required to improve the broader market tone, said Hitesh Tailor, Technical Research Analyst at Choice Broking.

Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is expected to end its accommodative monetary stance and initiate a rate hike cycle, moving the repo rate from 5.25 per cent toward 6.5 per cent.

This shift is driven by accelerating inflation across retail and wholesale metrics, persistent food and fuel price pressures, and a widening gap between producer costs and consumer prices.

Compounded by rising US interest rates and global market uncertainty, negative real interest rates have become unsustainable for India's macroeconomic stability, analysts at Systematrix Institutional Equities said.

SBI General Insurance steps up Assam flood relief, reaches 1,000 households

Jorhat: SBI General Insurance has launched a flood relief and recovery initiative in Assam in partnership with The Akshaya Patra Foundation and Ayang Trust, combining immediate food assistance with essential relief supplies for affected communities.

Through The Akshaya Patra Foundation, the insurer is facilitating the distribution of fresh, hygienic and nutritious hot meals in Jorhat district. Separately, its partnership with Ayang Trust will support 1,000 flood-affected households across Jorhat, Sivasagar and Charaideo, covering 300, 400 and 300 households respectively and reaching around 4,000 people.

The relief kits, prepared in coordination with district administrations, include bed sheets, blankets, buckets and mugs, sanitary pads and essential utensils.

In Jorhat, the initiative



assumes significance as flooding disrupts household spending, livelihoods and access to basic necessities. Food and essential household supplies can provide immediate support to affected families while helping ease pressure on local communities and the rural economy.

SBI General Insurance MD and CEO Naveen Chandra Jha said the company aims to stand with communities during natural disasters. Head-Marketing

& CSR Rathin Lahiri said timely assistance addressing basic needs is critical during the recovery period. Founded in 2009, SBI General reported gross direct premium of Rs 15,904 crore in FY26, up 14.5% year-on-year, and has over 9,900 employees and 182 branches.

For Assam flood claims, motor customers can contact Pritam Dey at 7002653893 and property customers Rajib Saha at 9073946049.

DFS launches three fintech solutions at GFF 2026 to accelerate financial inclusion

Kohima: Department of Financial Services Secretary Sanjay Lohiya on Wednesday launched three initiatives at the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2026 aimed at expanding access to digital banking, formal credit and cash deposit services across the country.

The initiatives include an open-source Android ATM for instant issuance of personalised RuPay cards

and merchant UPI QR codes, integration of select government-backed credit schemes with Credit Line on UPI, and an Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) Three-Party Cash Deposit facility. UIDAI CEO Saurabh Vijay was also present at the launch.

The new ATMs will allow customers to obtain RuPay debit, credit and NCMC cards instantly while also

offering services such as cheque deposits, account opening and loan applications. Nine banks are currently working with NPCI and ATM manufacturers to explore the solution.

Under Credit Line on UPI, eligible Kisan Credit Card and PM MUDRA Yojana beneficiaries can use sanctioned credit limits for merchant payments through UPI. More than 7.7 crore operative KCC accounts

and over 57 crore PMMY loans are covered by the respective credit ecosystems.

The AePS Three-Party Cash Deposit service will allow eKYC-registered customers to deposit cash directly into beneficiaries' bank accounts through participating AePS Touchpoint Operators, using Aadhaar-based biometric authentication and beneficiary validation.

Glass Wall Systems shares list at nearly 7% premium over IPO price

New Delhi: Shares of Glass Wall Systems India Ltd made a positive debut on the stock exchanges on Wednesday, listing at a premium of 6.59 per cent over the issue price.

The stock opened at Rs 194 on NSE, compared with its initial public offering (IPO) price of Rs 182 per share. The Rs 428-crore initial share sale of the façade solutions provider was subscribed 81.65 times during the September 8-10 bidding period. The issue received bids for 134.37 crore equity shares against 1.64 crore shares on offer.

The qualified institutional buyer (QIB) portion was subscribed 167.93 times, while the non-institutional investor (NII) category saw 79.71 times subscription. The retail portion was



subscribed 33.18 times.

Glass Wall Systems had fixed the IPO price band at Rs 172-182 per equity share. Ahead of the issue, the company raised Rs 128.36 crore from anchor investors by allotting 70.53 lakh shares at Rs 182 apiece.

The anchor investors included HDFC Mutual Fund, Bank of India Mutu-

al Fund, Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company, Abakus Growth Fund, Integrated Core Strategies (Asia) Pte Ltd, PineBridge India Equity Fund, Bengal Finance and Investment and Subhram Ventures. The mainboard IPO comprised a fresh issue of equity shares worth up to Rs 60 crore and an Offer-for-Sale (OFS) of 2.02 crore

shares by promoters Jawahar Harihar Hemrajani and Eshan Jawahar Hemrajani, along with investor shareholder India Business Excellence Fund IIA.

Of the fresh issue proceeds, Rs 50 crore will be used to establish a glass-processing unit at the company's Vile Bhagad facility in Maharashtra as part of its backward integration plans. The balance will be used for general corporate purposes.

Incorporated in 2002, Glass Wall Systems provides façade solutions and fenestration services in India as well as overseas markets, including the US and Australia. The company undertakes projects across design, engineering, manufacturing, supply and installation of customised façade systems.

Sensex climbs 300 points, Nifty holds above 23,200

New Delhi: Sensex, Nifty at 10 am: The Nifty and the Sensex are holding onto early gains.

Three companies made their market debut today. Glass Well and Kanohar listed with strong double-digit premium while Prasol Chemicals listed at a discount.

Kanohar Electricals, Glass Wall Systems make positive debut: The IPOs of Kanohar Electricals and Glass Wall Systems (India) made a positive debut on the stock exchanges. Kanohar Electricals, which had fixed its issue price at Rs 632, listed at Rs 685.50 on the NSE, marking a premium of 8.47%, while its BSE listing stood at Rs 672.05, a 6.34% Rs 190.10 on the BSE, reflecting a 4.45% premium.

UPI merchant fees kick 15: Citi, Morgan Stanley

New Delhi: UPI's zero merchant discount rate regime is set to change from October 15, with Citi, JP Morgan and Morgan Stanley assessing the impact of new merchant charges on banks and the wider payments ecosystem.

Citi has provided the most detailed bank-level assessment, identifying Yes Bank as the biggest potential beneficiary, followed by several other lenders. JP Morgan estimates the new framework could create an annual revenue pool of around Rs 17,000 crore across the UPI ecosystem, while Morgan Stanley also sees Yes Bank as a relative beneficiary. Citi said the new UPI merchant discount rate framework will bring an end to the zero-MDR structure for larger merchant payments while retaining free person-to-person transactions. The brokerage noted that around 96% of person-to-merchant transaction volumes would remain outside the new charges, covering transactions up to Rs 2,000 and small merchants receiving up to Rs 1 lakh a month. Citi expects net incremental revenue for the UPI ecosystem at around Rs 16,000 crore to Rs 17,000 crore a year. The brokerage estimates that roughly 60% could accrue to the banking system, 25% to UPI application providers and 15% to non-bank payment aggregators. For larger eligible merchant payments, the merchant discount rate will be 0.4%, with a cap of Rs 300 for transactions above Rs 75,000, according to Citi. Essential services will receive concessional treatment, while capital market transactions will carry a 0.02% rate, subject to a Rs 300 cap.

Citi described the new framework as a long-awaited monetisation opportunity for banks with substantial UPI volumes. "We view this as a structurally positive, long-awaited monetization event for UPI-heavy banks and Third-Party Application Providers (TPAPs)," Citi said. Citi estimated that Yes Bank could see a 6% to 12% increase in profit before tax from the new framework. The brokerage also identified Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank and IndusInd Bank as potential beneficia-



ries, estimating around 2% PBT benefit for each. Axis Bank, State Bank of India and Federal Bank could see a 1% to 2% PBT benefit, Citi estimated. HDFC Bank, ICI- CI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and AU Small Finance Bank could see a benefit of less than 1%, the brokerage added.

JP Morgan sees Rs 17,000 crore UPI revenue pool

JP Morgan said the UPI Steering Committee has formally introduced a merchant discount rate on selected bank-account-funded person-to-merchant transactions from October 15. Large merchants will pay 40 basis points on transactions above Rs 2,000, subject to a Rs 300 cap per transaction, according to the brokerage. Small merchants receiving up to Rs 1 lakh a month through UPI QR codes under the person-to-person merchant category will remain exempt. Essential services such as railways, telecommunications, insurance, fuel and agricultural inputs will carry a flat Rs 5 charge, while capital market transactions will attract 2 basis points subject to a Rs 300 cap. Person-to-person transactions will remain free.

Unlike Citi, JP Morgan does not provide a comparable list of individual bank-level PBT beneficiaries in the material reviewed. Instead, the brokerage focuses on the size of the revenue pool and how it could be distributed across the UPI ecosystem.

JP Morgan pointed out that the additional revenue could support investment in payment infrastructure, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

From floor trading to free cash flow: NSE achieved in 32-year journey

New Delhi: The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) is set to launch its initial public offering (IPO) on September 17, taking the country's largest exchange into the public markets after more than three decades of change. NSE's Rs 22,568 crore maiden stake sale will be largest IPO in India's financial sector and second largest after Hyundai Motors India. As the exchange prepares to list, its MD and CEO Ashish Kumar Chauhan looked back at NSE's journey from the era of floor-based trading to a technology-driven market infrastructure institution with significant scale and strong free cash flow generation. While addressing the media in Delhi, Chauhan said that the numbers show how sharply India's capital markets have changed over this period. When NSE began operations, India's total market capitalisation stood at around Rs 4 lakh crore. Currently, it is near Rs 480 lakh crore, a nearly 120-fold increase. Chauhan said exchanges across major global markets, including the US, Australia, Japan, the UK and Europe, once operated through floor trading, while India moved quickly towards technology-led markets as the economy and



investor participation expanded. The growth has also been reflected in the number of unique users, which has risen from around 1 million to 132.37 million (as of June 30, 2026) over NSE's three-decade journey.

Chauhan said the scale of NSE's technology infrastructure can be seen in its trading volumes. According to him, NSE executes an average of around 2,200 crore orders during 375 minutes, or 6.15 hours, of trading. This works out to nearly 5.87 crore orders every minute.

He compared this with India's digital payments ecosystem, noting that the country records around

2,400 crore UPI transactions in a month, underscoring the scale of the throughput handled by the exchange's technology infrastructure.

Chauhan said the shift from physical trading floors to electronic markets has also changed the economics of launching new products. According to him, exchanges do not necessarily need significant investments to create every new asset class. Once the underlying technology and product infrastructure are in place, relatively limited changes can enable the launch of new products. He added, however, that an exchange cannot independently decide which products or asset classes can be introduced, and that

regulatory approval remains a key requirement. This technology-led model has allowed NSE to build a diversified market ecosystem spanning equities, derivatives and other products, while also extending its role into newer areas such as the Social Stock Exchange.

Chauhan said NSE now has a reach across more than 99 per cent of India's 19,300 pin codes. According to the exchange, participants are present in all but 28 pin codes. The expansion has taken the exchange's footprint well beyond Mumbai and other major cities, reflecting a shift from capital market activity being concentrated among institutional and urban investors to one that is increasingly accessible to millions of retail participants across the country.

NSE's upcoming IPO marks another point in this journey. After more than 30 years of building technology infrastructure, expanding investor access and establishing a dominant position in India's capital markets, the exchange is now preparing to enter the public markets itself. NSE's three-decade journey tracks the digitisation and expansion of India's capital markets.

Airlines should pay for CO2 removal if Heathrow expands, say climate advisers

Heathrow airport should be allowed to expand only if airlines pay for the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, the government’s climate advisers have said.

Building a third runway and new terminals, as some in government want to do, would breach the UK’s carbon budgets and make reaching net zero by 2050 impossible, on current policies, according to the Climate Change Committee.

The “only way” to manage such expansion within the UK’s climate commitments was for the aviation industry to become more efficient, use an increasing proportion of “sustainable aviation fuels” (SAF) in place of fossil fuels, and pay for the permanent removal and storage of carbon from the atmosphere.

Nigel Topping, the chair of the CCC, said: “The government cannot expand Heathrow airport without requiring the aviation industry to clean up its emissions. Therefore, the government should legislate policies that require the aviation industry to fully address all of their emissions by 2050, either directly or by purchasing engineered removals. The polluter-pays principle must apply.” In a report to the government on Wednesday, the CCC

found that the costs of SAF and carbon removal would probably be passed on to passengers by airlines, adding an estimated £150 to the price of a return flight to Alicante by 2050, or about £400 to the price of a flight to New York. These costs would be phased in gradually over 25 years.

But campaigners rejected the CCC’s plan of relying on nascent technologies to wipe out the impact of an expansion that would commit the UK to much higher emissions for decades, and called on ministers to halt all airport expansion. Tony Bosworth, campaigner at Friends of the Earth, accused the CCC of “pulling its punches”, pointing to recent research by the Tyndall Centre that found SAF and carbon removals were unproven and unlikely to ramp up in time to the extent needed to justify airport expansion.

“The CCC should have made it crystal clear: there is no plausible way to expand Heathrow without wrecking the UK’s climate targets,” he said.

Frequent flying is overwhelmingly skewed towards the wealthy. In any year, only about half of people in England take a flight abroad, while about 80% of all flights abroad were taken by people who took two or more flights



— about a quarter of the population. Frequent flyers — those who took five or more return flights abroad in 2024 — made up only 5% of the population, but accounted for a third of all flights.

Those in the highest income group took 38% of all flights abroad — four times as many flights as those in the lowest income group, according to the Na-

tional Travel Survey of England in 2024.

The CCC said policies to force airlines to take responsibility for cleaning up their emissions should take these inequalities into account, but stopped short of recommending a frequent flyer levy. The rise in demand for flying since the Covid pandemic threatens to raise carbon emis-

sions around the world. Separate research by the campaign group Transport&Environment has found that planned expansions at 20 of Europe’s biggest airports, including Heathrow, would breach EU and national carbon limits, even if the planes using them were more efficient and partly powered by sustainable aviation fuel.

James Richardson, director of analysis at the CCC, said the past three decades of growth in the aviation industry and the likely increase in future demand meant it was “too big” to rely on other sectors to cut their emissions, allowing flying to take up more space within the UK’s carbon budgets. Aviation now produces more carbon than the UK’s electricity generation, and passenger demand has nearly tripled from 100 million passengers in 1990 to 300 million in 2025. It now makes up 9% of the UK’s emissions, and will be one of the two top emitting sectors, along with agriculture, by 2050. A spokesperson for Heathrow said: “Heathrow expansion cannot be a choice between economic growth and net zero — it must deliver both. The CCC’s assessment does not change this and acknowledges that the key solutions exist today. We will continue working with government and partners across the aviation sector to ramp up today’s proven technologies, while examining options for how the billions of pounds passengers already pay in carbon taxes can be used to support this.”

But Tim Alderslade, chief executive of industry body Airlines UK, claimed the CCC’s approach was not affordable and would

“put holidays out of reach for millions, turning the clock back to a time when flying was the preserve of the rich”. He said: “You can’t solve the climate crisis by pricing Britain out of the skies. The answer is affordable SAF — already cutting emissions since the mandate began — airspace reform by 2035 for more direct routes and scaled-up carbon removals.”

The government is not obliged to follow the advice of the CCC, which was set up under the 2008 Climate Change Act to draw up five-yearly carbon budgets. Topping said that if consent was granted to Heathrow without legislation in place to force the industry to clean up its emissions, “there will be a big red light flashing” in the CCC’s report to parliament.

Responding to the CCC’s findings, a spokesperson for the UK’s Department for Transport said: “Any expansion proposal [for Heathrow] would need to align with our net zero targets. We’re investing £219m in sustainable aviation fuel production and a further £43m in cleaner technologies to support greener aviation, while expansion could deliver around £40bn to the economy and support up to 60,000 local jobs.”

‘Significant unease’ at the Telegraph over Reform using outlet for ‘spoiler’ tactics

UK: The Telegraph and Reform UK are facing claims of undermining public interest journalism and eroding trust between reporters and politicians, after Nigel Farage’s party gave the newspaper stories first uncovered by other outlets.

It is understood there is unease among editorial staff at the Telegraph about Reform’s repeated use of the outlet for “spoilers”: a media tactic designed to pre-empt a problematic story by placing it with a title seen as more sympathetic.

The concern comes after the Telegraph published details of two unprecedented £36m donations to Reform from the crypto billionaires Ben Delo and Christopher Harborne. It did so shortly after Farage and a party spokesperson had been approached for comment about the donations by the Sunday Times.

“A fundamental part of political reporting — approaching for comment before publishing — just totally breaks down if this is what happens,” said the Sunday Times political editor, Ben Riley-Smith. “Bad for both sides: [It] will increase the chance of inaccuracies.”

It follows similar instances in which Reform has attempted to use the Telegraph to neutralise potentially damaging stories.

In April, the Guardian revealed that Farage had received a £5m gift from Harborne. When the Guardian went to Reform for comment, the party asked for more time to respond — and used the time to brief the Telegraph, which ran fawning interviews with Farage and Harborne.

On another occasion, details of donations and loans to Reform’s deputy leader, Richard Tice, and his company, put to the party by



the Guardian, then appeared in a Telegraph story. A Telegraph journalist said there was “significant unease” about the tactic in the newsroom, with concern that Reform figures had repeatedly undermined journalism with the spoiler tactic.

Other insiders said the criticism was unfair in relation to the latest incident, stating the Telegraph team was not aware that Reform had been approached about the donations by another publication. However, there had been a previous history of Reform using the tactic.

The stories were written by

Gordon Rayner, the Telegraph’s associate editor, who has previously served as its political editor and chief reporter. Decisions over publication are ultimately taken by senior editors.

The incident has reignited a debate over the Telegraph’s links to Reform. The title has traditionally been closely associated with the Conservative party.

Some at the title disapproved of a piece about a journalist travelling to Britain on a small boat. It later emerged the journalist in question was a Reform member and activist. The paper also features columns by Isabel Oakeshott, Tice’s

partner and an open supporter of many Reform UK policies.

However, Reform’s approach to the Telegraph is inconsistent. Senior Reform figures have attacked it as being part of a pro-Conservative and mainstream media establishment.

Some senior media figures privately argue there is nothing new about Reform’s “spoiler story” tactic, comparing it to New Labour’s news management — and favouring of certain reporters — in the 2000s. However, other media experts said Reform’s stories with the Telegraph were different. “It’s utterly destructive behaviour with

a new twist — the importance of the campaign finance story, Reform UK as a Trumpist playbook party and corrosive of trust,” said Lionel Barber, a former Financial Times editor. “I have been victim myself at the FT of this behaviour. But in the end, the good guys win.” David Banks, a media law consultant, said Reform risked damaging trust and ultimately narrowing its ability to respond to stories. “The danger is that it will make newspapers less willing to extend a larger window of opportunity [to respond to journalistic inquiries],” Banks said.

He added: “If you know your exclusive is going to be spoiled by being sent to another publication, then why would you do anything that would make things convenient or easier for the respondents?”

“[Political reporters] have decent working relationships and things like this break down that working relationship. Ultimately, it’s bad for the public as well, because the journalism they see isn’t going to be as balanced as editors might like it to be, because this behaviour has meant it is harder to produce balanced reporting.”

It comes at a critical moment in the Telegraph’s history. It is now under the ownership of the German media powerhouse Axel Springer, though its executives have not yet made significant changes.

Some Telegraph writers believe there has been more challenging coverage of Reform recently. On Monday, it published a piece by its columnist Suzanne Moore under the headline: “Reform is a party for very rich men who pretend to care about ordinary people.”

US Targets Russia-Iran Financial Links, Imposes New Sanctions on VTB Bank



Washington: The United States has imposed fresh sanctions on VTB Bank, one of Russia’s major financial institutions, accusing it of helping Iran circumvent US sanctions. American officials allege that VTB assisted in the transfer of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets and established banking relationships with sanctioned Iranian financial institutions.

According to Türkiye’s state-run Anadolu Agency, the US State Department said that VTB had opened offices in Iran and developed business ties with Iranian financial institutions facing sanctions. The department said the bank also played a role in moving billions of dollars in Iranian assets.

The US administration said it remains committed to shutting down the financial channels allegedly used by the Iranian government to finance terrorism and promote regional instability.

According to the US Treasury Department, VTB assisted in transferring billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets and expanded its fi-

nancial presence in Iran.

The United States had already imposed sanctions on VTB Bank in 2022, following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war. Under the existing sanctions, US citizens and institutions are prohibited from conducting transactions with the bank. Through the latest action, Washington has also targeted the growing financial ties between Iran and Russia.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent linked the action to the “Operation Economic Outcast” initiative launched last month, saying the Treasury would continue targeting individuals and entities that provide the Iranian government with financial, technological or other assistance to sustain its activities.

The US administration says identifying and isolating networks that support Iran is among its priorities. Washington alleges that such financial networks enable the Iranian government to continue its activities despite the sanctions imposed against it.

Indonesia Ferry Capsizes in Java Sea, Six Dead and 130 Missing

Jakarta: At least six people have died and 130 remain missing after the “Vargo Transport 8” ferry capsized in Indonesia’s Java Sea. A large-scale search and rescue operation is underway following the disaster. Authorities said 107 people have so far been rescued.

International media outlet Al Jazeera, citing Indonesia’s National Search and Rescue Agency (Basarnas), reported that 243 people

were aboard the ferry, including 213 passengers and 30 crew members.

The vessel departed from Surabaya on the island of Java on Saturday and was bound for the port city of Banjarmasin on the island of Borneo. The ferry lost contact with its operator early Sunday morning, following which authorities immediately launched a search and rescue operation. Indonesia’s Ministry of Transportation also con-

firmed that the vessel had capsized.

According to I Putu Sudayana, head of the local search and rescue office in Banjarmasin, the vessel encountered severe weather conditions at the time of the incident. The ferry’s last known position was reported to be approximately 81 nautical miles, or 150 kilometres, from Banjarmasin in the Java Sea.

Ships and helicopters have been deployed as part of the



rescue operation. However, waves reaching around 2.5

metres in height are posing a major challenge to res-

cue efforts. Authorities described the sea conditions as

extremely hazardous even for rescue vessels.

Officials have yet to establish the exact cause of the ferry’s capsizing. An investigation is underway, examining several possibilities, including adverse weather conditions and potential technical failure.

Maritime transport is critically important in Indonesia. With around 17,000 islands, the country has a large population that relies on ferries to travel between

islands. Ferries are widely used because sea transport is relatively affordable and more readily accessible than air travel.

Indonesia has also witnessed several maritime accidents in recent months. Last month, a ferry operating between Bali and Lombok caught fire, killing one person and leaving five others missing. In July, another ferry carrying more than 70 people sank near Selayar Island, south of Sulawesi.

Avoid These 5 Common Errors When Oiling Your Hair



The practice of hair oiling has constituted a long-standing component of comprehensive hair maintenance protocols. This treatment possesses the capacity to hydrate parched hair fibers, enhance the tactile softness of the hair shaft, and diminish mechanical friction during the cleansing process. Nevertheless, the application methodology employed proves equally consequential as the selection of the oil product itself. Using too much oil, rubbing the scalp aggressively or leaving it on overnight may do more harm than good. If hair oil-

ing is part of your routine, avoid these five common mistakes.

1. Applying Oil Without Detangling Your Hair: Applying oil directly to tangled hair can lead to excessive pulling and breakage. Before you begin, gently comb through your hair to remove knots. Start detangling from the ends and gradually work your way upwards. Avoid tugging or forcing the comb through stubborn knots.

2. Rubbing Your Scalp Too Aggressively: A vigorous head massage does not make the oil work better. Scratching the scalp with

your nails or applying too much pressure can cause irritation and minor abrasions. When applying oil to your hair, ditching the messy practice of pouring the bottle directly onto the center of your head can make a world of difference in achieving an even, manageable application. Instead, take a more strategic approach by dispensing small, controlled amounts of oil onto different sections of your scalp using just your fingertips. This method ensures that the product is distributed harmoniously across your entire head rather than pool-

ing heavily in one single spot, which can otherwise make the washing process a frustrating chore. Once the oil is neatly dotted across your partitions, use the soft pads of your fingers—never your nails—to massage the scalp gently with slow, circular motions for a few minutes. This deliberate technique not only feels wonderfully relaxing, but it also helps stimulate healthy blood circulation to the hair follicles, maximizing the soothing benefits of your routine without causing any unnecessary friction, pulling, or breakage to your precious roots.

3. Using More Oil Than You Need: Drenching your hair in oil does not necessarily offer additional benefits. Too much oil can leave the scalp and strands feeling greasy, sticky and heavy.

When dealing with heavy oil treatments, applying too much product often traps you in a frustrating cycle where it requires repeated, aggressive shampooing just to get your hair clean, which ultimately strips away essential moisture and leaves both your scalp and strands feeling parched. To avoid this common pitfall, it is

always best to use a carefully measured quantity of oil that is tailored specifically to your hair’s unique length, thickness, and level of dryness, ensuring you provide just enough nourishment without going overboard. Once you have massaged the appropriate amount into your scalp, you can make the most of your product by gently spreading the remaining oil downward along the lengths of your hair. Be sure to pay a little extra attention to your ends, which are typically the driest and oldest part of the hair shaft, while taking care not to completely soak or weigh down the rest of your locks. This thoughtful, balanced approach keeps your hair manageable, prevents excessive washing, and leaves your tresses feeling soft and naturally hydrated from root to tip.

4. Leaving Oil On Overnight: You do not need to keep oil in your hair all night to benefit from it. Leaving it on for a short period before washing is often enough. While overnight oiling is often touted as a miracle cure for dry hair, it is certainly not a one-size-fits-all solution and can actually exacerbate

certain conditions, particularly for individuals who already struggle with an oily scalp, stubborn dandruff, or frequent, bothersome itching. Leaving heavy fats on the skin for hours while you sleep can trap excess sebum, feed yeast-like fungi associated with dandruff, and create an ideal breeding ground for irritation. Instead of pushing through a lengthy overnight routine that leaves your scalp unhappy, a much wiser approach is to let the oil sit for a comfortable, moderate amount of time—just enough to deliver its nourishing properties—and then thoroughly cleanse your hair using a gentle, sulfate-free shampoo. This balanced method allows you to reap the conditioning benefits of the treatment without overwhelming your scalp’s natural ecosystem, keeping your roots fresh, clean, and irritation-free.

5. Applying Oil That Is Too Hot: Heating hair oil is not essential. If you prefer warm oil, make sure it is only slightly lukewarm.

When preparing an oil treatment for your scalp, temperature control is a crucial step that is far too

often overlooked in the pursuit of relaxation. Applying oil that is excessively heated can easily shock, irritate, or even severely burn the delicate skin of your scalp, which can lead to inflammation and discomfort rather than nourishment. To prevent any accidental mishaps, it is essential to make a habit of testing the temperature of the oil on a sensitive area of your body, such as the inside of your wrist or the tip of your finger, before letting it anywhere near your head. The ideal consistency should feel genuinely soothing and comfortably warm to the touch—never piping hot or steaming. By taking this simple yet vital safety precaution, you protect your skin’s natural barrier and ensure that your self-care ritual remains safe, calming, and truly beneficial for your hair health.

The Right Way To Oil Your Hair

Detangle your hair, apply a limited amount of oil in sections and massage the scalp gently using your fingertips. Spread the remaining oil over the lengths and ends before washing it out with a mild shampoo.

When it comes to main-

taining a healthy scalp and hair, the golden rule is that moderation and patience yield the best results. Many people mistakenly believe that pouring on excess oil, applying aggressive pressure during a massage, or leaving the treatment on for hours on end will fast-track them to luscious locks. In reality, this heavy-handed approach often backfires, weighing down the hair strands, clogging hair follicles, and making the subsequent washing process unnecessarily harsh. A gentle touch is far more effective because it stimulates the scalp’s microcirculation without causing friction or breakage to fragile roots. Warming a modest amount of oil between your palms and using the soft pads of your fingertips to massage it in with light, circular motions is more than enough to nourish the hair. Similarly, a shorter, mindful application time allows the nutrients to absorb efficiently without suffocating the scalp. Ultimately, treating your hair care routine as a soothing, deliberate ritual rather than an intense chore ensures your hair remains strong, balanced, and naturally radiant.

Stressed skin need assistance from pollutants and heat to retinoids

The retinol demonstrates efficacy, the sunscreen remains essential, and the exfoliating acid delivers luminosity. Yet why does your skin appear to be experiencing distress? Introducing ectoin, the barrier-fortifying component that substantiates the argument for more tranquil and robust skin health. At 8.15am, Rhea Oberoi, a sales executive, is already having a bad skin day. Her morning commute through Delhi’s heat and pollution is followed by hours in aggressively air-conditioned offices. By lunchtime, her skin feels tight; by evening, her cheeks are irritated. She has also been diligently using a retinoid for the past few weeks, convinced it is the secret to better skin. Then there is Meera Sehgal, a homemaker, whose skin is oily but somehow still feels dehydrated. She has been tackling occasional breakouts with acids, cleansers and spot treatments, only to find her complexion caught in an uncomfortable middle ground, greasy, dry and sensitive all at once. And Ananya Bedi, an IT executive, has just undergone a cosmetic procedure. Her skin looks fresh for now, but she knows the days ahead call for extra care. The last thing she wants is irritation that could leave behind pigmentation. Three women, three very different skin concerns, but a shared problem: skin that is being pushed, stressed and asked to do too much. This is where ectoin enters the picture. Meet ectoin: skincare’s stress manager

Ectoin isn’t a newly invented laboratory molecule designed to make your skin glow overnight. It is a naturally occurring molecule produced by certain microorganisms that survive in extreme conditions, including intense heat, high salt concentrations and dehydration. Essentially, these microorganisms have figured out how to protect themselves when their surroundings become hostile. Ectoin is part of that survival mechanism, helping them bind water and stabilise cellular structures. In skincare, scientists have become interested in translating that protective quality to the skin.

“From a dermatological perspective, I look at ectoin primarily as a barrier-supporting and stress-protective ingredient,” says Dr Chirranjiv Chhabra, dermatologist and founder, medical director, Alive Wellness Clinics. Rather than behaving like a traditional high-performance active that aggressively changes the skin, ectoin takes a more supportive approach. It helps the skin retain moisture and supports barrier integrity, which can be particularly relevant when skin is dry, sensitive or exposed to environmental stressors. And that distinction matters. Because perhaps the next chapter of skincare isn’t about asking your skin to do more. Perhaps it’s about helping it cope better.



Your skin barrier has a lot on its plate

Think about everything your skin encounters in a single day: sunlight, pollution, dust, heat, air-conditioning, cleansing, makeup, sweat and, depending on your routine, retinoids, exfoliating acids and other potent actives. For people living in India, the environmental equation can be particularly demanding.

“Indian skin is diverse, and individual concerns vary considerably,” says Dr Chhabra. But, she adds, the environmental conditions many people experience from heat and humidity to strong UV exposure, pollution, dust and frequent air-conditioning can put additional stress on the skin barrier.

Dr Harleen Kaur, aesthetic physician, The Wellness Co, agrees that ectoin’s relevance to Indian consumers is less about there being a separate category of “Indian skin” and more about the concerns that can arise when skin is exposed to multiple stressors. Delving into the remarkable science of modern dermatology, ectoin emerges as a fascinating, naturally occurring small molecule synthesized by specialized extremophilic microorganisms that have uniquely adapted to thrive in some of the most punishing and hostile environments on Earth, such as hypersaline lakes, scorching thermal vents, and regions subject to intense, unyielding ultraviolet radiation. Because these microscopic organisms are forced to endure extreme physical stressors that would otherwise destroy cellular structures, they have evolved ectoin as a brilliant biological defense mechanism to stabilize their proteins, cell membranes, and overall cellular integrity against dehydration and environmental denaturation. When harnessed and integrated into contemporary skincare formulations, this extraordinary molecule translates its survival expertise directly to human skin, functioning as a powerhouse skin-protective, deeply hydrating, and barrier-supporting agent that actively shields the complexion from the daily onslaught of urban pol-

lution, oxidative stress, and climatic aggressors. By forming a protective hydration shell around skin cells and reinforcing the skin’s natural lipid barrier, ectoin not only prevents moisture loss and locks in vital hydration, but it also calms inflammation and helps the skin gracefully cope with the persistent physiological strains of modern environmental wear and tear. When pigmentation starts with irritation

This is precisely where the dermatological narrative takes a fascinating and critical turn for anyone who is naturally prone to hyperpigmentation, bringing into sharp focus the delicate balance required when managing sensitive or reactive complexions. Consider the hypothetical journey of Ananya Bedi: immediately following an intensive clinical intervention such as a chemical peel, a targeted laser resurfacing procedure, or a collagen-inducing microneedling session, her skin is left in a state of heightened post-procedural vulnerability where its natural defense mechanisms are temporarily compromised. During this vulnerable healing window, if the skin experiences even minor irritation, redness, or prolonged stinging, the body’s natural inflammatory cascade is triggered, leading to a surge of inflammatory mediators that can overstimulate melanocytes—the pigment-producing cells—resulting in stubborn post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation. This insidious chain reaction highlights why post-care management is just as vital as the procedure itself, particularly for individuals with melanin-rich or pigmentation-prone skin who must navigate a narrow tightrope between encouraging skin renewal and inadvertently provoking the very discoloration they are trying to eliminate. Ectoin isn’t a pigmentation eraser and it shouldn’t be marketed as one. Its potential role is more subtle. “By helping support the skin barrier and calm irritation, Ectoin may help reduce some of the irritation that can trigger post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation,” says Dr Kaur.

From wedding outfits to everyday essentials, here’s how you can build a bridal trousseau

The trousseau, a silent rite of selection that bears the weight of everything to come, is when every bride’s expectation begins to take shape. Its customary outlines are marked by sarees, lehengas, jewelry, shoes, cosmetics, and home décor, yet no two paths to the wedding day are the same. The vise president and business head of DLF Luxury Malls, Saurabh Bharara, provided a straightforward tutorial on how to construct a bridal trousseau that fulfills the function.

1. Start with the pieces you actually wear: According to Saurabh, a bride may have a clear idea of the lehenga she wants for her wedding, but the pieces around it require a little more thought. A heavily embroidered outfit may work beautifully for the main ceremony, while a lighter silhouette can be far more useful for a family dinner or a post-wedding celebration.

2. Think about what you need immediately after the wedding: Before adding more ceremonial pieces, imagine the morning after the celebrations. What do you wear when the wedding is over? There may be family lunches, visits at home, post-wedding rituals or simply days when you want to dress well without feeling like you are still wearing your wedding wardrobe.

For post-wedding ceremonies, this could mean a Banarasi, Kanjeevaram or lighter organza saree; an easy Indian set or softer festive outfit can work just as well.

3. Build different levels of occasionwear: Not every wedding-related event requires the same degree of dressing. A cocktail, a family dinner, a reception and a smaller celebration can each call for a different mood. Having a mix of statement pieces and lighter occasionwear makes the trousseau considerably easier to use. Looking at different styles in this way can help a bride work out where she wants to make a statement and where she prefers to keep things simpler.

4. Choose the silhouette; then make it personal: Instead of accepting an outfit exactly as it comes, think about the details that matter to you: the fit, fabric, colour, embroidery, sleeve length, neckline or even the way a dupatta is styled. “The point is not to

choose between them; it is to recognise which visual language feels closest to your own,” said Saurabh.

5. Leave room for contemporary pieces: Once the main ceremonial wardrobe is in place, think about the outfits that sit between the bigger occasions. A contemporary lehenga, a structured evening outfit, a lighter festive set or something that can be styled differently can prevent the trousseau from becoming repetitive.

6. Think about jewellery after you know the clothes: Jewellery is easier to choose once the wardrobe has begun to take shape. Rather than buying pieces simply because they are considered bridal essentials, look at what you actually wear them with. A statement necklace may work beautifully with one outfit but rarely leave the cupboard afterwards; earrings, bracelets or a versatile necklace may have a much longer life.

7. Give beauty and fragrance a place in the trousseau: When curating your beauty and grooming kit for bridal preparations, shifting away from impulse purchases and approaching your regimen through the realistic lens of your everyday lifestyle is essential for avoiding a collection of expensive products that ultimately go to waste. Alongside the heavy-duty makeup and specialized skincare formulas specifically required for wedding festivities and pre-bridal ceremonies, it is vital to intentionally carve out space for the practical items you will actually rely on once the honeymoon phase ends and routine sets in—such as your go-to everyday makeup staples, a handful of versatile occasion essentials, and reliable, high-performing skincare products you genuinely reach for week after week. Fragrance can, and should, be approached with this exact same pragmatic yet mindful mindset rather than succumbing to the pressure of collecting full-sized designer bottles simply because they are traditionally deemed a mandatory fixture of a luxury trousseau. Instead of accumulating scents that clash with your daily preferences, take the time to deeply consider whether you truly desire a singular, grounding signature scent that effortlessly defines

your presence, or if you prefer a tightly curated wardrobe of two or three complementary perfumes that authentically reflect your shifting moods, seasons, and personal identity long after the wedding confetti has settled.

8. Give the honeymoon its own chapter

The honeymoon often comes immediately after the wedding, yet its wardrobe can easily become an afterthought. Think about where you are going, what you are likely to do and what you genuinely wear again. Resortwear, evening dresses, easy separates and comfortable

wear potential, and timeless style over momentary visual trends, you not only lighten your luggage and reduce unnecessary fashion consumption, but you also guarantee that every single item you bring along truly serves you, keeping you effortlessly stylish, completely at ease, and fully present to enjoy every single moment of your getaway.

9. Don’t forget the wardrobe you return to

Expanding thoughtfully on the insightful perspective of Saurabh, building a truly comprehensive and meaningful trousseau extends far



travel pieces can form a small wardrobe of their own.

When curating your post-wedding travel wardrobe, ditching the trap of buying a generic, pre-packaged “honeymoon collection” in favor of pieces handpicked for your specific destination, personal aesthetic, and individual comfort level will transform your entire packing experience. Instead of packing single-use garments that look phenomenal for a split-second snapshot on social media but end up gathering dust at the back of your closet, the secret to a sustainable and stress-free suitcase lies in versatility and thoughtful curation. Investing in clever, multi-functional items—such as a fluid, elegant dress that effortlessly transitions from a casual afternoon stroll to a candlelit romantic dinner, modular separates that can be mixed and matched to create completely different looks multiple times, or a chic cover-up that works just as seamlessly as a tunic over denim away from the shoreline—ensures your clothing has a much longer, more meaningful lifespan. By prioritizing adaptability, high-

beyond the fleeting glamour of the wedding ceremony and honeymoon, encompassing the very real, multifaceted rhythm of everyday life that continues long after the celebrations have concluded. Far too often, brides get swept up in the romantic fantasy of heavy lehengas and ornate ensembles, completely overlooking the practical demands of their actual lifestyle. If your daily routine involves navigating a professional career, traveling frequently for work, or constantly attending bustling family gatherings and social commitments, these distinct realities should serve as the primary guiding compass for your trousseau purchases rather than an afterthought. While understated workwear, breathable everyday Indian clothes, versatile evening separates, and practical, comfortable footwear may lack the dramatic visual excitement and ceremonial allure of a grand bridal outfit, they represent the foundational pieces that you will actually reach for and utilize far more often in the months and years to come.

“A Musical Legacy on Screen: Rashmika Mandanna All Set to Play MS Subbulakshmi”

Mumbai: Rashmika Mandanna has officially been cast to play the late M.S. Subbulakshmi, India’s iconic Carnatic singer, in director Gowtam Tinnanuri’s upcoming biopic. Announcing the project on Instagram, Rashmika shared that the first look and title will be unveiled tomorrow, September 16, at 5:15 PM. The makers also officially announced the project, sharing that Rashmika will bring MS Subbulakshmi’s life story to the big screen. Anirudh Ravichander will be composing the music, while the pan-India film will be jointly produced by Allu Aravind, Rockline Venkatesh and Bunny Vas. On September 15, Geetha Arts officially announced the film, while also revealing that a grand film launch event has been organised at The Music Academy in Chennai on Wednesday (September 16) to mark MS Subbulakshmi’s 110th birth anniversary. Kamal Haasan will attend the event as the special guest. “A LEGACY begins with



an unforgettable celebration Witness the grand launch of #MS – A Legacy On Screen, celebrating Bharat Ratna #MSSubbulakshmi Amma’s 110th Birth Anniversary with Ulaganayagan @ikamalhaasan garu as the Chief Guest. Starring: @rashmika_mandanna Di-

rected by: @gowtamnaidu Music by: @anirudhofficial,” read the caption of the post. Meanwhile, Rashmika also shared a poster, announcing the film. She revealed that the title and her first look poster will be unveiled tomorrow. “Some legends live beyond time.

Some melodies live beyond generations. And some stories wait for the right moment to be told. Today, that journey begins and What an absolute honour it is. Title & First Look, Tomorrow 5:15 PM,” she wrote. Who Was MS Subbulakshmi M.S. Subbulakshmi, born

on September 16, 1916, in Madurai, was one of the most celebrated figures in the history of Carnatic music. Over a career spanning several decades, she took Indian classical music to audiences around the world and became a cultural icon. She was the first musician to receive the Bharat Ratna, India’s highest civilian honour, in 1998. Her other major accolades included the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service in 1974, the Padma Bhushan in 1954 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1975. In 1966, she made history as the first Indian musician to perform at the United Nations General Assembly. Subbulakshmi died on December 11, 2004, in Chennai, at the age of 88. Rashmika Mandanna’s Other ProjectsMeanwhile, Rashmika has several other interesting projects in the pipeline. She is set to share screen space with her husband Vijay Deverakonda in the period drama Ranabaali. The actress will also be seen in the upcoming action film Mysaa.

“Kareena Kapoor Opens Up About Her Professional Disagreements with Husband Saif Ali Khan”

Mumbai: Kareena Kapoor, who will soon be seen in Daayra, recently opened up about how she and her actor-husband Saif Ali Khan differ in their approach to acting. She credited her sister and superstar Karisma Kapoor for teaching her everything she knows. Kareena also reflected on her kids, Taimur and Jeh, noticing her advertisements everywhere. She said that Karisma has been her mentor. “I credit her with everything. But, if there’s one thing that she has always taught me is just that hard work and perseverance. Because in the 90s, there was a constant push they had to do, just be there and prove themselves. She tells me to never lose faith, no matter how great an actor or bigger star you are,” she said. Kareena said at a recent SCREEN event, “We always end up fighting. Two actors in the house will always end up fighting. I might not like a promo of his, or he might not like mine. We are pretty different when it comes to that. I am more instinctive, while Saif likes to prepare a lot more. He will read a lot more and get into it. Whereas I want to be switching on



and off.” In the same chat, she also revealed she finds it strange when Taimur and Jeh see her ads. “It’s a lot, because now they are constantly watching ads. I don’t know what I feel when my ads show up in front of them. Whether I want them to see too much or... There is a constant battle,” she said. The actor recalled an incident with Taimur and added, “I feel weird sometimes, like

at airports. If I see myself pouting in some ad, Taimur asks, ‘Why are you doing that?’ I ask him to move on; it’s an ad, that’s fine. But he asks why I am doing that. I just ask him to leave it and let it be.” Meanwhile, on the work front, Kareena’s Daayra will be out in theatres on September 18. The film is directed by Meghna Gulzar and also stars Prithviraj Sukumaran.

Celebrating 20 Years of Love: Suriya and Jyotika Renew Their Vows in a Christian Ceremony

Mumbai: Actor couple Suriya and Jyotika marked 20 years of marriage with a vow renewal ceremony surrounded by their family and close friends. Videos from the special occasion have surfaced online and are being widely shared on social media. The couple also shared pictures and videos from the ceremony, along with a long note about their journey together. Calling it “The Sequel”, they said the vow renewal was not about celebrating a perfect marriage but about the bond they have built over the years. “THE SEQUEL -A vow renewal, celebrating our 20 years of love and war. And no, this is not a celebration of a perfect marriage. This is a celebration of imperfections, of ad-



justments, of understanding, sacrifices, of loving each other selflessly. This is a celebration of “us”. The people we have become for each other,” the caption wrote. Jyotika also shared her vows and spoke about the life she has built with Suriya and their children. She said she wants to focus on the positive side of life and be thankful for the people around her. “How ironical- A dream

which felt far from reality is now a reality I will spend my entire lifetime dreaming of! So here are my vows -I vow to be a happy person — because I choose to see only life’s positive side. I vow to celebrate life — because life itself is a gift when the man whom you love respects you beyond himself. I vow never to complain- why should I? When even something as vast as the sky doesn’t have

the privilege of touching the ground! Look around, everything in existence is incomplete. It’s how we choose to fill the gaps.” “I vow to be thankful — as every morning I wake in the arms of a man who protects me, and for my beautiful children who’ve given my life a meaning. And me, a reason to live. I vow to be healthy — because that is the only true asset we ever build. Even the fanciest brick houses will always have their leaks, termites, and renovations,” they added. On the work front, Suriya has several projects lined up. His upcoming film with director Jithu Madhavan is titled Scene. He is also set to collaborate with director TJ Gnanavel on another project backed by Hombale Films.

“Inside Sohail Khan’s Ganpati Visarjan: Salman Khan’s Aarti Correction Video Goes Viral”

Mumbai: Salman Khan continued his family’s annual Ganpati tradition as he joined his loved ones for the visarjan celebrations. The actor was seen participating in the prayers and spending time with his niece Ayat Sharma, daughter of his sister Arpita Khan Sharma and actor Aayush Sharma. Salman Khan’s close friend Iulia Vantur was also present at the family’s Ganpati celebrations. She was seen performing the aarti as the Khan family geared up to bid farewell to Bappa. Iulia has been a regular presence at Salman’s family gatherings and festive celebrations over the years. Varun Sharma Touches Salman Khan’s Feet Actor Varun Sharma, best known for playing Choocha in the Fukrey franchise, was also seen at the Ganpati visarjan. In a viral clip from the celebrations, Varun greeted Salman and touched his feet. In one of the videos, Salman Khan was seen waiting to seek Ganpati Bappa’s blessings before the visarjan. Varun Sharma was standing ahead of him and seemed to be



taking his time while praying. Salman jokingly pulled his leg and asked, “Aur kitna wish mangega?” Varun immediately burst out laughing. The funny exchange between the two actors is going viral on social media. Salman Khan’s Ganpati Tradition Salman has regularly celebrated Ganpati with his family over the years. The actor has often been seen attending aarti, dancing during visarjan and joining his parents, siblings and friends for the festivities. The Khan family’s celebrations have

also included Salman’s brothers Sohail and Arbaaz Khan, sister Arpita and other members of their extended family. This year, Salman was seen in a bandana look as he attended the celebrations at Sohail Khan’s residence before joining the family’s visarjan festivities. Salman Khan was last seen in Sikandar, followed by cameos in Raja Shivaji and 7 Dogs. His upcoming projects include Maatrubhumi: May War Rest in Peace, earlier titled Battle of Galwan, in which he plays Indian Army officer Colonel B. Santosh Babu.

“Bigg Boss 20 Insider: Mahhi Vij Recalls Losing Big Bollywood Project Due to Soured Equations”

Mumbai: Bigg Boss 20 contestant and television actress Mahhi Vij recently opened up about her early days in the entertainment industry. During the latest episode, Mahhi spoke to fellow contestant Kanika Mann about her first music video, her journey into films and how she eventually turned to television after a few projects fell through. Mahhi revealed that she got her first break in the music video for the remix of the popular song Tu Tu Hai Wahi. The song, also known as Tu Tu Hai Wahi (DJ Aqeel Mix), featured Mahhi Vij in a pink outfit. Recalling the beginning of her career, she said that she moved to Mumbai and received the music video opportunity almost immediately. “Bombay gayi toh aate hi mujhe music video mil gaya, woh pink dress wala, ‘Tu Tu Hai Wahi’. Woh pehla music video,” Mahhi said. She went on to reveal that several music videos followed after her first appearance. “Uske baad meri life se bahut saare music videos, saare hit kiye maine, saare,” she recalled. Mahhi Was Offered Mani Ratnam’s Yuva Mahhi also spoke about her transition from music videos to films. She said that she worked in South



Indian films before being considered for Mani Ratnam’s Yuva. According to the actress, she was selected for the film but eventually lost out on the opportunity after some equations went wrong. “Phir do khatam hua music videos, phir main South films ki Prabhu Deva ke saath. Phir maine ki film Mammootty ke saath. Aur main phir wahan se final hui thi Yuva ke liye. Mani Ratnam ne mujhe Yuva ke liye select kiya,” she said. Mahhi claimed that she was also being considered for a film opposite Vivek Oberoi, in which Kareena Kapoor was eventually selected. However, the project did not work out for her. “Kareena wale role ke liye Vivek Oberoi ke opposite. But wahan pe kuch equa-

tions thodi kharab ho gayi thi kisi ke saath,” she said. After returning to Delhi, Mahhi said that she discussed two or three more films, but they were cancelled at the last minute. That was when she decided to explore television. “Uske baad wapas aa gayi Delhi. Phir do-teen film-on ki baat hui, last minute cancel ho gaya. Toh maine kaha main TV karungi,” she added. Mahhi Vij TV Shows Mahhi eventually became a familiar face on Hindi television with shows such as Laagi Tujhse Lagan and Balika Vadhu. She became particularly popular for playing Nakusha in Laagi Tujhse Lagan and later portrayed Nandini in Balika Vadhu. She also participated in reality shows includ-

ing Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa, Khatron Ke Khiladi and Nach Baliye 5, which she won with her then-husband Jay Bhanushali. Mahhi And Jay Bhanushali Divorce Mahhi and Jay got married in 2011 after being in a relationship. In 2017, the couple welcomed Rajveer and Khushi into their family and raised them as their own, while their biological daughter Tara was born in 2019. After months of speculation about trouble in their marriage, Mahhi and Jay announced their separation in January 2026. They have maintained that they will continue to co-parent their children. Mahhi has also said that she does not wish to discuss the separation on Bigg Boss 20 as it is a private matter.

“Drama Unfolds on Bigg Boss 20: Isha Rikhi Opens Up About Her Past with Badshah”

Mumbai: Drama inside the Bigg Boss 20 house reached an explosive peak as actress Isha Rikhi made shocking revelations about her past relationship and separation. In a candid conversation with co-contestant Kanika Mann, Isha opened up about the heartbreak she endured, confirming that she was cheated on both emotionally and physically. Although she did not explicitly name her former partner throughout the chat, fans quickly connected the dots to her past marriage and links with rapper-singer Badshah. Sharing the toxic nature of her past dynamic, Isha described how difficult it was to be stuck in a relationship built on deception. She explained that she preferred to trust her partner over outside gossip, demanding proof before believing any rumors. However, the truth unraveled when the relationship ultimately ended. “When it ended, I got to know, yahan toh kat gaya,” she confessed to Kanika. When probed by Kanika about whether the betrayal involved emotional or physical infidelity, Isha revealed that it was a combination of both. She described feeling trapped in a confusing, toxic gray area. She expressed her pain over giving someone her absolute best friend treatment, showcasing them proudly in her inner circle, only to realize she was never truly viewed the same way in return. “You get to know that I was never your best friend. All of these things I am doing in a private circle kyunki teri aur bhi bahut best friends hain,” Isha remarked, exposing the double standards she faced. When Kanika further asked if there were multiple other “best friends” involved, Isha answered in the affirma-



tive, noting that while some connections were brief flings, the core issue was manipulation and convenience. She stated that her partner wanted her in their life because of her soft and accommodating nature—qualities they knew they wouldn’t find anywhere else—while still wanting absolute freedom. “You want to stay with me, but also want your freedom... you were just playing a game with me,” she added, highlighting how a completely false picture was painted for

her. Isha’s bombshell revelations have instantly gone viral across social media platforms, with viewers discussing the emotional toll of her past relationship. While Badshah has previously been linked to various famous personalities over the years, he has consistently denied being in committed relationships. This latest inside look into Isha’s personal life has once again put her past marriage at the center of entertainment headlines.

Chandrababu Naidu will be present for the Seva Sankalp celebration on PM Modi's 76th birthday



New Delhi, Sep 16: Chandrababu Naidu, the president of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, will visit Varanasi on September 17 to participate in the festivities commemorating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 76th birthday. This will bring a significant NDA ally to the prime minister's parliamentary constituency on a day of national political significance. Chandrababu Naidu's presence in Kashi takes significance for the NDA, given his long political association with the BJP and his relationship with PM Modi. The visit highlights the political association between two leaders with decades of experience in public life. PM Modi has served as Gujarat Chief Minister from October 2001 to May 2014 and has been Prime Minister since May 2014. He is now serving his third consecutive term as Prime Minister.

The BJP has described September 17 as the beginning of a month-long campaign marking 25 years of PM Modi's public service in elected office. At 10.05 am, a special airplane is planned to take 76-year-old Chandrababu Naidu to Varanasi. He will take part in the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan program at the Rudraksha International Convention Center at about 1 pm, along with prominent officials attending the festivities, according to Andhra Pradesh government sources. Before heading back to Vijayawada in the evening, he is also expected to visit the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. In the past, notably under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA administration, the TDP and BJP collaborated at the national level. When he and Prime Minister Modi ran as coalition partners in the 2014 elections, Chandrababu Naidu once more joined forces

with the BJP. The renewed partnership also translated into an alliance in Andhra Pradesh, where the TDP, BJP and Jana Sena Party fought the 2024 Assembly and Lok Sabha elections together. The September 17 programme has an added symbolic dimension because Varanasi is PM Modi's Lok Sabha constituency, while Vadnagar in Gujarat is his birthplace. The BJP has planned a month-long Seva Sankalp Abhiyan from September 17 to October 17 to mark 25 years of PM Modi's public life. The campaign includes service activities, welfare outreach, beneficiary programmes, youth-oriented events, cleanliness drives and other public initiatives. In Kashi, the campaign is on September 17 with programmes including a Kashi-to-Vadnagar bike journey following a ceremonial jalabhishek at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. Against this backdrop, Chandrababu Naidu's presence in Varanasi places the TDP chief alongside the BJP leadership at a high-profile celebration and offers a prominent public display of coordination among the NDA's key partners. The Prime Minister's birthday program for Chandrababu Naidu and the TDP emphasizes the two parties' renewed political cooperation, and their continued affiliation with the NDA sends a clear message to the state, where the TDP, BJP Janasena, and assembly elections will be held jointly in 2029.

For one final game, Lionel Messi reverses his retirement from Argentina



Buenos Aires: Lionel Messi, the legendary player for Argentina, will don the blue and white jersey for the last time in his career just a few weeks after announcing his retirement from international competition. Messi, who last played for La Albiceleste in the FIFA World Cup 2026 final, will don the shirt once again in what will be his last game in October. Fans believed they had seen the last of Messi in international

football, but head coach Lionel Scaloni shocked everyone by selecting him for the national team's October 6 encounter against Benin in Buenos Aires. Messi was instrumental in Argentina's qualification to the final of the World Cup in North America.

However, he couldn't influence the game as much in the decider, where Spain emerged triumphant. It wasn't the goodbye Messi

would have wanted, but he has the opportunity to correct that after being named in the preliminary 26-member squad for the friendly against Benin. In a statement, the Argentina Football Association also confirmed that the squad that won the World Cup in 2022 will be invited to attend the game against Benin. "We would like to announce that, following a discussion with national team coach, Lionel Scaloni, we have decided to

invite the world's best player, the icon of our national team, our captain Lionel Messi, so that he can receive the send-off he truly deserves on 6 October here in Argentina," the AFA said. "Furthermore, having received Lionel's acceptance, we are inviting all the world champions who played alongside him at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar to join him, together with their families, for what will be an unforgettable match for all Argentinians who support the national team, as they watch the world's best player's last dance," the statement further read. Argentina will host three friendly games in total. On September 30, they will play Bolivia in Cordoba as their first match following the FIFA World Cup. On October 3, they will play Burkina Faso at River Plate's Estadio Monumental in Buenos Aires. Messi would play in the third match, which would take place on October 6 against Benin.

"I'm Nowhere Done" Abhishek Banerjee's Mysterious US Message

New Delhi, Sep 16: Abhishek Banerjee, a Trinamool MP, wants people to see his damaged face. He won't act evasive. The MP displayed a photo of his face that had been split in half, with a big open eye and a thin, bent eyebrow. Just above his nostril, a crimson tinge fades behind the eye. And his face is hidden by a shadowy beard. The image conveys a message. You can tell I've gone through something by the scar. The accompanying statement, which features a stark image of his half-face, says, "The eyes tell you I'm nowhere done." The political signalling is clear: he will not give in. In the recent past, Abhishek Banerjee has faced a barrage of attacks, including action by investigative agencies, multiple life-threatening attacks, an attempt to murder, vandalism of his office. Last month, the Supreme Court allowed the 38-year-old MP to travel abroad for three weeks for medical treatment of his eye, setting aside the Calcutta High Court's refusal to relax the restriction on his foreign travel. Banerjee had moved a plea seeking lifting of conditions being imposed upon him by the Calcutta High Court in an alleged hate speech case. It was the second time Banerjee approached the Supreme Court seeking permission to travel abroad. On his earlier plea, the top court had asked the Calcutta High Court to decide his request to travel abroad. The High Court subsequently declined to lift the travel restriction, prompting Banerjee to approach the Supreme Court again.

The Chief Justice Surya Kant-led Bench expressed its disinclination to entertain the objections raised by the West Bengal government against Banerjee's overseas travel, observing that every individual has a right to travel abroad and choose his medical treatment. During the hearing, Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the West Bengal government, opposed the plea, submitting



that there were several cases registered against Banerjee and expressing apprehension that he might not return if permitted to travel abroad. The top court asked Banerjee to submit details of his itinerary, including his place of residence in the foreign country, the doctors or hospital where he proposes to undergo treatment, the period of his stay and flight details. Banerjee had first approached the Calcutta High Court on June 23, seeking permission to travel abroad for seven days for ophthalmic treatment. He stated that he had been undergoing treatment in the United States for nearly a decade following a serious eye injury suffered in a road accident in October 2016. The accident occurred while Banerjee was returning to Kolkata from a political programme in Murshidabad district. He subsequently underwent treatment at hospitals in India and abroad. Earlier this month, the West Bengal CID arrested Abhishek Banerjee's personal assis-

tant Sumit Roy in connection with a land scam case. In June, the Enforcement Directorate questioned Abhishek Banerjee in connection with a probe into the alleged primary school recruitment scam. Just days before the Bengal election results, Banerjee was pushed, heckled, chased, and attacked by the public with eggs while he was visiting the family of party workers affected by post-poll violence in Sonarpur in South 24 Paraganas.

The crowd charged at him with 'chor, chor' slogans. Stones flew in too, and he was made to wear a cricket helmet and moved to safety by the cops amid a sea of people trying to push and grab him. And there's the party turnover to contend with. Since the Trinamool's defeat in the Assembly elections, animosity and conflict within the party have been growing daily. According to sources, party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee is the target of the leaders' ire.

"Raised Expectations": India's top player defeats Aakash Chopra in the second Twenty20 International match



New Delhi: Aakash Chopra, a former Indian cricket player, commended India's bowling unit for keeping control against Afghanistan in the second Twenty20 International, stating that the team's primary concern had been the performance of the fifth bowler and his potential to contribute with wickets. He

emphasized the economical period of Jasprit Bumrah and the excellent efforts of Ravi Bishnoi, Axar Patel, and Arshdeep Singh. Nitish Kumar Reddy, who was trusted to bowl the last over and gave up just 24 runs in three overs while capturing three wickets, received particular recognition from Chopra. He said Reddy's all-round

contribution has raised expectations and could see him emerge as a serious contender for the role after Hardik Pandya. "What was India's problem? India's problem was what the fifth bowler would do, how he would bowl, and whether he would be able to pick up wickets. I am quite happy with the way things went. Jasprit Bumrah conceded 25 runs in four overs and picked up a wicket. He is gold. He bowls the same way whenever you bowl him. Arshdeep Singh has had an excellent series - 35 runs in four overs and two wickets," Chopra said on his YouTube Channel. "Axar Patel - 28 runs in four overs. Once again, he bowled like a bank. Ravi Bishnoi conceded 32 runs and picked up a wicket. Nitish Kumar Reddy - 24 runs in three overs and three wickets. You even got

him to bowl the 20th over. Nitish Kumar Reddy has raised your expectations a little. For the question of who after Hardik Pandya, he is putting his hat into the ring," he added.

A collective effort from India's bowling attack restricted Afghanistan to 159 in the second T20I. In response, half-centuries from Sanju Samson, Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan powered India's chase, with the hosts reaching the target in just 15 overs. India has won another series as they continue to dominate the format at home. In the first Twenty20 International, India chased down 157 in just 13.4 overs. On Tuesday, they easily reached a 160-run mark in 14.5 overs. India has dominated the series, as evidenced by two decisive wins.

Suvendu Adhikari claims that the Bengal by-elections are a "test" for minorities



New Delhi, Sep 16: Suvendu Adhikari, the chief minister of West Bengal, has presented the Assembly by-elections in Nandigram and Rejinagar on October 6 as a crucial "test" for minority voters, urging them to "pass or fail" the exam. Muslims make up around 26% of votes in Nandigram, East Midnapore, and about 65% of voters in Rejinagar, which is located in Murshidabad. Speaking at a rally at Haldia, East Midnapore, Adhikari gave locals the assurance that development services and administrative outreach would continue without interruption while the BJP was in power. And then he threw a challenge to the Muslim voters of the two constituencies. "No one could have ever imagined that BJP would win Nandigram by such a margin this time. Not only in Nandi-

gram, but I have also defeated her (Mamata Banerjee) even across the Ganges. And for the minority who do not vote for us, who do not vote for BJP, now there is an opportunity for all of them to decide whether you will stay with the government or not. Whether you will work hand in hand with the Chief Minister or not, you will have to take this test on the 6th," the Chief Minister said. He added: "Your tests are in Rejinagar and Nandigram. Let's see whether you pass or fail. And the rest will be seen after the 18th." Adhikari had vacated the Nandigram seat as he retained Bhabanipur where he defeated former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, necessitating the bypoll. The Rejinagar seat was vacated by AJUP chief Humayun Kabir, who also won from two seats. In Nandi-

gram, the BJP's vote share was 50.56%. In Rejinagar, the BJP finished second with 27.02% of the vote share, losing to Kabir, who secured 51.62%. Notably, the BJP has fielded Hasirani Rath for the high-profile Nandigram Assembly seat. Rath is the mother of murdered Suvendu Adhikari aide Chandranath Rath, who was gunned down on May 6, just two days after the election results. From the Rejinagar constituency, Sakharav Sarkar is the party candidate.

The Trinamool Congress has hit out at the Chief Minister's framing of the contest as a "test" for minorities, calling it a "threat". "It is a threat. I condemn it. It shows the Chief Minister's communal mindset against Muslims," TMC MP Saugata Roy said. "Our country stands for unity in diversity. I want the chief of our administration to also accept and uphold this.

I would request, and wish from the bottom of our hearts, that the chief of our administration also recognises the diversity of our country. We wish that good sense prevails upon him," TMC MP Dola Sen said. However, the BJP has defended the Chief Minister's comments, accusing the Left and TMC of using minorities to gain support. The Chief Minister's statement is entirely accurate. Minorities have always been viewed by the opposition, whether it is the Congress, the Left, or the Trinamool, as nothing more than a vote bank, with no real progress being made for them. The Chief Minister has asked people to vote for development because of this, according to BJP leader Keya Ghosh.

At the Samarkand Chess Olympiad, Indian teams have to wait five hours for hotel rooms

Samarkand: After arriving in Samarkand for the Chess Olympiad, defending champions India encountered organizational disarray when participants were assigned to their hotel rooms following a five-hour delay on Tuesday. For the FIDE competition, which is set to take place from September 16-27, the Indian teams traveled to the Uzbek city. However, one of the Indian team coaches verified to PTI that they ultimately received their accommodations after having to wait longer than anticipated. "Every player has now taken up residence in their chambers. However, it was an awful experience, a traveling squad member stated. GM Vidit Gujrathi and Grandmaster Srinath Narayanan, the captain of the men's team, had vented their annoyance on social media over the delay. I had an awful time at the FIDE chess 2026 Olympiad. The squad arrived at Samarkand airport five hours ago. Srinath wrote on X, "The team has yet to receive rooms, and there is no indication as to when they will." Very negative initial views of the 2026 Olympiad in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. "I'm still waiting," Gujrathi posted on X. The accommodation is-



sue was not restricted to the Indian contingent. Austrian Grandmaster Felix Blohberger and Welsh player Jonathan Blackburn also raised similar concerns. "Same here. We arrived yesterday at 6 a.m. at the hotel, and our captain got his room at 1:30 p.m.," Blohberger replied to Srinath's post on X. "37 hours awake, 2 flights, halfway round the world, only to be told you don't have a hotel room that night. Typical Olympiad. Finally in my room - worth it," Blackburn wrote on Tuesday. Uzbekistan Chess Federation Vice President Alisher Sadullaev said efforts were underway to resolve the issue. "I have had a talk with the Indian team. According to the regulations, the check-in was

planned for an earlier time, but the FIDE team and the coordination team have organised everything now, and I think everything is already being set up. "I'm sure this will be resolved, and from tomorrow onwards, players can comfortably come and start playing their matches," Sadullaev told ChessBase India. The Indian men's squad is headlined by world champion D Gukesh, Grandmasters R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi, Nihal Sarin and Vidit Gujrathi, along with Srinath. The women's team comprises several top stars, including Koneru Humpy, R Vaishali, World Cup winner Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agrawal, Savitha Shri B and captain Swayams Mishra.

Diego Simeone Picks Lionel Messi Over Kylian Mbappe and Lamine Yamal For Ballon d’Or

Mumbai : Atletico Madrid manager Diego Simeone has backed Lionel Messi to win the 2026 Ballon d’Or, putting the Argentina captain ahead of the other leading names in contention. Simeone believes Messi’s performance at the 2026 World Cup gives him a strong case for the award. Simeone was speaking ahead of Atletico Madrid’s upcoming La Liga clash against Osasuna when he was asked about the Ballon d’Or race. The discussion had intensified after Lamine Yamal backed himself and Kylian Mbappe as the two best players in the world, but Simeone had a different choice. “Messi, without a doubt,” Simeone told re-



porters. “After the World Cup he had, at the age he is, no doubt at all. Messi.” Simeone’s argument centres on Messi’s contribution to Argentina’s run to the 2026 World Cup final. Argentina eventually finished runners-up after losing to Spain, but Messi remained a key figure for Lionel Scaloni’s side throughout the

tournament. The World Cup was expected to mark the end of Messi’s international career. The 39-year-old announced his retirement from Argentina duty on August 31, saying he felt it was time for a new generation to have its opportunity. However, Messi will have one more appearance in the Argentina shirt. He has been

included in the squad for three upcoming friendlies, but the AFA has confirmed that his farewell appearance will come against Benin on October 6 at the Monumental in Buenos Aires. Argentina will first face Bolivia in C rdoba on September 30 and Burkina Faso in Buenos Aires on October 3. Messi is set to feature only in the October 6 fixture, which will serve as his official farewell. Simeone’s backing comes in a Ballon d’Or race featuring several prominent contenders. Yamal has made his case after Spain’s World Cup triumph, while Mbappe remains part of the conversation following another prolific campaign with Real Madrid.

James Rodriguez Ends 15-Year International Career With Colombia

New Delhi : James Rodriguez has announced his retirement from international football after 15 years with Colombia, closing the chapter on a career that saw him become one of the country’s most celebrated players. The former Real Madrid and Bayern Munich star leaves the national team as a World Cup Golden Boot winner and an enduring No. 10. Rodriguez made his final appearance for Colombia at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, coming on in their round-of-16 defeat to Switzerland on penalties. Speaking in an emotional video shared on social media, the 35-year-old said the

time had come to bring his international journey to an end. Lleg  el momento. Gracias por cada partido, cada alegr a, cada l grima y cada sueo compartido. Defender los colores de la selecci n Colombia fue uno de los mayores honores de mi vida. Gracias, Colombia. Para siempre. pic.twitter.com/AlRxMgtFe— James Rodriguez (@jamesdrodriguez) September 15, 2026 ”Today, I want to talk to you from the heart. After many years, many games and joys, and difficult moments, it’s time to close one of the most important chapters in my life: my journey with the Colombian national team,”

Rodriguez said. “Wearing this shirt was a dream, but also a huge responsibility. Every time I entered a court, I understood that I didn’t play just for me. I played for my family, teammates, thousands of Colombians who dreamed of all of us.” Rodriguez made his international debut against Bolivia in October 2011 and quickly established himself as a key figure. Across 131 appearances, he scored 31 goals and provided 43 assists, while also wearing the captain’s armband and helping Colombia reach the 2024 Copa America final. Rodriguez’s career-defining tournament came in Brazil



in 2014, when he scored six goals in five matches to claim the Golden Boot. His stunning volley against Uruguay in the round of 16 became one of the defining goals of the tournament and

Aryna Sabalenka Fined Heavily for Racket Abuse During US Open Final

New Delhi: Aryna Sabalenka has been fined \$7,500 by the United States Tennis Association for her conduct during the US Open final, adding to the frustration of a disappointing end to her Grand Slam campaign. Sabalenka lost 6-4, 5-7, 6-2 to Elena Rybakina in the championship match on Saturday, September 12. The fine stemmed from a code violation after Sabalenka hit a ball into the Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd following a break in the opening set. Her frustration continued during the match, with the Belarusian also angrily hitting a ball towards the back of the court and narrowly missing a cameraman. After the defeat, Sabalenka smashed her racket several times while sitting at her bench before the trophy presentation. Sabalenka, the two-time defending champion, was aiming to become only the third woman in the Open Era to win three consecutive US Open titles. She struggled to impose her usual aggressive



game early on as Rybakina took the first set. The world No.1 responded strongly in the second set, raising her intensity and eventually forcing a decider by winning it

7-5. However, Rybakina regained control in the third, breaking early and making the most of longer rallies as Sabalenka committed errors under pressure.

Stokes picks Brook over Pietersen



Southampton: Harry Brook’s blistering century against Sri Lanka did more than set up a crushing England win in Southampton. His 114 not out also prompted Ben Stokes to make a bold comparison with Kevin Pietersen, before the former England captain quickly clarified that he was not trying to diminish his predecessor’s extraordinary talent. Brook took apart Sri Lanka’s bowling attack in the first T20I on Tuesday, reaching his second T20I century from just 42 balls. His unbeaten 114, which included 10 fours and six sixes, helped England post 254/4 before their bowlers completed a 119-run victory. Watching from the stands was Pietersen, who has recently joined Brendon McCullum’s white-ball setup as a mentor ahead of the 2027 ODI World Cup. Brook had already been studying the former England batter before the match, and the influence was evident as he produced the kind of inventive strokeplay that made Pietersen such a difficult batter to contain. Stokes, meanwhile, was watching from afar and took to social media to weigh in on the comparison. “I don’t even think the genius of KP could come close to what Brook has talent-wise. You are an absolute freak, Harry. You’re mint to watch,” he wrote.

Vinicius Jr Vows Goals Will Return to Real Madrid Fans

New Delhi : Vinicius Junior acknowledged his recent struggles in front of goal after Real Madrid’s 3-2 win over Elche, admitting he needs to be more clinical. The Brazilian forward also assured supporters that his goals will return. Real Madrid were made to work for all three points at the Estadio Manuel Martinez Valero on Tuesday, with a late goal securing a 3-2 victory. Vinicius was among the scorers but endured a mixed outing, missing several chances during his 68 minutes on the pitch. “The goals will come back. I can’t miss so many. Sunday there will be more. HALA MADRID,” Vinicius wrote on social media after the match. The Brazilian’s message came after a performance



in which his finishing was one of the talking points. While he found the net, he also failed to convert a number of opportunities before being substituted. Vinicius has had a relatively quiet start to the 2026-27 campaign by his usual standards. He has recorded one goal and three assists from his first seven appearances across competi-

tions, according to the context provided. His outing against Elche highlighted both sides of his game. The 26-year-old remained involved in Real Madrid’s attack and scored, but his inability to make more of his chances left him frustrated. For a player who remains an important attacking option for Real Madrid, improving his efficiency

in front of goal will be an obvious area of focus in the coming games. Vinicius is also adapting to a new managerial setup at Real Madrid, with Jose Mourinho taking charge in August 2026. The Portuguese has backed the Brazilian despite his slow start to the season. Mourinho has said that the best version of Vinicius will come when he starts scoring goals, underlining the importance of finishing to the forward’s current challenge. Vinicius will have a quick opportunity to respond when Real Madrid face Atletico Madrid in the Madrid derby on Sunday, September 20. Mourinho’s side will travel to the Metropolitan for the fixture, with Vinicius looking to build on his goal against his finishing.

India Forms Task Force to Explore F1 Return in 2028

New Delhi : Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday announced a 10-member Task Force to assess the challenges and feasibility of reviving Formula 1 and motorsports in India, with the aim of exploring a return to the country in 2028. The Task Force will be chaired by NITI Aayog Programme Director and Adviser Yugal Kishore Joshi. Joint Secretary (Sports) Kunal will also be part of the committee. The panel will have representation from the departments of tourism and commerce, the Department of Revenue, the Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra governments, and India’s motorsport bodies and racing circuits. Representatives from the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India (FMSCI), Buddh International Circuit (BIC) and Madras International Circuit (MIC) will be included in the Task Force.



FMSCI will also nominate a technical expert. Mandaviya said the committee’s terms of reference include finding ways to ensure the sustainable growth of motorsports in India and preparing a coordinated roadmap for the revival of Formula 1. “The Terms of reference of this committee are suggesting comprehensive ways for sustainable growth of motorsports in India, a holistic coordinated roadmap for revival of Formula One so that we can host a race in 2028,” Mandaviya said during a media interaction. The Task Force

will also carry out a detailed assessment of the challenges facing motorsports in India, including taxation-related issues, and identify policy interventions needed to address them. It will assess the international, economic, tourism and investment benefits of hosting major motorsport events in India. The committee will also examine infrastructure and operational requirements and make recommendations for a comprehensive motorsports policy, including possible Public-Private Partnership models.

Shreyanka Patil Recovers From Ankle Injury and Set to Play Asian Games



New Delhi : Shreyanka Patil has recovered from her ankle injury and is set to make her return to competitive cricket at the 2026 Asian Games in Japan. The India all-rounder was working her way back to full fitness after missing the Asia Cup and the latter stages of the Women’s T20 World Cup due to injury. “Yes, she’s on her way to Japan,” Shreyanka’s

coach Arjun Dev told India Today, providing a positive update ahead of the Asian Games. Shreyanka was named in India’s Asian Games squad in June, but her selection was made subject to fitness clearance after she suffered the ankle injury during the T20 World Cup. Shreyanka’s latest injury setback came during India’s Group A match against the Neth-

erlands at Headingley on June 17. The off-spinner hurt her right ankle while fielding and was unable to put weight on it. She was eventually stretched off the field and was subsequently ruled out of the remainder of the T20 World Cup. The BCCI replaced her in the squad with leg-spinner Prema Rawat. The injury also forced Shreyanka to miss the Women’s Asia Cup in the UAE. When India announced their Asia Cup squad in August, Shreyanka was the only player from the Asian Games squad to miss out, with Prema Rawat retaining her place after replacing her during the T20 World Cup. Her latest setback came after a difficult period with injuries. Shreyanka had previously endured a fractured finger and a lengthy spell out with shin splints, before eventually making her India comeback in 2026 after a 16-month absence. She returned to international cricket in February and was part of India’s T20 World Cup campaign before the ankle injury brought another interruption.

Dilip Tirkey Challenges Hockey India Executive Board Meeting Amid Ongoing Power Rift

New Delhi: The power struggle within Hockey India took another turn on Tuesday after president Dilip Tirkey questioned the validity of an Emergent Executive Committee Meeting called by secretary Bhola Nath Singh for September 18. The proposed meeting was intended to address the growing differences within the federation and discuss changes to the Hockey India League, including the creation of an independent Governing Council to oversee the competition. The relationship between Tirkey and Bhola Nath has been strained for some time, with the dispute over the Indian teams’ jersey colour adding to the tensions. India’s switch from its traditional blue to saffron jerseys ahead of the recently concluded



FIH World Cup was made without Tirkey’s knowledge or the approval of the Hockey India Executive Board, according to the president. The controversy led Tirkey

to issue a show-cause notice to Hockey India Director General Cdr R K Srivastava. He also removed Srivastava from all his responsibilities with immediate effect and

listed eight charges against him, with the jersey colour change featuring prominently among them. With Srivastava given four weeks to respond to the notice, Bhola Nath subsequently moved to convene an emergent Executive Board Meeting on September 18. “On the advice/direction of the Hockey India President, Dr Dilip Tirkey, received via email dated 14.09.2026, the Emergent - 119th Executive Board Meeting of Hockey India will be held at 15:00 hrs on 18.09.2026 at the Hockey India Office, New Delhi,” Bhola Nath wrote in an e-mail to Executive Board members, a copy of which is in possession of PTI. However, Tirkey has now challenged the secretary’s authority to call such a meeting.