

Cooperative Development Workshop ‘Sahkar Se Samriddhi’ Concludes in Mizoram

Aizawl, May 09: A two-day workshop titled “Sahkar Se Samriddhi” focusing on strengthening cooperative societies in Northeast India concluded in Aizawl on Wednesday. The programme was held at the Conference Hall of the Assembly House and was jointly organised by the Ministry of Cooperation, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development and the Cooperation Department of the Mizoram government. The workshop was attended by Cooperation Secretaries and Registrars of Cooperative Societies from different northeastern states.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Ashish Kumar Bhutani, Secretary of the Ministry of Co-operation, said it is important to understand the unique challenges faced by the northeastern region while planning cooperative development initiatives. He encouraged participants from various states to make effective use of support and assistance provided by the National Cooperative Development Corporation in implementing different cooperative projects and programmes. Bhutani also said that the Central Government has established Sahakar Sarathi for rural coop-



erative banks and the National Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation for urban cooperative banks across the country to strengthen the

cooperative financial system. Mizoram Chief Secretary Khii-li Ram Meena said the cooperative sector plays an important role in the lives and

economy of the people of Mizoram. He stated that Mizoram has become the first state in the country to fully computerise the Registrar Society Office. He further informed that 24 Primary Agriculture Cooperative Credit Societies (PACS) in the state have already been computerised, while work is continuing for another 75 societies. The Chief Secretary also said that the Mizoram government and cooperative institutions are jointly working under the Bana Kaih initiative to strengthen economic activities and improve the functioning of cooperative societies in the state.

Tripura Border Firing: Two Suspected Bangladeshi Smugglers Killed Near Kamalasagar

Agartala, May 09: Two suspected Bangladeshi smugglers were killed in firing allegedly carried out by the Border Security Force near the zero point of the Kamalasagar-Pathariyadwar border in Tripura’s Sepahijala district on Friday, officials said.

According to preliminary reports, the incident took place during an anti-smuggling operation along the India-Bangladesh international border when BSF personnel allegedly opened fire under circumstances that are yet to be officially clarified.

The injured persons were immediately shifted to Bishalgarh Sub-Divisional Hospital, where doctors declared both of them dead.

The deceased have been identified as Md. Mursalin (20), a resident of Batenbari village in Bangladesh, and Nabi Hossain (40), a resident of Madhupur village in Bangladesh.

Officials suspect that the two were allegedly involved in smuggling activities along the India-Bangladesh border.

Further investigation into the incident is currently underway.

Manipur Police seize over 1 kg suspected brown sugar One arrested in Churachandpur

Imphal, May 09: Manipur Police arrested one person and seized more than one kilogram of suspected brown sugar during an anti-drug operation carried out in Churachandpur district. Police said the operation was conducted on May 8 near Hiltown under the jurisdiction of Churachandpur Police Station. The arrested person has been identified as Nehkholun Hangshing, 45, a resident of K. Sharomphai village in Churachandpur district. According to officials, police recovered 118 soap cases containing suspected brown sugar weighing around 1.360 kilograms from the possession of the accused during the operation.

The contraband was seized following legal procedures, and the accused was taken into custody for further investigation. Police said efforts are underway to determine the source of the narcotics consignment as well as its intended destination. Investigators are also trying to find out whether the accused has links with any larger drug trafficking network operating in the region. Officials stated that the latest seizure is part of the continuing anti-narcotics campaign being carried out by Manipur Police across different districts of the state. Over the past few years, security agencies in Manipur have intensified operations against

drug trafficking, illegal poppy cultivation and cross-border narcotics smuggling. Several drugs and psychotropic substances have been seized in separate operations conducted in hill and valley districts. Police said the crackdown against illegal drugs would continue and warned those involved in narcotics trafficking of strict legal action under the law. Authorities have repeatedly expressed concern over the growing drug trade in the region and said coordinated operations are being carried out to dismantle illegal trafficking networks and prevent narcotics from reaching local communities, especially the youth.

Organ Trafficking Racket Busted in Assam Four Arrested from Margherita

Margherita, May 09: A suspected interstate human organ trafficking network operating in Assam was busted after a joint operation by Dibrugarh and Tinsukia police led to the arrest of four alleged brokers from Margherita on Friday. The arrested accused have been identified as Zakir Hussain (53), Shankar Chentanu (28), Samir Paul (37) and Gopal Roy (31). According to police sources, the accused were allegedly involved in a racket that targeted financially vulnerable individuals and lured them with promises of money and jobs before attempting to illegally sell their organs. Investigators said the accused were allegedly trying to take a 35-year-old man, Rajiv Dey of Margherita, for the illegal sale of one of his kidneys. The operation began after Rajiv Dey’s family lodged a complaint at Margherita Police Station late Thursday night. A family member alleged that Rajiv had left home early Thursday morning with accused Shankar Chentanu after being told there was some work in Dibrugarh. Hours later, the family reportedly learned that he was allegedly being taken for illegal kidney trade with the involvement of some medical staff.



The relatives became suspicious after Rajiv’s phone remained switched off for several hours. When they contacted Shankar Chentanu, he allegedly denied knowing anything about Rajiv’s whereabouts. Following the complaint, police launched a special operation led by Tinsukia DSP (Crime) Fayeze Ahmed with assistance from Dibrugarh Police. All four accused were reportedly caught during the operation. Police sources said there could be a larger inter-district or-

gan trafficking network operating in Assam. Investigators are now probing whether any hospitals, doctors or medical personnel were connected to the alleged racket. Police also suspect that several other victims may have been linked to the network. A case numbered 44/2026 has been registered at Margherita Police Station under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including Sections 61(2), 112, 143(1) and 318(4).

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Ibobi Singh Slams Centre, State Over Kamjong Violence; Questions Border Security Lapses

Imphal, May 09: Manipur Congress leader and former Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh launched a sharp attack on both the Central and State governments over the recent violence in Manipur’s Kamjong district, questioning how armed attacks could take place in sensitive Indo-Myanmar border villages despite the presence of security forces in the region.

Addressing a press conference at Congress Bhavan on BT Road in Imphal, the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee president described the incident as a “very serious matter” and warned that the worsening security situation in border areas could further destabilise the already fragile condition in the state. The violence was reported from the border villages of Namlee, Z Choro and Wanglee in Kamjong district, triggering fresh political criticism over alleged security lapses and inadequate protection in frontier areas bordering Myanmar. “The unfortunate incident that took place in the border villages near the Indo-Myanmar border is a very serious matter. The affected areas are located close to Assam Rifles posts, yet such an attack still occurred. Therefore, both the Government of India and the State Government must take responsibility and explain their response,” Ibobi Singh said. He alleged that repeated incidents of violence reflected the failure of authorities to restore public confidence and ensure effective protection in vulnerable

regions.

“One incident after another is making the situation in Manipur more dangerous and unstable. Sensitive border areas continue to remain vulnerable despite the presence of security forces, while only a few State police personnel are deployed in such regions. The governments cannot remain silent spectators while people continue to suffer,” he said.

Warning of possible escalation, the former chief minister said similar incidents could occur in other parts of the state if urgent measures were not taken. “What happened yesterday in Kamjong district could happen elsewhere as well if proper security measures are not taken immediately. Protection of life and property is the responsibility of both the Central and State Governments. Despite repeated assurances regarding law and order, proper action has still not been taken against those responsible for violence and instability in the State,” he added.

Congress leader Victor Keishing, who also addressed the press conference, alleged that inadequate deployment in the border belt contributed to the attack.

“The incident occurred because only a few unarmed police personnel are usually posted in the border areas. Despite repeated concerns raised by local residents, adequate security deployment has not been ensured,” Keishing said.

Drugs Worth Rs 30 Lakh Seized in Naharlagun; One Person arrested

Naharlagun, May 09: Police arrested a man with drugs worth around Rs 30 lakh at Polo Colony in Naharlagun on Friday.

During an anti-drug raid, police seized 113 plastic vials containing heroin weighing around 144 grams, and 30 Nitrazepam tablets, a sedative, weighing close to 300 mg, Naharlagun Superintendent of Police Nyelam Nega said.

A suspected drug peddler, Vijay Parang (30), was also

arrested, the police officer said, adding that cash, suspected to be proceeds of drug trafficking, was seized during the raid.

The raid was conducted by a police team led by Inspector Krishnendu Dev under the overall supervision of SP Nyelam Nega, following all legal procedures under the NDPS Act. A case has been registered at Naharlagun Police Station, and further investigation is underway.



Rare Gharial Sighting at Kaziranga Raises Hope for Wildlife Conservation

Kaziranga, May 09: Kaziranga National Park has once again highlighted Assam’s extraordinary biodiversity after tourists reportedly witnessed a critically endangered gharial during a safari in the Burhapahar Range of the park, a sighting being described as extremely rare and significant for wildlife conservation.

The rare reptile was spotted during an early morning safari near Dipholu Camp in the Burhapahar Range. The moment was captured on camera by travel guide Shishukanta Nath along with tourist Diganta Kumar Sarma, creating excitement among wildlife enthusiasts and conservationists.

The gharial, known for its long and narrow snout, is listed as a critically endangered species and is rarely seen in the wild. Tourists who witnessed

the animal described the experience as unforgettable, especially as such a visual record from Kaziranga by visitors is believed to be the first of its kind.

Photographs and videos of the sighting have since gone viral on social media, drawing widespread attention from wildlife lovers across the country. Many have called the sighting a positive sign for conservation efforts and a reminder of the rich ecological diversity preserved within Assam’s forests and wetlands.

While Kaziranga is globally recognised for its iconic one-horned rhinoceroses, the latest sighting once again underlines the park’s importance as a thriving habitat for several rare and endangered species. Wildlife experts believe such moments also

help raise awareness about the need for stronger conservation and protection of fragile river ecosystems where gharials survive.

Reacting to the development, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma described it as “a truly remarkable moment for wildlife conservation.”

“Gharial, once believed to have vanished from Assam’s river systems, has now been sighted at Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in a significant development for wildlife conservation,” he said. “For tourists and forest officials alike, this was more than just a rare sighting. It was a powerful reminder of Assam’s extraordinary biodiversity and the silent success of sustained conservation efforts across our forests, wetlands and rivers,” Sarma added.

NE/EAST

Judicial Commission concludes three-day Mynsngat-Thangsko blast



Shillong, Apr 09: A three-day sitting of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry, headed by Justice (ret'd) R.S. Chauhan, was held from May 6 to 8 at the State Guest House in Shillong in connection with the Mynsngat-Thangsko blast in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district that occurred on February 5. The blast had claimed the lives of 33 migrant workers, most of them from Assam and Nepal, following which the state government set up a judicial inquiry to examine the incident. During the proceedings on May 6, the Commission heard submissions from officials including the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Head of Forest, Shillong, representatives of the Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Ltd (Ranchi), the Ministry of Coal, and the Directorate of Mineral Resources, Shillong.

Statements were presented, on May 7, by

the Shillong Area Trader Association of West Khasi Hills and the South West Khasi Hills Mine Owners and Exporter Association. On the final day, May 8, inputs were given by the North Eastern Space Application Centre, the Indian Bureau of Mines, and relatives of those killed in the blast.

The inquiry panel has announced that its next hearing will take place between July 13 and 15, 2026. On July 13, the Commission will also visit the blast site as part of its ongoing investigation. The judicial probe was set up by Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma following the incident, with the mandate to examine both the explosion and issues related to illegal mining activities in the region. In connection with illegal mining cases, officials have registered 62 FIRs so far. These cases have also led to the recovery of more than 15,000 metric tonnes of coal and a quantity of explosives.

Supreme Court upholds bail of IAS officer Talo Potom in abetment of suicide case

Guwahati, Apr 09: The Supreme Court on Thursday set aside the Gauhati High Court order that had cancelled the bail granted to Arunachal Pradesh IAS officer Talo Potom in an abetment of suicide case involving 19-year-old Gomchu Yekar. A Bench of Justices J.K. Maheshwari and Atul S. Chandurkar allowed Potom's appeal after hearing counsel for the complainant and found no grounds to cancel the bail granted by the trial court.

The court directed that the bail order passed by the trial court would continue to remain in force. It also observed that Potom shall not threaten or influence the complainant or witnesses during the pendency of the trial, adding that any violation could lead to cancellation of bail. The Bench refrained from making observations on the contents of the alleged dying declaration, stating that it should not affect the merits of the case.

The case relates to the death of Gomchu Yekar, who was found dead at his rented accommodation in Lekhi village on October 23, 2025. He had allegedly left behind suicide notes accusing the accused persons of mental harassment, sexual exploitation, corruption-related activities and exposure to HIV/AIDS. Potom was arrested on October 27, 2025, and was granted bail by the Sessions Court within a week. The bail was later challenged by the deceased's father, following which the High Court cancelled the bail and ordered his custody. The High Court had observed that the trial court granted bail without proper application of mind and had ignored material evidence, including references to Potom in the suicide note. It also noted concerns raised by the prosecution regarding deletion of WhatsApp chats and voice messages, which were sent for forensic examination.

Akashvani Kohima organises marathon to commemorate 90 years of broadcasting

Dimapur, Apr 09: Nagaland's Akashvani Kohima organised the 'Akashvani Marathon' in Kohima on Friday as part of the nationwide celebration marking 90 years of broadcasting in India. The marathon, which began at the Old MLA Hostel junction and concluded at the High School junction, was organised to promote fitness, public participation, and national unity in line with the vision of a healthy and active India. Speaking on the occasion, Buchem said the event symbolised a marathon of voices, music, news, and stories that have reached millions of people through broadcasting over the decades.

He stated that the occasion was not only a milestone in the history of broadcasting but also a celebration of unity fostered through



shared narratives and songs. The Deputy Commissioner thanked Akashvani for its decades of innovation and dedicated public service in connecting people across the country through news and programmes.

Director of Youth Resources and Sports Kethosituo Sekhose attended the closing ceremony as a special guest. Addressing the gathering, he said radio has connected generations and continues to remain an important source of infor-

mation, particularly in rural areas. Congratulating Akashvani Kohima for its longstanding service, Sekhose lauded the participants of the marathon. Also speaking at the closing ceremony, Programme Executive of Akashvani Kohima, Khriesaneisa Rutsa, highlighted the significance of the 90-year milestone of Akashvani.

He said Akashvani Kohima completed 63 years of service in January 2026. Since June 2025, the station has been organising a series of activities to commemorate 90 years of broadcasting, including special programmes featuring former broadcasters and experts, essay competitions for schools, folk song competitions involving Naga tribal student bodies, and Hindi film song competitions.

Gaurav Gogoi targets Akhil Gogoi, flags cracks in opposition

Guwahati, Apr 09: After the Assam Assembly election results, differences within the opposition camp have become more visible, with tensions emerging between Rajiv Dal led by Akhil Gogoi and the Congress party. Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi, on Friday, spoke to reporters and reacted strongly to recent comments made by Akhil Gogoi. He said, "We are disappointed by Akhil Gogoi's remarks. What he is saying now sounds similar to what the Chief Minister said before and after the elections. His public behaviour is raising doubts among people."

He also spoke about the party's political alliances, saying, "Our partnership with BJP, CPI(M) and APHCL remains firm and unchanged." At the same time, he suggested that Rajiv Dal's recent statements indicate a possible shift in its political stance and hinted that it may be moving away from the broader opposition alignment.

Gogoi said that Congress leaders had recently held discussions with both newly elected and senior legislators. He also said the party's influence in the opposition space had reduced after the election outcome. He further accused Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of continuing to attack the Congress after the BJP's victory. Speaking on governance, he said the state government was not focusing on key public issues. He said, "Assam is facing several serious issues, but the government is not focusing on them. Problems like artificial flooding, syndicate activities, and lack of opportunities for children need urgent at-



ention." He added that attempts were being made to weaken the Congress politically but said the party must continue to play its role as the main opposition. He said, "People have given them the mandate to function; they should concentrate

on that duty." Gogoi also said the Congress was currently reviewing its election performance to assess both strengths and weaknesses, and reaffirmed that the party would work to strengthen its opposition role.

Tripura govt provided over 20,000 regular jobs says CM Manik Saha

Fill vacant posts departments

Agartala, Apr 09: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Friday said the state government has provided 20,845 regular jobs since the BJP came to power in 2018 and has taken steps to fill vacant posts across departments despite financial constraints. Addressing a programme in Agartala for the distribution of offer letters to newly recruited employees under various departments, Saha said 115 more regular appointments were made on Thursday. "Till date, after our government was formed in 2018, we have recruited 20,845, and today 115 people who are receiving their offer letters are new additions to this. All these are regular jobs," he said. The chief minister said another 24,078 people have been engaged through contractual and outsourcing arrangements. "I have come across many aspirants who had been working on contractual basis earlier and, after getting selected through competitive exams, are now in regular service. A good number of women are also in the selection list, which is a matter of great satisfaction," he added. "We have initiated the process of filling up the posts which are lying va-



cant. There are financial constraints because salaries of government employees fall under the head of revenue expenditure," he said. Saha said the government is also focusing on capital expenditure and claimed that around Rs 10,000 crore is being spent on infrastructure and development-related works. Referring to skill development and employment generation, he said the employability rate in the country has improved after 2014. "When Prime Minister Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in 2014, the employability rate stood at 33.95 per cent. Today it stands at 54.81 per cent. Skill is important. People in each and

every sector must hone their skills continuously," he said. People should remain the priority for government employees and urged the newly recruited staff to remember that salaries are paid from taxes collected from the public. He also claimed that Tripura ranks first in ease of doing business in both phases of assessment. Referring to political developments in neighbouring West Bengal, Saha said political decisions are important for public welfare and asserted that "a new dawn" has emerged in the state. "It was an absurd development in Bengal. The outgoing the elections but refused to resign," he said, without naming any leader.

Assam Rifles hands over 18.8 acres of land for Dimapur airport expansion

Guwahati, Apr 09: Assam Rifles on Friday handed over 18.8 acres of land, presently under the occupation of the Assam Rifles Training Centre and School (ARTC&S), 3rd Mile, Nagaland's Chumoukedima, to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) for the Phase-I expansion of Dimapur airport. The land was handed over during a joint handing-over

and taking-over programme at Dimapur airport. The event was attended by Moa Pongen, Airport Director, AAI, Dimapur airport; Col KD Sharma, Commanding Officer, No. 2 Bn, ARTC&S; Sentiwapang Aier, Secretary (Airports, Inland Waterways, and Railways Cell), Nagaland Transport Department; Polan John, Deputy Commissioner, Chu-

moukedima; M Ababe Ezung, OSD, Nagaland Transport Department; along with other officials. The issue relating to the transfer of the remaining areas, presently under the occupation of ARTC&S, for Phase-II expansion of Dimapur airport was also discussed during the programme. It was stated that further directives from the appropriate authorities

would be required for the transfer of the remaining areas for Phase-II development works. Before the formal handing-over and taking-over ceremony, officials inspected the identified area at ARTC&S. It was stated that further directives from the appropriate authorities would be required for the transfer of the remaining areas

NDA Legislature Party to elect leader on May 10, swearing-in on May 12: Sarma

Guwahati, Apr 09: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday that the process for formation of new NDA government in the state will formally begin on May 10 with the election of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Legislature Party leader, while the swearing-in ceremony of the new Council of Ministers will be held on May 12 in Guwahati.

Addressing reporters here, Chief Minister Sarma added that the BJP Legislature Party meeting has been scheduled for May 10 at 10 a.m., where the leader of the party in the state Assembly will be elected.

He said that immediately after the BJP Legislature Party meeting, a joint meeting of the NDA legislators would be held at 11 a.m. to elect the leader of the alliance.

"The BJP Legislature Party meeting will take place at 10 a.m. on May 10. The leader of the BJP Legislature Party will be elected there. At 11 a.m., a joint NDA meeting will be held and the NDA leader will be elected," Chief Minister Sarma added. According to the Chief Minister, the newly elected NDA leader, along with alliance legislators, will meet the Governor at 12 noon on the same day and formally stake claim to form the government in Assam. "At 12 p.m., the NDA delegation will meet the Governor and submit the claim to form the government. Once the Governor grants permission, the process of government formation will begin immediately," he added.

Chief Minister Sarma also said that the swearing-in ceremony of the new government in Assam would be organ-



ised on May 12 at 11 a.m. and is expected to witness the presence of several high-profile dignitaries from across the country.

He added that Chief Ministers from 20 states have been invited to attend the ceremony. Apart from political leaders, several industrialists, Vaishnavite religious heads and Satradhikars have also been invited.

The Chief Minister said BJP and the Asom Gana Parishad's booth committee presidents from across Assam would participate in the programme, along with elected representatives of Gaon Panchayats.

The ceremony is expected to be held on a grand scale, reflecting the NDA's return to power in the state.

Congress member's house attacked

Guwahati, Apr 09: Unidentified persons allegedly set on fire a food joint on the residential premises of a Congress worker in Assam's Jorhat district in the early hours of Friday, police said. The incident happened around 1.30 am at Rangajan in Titabor police station area. "A probe has begun following a complaint by Rupali Das. More details will be known as the investigation progresses," a police officer said. "The food joint and some spare parts of a vehicle, estimated to be worth around Rs 10,000-Rs 15,000, were gutted, according to the family," he added. This is the second reported incident of an alleged attack on opposition members after the Assembly election results were declared on Monday, in which the BJP-led NDA secured a third consecutive term with

a two-thirds majority. Unidentified persons had allegedly hurled petrol bombs at the house of a Congress candidate in Diphu in Karbi Anglong district late on Monday night, though none of the explosives exploded. In the latest incident, Das said passersby noticed the flames and alerted the family, who were asleep at the time. "Around 1.30 am, we heard banging on our door and people shouting. We were initially hesitant to open the door, but when we heard the voice of our neighbours, we rushed out," Das said. Das said her food joint at the front of the premises was completely gutted, with damage also caused to spare parts of a commercial passenger vehicle that her husband operates.

The fire was brought under control with the help of locals before it could

spread, she said. After the fire was doused, Das said she found a glass bottle with petrol and an attached wick. "Until now, we had only seen videos of post-poll violence in West Bengal. But today, some people are bringing such a dangerous political culture into Assam, which is a very alarming sign for the social fabric of the state," Konwar said. "I strongly condemn the incident and urge police to immediately apprehend the culprits and ensure strict punishment," he added. Das's residence is located in the vicinity of former chief minister Tarun Gogoi's ancestral home. She routinely posts videos in support of the opposition party on social media. Chairman of Congress' social media and IT department Rituparna Konwar condemned the incident and demanded the arrest of the culprits.

SC Reinstates Bail in Gomchu Yekar Suicide Case

Itanagar, May 09: The Supreme Court has restored the bail granted to Arunachal Pradesh IAS officer Talo Potom in connection with the alleged abetment of suicide case involving 19-year-old Gomchu Yekar. A bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and Atul S Chandurkar on May 7 set aside an earlier order of the Gauhati High Court which had cancelled the bail granted to Potom by a lower court. The apex court observed that there were no sufficient grounds to revoke the bail earlier granted by the trial court. After hearing arguments from both sides, the Supreme Court allowed Potom's appeal and directed that the original bail order would continue to remain in force. At the same time, the court warned the accused against trying to influence witnesses or interfere with the investigation. The bench stated that if any verified complaint regarding intimidation or interference is received, the bail could be cancelled again. The Supreme Court also clarified that observations made by the trial court while granting bail should not affect the merits of the ongoing criminal trial. The bench avoided making detailed remarks on the alleged dying declaration in order to ensure that the case proceeds without prejudice. The case is linked to the death of Gomchu Yekar, who was found dead at his rented accommodation in Lekhi village on October 23, 2025. According to allegations made during the investigation, Yekar had left behind suicide notes accusing Talo Potom and

another government engineer of sexual assault, mental harassment and exposing him to HIV/AIDS. Reports stated that Yekar had been working in the Public Works Department through Potom. Potom was arrested on October 27, 2025. He later secured bail from the Sessions Court within a week of his arrest. However, the victim's father challenged the bail order before the Gauhati High Court. The High Court subsequently cancelled the bail and directed that Potom be taken into custody again. The High Court had observed that the lower court granted bail without proper application of mind and had allegedly ignored important evidence in the case. The High Court also noted concerns that Potom, being a senior and influential officer, could affect the investigation at an early stage. During earlier court proceedings, the prosecution had claimed that WhatsApp chats and voice messages exchanged between the accused and the deceased had been deleted. It also informed the court that forensic examination of electronic devices connected to the case was still pending. Following the High Court order, Potom approached the Supreme Court challenging the cancellation of bail. The apex court had earlier stayed the High Court's order and directed the IAS officer to cooperate fully with the ongoing investigation. According to officials, all the rescued children were later produced before the competent authority for necessary legal procedures.

Neiphiu Rio Promises Rapid Change in Bengal Under BJP

Kohima, May 09: Neiphiu Rio has expressed confidence that West Bengal would witness major development and visible transformation under the newly formed BJP government in the state. Speaking ahead of the swearing-in ceremony of Suwendu Adhikari as Chief Minister, the Nagaland Chief Minister said the effects of political change in West Bengal would become visible in a short period of time. Rio said that as India continues to move forward on the path

of development, the people of West Bengal would also experience progress and administrative change under the new government. Earlier, BJP Rajya Sabha MP Rahul Sinha described the swearing-in ceremony as a "historic change" for West Bengal. He said the formation of the BJP government marked a major political shift in the state after years of rule by the All India Trinamool Congress. Sinha also said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several senior national leaders of the

BJP were expected to attend the oath-taking ceremony in Kolkata. He pointed out that the swearing-in event coincides with the birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, calling it a significant occasion for the state. Suwendu Adhikari, who is the leader of the BJP legislative party in West Bengal, is set to become the first BJP leader to head the state government. The BJP secured a major victory in the Assembly elections by winning 207 seats, while the Trinamool Congress won 80 seats after remaining in

power in the state for nearly 15 years. During the elections, Adhikari contested from Nandigram and Bhabanipur. In Bhabanipur, he defeated outgoing Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee by a margin of more than 15,000 votes, a result that became one of the biggest talking points of the election. Meanwhile, several senior BJP leaders and Union ministers arrived in Kolkata to attend the swearing-in ceremony. Among them were Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, J. P. Nadda and Dharmendra Pradhan.

Probe Ordered After Five-Year-Old Student Dies Inside Classroom in Assam's Katigorah

Silchar, May 09: Authorities have launched a detailed investigation into the death of a five-year-old student inside a private school classroom in Katigorah of Assam's Cachar district, an incident that has triggered widespread concern over student safety and supervision in educational institutions.

Cachar Deputy Commissioner Aayush Garg said the Inspector of Schools has been directed to conduct an inquiry into the incident. He added that the concerned Circle Officer had already visited the school and examined the circumstances surrounding the

tragedy.

Inspector of Schools Mithun Johri confirmed that a preliminary report has been received and a detailed probe is currently underway.

The deceased child was identified as Sakib Alom, a resident of Gangapur and a student of Holy Flower Senior Secondary School.

According to sources, the incident took place during the tiffin break on Thursday when the child reportedly collapsed while eating food brought from home inside the classroom.

CCTV footage of the incident, which later went viral

on social media, allegedly

showed another student trying to alert a teacher present in the classroom. However, the teacher reportedly appeared to be occupied elsewhere in the room at that moment.

The child was immediately taken to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead. The incident sparked emotional scenes in the locality and led to sharp criticism on social media over the alleged lack of supervision and emergency response within the school premises. Questions were also raised regarding safety protocols and preparedness in handling medical

emergencies involving young

students.

Amid growing allegations of negligence, the school authority admitted before the media that there may have been partial negligence in handling the situation.

At the same time, the management stated that guardians had previously been advised not to send packaged food items such as chips and other processed snacks in children's tiffin boxes.

Newly elected Katigorah MLA Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha expressed grief over the incident and demanded accountability.

"When guardians send their children to school, the responsibility of ensuring their safety rests with the school authority. There must be an in-depth inquiry and whoever is found responsible should face action as per law," he said.

The legislator further stated that he would raise the issue in the Assembly after the formation of the new government and seek stricter safety regulations for schools, particularly private institutions, to prevent such incidents in future.

He also said he would meet the bereaved family and visit the school after returning from Guwahati.

ANCSU Warns Protest Over Delay in Kohima Hostel Project

Kohima, May 09: The All Nagaland College Students' Union has warned the Nagaland government of an agitation if steps are not taken within a week to address the delay in construction of a proposed girls' hostel at Kohima Science College. Addressing the media in Kohima on Friday, ANCSU president Kivika Yephtho alleged that the delay in utilising funds sanctioned for the project has placed the hostel construction at risk. According to the student body, an amount of Rs 3.53 crore was sanctioned by REC Limited under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) scheme for the proposed hostel project. ANCSU stated that the proposal for the girls' hostel was submitted in 2022 through the Investment and Development Authority of Nagaland. The project was later approved in 2023, and the first instalment of Rs 1.5 crore was reportedly released in April that year. However, the union alleged that the project failed to move forward after plans were made to upgrade the hostel into what was described as an "international standard facility". Following this, the estimated project cost was reportedly revised to around Rs 6 crore. The students' body claimed that despite three years passing since the release of the initial funds, the sanctioned amount has remained unused. It further alleged that REC Limited has now initiated steps to seek a refund because the original project timeline has expired. ANCSU also expressed concern over what it described as a lack of transparency regarding the revised hostel project. The union said no proper blueprint or detailed plan of the upgraded facility has been shared with students so far. The organisation stated that female students of the college are currently dependent on only one hostel with a capacity of around 100 beds, creating accommodation difficulties for many students. The union demanded immediate commencement of the project and urged the government and departments concerned to act quickly to protect the sanctioned funds and solve the hostel shortage issue.

Assam exports 20 tons of honey to US

Guwahati, May 09: In a significant boost to India's agri-export landscape and the promotion of the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative, the first-ever export of ODOP Honey from the Aspirational district of Baksa, Assam to the United States of America was flagged off through the initiative of APEDA on Saturday. The consignment was undertaken by an APEDA-registered exporter, Salt Range Foods Pvt. Ltd., Assam. The landmark consignment, comprising approximately 20 metric tonnes of honey, was flagged off from Guwahati, Assam. The honey has been processed and packed at the facility of Salt Range Foods Private Limited in Guwahati. Assam has immense potential for honey production owing to its rich biodiversity, abundant forest resources and long-standing tradition of bee-keeping. Honey collection in Assam has been practised for centuries by indigenous communities such as the Karbi, Mishing and Bodo tribes, where it has traditionally been used as food, medicine and in cultural and religious practices. Major honey-producing districts in the state include Baksa, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Udalguri and Tamulpur in the Bodoland Territorial Region



(BTR). Assam produced approximately 1,650 metric tonnes of honey during FY 2023-24, as per National Horticulture Board latest data. Sourced from eco-friendly and pesticide-free environments, the honey from Baksa district is known for its high quality and near-organic

characteristics, reflecting the region's rich biodiversity and sustainable agricultural practices. Sourced from eco-friendly and pesticide-free environments, honey from the Baksa district is known for its high quality and near-organic characteristics.

18.8 Acres of ARTC&S Land Handed Over to AAI for Dimapur Airport Expansion

Dimapur, May 09: A joint handing over and taking over ceremony for 18.8 acres of land occupied by the Assam Rifles Training Centre and School was held at Dimapur Airport on Friday.

According to a DIPR report, the land was formally transferred to the Airports Authority of India for the development of Phase-I of Dimapur Airport.

Officials inspected the 18.8-acre site before the formal handover and takeover process was completed in the presence of representatives from the state government and concerned departments.

During the meeting, discus-



sions were also held regarding the transfer of the remaining land currently under the occupation of ARTC&S for the proposed Phase-II expansion of the airport.

Officials agreed that further

directives from the competent authorities would be required before proceeding with the next phase of land transfer.

The transfer of land is being seen as a significant step towards the expansion and mod-

ernisation of Dimapur Airport.

Among those present during the programme were Moa Ponggen, KD Sharma, Sentiwapang Aier, Polan John and M. Ababe Ezung, along with several other officials.

Assam Rifles Rescues Abducted Woman in Manipur's Kamjong



Kamjong, May 09: Assam Rifles successfully rescued an abducted woman in Manipur's Kamjong district following coordinated operations carried out in the violence-affected border region along the India-Myanmar border.

According to an official statement issued on Friday, the rescued woman, identified as Olina Ningshen, had allegedly been abducted from Namlee village during the clashes that erupted on May 7.

The release operation was conducted south of Z Choro village, close to the incident site, under the supervision of Assam Rifles and other agencies.

Officials said the woman's husband, village headman and members of civil society organisations (CSOs) were taken to Humine Thana, near Phaikoh, after Assam Rifles secured her safe release.

Following the rescue, the woman and her family members were escorted to the Assam Rifles headquarters at Chassad for formal handover procedures, documentation, medical examination and psychological assistance. The family, along with village representatives and CSO members, later returned safely to Khangpat Khun village. The Assam Rifles stated that the entire operation was closely coordinated to ensure

the woman's safety and wellbeing. The force further said unrest had broken out near Z Choro and opposite Namlee along the India-Myanmar border in the early hours of May 7. Troops of Assam Rifles reportedly responded swiftly and managed to bring the volatile situation under control despite difficult conditions. During the violence, multiple rescue teams were deployed in the affected areas. Assam Rifles personnel secured 10 houses affected by the clashes and evacuated civilians to safer locations. Fifteen villagers, including women and children, were rescued and provided humanitarian assistance at the Aloyo Assam Rifles camp. An injured woman was also given immediate first aid and medical evacuation support. Simultaneously, sanitisation and search operations were launched to prevent further escalation of violence and restore stability in the region. During the operations, one armed cadre identified as Lal Thag John, aged 38, was apprehended from Churachandpur district along with a weapon, magazine and ammunition. He was later handed over to local police authorities.

Assam Rifles said troops continue to patrol sensitive areas across Kamjong district to maintain peace and security amid prevailing tensions in the region.

MBSE Proposal to End Merit Lists Faces Opposition from Mizoram School Owners

Aizawl, May 09: The Mizoram Independent Schools' Association has expressed strong opposition to the decision of the Mizoram Board of School Education to stop publishing merit lists for Class 10 and Class 12 board examinations. The association said the move could reduce academic competitiveness among students and negatively affect education-

al standards in the state. This year, the MBSE decided not to publish merit lists, distinctions and division classifications while announcing board examination results. According to the board, the decision was taken to reduce unhealthy competition among students and to promote quality-based and competency-focused education. However, reacting to the decision, MISA presi-

dent Lalnunkunga Sailo criticised the new policy and said it had disappointed students as well as educational institutions across Mizoram. Speaking at a press conference, Sailo said the board's decision to discontinue publication of merit lists, subject top-pers, letter marks and division categories would affect students' motivation and performance.

He said healthy academic competition is important for encouraging students to perform better and achieve excellence in studies. "The move will undermine healthy academic competition among students, which is essential for encouraging excellence," Sailo said. The MISA president further argued that the revised system removes visible distinctions between high-performing

schools and weaker institutions, as all schools would now appear on the same level regardless of academic performance. He described the decision as a "serious dilution of educational standards" and claimed that the reasons given by the MBSE and the state school education department were not convincing enough to justify such a major change in the examination system.

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Roots Before Wings: Why India's Youth Must Reclaim Their Heritage

In an age of viral trends and digital distractions, India's young generation risks becoming culturally rootless — fluent in global pop culture yet strangers to their own civilisational inheritance. India's heritage is not a museum exhibit. It is a living, breathing continuum — from the philosophical depth of the Upanishads and the mathematical genius of Aryabhata, to the architectural splendour of Hampi and the textile traditions of Kanchipuram. This inheritance belongs to every young Indian, not as a burden, but as a foundation. Awareness is the first step. Schools must go beyond tokenistic celebration of festivals and engage students with the 'why' behind traditions — the ecology encoded in folk practices, the astronomy embedded in temple alignments, the social wisdom preserved in oral literature. Respect, however, does not mean blind reverence. A truly culturally literate youth should be able to celebrate what is timeless while critically examining what must evolve. Heritage is strongest when it is understood, not merely inherited. A nation that forgets its past builds on sand. India's youth have every right to dream globally — but they will dream richer, and stand firmer, with their roots intact. Know where you come from. That is how you decide where you are going.

The reality of urban crimes in Dhaka and Mohammadpur

There is something quite catchy and seductive in the way Mohammadpur is branded as the “City of God.” The phrase is loaded with a Brazilian flavour, conjuring cinematic memories of gang fights in narrow alleys, muggers on motorcycles, the prevalence of narcotics among frightened residents, territorial youth gangs, occasional police raids, and political protection. Some national newspapers have used the phrase to reflect on extortion networks, murders, organised gangs, and the resurgence of Dhaka’s underworld economies in recent months. Without condoning the violence, it is perhaps possible to point out the exaggeration in labelling Mohammadpur as Dhaka’s “City of God.” A more apt label can be found in Arundhati Roy’s maiden novel, *The God of Small Things*, where the caste system is unpacked to reveal the “small gods.” Roy’s novel pinpoints the intimate tyrannies, invisible humiliations, accumulated exclusions, and ordinary violences as sources for spectacular crimes. The spectacle witnessed in Mohammadpur is not unique. You find similar violence in other city areas on the outskirts, such as Jatrabari, Mirpur and Uttara. Applying the phrase “City of God” to Mohammadpur makes the area appear as a self-contained dystopia at the edge of an otherwise functioning city. The reality is, Mohammadpur is not outside Dhaka’s moral order.

It is no different from many other parts of the city. Mohammadpur poses as a true mirror where violence has replaced local governance. Thankfully, the city has not yet reached the nadir of becoming the Brazilian favela where state authority has collapsed to make room for gang sovereignty. Dhaka’s crisis consists of small things: local leaders patronising gangs, police conveniently overlooking crimes, landlords housing criminals, narcotics monitors

tolerating political substance, students joining groups seeking protection, unemployed youth preferring territorial power to employment, media enjoying clickbait, and policymakers making promises without asking deeper questions. By extension, they become the “small gods” of the city. They manifest petty sovereignties and quietly regulate urban survival. In Mohammadpur, we have a heavy density that makes the near-dystopian violence more visible. The crime in the area is real, but so is the theatre around it. Locating the city’s crime in one area does not provide comfort; it only reflects an ostrich-like satisfaction in viewing the rest of the city as fine.

There are social media reels in which we have seen young muggers roaming the city terminals like sharks in shallow waters with their fins (read: machetes) exposed, snatching mobiles from bus passengers, mugging rickshaw riders and pedestrians, or nicking car parts in plain sight. These are sources of the same fear experienced by Mohammadpur residents. It will be wrong to assume that they enjoy living under the threats of mugging, drugs, gang recruitment, nighttime insecurity, and the erosion of ordinary civic trust. A series of police operations in response to the crime scene has brought Mohammadpur in the limelight. But we also need to be careful in projecting the neighbourhood as a narratively useful trope. Mohammadpur has been useful in offering visual crime for television, viral geography for social media, and symbolic disorder for cities. CCTV monitors the heavily grilled houses in Mohammadpur. Yet, the urban density and the narrow lanes allow teen gangs with “funky” names to thrive. The neighbourhood possesses all the necessary elements to be a visually compelling candidate for the “City of God.” However, the question persists as to why elite

criminality is excluded from the purview of the omniscient being suggested by the metaphor. No upscale neighbourhood is permanently stigmatised because of loan default culture or financial fraud. The economic damage of these crimes may exceed the violence of street gangs many times over. Street crimes bleed visibly, while elite crimes disperse to become invisible. The former produces spectacular headlines; the latter gets deposited in annual reports. As a daily traveller to Mohammadpur, I find the unequal moral geography of the area intriguing. There is no benefit in marginalising evil in the city’s outskirts.

This was the same logic through which asylums and brothels were once parcelled out of the city core, as philosopher Michel Foucault has shown. The challenge is to understand why the crimes of the poor and lower middle class occupy more public space. What programmes have we implemented to rehabilitate these disillusioned youths? Have there been any community-level interventions or integrated crime-fighting efforts? Neighbourhoods like Mohammadpur become morally contaminated through their repeated visibility. Class aesthetics often shield larger crimes. The elites continue to commit crimes inside systems and present them in abstract terms. Thus, the city gradually teaches its citizens to fear certain places while admiring others who may participate in quieter forms of violence: corruption, labour exploitation, institutional decay, environmental destruction, educational fraud, and exploitative capitalism. Mohammadpur becomes the city’s visible sin so that the rest of Dhaka may continue imagining itself innocent. For a second, think how such portrayal negatively affects the middle class residents. Thousands of students, teachers, drivers, office assistants, vendors, and service workers live in or move through Mo-

hammadpur every day. The area is not external to the intellectual life of the educational institutions there; it sustains it materially. Yet, these institutions face reputational anxiety because of the security advisories, transport warnings, and enhanced surveillance. The time has come to use value-laden terms, such as “City of God,” responsibly.

The most dangerous aspect of this metaphor is that it suggests inevitability. It tells us that this neighbourhood has become a natural disaster. But the fact remains: this condition is the result of structural failures contributed by unmanaged urbanisation, youth unemployment, narcotics economies, political patronage, weak local governance, informal settlement pressures, unequal policing, educational exclusion, and the collapse of public recreational and civic infrastructure. Crime here is not simply moral failure.

It is also institutional sediment. Instead of excusing violence, let us change the question. Let us problematise the question, “Why are these people criminal?”, and ask, “What urban conditions repeatedly manufacture such ecosystems?” Mohammadpur has earned its scary reputation by revealing too much of its darker side. But once you shed light on it, it reveals what happens when inequality becomes normal, institutions become selective, youth become excess, and urban belonging becomes disillusioning. Metaphors like the “City of God” can create a safe distance to allow viewers to imagine the location of violence elsewhere. But Mohammadpur is not outside Dhaka’s order. It is one of the places where the “small gods” of Dhaka reside. They experience neglect, patronage, exclusion, fear, spectacle, and unequal morality on a daily basis. The ordinary lives of these “small gods” cannot conceal their extraordinary existence.

West Bengal’s saffron turn and the new reality facing Dhaka

For 75 years, West Bengal told itself a story: we are the land of Tagore and Vivekananda, of Bankim and Bose, of Amartya Sen and Abhijit Banerjee, of coffee house Marxists and high-minded bhadralok secularism. We are too refined for the politics of mandir and masjid. The Partition of 1947? A regrettable necessity inflicted upon us by lesser provinces. On May 4, 2026, that story died as Suwendu Adhikari beat Mamata Banerjee on her own turf, Bhabanipur, by at least 15,000 votes. The BJP walked away with over 200 of West Bengal’s 294 seats, and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) collapsed to roughly 80. The Left and the Indian National Congress remained where they have been parked since 2011: in near oblivion. The Kolkata bhadralok society has, at last, found its inner Sanatani. Partition, it turns out, was not a tragedy of misunderstanding; it was a verdict ahead of its time. This matters for Bangladesh in ways our political elites have yet to absorb. The country is now, geographically, surrounded by the saffron flag. Tripura: BJP. Assam: Himanta Biswa Sarma, who campaigned in West Bengal for Adhikari and vividly spoke of pushing individuals across

the border—a phrase that does not appear in any Vienna Convention I know of. Dhaka summoned the acting Indian high commissioner on April 30 to protest remarks by the Assam CM; four days later, the BJP won West Bengal on precisely that rhetoric. In retrospect, the summons seems only to have goaded the politics it sought to restrain.

So, how did the citadel fall? First, the Election Commission’s Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voters vaporised nearly nine million voters, roughly 12 percent of the electorate, with a disproportionate impact on Muslim communities. It reminds me of the Bollywood cult Gabbar Singh. Kitne aadmi the? Nine million, sardar. TMC’s most reliable bank was emptied before the first ballot was cast. Adhikari helpfully assured Indian Muslims that the SIR would target only Bangladeshi infiltrators, a category whose definition appears to expand with every rally. The Awami League was structurally deaf to all this; the BNP dispensation, judged by the foreign minister’s first outing (to India), appears to be auditioning for the role of selfie partner. But let’s not get ahead of ourselves.

Second, the central government deployed 2,400 companies of Central Armed Police Forces—probably the largest paramilitary footprint in any state election in Indian history—supplemented by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) debuting in a state poll. This obliterated TMC’s booth-level apparatus. Turnout hit 93 percent. That was not suppression but redirection: voters who had operated under TMC’s organisational canopy found themselves, for once, voting freely. Freedom, it transpires, broke decisively for the BJP.

Third, years of anti-incumbency—stalled industrialisation, the SSC scandal in which teachers were hired by what one can only call tom-bola, and a welfare-dependent economy that printed lakhs of “Lakshmi Bhandar” coupons but very few private-sector jobs—left Mamata’s record indefensible. And before any of this, Mamata had spent 15 years weakening the Bengal Congress, the very ally that built her career, leaving herself, in 2026, with no secular flank to fall back on. Fourth, the post-Hasina collapse of Bangladesh-India ties did the rest. Visa suspensions. Closures at Petrapole-Benapole, the cor-

ridor handling 70 percent of bilateral land-based trade. Port restrictions are hitting \$770 million in Bangladeshi exports, 42 percent of what we send to India. And the securitisation of the entire 4,096km frontier, complete with an internal BSF communiqué leaked to *The Hindu*, exploring the “operational feasibility of deploying reptiles or crocodiles” in riverine gaps. Yes, crocodiles. Indian North Block apparently concluded that wildlife was the cheaper subcontractor. The Dhaka-Kolkata corridor that quietly underwrote Kolkata New Market, the Park Street economy, and West Bengal’s wider SME sector, and the Bangladeshi shoppers, traders, students, and patients on whom Mamata’s economy quietly depended, simply collapsed. Mamata could neither lobby Delhi nor offer an alternative. The BJP framed the disruption not as economic mismanagement but as a national security imperative. They spent years blaming her for refusing to give up land for fencing.

Weeks before West Bengal voted, Bangladesh’s foreign minister was in Delhi describing the trip as a “good-will” mission to take ties in a “new direction.” The new direction, as it

happened, was both towards Mauritius with Indian foreign minister as a travel partner to attend an Indian Ocean Conference hosted by India Foundation, and northwards on April 8, while he was still in Delhi, when Ali Hossain of Dhabalguri was shot dead by the BSF at Patgram. Good-will, one supposes, has a body count. The Awami League looked away from such numbers as the price of patronage; I have yet to understand where our post-July 2024 politicians are heading. Now consider what awaits the BNP that swept to parliament in Bangladesh’s 13th general election in February. Adhikari, likely to be chief minister, told reporters in December last year that Bangladesh should be “taught a lesson like Israel taught Gaza.” This is the BJP’s political efficacy on display and the man with whom Dhaka must now discuss water-sharing, border haats, and economy, not to mention the Indians who may soon find themselves stateless. And the Teesta will flow as electorally convenient as the Ganges.

My honest reading, then? India’s posture towards Bangladesh will, as usual, be based on selective amnesia and transactionality. And the BJP’s

domestic electoral product—the eternally menacing Bangladeshi infiltrator—will continue to be manufactured in West Bengal, Tripura, and Assam regardless of what the Indian foreign office murmurs at bilateral dinners. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs does the laundry that I appreciate, though the BJP picks the wardrobe. We must learn to read both the cycle and the spin. Which means our parliament must do what it has historically refused to do: build a national consensus on a transactional foreign policy that survives the election cycles. Continuity beyond rhetoric. A doctrine, not an emotional mood. Engage all, align with balance, yes, but engage from a foundation that does not crumble amid changes in governments. West Bengal’s bhadralok society, or perhaps the Babu Samaj, has finally decided that 1947 was correct. We should grant them the courtesy of believing them and think accordingly. The story West Bengal now tells is one we have heard before, in other languages, on other borders. I hope Dhaka and Delhi read this caution carefully before the next chapter is written on Bangladesh-India relations.

McSweeney is questioned about Mandelson after Starmer and Robbins. Is this government going to last? Our panel reacts

Not here, not now, not this month — but sometime soon the tumblel will come for Keir Starmer. What saves him is the dismal fact that Labour has no obvious contender that MPs would rally round.

Waiting for Andy Burnham is a reason for delay — but that might prompt Wes Streeting or Angela Rayner to seize the moment before the mayor of Greater Manchester can ride back to Westminster. Starmer’s manipulation of Labour’s national executive committee to bar Burnham from standing at the Gorton and Denton byelection (that he probably would have won) was low, petty politics that turned many against him: this non-politician was supposed to rise above such grubbiness.

The prime minister’s troubles will continue: MPs have now called for Morgan McSweeney to appear before the committee. But Starmer already admits that appointing Mandelson was a serious error — though remember that despite the

known Epstein link, Kemi Badenoch did not protest against the decision, Nigel Farage praised it and Labour’s massed ranks did not rise up.

It might have seemed a touch of brilliance to send an avaricious man without moral or political scruple to charm a president with even less — security be damned. But Labour people will have been doubly appalled by the revelation from Tom Baldwin, Starmer’s biographer, of a closer runner-up for that Washington post: George Osborne! Austerity’s destroyer of public services is a cursed name that has Labour reaching for the garlic and stake. That exposed a prime minister with a spinning political compass. He has begun to find due north with his bold refusal to join Trump’s war — but it’s far too late.

For now he has a stay of execution — but only until his cabinet decides differently. It’s utterly depressing, isn’t it? We were supposed to be free of this cycle of chaos and scan-

dal. It was exactly what Keir Starmer promised to change. To restore integrity to government and get on with fixing the problems in our country, from the NHS to the cost of living.

Instead, here we are. With war in Iran and our economy on the rocks, the prime minister is embroiled in trying to explain how he appointed the close friend of a child sex trafficker to one of the most important and sensitive jobs in his government.

What makes it worse is the reason Starmer got into this mess in the first place. It’s because he decided to try to appease Trump instead of standing up to him alongside our allies. That’s why he was so desperate to rush Mandelson to Washington, regardless of the security risk. But appeasing Trump was never going to work, and it has blown up in his face.

Scandals like this — especially from a prime minister who promised to end them — fuel the populism and extremism that threaten to tear our country apart.

We can’t let that happen. We urgently need change at the top of this government, so that it can finally focus on fixing what’s broken in our country.

The fallout from the Peter Mandelson scandal will cast a long shadow over relationships between ministers and the civil service. Olly Robbins’s sacking is another knock to trust at the centre of government. It follows the prime minister’s “tepid bath” criticism of officials, his dismissal of two cabinet secretaries and political frustration that the official machine has not been able to plug gaps in the government’s vision for the country.

As the prime minister’s authority wanes, and his relationship with colleagues degrades, officials will look to survive a period of drift — or to prepare for leadership changes and turbulence ahead.

It is also a blow to Robbins’s reform programme at the Foreign Office — losing a leader midway through a set of fundamental structural changes will further

destabilise the department at a time of geopolitical peril.

Confidence and trust between colleagues are essential qualities in the intense cauldron of No 10. The nature of Robbins’s exit will encourage too many in the civil service to conclude that back-covering and risk aversion are the correct responses. That in turn will further damage relationships.

The prime minister and his civil service colleagues should remember that building trust, not laying audit trails, is the best response to the government’s recent troubles. These frenzied political media events are most often anticlimactic — but I have learned some interesting detail in the past two days. Yet there was nothing surprising or out of character. Olly Robbins came across as the consummate Whitehall mandarin;

but he did have an easier brief than the prime minister. All he had to do was tell the truth. Keir Starmer, on the other hand, had

a bigger challenge. He had to convince the House of Commons that he had absolutely no idea that there were any concerns thrown up by Peter Mandelson’s security vetting. This was clearly improbable. You only have to go on Google to see what those concerns might be. Accordingly, parliament could not stop laughing at the PM’s protestations of ignorance.

The government will survive the recent excitement, partly because nobody in the Labour party has an interest in a leadership contest and partly because there is no agreement on a successor.

However, things may look different after the May elections. One of the main lessons for politicians from recent events is that unwritten rules in government are there for a reason. For Starmer to sack a whole series of officials who have done nothing but try to execute what he wanted is outrageous.

Hopefully it will not happen again, at least on such a scale. But maybe the rules

should be made explicit that politicians cannot sack senior civil servants without due process, in a completely arbitrary way. Anything else seriously undermines the democratic process. It was No 10 who dun it. All roads in Olly Robbins’s testimony to the foreign affairs select committee lead back to Downing Street.

No 10 made the announcement of the appointment of Peter Mandelson with no qualification, no caveat that this was dependent on developed vetting (DV). There was “pressure” to get this done at speed — No 10 wanted it over the line before the inauguration of Donald Trump.

In Robbins’s account, Downing Street saw the Foreign Office as an operational offshoot — speedily delivering what it wanted in the US, searching in another instance for a diplomatic post for a staffer about to be moved on — and (via the Cabinet Office) asking questions about whether DV was actually necessary for the post of

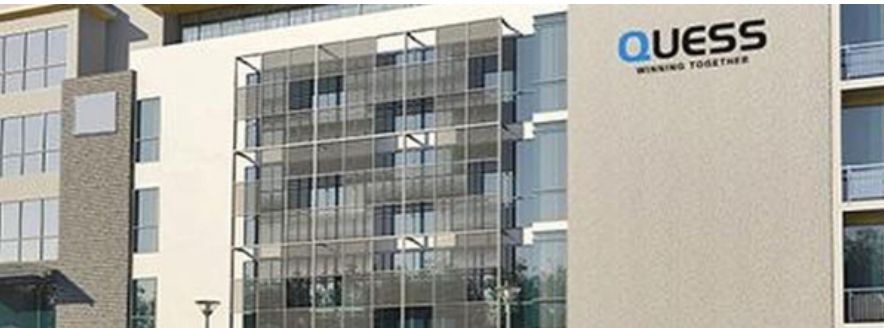
US ambassador. Robbins seemed to suggest that No 10 and the Cabinet Office leaked the story about Mandelson failing his vetting to the Guardian, which he claimed to be a “grievous breach of national security”.

Robbins took full responsibility for the vetting process and its conclusion. But with his “union rep” — Dave Penman, general secretary of the FDA — sitting behind him, Robbins was indicating that he will not take the sacking lying down.

Politics is full of fascinating processology, but where is the responsibility? It was not the vetting that mattered; it was the sheer immorality of the appointment in the first place. Keir Starmer has taken personal responsibility for that — without, so far, any personal consequences.

Those will come in two waves. First, from voters, who will humiliate the whole Labour party in May. Second, from the parliamentary Labour party, who will put Starmer out of his misery later this year.

Quess Corp shares zoom 12% as Q4 swings to profit from year-ago loss



Mumbai: Quess Corp shares gained 12.4 per cent on BSE, logging an intra-day high at ₹237.9 per share. However, at 11:23 AM, Quess Corp’s share price pared some gains but was up 8.11 per cent at ₹228.65 per share. In comparison, the BSE Sensex was down 0.79 per cent at 76,679.27.

The company reported its Q4FY26 results on Monday, after market hours. In the March quarter (Q4FY26), the company posted a year-on-year (Y-o-Y) net profit of ₹64.13 crore, compared to a net loss of ₹95.49 crore a year ago. Its revenue was ₹3,892.45 crore, up 6.4 per cent from ₹3,656.4 crore a year ago. Its Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (Ebitda) stood at ₹86 crore Y-o-Y, compared to ₹67 crore. Ebitda margin was 2.2 per cent, up from 1.8 per cent a year ago.

“Despite regulatory and global headwinds, our staffing solutions business added around 26,000 to itsheadcount, a testament to our resilient, all-weather business model. It is a matter of great pride that our Great Place to Work recognition has grown beyond borders. Quess India was certified for the seventh consecutive year, Quess Singapore for the third consecutive time,

and Quess UAE for the first time,” said Lohit Bhatia, CEO, Quess Corp. The company also declared a special interim dividend of ₹3 per equity share (30 per cent) of the face value of ₹10 each for the financial year 2025-26.

According to the management, looking ahead, Quess will strengthen its domestic growth engine by adding new verticals, while simultaneously pursuing expansion into new international geographies. Every new initiative will focus on improving operating Ebitda margins, ensuring these efforts translate into significant revenue growth and lasting value for all stakeholders.

Established in Bengaluru in 2007, Quess Corp is India’s largest and a global leader in staffing and workforce solutions. Quess leverages deep domain expertise and artificial intelligence (AI)-driven digital platforms to help businesses enhance productivity and build a future-ready workforce. Its comprehensive suite of technology-enabled staffing and managed outsourcing services spans key sectors including banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI), retail, telecom, manufacturing, IT, and GCCs.

CAMS shares surge 9% in weak markets on Q4 show; dividend announcement NSE Nifty50 was quoted

Mumbai: Shares of Computer Age Management Services (CAMS) were in high demand in an otherwise weak market on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, after the company reported its highest-ever quarterly revenue in Q4 FY26. The company also announced a dividend of ₹4 per share for its shareholders.

Following the announcements, the CAMS share price climbed 8.76 per cent to hit an intra-day high of ₹782.75 per share on the NSE. The stock has surged 30 per cent from its 52-week low of ₹611.40 per share touched earlier this year on March 23, 2026.

The counter, however, pared some gains but continued to witness strong investor demand. At 11:42 AM, the stock was trading at ₹792.55 apiece, up 8.44 per cent from its previous close of ₹730.85 per share. In comparison, the benchmark NSE Nifty50 was quoted at 23,924, down 195 points or 0.81 per cent. In Q4 FY26, revenue stood at ₹395.22 crore compared to ₹356.17 crore in Q4 FY25, reflecting a year-on-year growth of 11.0 per cent. Profit After Tax (PAT) increased to ₹125.44 crore from ₹112.80 crore, registering a growth of 11.2 per cent. Profit attributable to owners rose to ₹126.43 crore from ₹114.02 crore, marking a 10.9 per cent increase. PAT margins were 31.0 per cent in Q4 FY26 compared to 30.9 per cent in Q4 FY25.

The company said improved operational efficiency and a significant ramp-up in automation initiatives helped absolute earning earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (Ebitda) reach an all-time high of ₹183.66 crore. Ebitda margin stood at 46.5 per cent. In the mutual fund segment, CAMS’ assets under management (AuM) stood at ₹55.1 lakh crore in Q4 FY26, retaining market leadership with around 68 per cent market share and delivering 21



per cent year-on-year growth, in line with the industry. Overall active assets grew ahead of the industry. Brokerage firm Motilal Oswal Financial Services has retained its ‘Buy’ rating on the stock, citing structural tailwinds in the mutual fund industry that are likely to drive absolute growth in MF revenue, with potential headwinds from the implementation of TER regulations impacting yields.Meanwhile, new SIP registrations reached 1.26 crore in Q4 FY26, reflecting a strong 46 per cent year-on-year growth, outpacing industry growth of 37 per cent. Annual SIP registrations in FY26 stood at 4.7 crore, up 17 per cent over FY25—nearly double the industry growth of 9 per cent, the company said in a release.

Equity assets surged to an all-time high of ₹30.5 lakh crore, improving share to a record 67.0 per cent, up 90 basis points year-on-year, and growing faster

than the industry. Equity net sales stood at ₹1,01,294 crore, driving share in this segment to 76.3 per cent from 71 per cent in the previous quarter ”Within mutual funds, we continue to deepen and strengthen our partnerships with asset managers. Alongside growth, our multi-year platform re-architecture programme is progressing well. Sustained innovation in technology, coupled with revenue growth (while maintaining a flat headcount) highlight the operating efficiency and long-term leverage that our next-generation platform is designed to deliver. As we move ahead, our focus remains on strengthening platform leadership, scaling diversified growth engines and sustaining profitable growth, while reinforcing CAMS’ role as India’s most trusted financial market infrastructure partner,” Kumar added.

Northern Arc Capital records a 50% QoQ increase in net profit

Mumbai: The financial services platform Northern Arc Platform recorded a 50% QoQ increase in its net profit from Rs 92.17 crore in Q3FY26 to Rs 138.62 crore in Q4FY26. Lower expenses and tax expenses were the major contributors to this rise in profit. The net interest income in Q4FY26 recorded a 21% YoY rise to reach Rs 387 crore. The yearly net profit of the company also saw an increase from Rs 342.61 crore in FY25 to Rs 429.15 crore in FY26, recording a 25% YoY increase.Hyundai Q4 profit falls 22.2% to Rs 1,255.6 crore amid margin pressure

The lending and D2C assets also saw a YoY increase of 22% and 39%, respectively. The gross and

net NPA of the company were 1.2% and 0.6% as of March 2026, respectively. The net worth of the company grew by 13% YoY to Rs 3,896 crore as of March 2026 alongside an increase in profitability metrics like return on assets and return on equity. While talking about the company’s future plans, Ashish Mehrotra, MD & CEO, Northern Arc Capital said, “Over the next 3-5 years, we will deepen our geographic presence, scale digital partnerships and invest in technology, data analytics and AI to drive efficiency and scale to ensure we position Northern Arc Capital to double its AUM by FY2029, sustaining 22-25% growth and deliver consistent profitability.”

Government intends to prohibit auditors from providing non-audit services

Mumbai: A key amendment in the Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 restricting auditors and audit firms from providing non-audit services after their term completes, could potentially increase the compliance cost for domestic companies by 20-30%, top auditors working with Big Four firms told FE. These auditors, while opposing the rule, said that such restrictions don’t exist anywhere else in the world, and would result in service quality deterioration as companies will have to rely on lower-tier firms to deliver crucial services like tax advisory, internal audits and consulting.

As per the Bill, which has been referred to the joint parliamentary committee (JPC) for detailed scrutiny, Section 144 of the Companies Act will be amended to include a new provision that prohibits auditors or audit firms from giving non-audit services to a company or its subsidiary for a period of three years after their term as statutory auditor has completed. In India, mandatory



rotations of statutory auditors after every five years and audit firms after every 10 years are provided under Section 139(2) of the Companies Act. “Firms will have to charge higher audit fees to compensate for the potential loss of earnings by not providing non-audit services. Large firms often rely on future advisory revenue from the same client,” said a senior official at a Big Four firm, on condition of anonymity.

A partner at another big audit firm said that the proposed cool-off period could limit the choice for companies, especially those with operations in different countries, to get their non-audit work done. “The decision will severely impact not just large audit firms, but also mid-sized and smaller firms that rely on statutory audit and ongoing advisory/non-audit work to maintain viability,” he said. In fact, industry body ASSOCHAM raised this issue and recently submitted its recommendations to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA). ASSOCHAM’s note said that if this proposal is accepted, it will reduce choice for companies, increase costs, and accelerate market concentration. “When auditors are permitted to offer certain non-audit services, they develop a deeper understanding of their client’s business, risks, and industry. This insight helps deliver higher-quality audits and supports stronger governance and compliance frameworks,” the note stated. Industry Alarm

Prior to this, industry body FICCI also

voiced its concerns and asked the MCA to omit this requirement. “With top-tier firms excluded for long periods, businesses would be forced to rely on smaller firms, which can compromise service quality in complex areas requiring global reach and deep technical knowledge. Smaller firms may not always possess the capacity, reach or specialised skill sets necessary to service such organisations, especially in areas involving complex regulatory, cross-border or sector-specific requirements,” the FICCI note said.Hyundai Q4 profit falls 22.2% to Rs 1,255.6 crore amid margin pressureSection 144 of the Companies Act restricts statutory auditors from rendering non-audit services like internal audits, actuarial, investment banking/advisory, management, outsourced financial services, and bookkeeping services to their clients. However, there are many other services they can offer to their clients and their subsidiaries, including administrative, consultancy, forensics, fact-finding, diligence services, etc.

Omax Autos, Dynacons Systems, HFCL zoom up to 104% since April

Mumbai: Shares of Omax Autos, Dynacons Systems & Solutions and HFCL hit their respective 52-week highs, as they zoomed up to 20 per cent on the BSE in Tuesday’s intra-day trade in an otherwise weak market. In comparison, the BSE Sensex was down 0.27 per cent at 77,057 at 01:18 PM.HFCL presently operates through multiple business verticals, namely Telecom, Defence and Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC), each with distinct operating characteristics, capital requirements, growth trajectories and regulatory frameworks. In view of the evolving business environment and the need for sharper strategic focus, operational efficiency and long-term value creation, the Board has considered it appropriate to evaluate various options for business and structural realignment of these verticals.

HFCL also recorded its highest-ever quarterly performance, driven by the successful execution of its strategy focused on expanding global footprints, introducing new products and augmenting capacities with marked improvement in business mix. The order book grew phenomenally to ₹21,206 crore highest-ever, as compared to ₹9,967 crore in FY25, providing strong multi-year revenue visibility, HFCL said. Since April, the market price of Omax Auto has skyrocketed 104 per cent, while HFCL surged 96 per cent and Dynacons Systems & Solutions rallied 67 per cent.On Tuesday, Omax Autos was locked at the 20 per cent upper circuit at ₹186.90 amid heavy volumes. A combined 3.05 million equity shares



representing 13 per cent of the total equity of auto ancillary company changed hands. There were pending buy orders for around 200,000 shares on the NSE and BSE. In the past two trading days, the stock has zoomed allied after the company reported a solid March 2026 quarter (Q4FY26) results with profit after tax (PAT) of ₹17.34 crore, against PAT of ₹49 lakh in Q4FY25. Revenue from operations jumped 53 per cent year-on-year at ₹174.41 crore against ₹114.20 crore in previous year quarter. Dynacons Systems & Solutions on Monday informed that the company secured a project from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the supply, installation, implementation, integration, maintenance and facilities management services for Private Cloud Infrastructure for Data Centers of RBI. The order size is ₹750.82 crore and has to be executed in 5 years. Meanwhile, the board declared an interim dividend of ₹2.5 (25 per cent) per equity share of ₹10 each, out of the

profits of the company for the financial year 2025-26. Dynacons will be responsible for end-to-end supply, design, installation, implementation, integration with the Bank’s existing data center ecosystem, and providing ongoing technical support in line with defined service levels. HFCL on Monday informed that the company along with HTL Limited, a material subsidiary of the company, secured purchase orders worth ₹84.23 crore, for the supply of optical fiber cables, from one of the leading Private Telecom Operators. These orders are to be executed by August 2026. The scope of the Private Cloud Infrastructure project includes provisioning and deployment of Servers, Unified Native Storage, SAN Switches, Physical Racks, and associated Software Licenses. The project includes support for a period of 5 years. The solution shall also be designed to enable secure integration with the Bank’s AI Cloud infrastructure.

New platform, dubbed “Preferred Play” by Nomura, aims to capture 45% EV market

Mumbai: Ather Energy is Nomura’s preferred play in the electric two-wheeler space on the back of strong growth visibility. The international brokerage house believes the current demand itself is muchhigher than supply, and increase in fuel prices could be a further catalyst. Nomura has set a target price of Rs 1,120. This implies an upside of nearly 20% from current levels. Nomura on Ather Energy: Higher target on stronger demand hopes

The launch of the new platform is something that the street is watching out for. The management pointed out that this new platform EL is very versatile and low-cost. It will be launched around the festive season and addresses the 100-125k price segment which is 45% of the market. According to Nomura, Ather Energy’s upcoming EL platform will expand TAM by 50% and also lower costs meaningfully. “Improving scale and operating leverage are likely to drive meaningful margin turnaround. Potential entry into motorcycles offers further long-term optionality,” the brokerage added. The management commentary



had pointed out that EV demand is turning more mainstream now and might increase further if petrol prices rise. According to them, the expansion in stores to 700 from 350 last year and new model Rizta also helped market share gains in middle India. However, steep cost pressure in the near term and price hikes continue to be concerns for Ather Energy. The rising costs of raw material continue to be a key factor to watch out for. Nomura highlighted that the key upside risk for Ather Energy would be the extension of the subsidy beyond July,

2026 and inclusion of Ather in the PLI scheme.Ather Energy: Capacity watch Ather is the fourth largest Electric 2-wheeler player by volume. It is a pure play EV company that sells E2Ws along with accessories and Atherstack, its in-house developed software that powers its products. Ather was founded by Tarun Sanjay Mehta and Swapnil Babanlal Jain in 2013, with a focus on product and technology development in India in order to build an Electric two-weeler ecosystem. Ather’s offerings consist of 7 variants across 2 product

lines – the Ather 450 line and Ather Rizta line. Ather sold 155,394 units commanding a volume market share of 11.4%. Ather is also developing and operating India’s largest electric two-wheeler charging network.Ather Energy’s current capacity is 35,000 vehicles per month and the new plant is expected to add 42,000 per month by end of FY27. The new plant’s total capacity is projected to be 1 million/year boosting the two-wheeler maker’s future prospects. Nomura also expects the network to expand steadily.

According to the US’s new counterterrorism policy, migration has turned Europe into a terrorist “incubator”



Europe: In a new counterterrorism plan released on Wednesday, the Trump administration accused Europe of becoming a “incubator” for terrorism fueled by mass migration.As Trump’s conservative government intensifies its political attacks on rivals, the approach also focuses on eliminating “violent left-wing extremists,” including “radically pro-transgender” organizations.Additionally, it centers counterterrorism activities around drug cartels in the Americas. However, some of its harshest rhetoric is reserved for Europe, which is home to many US allies who will be concerned to see their continent targeted by the Trump administration once more.Everyone can see that organized adversarial

organizations take advantage of free borders and associated globalist ideologies. The strategy said that terrorism is certain to increase as these foreign cultures expand and as long as existing European policies continue.The strategy, headed by counterterrorism coordinator Sebastian Gorka, stated, “Europe must act now and halt its willful decline as the birthplace of Western culture and values.” The report said that European nations remained the US’s “preeminent and long-term counterterrorism partners”, but stated: “The world is safer when Europe is strong, but Europe is greatly threatened and is both a terror target and an incubator of terror threats.”The fresh criticism of Europe comes just

months after Trump’s new national security strategy said the continent faced “civilizational erasure” due to immigration.Trump has also recently lashed out at European Nato allies for failing to help with his war on Iran.Trump’s administration has moved aggressively to reshape the western hemisphere region with the ouster of Nicolás Maduro as Venezuela’s president, dozens of US military strikes on alleged drug boats operated by cartels and new pressure on the communist government of Cuba.

The administration’s campaign of blowing up alleged drug-trafficking vessels in Latin American waters has persisted since early September and killed at least 191 people in total.

At the same time, Trump has sought to press regional leaders to work more closely with the US to target cartels and take military action themselves against drug traffickers and transnational gangs that he says pose an “unacceptable threat” to the hemisphere’s national security.Gorka said administration officials would meet with allies later this week to discuss how they can bolster their counter-terrorism strategies.“As the president made very clear, we will measure your seriousness as a partner and ally by how much you bring to the table,” he told reporters, adding that the US expects “more” from its partners.Left-wing groups remain a major preoccupation for the Republican president’s administration, and the strategy targets what it calls “violent Left-Wing Extremists, including Anarchists and Anti-Fascists.”It says US counter-terrorism efforts will “prioritize the rapid identification and neutralization of violent secular political groups whose ideology is anti-American, radically pro-transgender, and anarchist.”Since his return to power last year, Trump has demonised any recognition of gender diversity and transgender people.He regularly boasts about how his administration has banned transwoman from women’s sports and shortly after his inauguration signed an executive order proclaiming that there are only two genders.

Trump declares the Strait of Hormuz “open to all” if Iran approves the agreement, which lowers oil prices



Iran: As Donald Trump said that the conflict with Iran would cease and the Strait of Hormuz would be “open to all” if Tehran reached an agreement with Washington, oil prices dropped and stock markets increased.“Assuming Iran agrees to give what has been agreed to, which is, perhaps, a big assumption, the already legendary Epic Fury will be at an end, and the highly effective Blockade will allow the Hormuz Strait to be OPEN TO ALL, including Iran,” the US president wrote on social media.But he also said that “the bombing starts” and “it will be, sadly, at a much higher level and intensity than it was before” if Iran did not reach an agreement. It came after the president said he would briefly pause his “Project Freedom” operation escorting ships through the strait, which carries about a fifth of the world’s oil supplies but has been blockaded by Iran since late February, triggering a global energy crisis. Trump said he was stopping the operation for “a

short period” so he could finalise a deal with Tehran but added that his blockade of Iranian ports would remain in place. According to official media, the Revolutionary Guards Navy declared on Wednesday that new protocols and an end to US threats will guarantee safe passage in the strait. It was Iran’s initial response to the US halting activities meant to assist ships that were stuck in the strait. Brent crude oil, which had increased as much as 6% earlier this week following the most recent assaults in the Middle East, initially fell 11% to as low as \$97 (£71) per barrel as a result of the news. It dropped below \$100 for the first time since April 22.While airline stocks increased due to better prospects for foreign travel, wholesale gas prices also decreased, with the British June contract falling 6.3% to 107.8p per therm. The crude price had been falling on Wednesday morning, and accelerated after a report by the Axios news site that the White House believed it was get-

ting close to agreeing a one-page memorandum of understanding to end the war with Iran. It said the two sides were ready to set a framework for more detailed nuclear talks, citing four sources including two US officials.However, oil pared its losses later in the day, trading down 7.3% at \$101.83 a barrel as Iran said it was an “American wishlist [and] not a reality”.The Guards’ statement on the strait did not specify what the new procedures entailed and thanked ship-owners and captains for respecting Iranian regulations when moving through the waterway.The oil price had hit \$126 a barrel last week, its highest level since 2022, after Trump said the US blockade of Iranian ports could last for months and peace talks remained stalled.European stock markets rallied on Wednesday. The UK’s FTSE 100 index rose 2%, and France’s Cac 40 was up 3% and Germany’s Dax rose by 2.1%.MSCI’s All-Country World Index rose 1.6% to a new record alongside similar milestones for its emerging markets benchmark and its broadest index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan, which rose by 2.5%. The rally was led by a 6.6% surge in South Korea’s Kospi, which cleared the 7,000 mark for the first time. As the Seoul market reopened after a holiday, Samsung Electronics increased by 14.8%, topping a \$1tn market value, as it

rode the boom in AI stocks. On Wall Street, the S&P 500 – which hit a new record on Tuesday – rose nearly 1.5%.On the bond market, UK long-term gilt yields decreased slightly after reaching their highest level since 1998 on Tuesday. The yield on 30-year gilts – which is the effective interest rate on the UK government’s long-term borrowing – reduced by about 9 basis points to 5.63%.Gold, which is traditionally seen as a safe haven asset, rose by 3% to \$4,695 an ounce.Trump’s latest comments came as the French shipping group CMA CGM said one of its ships, the San Antonio, had been the target of an attack while crossing the strait of Hormuz.The attack, which occurred on Tuesday, had injured crew members and damaged the vessel, the company said, adding it was “closely monitoring the situation and remains fully mobilised alongside the crew”.The chief investment strategist at Wealth Club, Susannah Streeter, said: “A dam of tension has eased with relief flooding into financial markets, amid hopes that hostilities will cease in the Middle East, with the Trump administration making conciliatory moves.“Relief is starting to seep into the bond markets, with UK gilt yields easing off amid hopes that inflation might not head quite as high if a longer-term resolution can be negotiated.”

Spain says the ship can dock after three people were evacuated from the hantavirus-affected ship

London: Three passengers on a cruise ship were medically evacuated due to probable hantavirus.Among them is a British guy who worked as an excursion guide aboard the MV Hondius. He was identified as 56-year-old Martin Anstee on Wednesday night.“I’m doing OK,” he said to Sky News. I don’t feel too horrible. Numerous testing still to be completed. I’m not sure how long I’ll be in the hospital. Right now, I’m alone. According to the Telegraph, Anstee was taken off the ship together with a 65-year-old German passenger and a 41-year-old Dutch colleague who served

as the ship’s physician.According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the three were removed off the cruise ship flying the Dutch flag so they could go to the Netherlands.The Briton had previously been in serious condition, but Spanish health officials said that his condition was now more stable.Five of the eight cases, according to the WHO, have been confirmed. The evacuation means the ship, with close to 150 people onboard, can now continue on its three-day journey to the Canary Islands after Spanish authorities gave permission for the vessel to dock.

A significant labor shakeup will push gas firms to set aside local supplies

Australian: In order to stabilize supply and lower costs for homes and businesses on the east coast, gas firms will be required to set aside 20% of their exports for domestic consumption.As part of a larger revision of the regulations governing the gas industry, the federal government unveiled the reservation scheme’s design on Thursday.The three major Queensland-based gas exporters would be required by the policy, which will go into effect on July 1, 2027, to set aside 20% of their export volumes for consumers in the east coast market. The companies would need to prove to the federal resources minister that their domestic supply obligations have been met to secure a permit to sell to the overseas spot market. The 20% mandate sits in the middle of the 15%-25% range that the government canvassed with industry after announcing its commitment to a gas reservation on 22 December.It will not apply to contracts signed before that date.The climate change and energy minister, Chris Bowen, said the legislative requirement would deliver a “modest oversupply” of gas into the east coast, helping to avert forecast shortages and put “down-



ward pressure” on prices.The start of LNG exports out of the east coast a decade ago linked the domestic market to the international market, leading to a tripling of prices and leaving Australian customers exposed to overseas shocks – such as Russia’s war in Ukraine. “Our gas market will no longer be hostage to international markets,” said the resources minister, Madeleine King.King announced wider changes to gas market rules, including removing the so-called “gas trigger” that can be used to force

exporters to preserve supplies for domestic use.The interventions come as the federal government resists mounting pressure to introduce a 25% tax on gas export revenue.The prime minister, Anthony Albanese, has ruled out a new tax on existing contracts in next week’s federal budget, in part to avoid a backlash from Asian trading partners that Australia is relying on for fuel amid the global oil shock.A parliamentary inquiry examining options for a new gas tax is due to table its final report on Thursday.

The governing royal family of the United Arab Emirates receives more than €71 million in EU farming subsidies



Europe: It might be shown that the governing royal family of the United Arab Emirates is receiving tens of millions in EU subsidies to cultivate crops for the Gulf.Subsidiaries under the Al Nahyans’ control received almost €71 million (£61 million) in six years for farms they held in Romania, Italy, and Spain, according to a cross-border research conducted by DeSmog and shared with the Guardian. With an estimated net worth of around \$320 billion (£235 billion), mostly from the Emirates’ enormous oil reserves, the Al Nahyan family is the second richest in the world.A third of the EU’s total budget is made up of subsidies under the common agricultural policy (Cap), which distributes over €54 billion annually to farmers and rural communities throughout the union. But an unknown proportion of this ends up in the hands of foreign investors – including those controlled by autocratic states.DeSmog, in partnership with Spain’s El Diario and Romanian news outlet G4Media, reviewed data for thousands of Cap beneficiaries between 2019 and 2024, tracing 110 European subsidy payments to a network of companies and subsidiaries controlled by the UAE’s Al Nahyan family and one of its sovereign wealth funds, ADQ.The largest of these payments came through the Romanian agricultural company Agricoast, which owns the EU’s single largest farm, measuring 57,000 hectares (141,000 acres), five times the size of Paris.EU farm subsidies disproportionately benefit large landowners – a 2024 Guardian investigation found that just 17 billionaires received more than €3bn between 2018 and 2021. In 2024 alone, Agricoast received €10.5m in direct payments – more than 1,600 times the amount collected by the average EU farm. Campaigners

have expressed alarm that the UAE, which has been widely condemned for jailing activists, criminalising homosexuality and multiple allegations of torture – repeatedly denied by the UAE – benefits from regular EU farm payouts.The Al Nahyans and companies named in this article did not respond to several requests for comment. ADQ declined to comment.The findings come as policymakers debate the future of the subsidy scheme. In July 2025, the European Commission published a proposal for the next round of Cap payments for 2028 to 2034, which could cap land-based payments to €100,000 per farmer each year.A spokesperson for the European Commission said it believed income support through Cap payments “should be better targeted including by reducing and capping payments for the bigger farms”, and is calling on the European parliament and Council to support its proposed changes to the subsidy scheme.“The Cap is not helping EU farmers; it continues to enrich the wealthiest landowners,” said Faustine Bas-Defosse, director for nature, health and environment at the advocacy group the European Environment Bureau. “And now, even worse, it is fuelling autocratic regimes.”The Al Nahyans are the most powerful monarchy in the AE, which is made up of seven federated states, each with its own royal family. At the helm is Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, leader of Abu Dhabi and president of the UAE.In just over 15 years, the Emirati dynasty has established itself as a major global agricultural player, acquiring swathes of land and agribusiness companies across Africa, South America and Europe. The UAE now controls about 960,000 hectares of farmland worldwide. This expansion forms part of the Emirates’ wider food security strategy,

aimed at securing supplies for a country where high temperatures, water scarcity and sandy soil make growing crops a challenge. The UAE currently imports up to 90% of its food.The investigation found that in the EU, the expansion has been channelled through three main companies in Spain, Italy and Romania.Agricoast, Romania’s vast farm, was bought by the Al Nahyans in 2018 for an estimated €230m through Al Dahra, the UAE agribusiness group. Al Dahra was founded by the president’s brother, Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, before Abu Dhabi’s sovereign wealth fund, ADQ, bought 50% of the company in 2020.No information on Al Dahra’s current ownership structure is publicly available, but DeSmog understands it remains linked to individuals on the board, which is chaired by Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed, and his son, Sheikh Zayed bin Hamdan Al Nahyan, who is married to the UAE president’s daughter.Since 2012, Al Dahra has also acquired multiple farm companies in Spain, responsible for more than 8,000 hectares of land. Together, these received more than €5m in Cap subsidies between 2015 and 2024, DeSmog found. The UAE’s Spanish and Romanian farms both cultivate alfalfa and other crops for animal feed, with the majority of produce designed for export, including to the Gulf.

Al Dahra holds a long-term contract with the UAE government to supply animal feed for the country, partly used for its rapidly growing dairy sector. In 2022, ADQ also bought Unifrutti, a fresh fruit producer with an estimated worth of \$830m. According to DeSmog’s analysis, Unifrutti’s Italian farms received at least €186,000 in Cap subsidies in the three years after the sale. The size of payouts to the UAE reflects significant is-

ues with the way Cap subsidies are calculated, which are largely based on the area of land farmed. The European Commission’s proposal to cap direct payments would impact only a fraction (0.5%) of the EU’s top landowners, who now capture 16% of the entire Cap budget.The UAE’s receipt of EU subsidies is “a scandal hiding in plain sight”, said Thomas Waitz, an Austrian Green party MEP and party coordinator for the agriculture committee.“Ninety-nine percent of real European farmers receive less than €100,000 in subsidies. That money was never meant for fossil fuel dynasties, it’s meant to strengthen real European farmers.”The subsidised farms make up just one strand of Al Dahra and ADQ’s agricultural push in Europe – an expansion which includes grain mills in Greece and Bulgaria, as well as massive dairy farms in Serbia.Despite technically being state-owned, ADQ is closely controlled by the UAE’s ruling royal family, experts say.“There is no clear boundary between the state and family coffers,” Marc Valeri, associate professor in political economy of the Middle East at Exeter University, said. “This is a very authoritarian and repressive regime, so the difference between state budgets and family budgets is completely blurred.”The UAE has some of the largest sovereign assets in the world – as of 2025 its seven wealth funds hold almost \$2.5tn.

These assets are largely managed by close relatives of the president. Between 2023 and January 2026, ADQ was chaired by Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the president’s brother and the country’s national security adviser.Since January, ADQ has become part of Abu Dhabi’s newest sovereign wealth fund, L’imad Holding, chaired by the crown prince, Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the president’s eldest son and likely successor.The subsidies traced by DeSmog may provide just a snapshot of the total EU payments benefiting Gulf royals, due to patchy official data and a lack of transparency by UAE corporations.All EU countries are required to publish information on the farms and farm owners receiving Cap subsidies.However, the entries only name the direct recipient, making it difficult or sometimes impossible to identify the ultimate owners and investors benefiting from the funds.

‘A kaleidoscope of colour and life’: readers’ favourite UK spring days out

Last April, I based myself in Oban and took my teenagers puffin-watching at Lunga, off Mull, in the Treshnish Isles, with an organised tour (Staffa Tours) by ferry and foot. It was a real delight. The guides were brilliant and helpful, especially with my mobility issues, and we were surprised and amazed at how tame and friendly the puffins were – allowing us to get great views of their faces from as near as 5ft or so. Next spring, we are going again as this is the best time to see them arriving in their thousands.

Stunning architecture in the heart of Surrey

Grade I-listed Claremont Landscape Garden near Esher is great to visit in spring. But time your trip there right and you can also visit a National Trust gem just half a mile away: the Homewood, architect Patrick Gwynne’s 1930s modernist villa and accompanying woodland garden (for pre-booked guided tours only on specific Fridays and Saturdays, April-October). The house itself is stunning, with light pouring through the sitting room’s floor to ceiling windows, but on a sunny spring day the garden, complete with rhododendron tunnel, bamboo thicket, water gardens and stepping stones, proves a tranquil spot in which to linger and view the Le Corbusier-inspired abode.

Sheffield’s Tudor turret

One of our favourite days out as a family in spring is to explore the beautiful Sheffield Manor Lodge. There is a wealth of history to explore in the Turret – my young daughter loves telling everyone who’ll listen that Mary, Queen of Scots was detained here. There are also children’s trails, outdoor games and craft sessions – we’ve made stained glass kites, learned about a frog’s life cycle, had Easter egg hunts and completed outdoor yoga trails. On a warm spring afternoon, it is a stunning place – with a lavender maze, apothecary gardens, wildflower meadows and the amazing rhubarb shed cafe.

Artistic treasure hunt on the North York Moors

This magical mystery tour combines fresh air, beautiful, wild landscapes and art. The

project is called Hanging Stones by Andy Goldsworthy, and it’s set in Rosedale. Several buildings that were in varying states of disrepair have been rebuilt as artworks and are connected by a six-mile walk encompassing Northdale, near Rosedale Abbey. You have to book a slot to find out where the key is, which you will pick up, together with a map, to get started. It’s the treasure hunt style that will get even the youngest in the group excited about the walk, allowing the adults to do something they wouldn’t otherwise dream of doing with children: admiring art and going for a decent walk. The cost is £10 per adult, while students and under-18s go free.

Dazzling azaleas in Gloucestershire

I always take my family to Westonbirt Arboretum near Tetbury in spring to celebrate the beautiful spectacle of nature exploding into a kaleidoscope of colour and life. The Arboretum is a



across the globe, it serves as a stunningly beautiful living gallery. In spring, the arboretum dazzles with azaleas and rhododendrons bursting into brilliant shades of white, red and pink. My teenagers especially enjoy exploring the treetop walkway and a quiet woodland trails – and a treat of tea and cake at the well-positioned cafe at the end of it all.

Wild garlic and lily ponds in Pembrokeshire

For a springtime lift, head to Bosherton Lakes set in three limestone valleys with spectacular displays of lilies. Start in ancient woodlands, where there’s a shimmering, scented carpet of white wild garlic. It feels like a fairytale. Emerge at the serene lily ponds, where you might spot an otter or a heron, then follow the path to Broad Haven South. The moment you hit the dunes and see the beach open up is one of the finest

coastal views in the UK. Finish with tea and cake at the nearby Stackpole Walled Gardens; it’s run by Mencap, so your pit stop supports a fantastic cause while you soak up the Pembrokeshire sunshine.

Kites fluttering in the Chiltern skies

My favourite UK spring activity is flying kites with my family in the Dunstable Downs. The open hills and steady breeze make it the perfect spot to let our kites dance in the sky. There’s something really joyful about watching the colours flutter along with other kite-flyers. After some fun, we spread out a picnic blanket and enjoy homemade treats while soaking up the sunshine and taking in the beautiful views. It’s such a simple but special way to spend a bright spring day together outdoors.

A memorable walk in the Cotswolds

The circular walk from Bourton-on-the Water to the Upper and Lower Slaughters provides a buffet of springtime goodness, from trees in blossom and daffodils to wildflowers and nesting swans. Oh, and don’t worry, the Slaughters aren’t as morbid as they sound. They take their name from the Old English word slohtre, meaning “muddy place”, suggesting suitable footwear is needed. While Bourton-on-the-Water

remains a tourist hotspot – the perfect example of an idyllic Cotswolds village – the walk towards the Slaughters via the Windrush Way and the Gloucestershire Way makes for a calming amble soundtrack by rivers and birdsong.

Luscious blooms and afternoon tea in Devon

Each spring, my family makes a pilgrimage to Killerton gardens in south Devon to see the glory of magnolia blossom on the south-facing slopes of Dolbury Hill, known locally as the Clump. The luscious blooms of pinks and ivory are the main attraction. It’s wonderful to see the children enjoy the release of running on the first-cut lawn and to watch their grandparents taking in the sight of the sea of daffodils. After a wet winter of grey skies, it’s also wonderful to have tea outside the house, basking in the sunshine.

A Northumberland beach stroll

Can anything beat standing on a beach getting a lungful of fresh sea air? I don’t care if I’m still having to wrap up in layers with a woolly hat, of summer. Beadnell beach in Northumberland is a great place for a leisurely wander, with cracking views and lots of dog-friendly places to refuel in the village. The breakfasts at the Courtyard Cafe have fuelled many a walk along the beach.

breath-taking place, especially under a sunny sky. The well-marked paths mean you can easily wander through its 245 hectares (600

acres) and enjoy the fresh air filled with the delicate scent of blooming cherry blossoms.

With more than 15,000 specimens and 2,500 species of trees and shrubs from

‘It feels like an independent republic’: Madrid’s new arty barrio of Carabanchel

Madrid’s current boomtown dynamics are driving the city centre way upmarket, pushing the average punter to outer barrios in search of cheaper rent. As seen in New York and elsewhere, the creative class is moving too – crossing the River Manzanares to open studios in the former factories and metalworks of Carabanchel. Now the city’s most populous district, this used to be a separate municipality, which was annexed to the capital in 1948 and built up into canyons of high-rise flats to house the postwar influx from the provinces, and later from Latin America. Today, old and new Madrid coexist here in a certain harmony: coffee

roasters and bistros slot in beside weathered blue-collar tapas bars and Colombian or Peruvian cantinas, but the neighbourhood still feels a bit like an independent republic. Long-term residents roll their eyes at claims made for the area’s coolness, and some express pride, or resistance, through a popular T-shirt slogan: “This is not Soho. This is Carabanchel.”

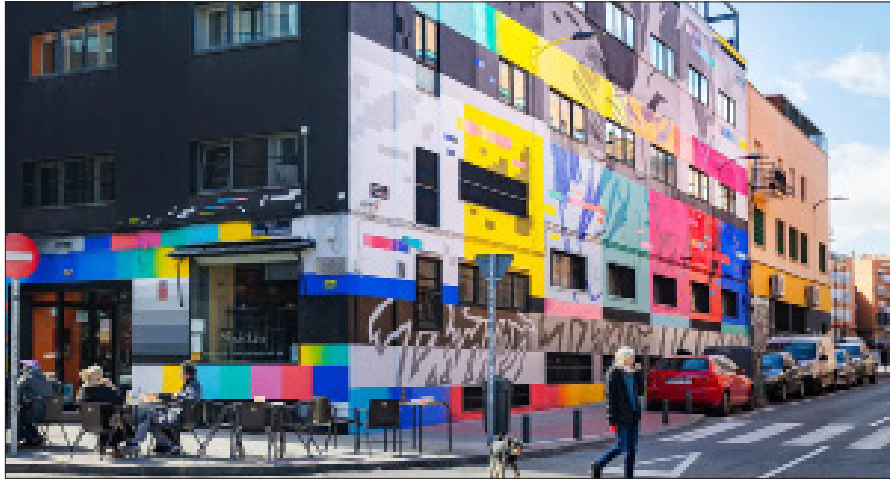
Where to eat and drink

The district’s focal point is La Capa, a defunct 1960s cafe revived by three local men, who gave the original interior a good scrub and upgraded the kitchen to serve exemplary dishes such as chicken escalope with red pepper confit and premium wines

from small bodegas, many sold at cost price. Three actors have repurposed an old corner shop as a small, bright bar called Merinas. The walls are hung with caricatures of famous film directors, the palm-shaded patio creates a beach-like feel in a landlocked city, and the judicious menu runs to guest wines, charcuterie boards and spectacular sandwiches with fillings like cured tuna and payoyo cheese on organic sourdough rolls. Cultural experiences Sabrina Amrani recalls the opening night of her new Carabanchel gallery in 2019, when one guest almost cried while telling her that she had changed the map of Madrid by bringing art

across the river. “Perhaps we helped open a door,” she says, “but many artists were based here before we arrived, and they generated a different kind of energy in the neighbourhood.”

While Amrani converted a car workshop into a showroom for work by international talents such as Alexandra Karakashian, native street artist Sfir made space for more than 200 painters, muralists and sculptors in a nearby underground garage now called 95 Gallery. Carabanchel has its own punky, DIY music scene, too, packed around a cluster of low-cost recording studios and rehearsal rooms, with raucous gigs at Gruta 77, battles of the bands at



Madreams, and after-hours DJ sets at industrial complex turned arts hub CasaBanchel.

Where to shop

At Planeta Ganga, retired film producer Maria Arel-lano draws on her contacts

in wardrobe departments to source and sell outfits seen in Spanish films and TV shows such as Elite. Prices are surprisingly low, and a big cut goes to an orthopaedic charity for kids (Arellano’s daughter

was born with mobility issues).

Local rockabillys buy their Harrington jackets and boogie shoes at specialist boutique Rocket, and the barrio’s first dedicated bottle shop for nat-

ural wines also doubles as a tiny late-night hangout, Luz Verde.

Don’t miss

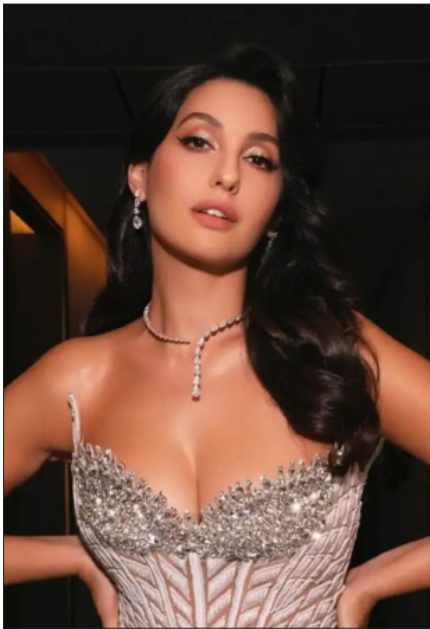
Far removed from the city’s historic core, Carabanchel has its own architectural legacy, from the modernist turrets and chalets of an early 20th-century writers’ colony, the Colonia de la Prensa, to the medieval brickwork hermitage of Santa Maria La Antigua – one of the oldest buildings in Madrid.

Where to stay

Cielo Studios offers stylish modern guest apartments from €80, with a rooftop garden and lounge overlooking the surrounding block of bars and galleries.

Nora Fatehi will perform at the 2026 FIFA World Cup opening ceremony in Canada

Mumbai: Actor Nora Fatehi, who is well-known for her dancing skills, is getting ready to make another spectacular appearance at FIFA. The actor-performer will return to the international stage for a performance at the 2026 FIFA World Cup opening ceremony in Canada. Nora will sing and perform in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Opening Ceremony on June 12 at BMO Field in Toronto, Canada, it was announced on Saturday. With the announcement, Nora becomes part of a worldwide lineup that also includes Michael Bublé, Sanjoy, Vegedream, Elyanna, Jessie Reyez, Alanis Morissette, Alessia Cara, and William Prince. Global music icons like Anitta, Future, Katy Perry, Lisa, Rema, and Tyla are part of the USA opening ceremony list. Nora recently performed at the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, expressing her gratitude on Instagram. She shared a clip from the closing ceremony, reflecting on her journey from a high school stage to the World Cup stadium, calling it a “most beautiful epic moment” in her career. The next FIFA World Cup in 2026 will feature three opening ceremonies across the USA, Mexico, and Canada, starting at the Mexico City Stadium before the first match. In the meantime, Nora was invited to testify before the National Commission for Women (NCW) earlier this week due to the alleged indecent depiction of women in the movie song Sarke Chunar. After appearing before the Commission, Nora spoke to the outside media and disclosed that she had sent in a formal apology. The actor went on to say that she is aware of the obligations that come with being an artist and public figure. “I apologized when I appeared before the Commission. I didn’t mean to insult anyone; it was just a circumstance



I found myself in, but as an artist, I must take responsibility. In the video, Nora can be heard saying, “I definitely apologized; we have done everything in writing.” “They have been so kind and helpful,” she continued. Giving back to society is crucial for us. After this, I made the decision that we should support the education of a few orphan girls. The song’s purportedly sexually explicit lyrics caused popular controversy when the Hindi version was posted on YouTube on March 15. Sanjay Dutt and Nora Fatehi are featured in the song. The Hindi version was taken down from YouTube by the creators in response to criticism, but it kept making the rounds on other sites. Additionally, the director, singer, and lyricist had apologized.

Jaideep Ahalwat gets Trapped in a Murky Swamp in Daldalll’s First Poster

Mumbai: Suresh Triveni is the director of actor Jaideep Ahlawat’s upcoming movie, Daldalll. The movie’s first look poster has been released by the actor. Setting the tone for the endeavor, Jaideep Ahalwat posted the poster of himself stuck in the swamp on his Instagram account. The project’s cast and release date have not yet been disclosed. Jaideep wrote, “Iss Daldal mein tum sab bhi phasoge!” as he shared the poster. The actor from “Paatal Lok” will also appear in the next Hindi movie “Drishyam 3,” which is scheduled to hit theaters on October 2, 2026. Ajay Devgn plays the main part in it.



Abhishek Pathak is the director of the movie. Vijay Salgaonkar, portrayed masterfully by Ajay Devgn, is a straightforward, middle-class man who resists all hardships with brains, willpower, and an unwavering love for his family rather than using violence. Vijay Salgaonkar became a

legendary on-screen father by using his emotional fortitude and astute reasoning to overcome any hardship. The film is being shot in several different cities and locations, according to the producers. The plot will develop within the preexisting “Drishyam” timeline, revealing fresh and surprising developments in the Salgaonkar family’s lives. Along with other well-known performers, the original ensemble cast—which included Ajay Devgn, Tabu, Shriya Saran, and Rajat Kapoor—will play their parts again. As the story progresses, the creators have alluded to suspenseful drama.

In comparison to male Bollywood leads, Kriti Sanon discusses negotiating fees



Mumbai: In 2014, Kriti Sanon made her cinematic debut in Telugu with the psychological thriller 1: Nenokkadine. The same year, she made her Bollywood debut with Tiger Shroff in Heropanti. In addition to being one of the best actors of this generation, she is now a prosperous producer and entrepreneur. She recently talked about whether or not she has experienced gender parity in Bollywood. “There has been some struggle around money,” Kriti Sanon said. Even though the male actor receives a sizable portion of the budget, producers frequently negotiate a lower cost for the female lead when they must take shortcuts.

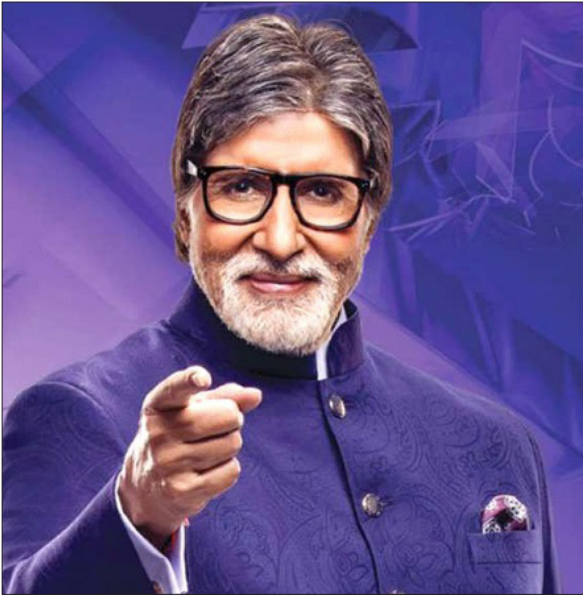
“We have to keep shaking things up to move towards equality because patriarchy is still deeply ingrained in the indus-

try,” she went on. It manifests itself in the tiniest ways as well. For example, on a movie set, there is frequently a propensity to see whether the female actress is prepared first so that the male actor doesn’t have to wait. Though subconscious, it must be altered. “I’ve always made an effort to advocate for myself, although it was challenging to do so early in my career. Little things like a male co-star who wasn’t a senior getting a better car are what I recall. Naturally, being treated equally was more important than the car. Even though the majority of directors and producers nowadays are progressive, these prejudices still persist,” the actress continued. Kriti Sanon mentioned Mimi and how it “shattered some notions” that people had

about her when discussing the highs and lows she had faced in her career. In addition to winning the National Award for Best Actress, she conveyed her appreciation for the affection she has gotten for the movie. “The biggest was Mimi and the love it received because it was the first project that I took on,” Kriti Sanon stated. The movie was supposed to be released in theaters, but it ended up being streamed online during the highly unpredictable Covid-19 epidemic. The National Award [for Best Actress in a Leading Role] was one of the pinnacles of my career, and it received a lot of affection.” The actress talked about experiencing intense dissatisfaction before to Mimi in order to address the low points. “You have to deal with a lot of uncertainty when you don’t have a background in film. I’ve gradually grown as a result of taking chances and making more deliberate decisions. Nothing has been given to me; I have earned every chance,” she continued. Together with Rashmika Mandanna and Shahid Kapoor, Kriti Sanon is now preparing for the release of Homi Adajania’s Cocktail 2. There has been a lot of talk about the first song, Jab Talak, and the look reveals. In 2012, Homi Adajania also directed Cocktail, starring Diana Penty, Deepika Padukone, and Saif Ali Khan. The movie is scheduled for release on June 19, 2026.

Spending time with friends, family, or social media can be distracting, according to Amitabh Bachchan

Mumbai: Amitabh Bachchan frequently posts updates on his everyday life, thoughts on life and work, friends, and his career on his Tumblr account. With a career spanning more than 50 years in Indian film, the seasoned actor has been a prolific performer. In his most recent post, Amitabh shared some advice he had read about Steve Jobs, highlighting the significance of “focus” in life. He started his message by saying, “Read some most inspiring words on life and work ethics. two words.. Signal and Noise.. signal as in focus.” “When you focus, the only thing that gets you going is what needs to be done,” he continued. Not tomorrow, not in a few days, not at any particular time—DO IT NOW! The term “noise” refers to all other social relevance



attractions, media scrolling, spending more time with friends or family, and other activities that divert attention. Thus, you can choose between Focus, Signal, or Noise. Focus—a truly re-

markable instruction from Steve Jobs—is the source of the fruits. Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple and a visionary innovator, made a lasting impact on the globe by encouraging millions of individuals to think creati-

vely and persistently. Amitabh talked extensively last month on the social media culture and how a lot of rumors are spreading every day. The excerpt reflects on the rapid transformation of knowledge acquisition, emphasizing that information is now accessible at the touch of a button, facilitated by the internet. The speaker contrasts this modern immediacy with the reflective processes of the past, where deeper thinking (“the ‘think button’ of the cerebrum”) was more prevalent. He notes that this evolution compels individuals to adopt new methods while dismissing earlier, more traditional practices. The narrative acknowledges the nostalgia associated with past times and how those who experienced them perceive current changes. In highlight-

ing the importance of ‘times,’ the speaker asserts that while the present generation engages with contemporary advancements, it parallels the experiences of previous generations as they, too, confronted innovations during their formative years. The commentary serves to bridge generational perspectives, illustrating how modern challenges echo those faced in earlier eras. Regarding his career, Amitabh last appeared in Kalki in the year 2898 AD. Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, and Kamal Haasan played major parts in the Nag Ashwin-directed movie. Big B captivated hearts with his depiction of Ashwatthama in the science fiction thriller, which went on to become a huge hit and earn over ₹1000 crore globally. He is now filming the movie’s sequel.

The Great Grand Superhero, starring Jackie Shroff, will be released on May 29

Mumbai: The Great Grand Superhero, starring veteran actor Jackie Shroff, has a release date. The movie, which is supported by Amdavad Films and Zee Studios, is scheduled to open in theaters on May 29, 2026. Fans were thrilled when the film’s teaser was released by the producers a month ago. In the universe depicted in the teaser, a “child’s imagination takes the grandfather-grandson relationship to another level with a unique thrill of aliens.” Jackie Shroff, in a part that feels incredibly warm and delightfully new, is at its center. In a news release, Jackie expressed her excitement about the initiative, saying, “With The Great Grand Superhero, we’re fulfilling every child’s dream.” You are a superhero in and of

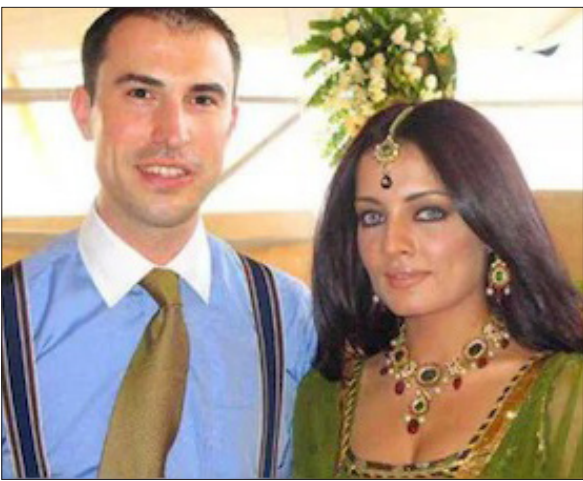


itself if your spirit remains youthful and your spine remains strong until you are ninety. The aspirations of children should always come first. Prateik Smita Patil, Bhagyashree Dasani, Sharat Saxena, Mihir Godbole, Durgesh Kumar, Saharsh Shukla, Shivansh Chorge, and Kumar Sau-

rabh are among the ensemble cast members of Manish Saini’s film. Jackie Shroff, meantime, recently traveled to Delhi to attend the 5th National Wheelchair Cricket Championship 2026 Open in Greater Noida. I would advise everyone to be boundaas in life. These athletes have been performing incredibly

well. “I’m in awe of these players’ passion,” Jackie Shroff remarked. “I want to come here every year and support these players,” he said, emphasizing the need for more support for para-sports. I want sponsors to back them as well. “Big businesses ought to come and support them,” he continued.

After Peter Haag, Celina Jaitley’s husband, refuses to cooperate, a FIR is filed against him



Mumbai: Celina Jaitley, a Bollywood actress, lodged a complaint against her Austrian spouse, Peter Haag. A FIR has been filed by the Mumbai police under several provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. Peter was also subject to a Look Out Circular (LOC) for allegedly failing to cooperate with the inquiry. According to reports, there are accusations of cruelty, physical assault, criminal intimidation, and persistent harassment against Celina’s husband, Peter. After he allegedly refused to comply

with the inquiry, the authorities exacerbated the situation and issued a LOC against him. On Friday, the Versova Police Station received the FIR. Following Celina’s complaint, Peter is now facing criminal charges in addition to the existing case under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. Sections 85, 115(2), 351(2), and 352 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 have been used to register the FIR. In 2010, Celina wed Peter, an Austrian hotelier and businessman; in 2012, they

welcomed twin sons into their family. In 2017, she gave birth to a second set of twins, however one of them passed away from a heart problem. Celina sued Peter under the Domestic Violence Act in November 2025, claiming that he had continuously abused her at home. The news agency claims that Celina requested ₹50 crore in compensation in addition to ₹10 lakh per month in maintenance. According to the appeal, Peter has prevented her from seeing their kids, who are presently in his care in Austria. Additionally, she has requested a court order compelling him to grant her unrestricted phone and virtual access to their children, Viraj, Winston, and Arthur. Celina posted a heartfelt video on Instagram on Wednesday after visiting her late son’s grave in Austria. She stated in the post that her sons had been taken to a “undisclosed location” and that she was not permitted to see them. In the footage, the star sobbed at her son’s grave.

Diljit Dosanjh rejects calls to become Punjab politics’ new face

Mumbai: Actor-musician Diljit Dosanjh has stated that he prefers entertainment to politics, even if he may discuss Punjab wherever he goes. Diljit politely said “never” in response to a request to be the “new face” of Punjabi politics. This follows his recent remarks regarding Punjab’s history on Jimmy Fallon’s show and his criticism of pro-Khalistani demonstrators at a concert. “Can Diljit Dosanjh be the new political face of Punjab?” was the title of an article published in the Punjabi Tribune. It states that a number of civil society

leaders, including persons from different backgrounds and retired military, publicly urged Diljit to pursue a career in politics. According to reports, the group headed by former bureaucrat SS Boparai wants the actor-musician to play the lead because he never asked for it. In response to the message, Diljit stated that he is happier acting and singing and rejected the appeal. “Kadey v. Nhi..Mera Kam Entertainment Karna,” he wrote. (Never. I work in entertainment, and I’m really content in my line of work. Thank you very much. A fan commented,

“I’m grateful! Chasing politics is a waste of your life’s purpose. In that filthy area, you will forget yourself. “Good reply,” wrote someone else. Diljit most recently starred in the Hindi movie Border 2 this year and the Punjabi movie Sardaar Ji 3 in 2025. Vedang Raina, Sharvari Wagh, and Naseeruddin Shah are his co-stars in Intiaz Ali’s Main Vaapas Aaunga. With songs from his 2025 album, Diljit has been performing extensively for his Aura Tour. The actor-musician recently made an appearance on The Tonight Show

with Jimmy Fallon. Speaking about Canada’s past, Indians were prohibited from entering the nation. “That stadium we did in Vancouver...like 1914, our people came to Canada for the first time, and they didn’t allow us to come and go,” he remarked. And the Guru Nanak Jahaz Komagata Maru event is within two kilometers from that stadium. You denied us access to the stadium, which has 55,000 spectators and is only two kilometers away, so it’s a big deal for us now. And here we are, dude. That’s why it’s so fantastic.

In The Last Tenant, Irrfan’s presence illuminates a ghost story

Mumbai: An unreleased movie featuring Irrfan has quietly surfaced on YouTube, much like a surprise gift. It is quite something for a lot of the actor’s admirers, including myself. The actor’s passing in 2020 created a unique hole in Hindi cinema. At a time like today, when Hindi cinema is making an increasing number of films focused on blood-soaked machismo, I sometimes wonder what kind of characters he would choose to play. The Last Tenant, in my opinion, is Irrfan’s response to that query. Irrfan portrays Saagar, a talented musician who recently experienced a painful split from Maanvi (Vidya Balan, excellent in a supporting role). He chooses to conduct studies in the United States since he is unable to communicate his feelings. Maybe this is the only way he can get away from the profession, from heartache, and from the continual reminders that he can’t go on. He still has one month to go, though, and he is in dire need of a temporary somewhere to stay. Saagar finds himself in a peaceful home a few hours from the city thanks to a friend. However, there’s a catch. Nobody has been able to remain here for longer than a few days. They think that this location is haunted by a spirit. Without Irrfan’s presence, The Last Tenant, which has all the makings of a ghost story, might have become inevitably jaded. His Saagar gradually settles into the new home, seeking solace in the company of his thoughts alone. The Last Tenant establishes a rhythm to its emotional pulses as it makes room for the performer within its frame. In these scenes, Irrfan detects a slight change in the surroundings with lighthearted awareness. Instead of being afraid, he just talks to the void as though he is aware that someone is listening to him babble without passing judgment. With only a flicker in his eyes, watch him recognize the shadow of someone in the room. He starts to perspire, but he wipes it away with his palm. This could have been extremely caricaturish in the hands of a less talented actor, but Irrfan’s portrayal of misery and emotional baggage takes center stage. It reminds me of a movie I recently watched that had a story juxtaposition that was almost exactly the same.

To save hills, Goa has designated 82 lakh square meters as a no-development zone

New Delhi, May 09: The state government of Goa has designated nearly 82 lakh square meters of land as a No Development Zone (NDZ) in a significant move to safeguard the state’s delicate environment. It has been decided to prevent unexpected construction and save the state’s hills, slopes, and other environmentally vulnerable places. According to Town and Country Planning Department officials, the TCP Board accepted the decision, which covers Majorda, Gonsua, and surrounding territories. Over 82,85,000 square meters of land have been designated under the latest NDZ notification. According to the administration, the action is intended to stop the flattening and chopping of hills, which has become a major issue in Goa as a result of the state’s fast-paced construction. According to officials, the decision is primarily motivated by preserving ecological balance and safeguarding the natural landscape. Goa’s environmental protection initiatives have also received a significant boost from the Center at the same time. The Goa Forest Department’s application to designate significant areas along the Mandovi and Zuari riverbanks as eco-sensitive zones has been approved by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change. Almost 6.72 crore square meters, or 6,729.54



hectares, make up the area found along the riverbanks. The state administration claims that this clearance will provide authorities more authority to halt new development projects in these ecologically significant areas. According to Forest Minister Vishwajit Rane, the move is required to save the delicate ecosystem surrounding Goa’s main waterways. The Town and Country Planning Department has already been notified by the Forest Department that no development should be permitted in these designated regions, he continued. The minister had previously instructed officials to closely monitor unrestrained land growth and construction along the

Mandovi and Zuari river areas. Additionally, the Goa government intends to classify low-lying areas and rice fields as No Development Zones. The minister claims that the action is intended to safeguard agricultural land, stop the abuse of such areas, and maintain Goa’s green cover going forward. The most recent rulings are made at a time when Goa is becoming more concerned about environmental harm, large-scale building, and hill removal. Concerns about fast urbanization and its effects on the state’s natural resources have been voiced by environmental organizations and locals on numerous occasions.

In an attempt to maintain playoff hopes, the Chennai Super Kings take on the Lucknow Super Giants

New Delhi: In an Indian Premier League game on Sunday in Chennai, the sixth-place Chennai Super Kings will try to maintain their chances of making the playoffs against the struggling Lucknow Super Giants, who are now at the bottom of the points chart. Despite an uneven season filled with batting collapses and poor performances both at home and abroad, CSK is still in the running for a top-four finish as the league stage enters a pivotal phase. Going back to Chepauk might give the five-time champions a chance to pick up steam against LSG, who have had a lackluster season and are already facing elimination. Sanju Samson has been the main focus of CSK’s campaign; the team’s success has frequently been determined by his beginnings at the top. Samson, a recent addition, has been the team’s “backbone” and batting anchor, while captain Ruturaj Gaikwad has had difficulty being consistent with the bat this season.



Despite failing in CSK’s most recent match against Delhi Capitals, where Samson remained undefeated on a game-winning 52-ball 87, Ruturaj has recovered form at the beginning of this month with vital unbeaten knocks of 74 and 67. The hosts are looking to larger contributions from middle-order players like Dewald Brevis, Kartik Sharma, Jamie Overton, and Shivam Dube to enhance scoring in the death overs. MS Dhoni remains sidelined with a calf injury, having not yet participated in any matches despite training in the nets.

Conditions at Chepauk have changed from their traditionally slow, spin-friendly nature to being more balanced and conducive for batting, though spinners still retain some advantage. Akeal Hosein and Noor Ahmad may play crucial roles for CSK in the middle overs. Conversely, LSG is struggling at the bottom of the table in 10th place, with only three wins in ten matches. Captain Rishabh Pant’s season has been disappointing relative to his significant Rs 27 crore price tag, although he briefly displayed his capabilities with a 32 off 10 balls against RCB. Mitchell Marsh’s impressive 111 runs off 56 balls in a recent match against RCB has provided a much-needed boost, snapping a six-match losing streak and keeping LSG’s playoff hopes alive, albeit tenuously.

Nicholas Pooran is expected to be influential in the middle overs for LSG. Their bowling attack is led by experienced seamer Mohammed Shami, supported by Prince Yadav and spinners Shahbaz Ahmed and Digvesh Singh Rathi. Injuries to Josh Inglis and Mohsin Khan have further hindered LSG’s performance this season.

At the Bengal BJP government’s inauguration, PM Modi bows to the crowd



New Delhi, May 09: At the West Bengal government’s swearing-in event in Kolkata on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted the crowd with a complete bow on stage. At Brigade Parade Ground, BJP legislative party leader Suwendu Adhikari took the oath of office as the state’s ninth chief minister, marking the beginning of the Bharatiya Janata Party’s first government in Bengal. Modi posted on X, “I bow to Jana Shakti of West Bengal.” “The greatest source of public resolve and the true strength of democracy is the blessings of the people.” The PM was seen bowing from the stage in front of the crowd in an internet video. The ceremony was attended by a number of senior BJP officials. Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, JP Nadda, and Dharmendra Pradhan were among them. There were also chief ministers from BJP-ruled states, including as Himanta Biswa Sarma of Assam, Manik Saha of Tripura, Pushkar Singh Dhami of Uttarakhand, and Rekha Gupta of Delhi. Amit Shah posted a video of Adhikari taking the oath on X along with the statement, “The BJP government

has arrived - a government for every person of Bengal.” Modi also visited elderly BJP worker Makhnail Sarkar, 98, during the program and asked for his blessings. Later, on Rabindranath Tagore’s 165th birthday according to the Bengali calendar, the PM and Adhikari honored him. Five BJP MLAs were sworn in as ministers in the new West Bengal cabinet alongside Adhikari. Senior BJP leader Dilip Ghosh, BJP Mahila Morcha leader Agnimitra Paul, North 24 Parganas MLA Ashok Kirtania, tribal leader Kshudiram Tudu, and former Union minister Nisith Pramanik are among the members of the first government. The oath was administered by Governor RN Ravi. The West Bengal Assembly elections of 2026 were won by the BJP.

The 15-year tenure of the Trinamool Congress government in the state came to an end as the saffron party won 207 seats. Eighty seats were gained by the TMC. According to Election Commission data, Adhikari defeated Mamata Banerjee in Bhabanipur by more than 15,000 votes, making her one of the key players in the election. According to the EC, he also kept the Nandigram assembly seat, where he received more over 1.27 lakh votes. Following his oath of office, Adhikari declared that Cabinet ministers would participate in decision-making and that the new administration would operate under “collective leadership.” After disagreements with Banerjee grew in recent years, Adhikari, a former senior Trinamool politician and a pivotal player in the Nandigram campaign that helped the TMC win power in 2011, joined the BJP. Later on, he emerged as a prominent figure in the state for the BJP.

After Vijay’s three failed visits to Lok Bhavan in three days, there is uncertainty over who will lead Tamil Nadu

New Delhi, May 09: As actor-turned-politician C Joseph Vijay met governor Rajendra Arlekar for the third time in three days and the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) edged closer to the majority threshold on Friday, tensions over the formation of a government in Tamil Nadu reached a fever pitch. However, the TVK was unable to demonstrate that it had a majority in the 234-member House, according to those who were aware of the situation, and Lok Bhavan had not issued an official statement till the time of publication. After the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist), each of which has two lawmakers, gave their “unconditional support,” Vijay, accompanied by senior TVK officials, met on Arlekar in an attempt to form the government. The letters were also given to Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam deputy general secretary CTR Nirmal Kumar earlier in the day by the two Left parties. For the third time, Vijay went to Lok Bhavan and called on Arlekar at around 6:30 p.m. on Friday with senior party officials. He delivered the letters to the governor. However, at the time of the Lok Bhavan meeting, Vijay, whose TVK secured 108 members in the 234-member parliament, was unable to obtain an unequivocal statement of support from the Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK). According to the individuals mentioned above, the TVK memorandum that was sent to the governor did not contain a VCK letter. According to the individuals mentioned above, the TVK memorandum that was sent to the governor did not contain a VCK letter. Following their endorsement of TVK, the leaders of the CPI and CPI (M) met with the media. CPI state secretary M Veerapandian stated that VCK president Thol Thirumavalavan had previously stated that his party would back TVK if the Left parties did the same. The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), a smaller party, stated cryptically that its two lawmakers would back the governor’s proposals “towards the government formation,” but they did not specify their position. This implied that the TVK, which has the support of five members of Congress, might have fallen short of the halfway point. Vijay ran for and won two seats. After the election results are announced, the 51-year-old has 14 days to step down from one position. Thus, as of Friday night, the alliance effectively had 117 lawmakers. The total increases to 118, just above the majority threshold, when the two lawmakers from the VCK are included. The TVK offered the Congress two cabinet positions and a Rajya Sabha seat, according to state unit president K Selvaperunthagai, who stated on Friday that the party wanted to join the government. On the record, both Left parties declared that they would provide external support to the administration. What the VCK had concluded was unclear. Vanni Arasu, the deputy general secretary of VCK, asked in a social media post that his party look for a deputy chief minister and a ministerial position, even though VCK has not yet made an official declaration. Vijay’s rookie outfit became the largest party in Tamil Nadu assembly elections, disrupting a long-standing Dravidian duopoly. However, governmental formation has been complicated, fueling speculation of potential collaboration between the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). The Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazagam (AMMK) backed AIADMK’s Edappadi Palanisami, while the CPI and CPI(M) extended support to Vijay’s TVK, aiming to prevent President’s Rule and BJP influence. Both left parties will offer external support without cabinet positions, while Congress indicated its intention to join the government, albeit with conditions pending national leadership decisions. Meanwhile, IUML clarified its non-support stance, maintaining its alliance with DMK.

In Bengal, the PM touches the feet of Makhn Lal Sarkar, 97

New Delhi, May 09: At Suwendu Adhikari’s swearing-in ceremony in Kolkata this morning, Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the blessing of a 97-year-old man.

PM Modi touched his feet and gave him a big hug. This individual is Makhn Lal Sarkar, a Siliguri native and one of the most senior state leaders in the early days of the BJP.

Bengal BJP chief Samik Bhattacharya claimed that Sarkar was Shyama Prasad Mookerjee’s assistant. “Mookerjee was mysteriously slain in a jail in Kashmir.

He said, “Sarkar, who was a part of his last journey, has graced us with his presence today.” Bhattacharya further recounted that during the Congress’s rule, Sarkar was detained by Delhi Police for singing a patriotic song. He was brought before the judge and asked to apologize. However, he declined. “Sarkar informed the judge that he had merely performed a song and had not committed any crimes.

He performed the song once more in court because the judge requested to hear

it. The Bengal BJP president stated, “The judge then ordered the police to get Sarkar a first-class ticket back home and give him Rs 100 for his journey.” Sarkar accompanied Shyama Prasad Mookerjee on his historic tour to Kashmir and served as the first BJP district president of the Siliguri organizational district.

He is still regarded as one of the pioneering grassroots leaders of the post-Independence Indian nationalist movement at the age of 97. He was detained in Kashmir in 1952 while going with Mookerjee to raise the Indian tricolor. He was appointed organizational coordinator for the districts of West Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, and Darjeeling following the establishment of the BJP in 1980. He assisted in the enrollment of about 10,000 members in just one year. He served as district president continuously for seven years starting in 1981, which was a remarkable accomplishment during a period when BJP leaders were typically unable to hold the same organizational post for longer than two years.

Shreyas Iyer’s T20I captaincy claim is challenged by Sanju Samson

New Delhi: The days of Suryakumar Yadav as India’s T20I skipper appear to be coming to an end, as reports and sources point to players who are prepared to succeed him. Sanju Samson is reportedly in the running to be India’s next T20I captain, while Shreyas Iyer is being considered. Since joining the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season, the wicket-keeper batter has had an incredible run of success with the bat. Despite not being the team’s captain, he appears to be in the running because to his prior leadership experience with the Rajasthan Royals and his general reputation as a captain. In June and July, the Indian team will go to England and Ireland for a white-ball series. IPL results will play a major role in choosing the squad for these trips. Sanju Samson and Shreyas Iyer are two of the best run scorers in this category, but Suryakumar Yadav’s performance has been somewhat subpar. Samson’s steady presence in the Indian T20 team is a factor

that helps him in the competition to replace Suryakumar as India’s next T20I captain, according to a report in Dainik Jagran. He has demonstrated his abilities on the global scene and has been a member of the team since the 2024 T20 World Cup. He has amassed 1,399 runs in 62 games, including three hundreds and six half-centuries.

Additionally, he played a significant role in India’s victory in the T20 World Cup earlier this year. According to the report, Iyer has not played for the T20 international team despite being in fine form and collecting runs for Punjab Kings in the IPL this season. On December 3, 2023, he participated in his final Twenty20 match for India. Therefore, even for a player of Iyer’s caliber, going back to the shortest format and being named captain might be too much of a leap. According to reports, the BCCI selection committee may continue to use Suryakumar for the T20Is between England and Ireland, but he may be replaced if he continues to play poorly.

The CBI raided 17 Mumbai locations connected to the Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group



New Delhi, May 09: In relation to three cases filed against Anil Ambani-led Reliance ADA Group companies—Reliance Telecom Ltd., Reliance Commercial Finance Ltd., Reliance Home Finance Ltd., and their Directors—the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) announced on Saturday that it had searched 17 locations in Mumbai. According to a CBI statement, these searches are “being conducted at the residential premises of Directors of the above-mentioned companies as well as at the office premises

of intermediary companies whose accounts were used for diversion of bank funds”. The statement went on to say that searches are carried out based on May 8 Search Warrants granted by the Special Judge for CBI cases in Mumbai, which have led to the confiscation of documents that could be used as evidence.

Additionally, searches have shown that other intermediary businesses were using the same location. The CBI states that the inquiry is ongoing. Recall that over the past few months, the CBI has

filed seven cases against the Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group in response to complaints made by LIC and several public sector banks over purported scams involving thousands of crores of rupees. In these cases, the total purported damage is Rs 27,337 crore. In the past few months, the CBI has searched 14 places right after these cases were registered.

On April 20, two senior RCom executives were arrested: Anil Kalya, Vice President, who had actively assisted Vishwanath in managing banking operations and payments/utilization of funds, and D. Vishwanath, Joint President of Reliance Communications, who was overall in charge of the Group’s banking operations. “At the moment, both of the defendants are under judicial detention. The Supreme Court is keeping an eye on the probe into the crimes involving the Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group,” the CBI statement continued.

Shafali Verma and Yashasvi Jaiswal are in trouble for failing the dope test

New Delhi: Indian cricketers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shafali Verma have received notifications from the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) due to a “whereabouts failure” concerning their dope testing requirements. Verma and Jaiswal are members of the Registered Testing Pool (RTP) of NADA. Athletes in this group must give precise information about where they are located as well as a daily window of one hour during which they are available for testing. Shafali Verma was allegedly unavailable when Dope Control Officers (DCOs) visited to take a sample on November 7, 2025, according to several accounts, including one published. On December 17, 2025, Yashasvi Jaiswal was apparently missing from his assigned location. In February 2026, NADA asked the players for answers, but neither of them responded. As a result, the agency formally documented a “missed test” for both cricket players. These shortcomings have been duly reported to the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). Now, the athletes have one last seven days to present a good reason for their absence. For out-of-competition drug testing, athletes in NADA’s Registered Testing Pool are need to specify a time and place. Under anti-doping laws, it is formally recorded as a “missed test” if a Doping Control Officer (DCO) shows up within this pre-arranged time and the athlete is not present. Repeated failures could have serious repercussions



under anti-doping legislation. An athlete is in violation of anti-doping rules if they record three “whereabouts failures” (which covers both missed tests and filing failures) in a rolling 12-month period. The athlete may be suspended from the sport for up to two years if a violation is proven and they are unable to demonstrate their innocence. Even though this is just Jaiswal and Verma’s first attack, it is crucial that they stay out of trouble moving ahead. Indian batsman Prithvi Shaw received a backdated 8-month punishment from NADA in 2019 after the BCCI claimed he had inadvertently ingested a banned chemical present in cough medication. Terbutaline, a prohibited substance, was discovered in Shaw’s blood test following the collection of his urine sample during the 2019 Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 campaign.

India Basketball League Seeks Unique Identity And Dedicated Private Courts

IBL Focuses On Sustainability Over IPL Blueprint



New Delhi: Every new sports league in India eventually gets hit with the same question. “Can it become the next IPL?” The people behind the India Basketball League (IBL) do not even want to entertain that idea. And honestly, that might be the smartest thing about the project so far. India’s first-ever professional basketball league, launched in 2025 and expected to begin competition by early 2027, is not trying to copy cricket’s biggest machine. No forced “mini IPL” packaging. No obsession with becoming cricket with sneak-

ers. Instead, the IBL wants basketball in India to finally feel like basketball. Speaking exclusively to India Today, league commissioner Jeremy Loeliger made it very clear that trying to directly compete with the IPL would simply be “foolish.” “If we tried to become another IPL, we would fail,” Loeliger said. That line probably tells you everything about how the league wants to position itself. Because for years, Indian sports leagues outside cricket have often walked into the same trap. Some tried borrowing IPL-style

auctions. Others copied formats, branding structures or presentation styles hoping the cricket audience would automatically transfer across. Most struggled to build a long-term identity. The IBL seems determined not to make that mistake. Loeliger’s biggest argument is actually pretty simple. Basketball already naturally fits the kind of audience modern sports leagues are trying to attract. Fast pace. Constant scoring. Music during breaks. Short attention spans. Indoor arenas. Fans sitting almost on top of the court. Social

media-friendly moments every few minutes. Basically, the exact reasons why T20 cricket exploded globally. “Basketball is already the kind of fast-paced, high-energy sport that T20 cricket was designed to replicate,” Loeliger said while speaking to India Today. And unlike cricket, basketball already comes with a naturally global ecosystem attached to it. That matters in modern India. Young fans today do not just watch one sport anymore. They move between NBA clips, football reels, UFC knockouts, F1 highlights and IPL games all on the same phone screen. The IBL knows that audience already exists. The challenge is giving Indian basketball players an actual pathway after school. Because the irony is basketball has always quietly existed inside Indian school culture. Courts are everywhere. Inter-school competitions are common. Plenty of kids grow up playing the sport seriously. The problem always came after that. There was nowhere to really go professionally. Now, the league believes there finally can be.

Veer Chotrani Upsets Abhay Singh In World Squash Championship Thriller



Giza: India's Veer Chotrani produced a stirring comeback to defeat compatriot Abhay Singh in an all-Indian opening-round clash at the 2026 World Squash Championships in Giza, Egypt, on Friday. World No. 45 Chotrani fought back from 2-1 down to overcome India's top-ranked men's player and world No. 22 Abhay 3-2 (14-12, 8-11, 5-11, 11-7, 11-2) at the Palm Hills Club and PGC Golf Central Mall, according to Olympics.com. The victory marked Chotrani's second win over Abhay in three meetings and secured him a place in the second round, where he will face defending champion and world No. 1 Mostafa Asal of Egypt. The match began with a fiercely contested opening game,

with Chotrani edging the tie-break 14-12 to seize the early advantage. Abhay, an Asian Games medallist, responded strongly and took control of the contest by winning the next two games 11-8 and 11-5. With momentum firmly against him, Chotrani raised his intensity in the fourth game, tightening his control on rallies and forcing errors from Abhay to level the match with an 11-7 win. The decider, however, turned into a one-sided affair as Chotrani dominated from the outset and wrapped up the fifth game 11-2 to complete an impressive turnaround. The decider, however, turned into a one-sided affair as Chotrani dominated from the outset and wrapped up the fifth

game 11-2 to complete an impressive turnaround. India have fielded a four-member men's contingent at this year's championships. Apart from Chotrani and Abhay, Ramit Tandon and Velavan Senthilkumar are also in action in Giza. Velavan Senthilkumar, the reigning World Cup gold medallist, is set to face France's sixth seed and world No. 5 Victor Crouin in his opening-round encounter on Saturday. World No. 40 Ramit Tandon will take on Egypt's Kareem El Torkey in another first-round match. India are still searching for their first singles medal at the World Squash Championships. The sport is scheduled to make its Olympic debut at the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles.

Rudranksh Patil Wins Air Rifle Gold



Bhopal: Maharashtra's Rudranksh Balasaheb Patil clinched the gold medal in the 10m Air Rifle Men ISSF event at the 24th Asian Shooting Championships being held at the Madhya Pradesh State Shooting Academy in Bhopal. Rudranksh shot 252.9 in the final to finish on top of the podium. Haryana's Rohit Kanyan secured the silver medal with 251.9, while West Bengal's Baiduriya Biswas claimed bronze with 230.8. Uttar Pradesh's Karamjeet Singh finished fourth with 209.6. In qualification, Delhi's Paarth Makhija topped the standings with a score of 633.4, followed by Railways' Shahu Tushar Mane with 630.0. Gujarat's Gajjar Krish Jigneshbhai qualified third with 627.8, while Rudranksh Patil entered the final in fourth place with 627.7. In the 10m Air Rifle Junior Men's classification, West Bengal's

Chris Green Avoids Infamy While Supporting Finn Allen During Explosive Century Against Kolkata Knight Riders

New Delhi: Finn Allen took home all the plaudits for his sensational hundred during the clash between DC and KKR at the Arun Jaitley stadium, but Cameron Green played an important role in him getting to the milestone. Of course, everyone would be looking at the 116-run stand between the duo, where Green contributed 33 runs off 27 balls. But it was the quick calculations from the Australian all-rounder that helped Allen get to his maiden hundred. But Green had a hilarious reason why he decided to knowingly play second fiddle during the partnership. Speaking to the broadcasters after the match, Green said that he didn't want the tag of being the most hated man in Kolkata, so he did all the calculations by himself while Allen was going berserk at the other end. I think I did the math



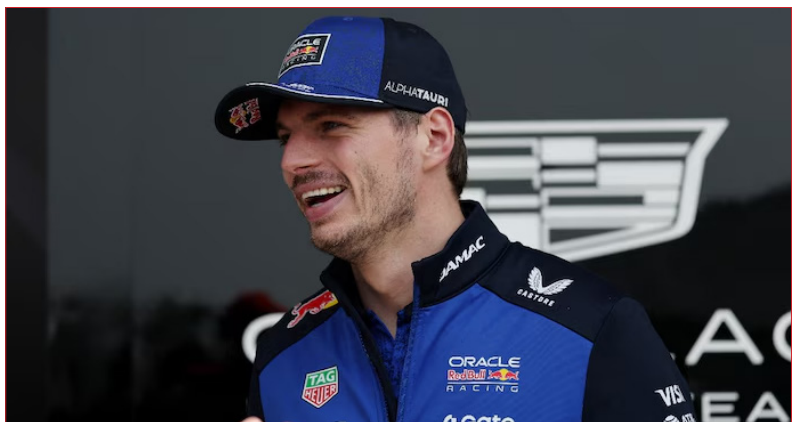
when we had 29 to get. So yeah, I knew I'd be the most hated man in Kolkata if I did anything else apart from that.” “No, not us. I was, I did the math. But no, Finn's very good at maths as well, so I'll give him credit for that. So, probably, he was probably doing the same,” said Green. Allen scored 100 off just 47 balls to help KKR register an eight-wicket win against DC to make it four on the trot and continue their resurgence. The New Zealand opener had struggled in

the initial phase of the tournament and found himself out of the team. Another issue was that he never saw off the powerplay in any of the game that he had played till that point. He put on a cautious approach in the first six overs and then started to take down the DC bowlers with ease and finish off the game with 5.4 overs left. Green had the best seat in the house and said that Allen is one of the best in the world when it comes to launching a calculated attack on the bowlers

after powerplay. The KKR all-rounder said he wasn't surprised by the madness that Green pulled off in the end. “Finn was exceptional today. He's been really good for us - he's got off to amazing starts every single time he's been out there. That's exactly what we have got him in the team for.” “He's one of the best in the world at doing that and putting pressure back on, and you know when he gets to 30 or 40, that he's very hard to get out because he just keeps going. He never really tries to rein it back in.” “I wasn't surprised by what he did tonight. He's been training really hard and I think he's worked out a really good way to go about it. I'm so happy for him and it was so good to watch out down the other end,” said Green. KKR will travel to Raipur next as they face RCB on May 13.

Formula One Agrees to Major 2027 Engine Overhaul Following Criticism From Max Verstappen and Peers

London: After the constant criticism about the new regulations from Max Verstappen and others, the Formula 1 bosses have agreed in principle to make changes to the 2027 engine regulations. The plan is to slightly increase the output from the internal combustion engine following criticism from drivers earlier this season. F1 introduced major engine changes this year, featuring a 50-50 split between the traditional combustion engine and electrical battery power. However, several drivers raised concerns almost immediately over how heavily the cars relied on electrical deployment and energy harvesting. Verstappen openly slammed the new regulations, calling them fundamentally flawed. The FIA confirmed on Friday that discussions were held with teams and F1 officials during an online meeting, where the proposed tweaks were approved in principle. The measures agreed in principle today for 2027 would see a nominal increase in internal combustion engine (ICE) power by (tilde)50kW alongside a fuel-flow increase and a nominal reduction of the



energy recovery system (ERS) deployment power by (tilde)50kW,” the FIA statement said. The governing body also added that the adjustments would be “intuitive for drivers and teams.” Earlier in the season, after only three grands prix, F1 had already introduced smaller tweaks to reduce the overall influence of electrical power. Those changes were aimed at improving the balance between driving skill and energy management, especially during qualifying sessions. Last weekend's Miami Grand Prix was the first

race held under those updated rules. The race saw multiple lead changes between four different teams before Mercedes rookie Kimi Antonelli claimed his third win of the 2026 season. F1 has been running V6 hybrid engines since 2014, with electrical systems playing an increasingly significant role in race strategy over the years. Drivers now have to carefully manage battery deployment and recharging during races. The FIA said Friday's meeting also reviewed the impact of the changes introduced before Miami.

Arjuna Awardee Abhijeet Gupta Slams Odisha Chess Meet For Unpaid Prizes

New Delhi: Renowned Indian grandmaster and Arjuna award winner Abhijeet Gupta has called out the Odisha Open organisers over unpaid prize money after winning the tournament earlier this year. Abhijeet asked the sports ministry for assistance after he claimed that the organisers failed to deliver on their promise after repeated assurances. Despite writing several letters to the All India Chess Federation (AICF), the Chess Olympiad medallist is yet to receive the cash award for winning the Odisha Open title earlier in the year. Abhijeet said that he reached out to the AICF to get the issue resolved, but received no response. “I won the Odisha Open in January 2026. The organisers assured me that the prize money would be paid within a month. However, when I followed up later, they stopped responding.” “Since the tournament was affiliated with the All India Chess Federation, I also reached out to the federation's president and secretary, hoping the matter would be resolved fairly. Unfortunately, there has been no response from them either.” “If this can happen to someone honoured with the Arjuna Award, one can only imagine the struggles faced by players at the



grassroots level of chess in India.” “I kindly request the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to look into this matter and help ensure that players receive their rightful prize money with transparency and accountability.” “This is not just about one unpaid prize. It is about protecting the dignity and trust of every chess player in India,” said Abhijeet on X. According to the report from PTI, the Odisha association is embroiled in infighting, with its bank account being frozen and the organisers being unable to pay the bills. Abhijeet said that the infighting in the Odisha association has been going on for years, and there was some responsibility from AICF. “The infighting

in the (Odisha association) has been going on for years. They conducted the tournament and it was affiliated by the AICF. So there has to be some responsibility on the part of the national federation,” said Abhijeet to PTI. “I totally understand that (their account might have been frozen), but as a player what should I do? They should not have held the tournament in the first place. As a sportsperson, you win very less tournaments and you lose more... that's what I feel in general,” added Abhijeet. Abhijeet told PTI that the organisers owe him Rs. 5.5 lakh in prize money. The Chess GM sent a follow-up tweet to this saying that the president of the AICF, Nitin Na-

rang, has assured him that the necessary action has been initiated. “The President of All India Chess Federation @narangnitinji called me and assured me that the necessary action has been initiated!” said on Abhijeet on X. Arjuna Awardee Abhijeet Gupta took several escalating steps to resolve the issue of unpaid prize money after winning the Odisha Open in January 2026. Initially, he followed up directly with the tournament organizers, who had promised payment within a month but eventually stopped responding to his inquiries. Following the lack of progress, Gupta wrote several letters to the All India Chess Federation (AICF) seeking their intervention as the national governing body. When both the organizers and the AICF failed to provide a resolution or response, he publicly appealed to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports via social media for a transparent investigation into the matter. The All India Chess Federation (AICF) faces criticism regarding tournament prize money accountability following allegations of unpaid awards from the Odisha Open. While the federation is expected to oversee affiliated tournaments, players promises.

Tristan Stubbs Overrated: Former India Selector Slams DC Star Amid Poor Form

New Delhi: Former India selector Kris Srikanth called Tristan Stubbs an overrated player after his poor run of form continued in the IPL 2026. Delhi Capitals completely collapsed after the powerplay in their latest loss to KKR. Stubbs once again failed with the bat, scoring just two off four balls before being castled by Anukul Roy. This meant that the South African's poor string of performances continued as he has scored 259 runs in 11 matches. After a good start to the season, Stubbs has faded away with scores of 5, 18, 38 and 2 in his last four games. Speaking on his YouTube channel, Srikanth slammed DC for their batting and questioned the contributions from the likes of Stubbs, Sameer Rizvi and Nitish Rana during the match. “What was this batting from DC? Horrible batting.” “I keep saying it. Tristan Stubbs is an overrated player. Rizvi played well at the start but should have contributed. For Nitish Rana, it was a crucial game,” said Srikanth.



kanth. DC scored just 11 runs during overs 12 to 16 and mustered up only 142 runs in their innings. KKR chased it down with 5.4 overs left to spare with Finn Allen scoring a fine hundred. Srikanth said that DC should have scored at least 180 runs on that training track after winning the toss and opting to bat first. The former Indian opener said that the Delhi middle-order is finished, and labelled Axar Patel as a total failure with the bat. And on a turning and spinning track like this, after winning the toss and batting first, you need to score at least 180. This is not a ground where you can casually think runs will come easily.” “In all fair-

ness, if someone gets going, they can bat brilliantly here. However, the reality is that their middle order is gone. KL Rahul's shot was very surprising. That ball completely stopped on him, and it was a very, very poor shot from KL Rahul. And honestly, for that Anukul Roy ball, there was no answer at all from Stubbs.” “Axar Patel has been a total failure with the bat. Only Ashutosh Sharma somehow kept fighting, scoring 20, 30, 40 runs every game. Poor guy, he is batting really well. That is the only reason they reached this total. Otherwise, they would have been all out for 120 maybe even 110 or 115,” said Srikanth. DC will face PBKS in their next on May 11.