

Mizoram village organise thanksgiving function to celebrate completion of new blacktopped road and Health Sub-Centre

Aizawl, May 20: Chief Minister Lalduhoma attended a thanksgiving function organised by the people of Hmunpui to celebrate the completion of the village's new blacktopped road, the newly constructed Health Sub-Centre and staff quarters, and the allotment of 24 hectares of rubber plantation under the Chief Minister's Rubber Mission. Local MLA H. Lalzirliana accompanied Lalduhoma.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said the road had been reconstructed under SASCI 2025-26 Part-I at a cost of Rs. 3 crore after the earlier PMGSY road required urgent repairs.

He also highlighted the objectives of the Chief Minister's Rubber Mission, launched after studying Tripura's successful model. Under the scheme, the government aims to plant over 51 lakh rubber saplings across 11,500 hectares over five years.

Hmunpui received 24 hectares under the second phase of the programme.

The Chief Minister said the new Health Sub-Centre and staff quarters, funded under NABARD RIDF-30, were constructed to strengthen healthcare services in the village. Describing Hmunpui as an important village, he assured continued government support and informed that a survey for a new power supply line is currently underway.

MLA Lalzirliana thanked the Chief Minister and appreciated the developmental progress achieved in the village under the present government.

Speaking on behalf of the villagers, Village Council Vice President H. Laldusanga expressed gratitude for the new road, healthcare facilities, and rubber-based livelihood opportunities provided to 24 families under the Rubber Mission.



Kamakhya Temple Gears Up for Ambubachi Mela 2026

Guwahati, May 20 (Agency): With nearly a month left for the annual Ambubachi Mela, preparations are now underway at the revered Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati for one of the biggest spiritual congregations in Northeast India.

Members of the temple's Doloi community announced that the four-day religious festival will commence on the night of June 22 and will conclude at sunrise on June 26.

Temple authorities, in coordination with the district administration, have started reviewing arrangements related to security, crowd regulation and other logistical requirements ahead of the influx of pilgrims. Lakhs of devotees, saints and ascetics from across the country are expected to participate in the annual gathering.

In an effort to streamline movement and reduce congestion around the shrine, a new access route from the Pandu side will be opened for devotees this year. Pilgrims will now be able to reach the temple through both the existing Nursery route and the newly developed Pandu-side approach road.

Preparations are also being intensified on the security front, with plans to install advanced CCTV surveillance systems across the temple premises during the mela period.

Meanwhile, several sadhus have already started arriving at Kamakhya Dham ahead of the festival and authorities expect the number of visitors to rise significantly in the coming weeks.

Widely known as the "Main Centre of Tantra Sadhna," the Ambubachi Mela is among Assam's most significant spiritual events and draws massive crowds every year to the Nilachal Hills shrine dedicated to Goddess Kamakhya.

ED Moves Against Bank Officer in Assam Fund Scam

Guwahati, May 20: Enforcement Directorate's Guwahati Zonal Office has filed a Prosecution Complaint under PMLA, 2002 before the Special Court for PMLA Cases in Guwahati against Dibyajyoti Kalita, the then Branch Head of Assam Gramin Vikash Bank (AGVB), Lahorijan Branch, Karbi Anglong, Assam, and Birbahu Brahma, a private person, in a case related to misappropriation of funds by misuse of the banking software credentials, without any supporting vouchers or customer instructions.

Brahma is from Dudhnoi in Goalpara district.

The Prosecution Complaint has been filed under Sections 441(b) and 45(1) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. ED initiated investigation on the basis of FIR registered at Khatkhathi Police Station, Karbi Anglong, under Sections 420 and

409 of the IPC, 1860, which was thereafter re-registered by CBI ACB, Shillong.

ED investigation revealed that during the period from December 2020 to April 2021, Dibyajyoti Kalita, in his capacity as Branch Head, AGVB Lahorijan Branch, in active conspiracy with one Birbahu Brahma, fraudulently misappropriated a sum of Rs. 7.28 Crore from the Adjustment Clearing Account of the said branch through 20 unauthorised transactions, executed by misuse of the Finacle banking software credentials, without any supporting vouchers or customer instructions. The proceeds of crime were placed and layered through fictitious customer accounts, multiple self-help group, society accounts opened on a single day, and a chain of Term Deposits and Loans Against Deposits created in fabricated names, of the

PRAGATI 2026 Kicks Off in Meghalaya With Global Participation

Shillong, May 20: The multinational military exercise PRAGATI 2026 commenced on Tuesday at the Umroi Military Station in Meghalaya with the participation of armed forces contingents from 12 friendly nations across the Indian Ocean Region and Southeast Asia.

The participating countries include Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

The contingents received a traditional welcome from the Indian Army upon their arrival, reflecting India's cultural heritage and hospitality.

PRAGATI, which stands for Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region, is being conducted to promote friendship, equality and mutual respect among participating nations. The exercise aims to strengthen military-to-military cooperation, facilitate professional exchanges and enhance coordination in joint operations.

The opening ceremony was at-



tended by senior military officials and dignitaries. Addressing the gathering, Major General Sunil Sheoran, Additional Director General of Infantry of the Indian Army, welcomed the participating contingents and stressed the importance of collective engagement in tackling emerging security challenges.

He urged all participants to interact with openness and mutual

respect while learning from each other's operational experiences and military practices. He also said the diverse strengths and perspectives brought by each participating country would contribute to achieving the collective goals of the exercise.

The two-week exercise will primarily focus on counter-terrorism operations in semi-mountainous

and jungle terrain. The training programme includes joint planning exercises, tactical drills and coordinated field operations aimed at improving adaptability, endurance and operational efficiency among troops.

Officials said special emphasis would be placed on discipline, physical fitness and coordination while operating under challenging conditions.

As part of the exercise, Indian defence and technology companies will also showcase indigenous military equipment and innovations developed under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative. The event is expected to serve as a platform for knowledge-sharing and highlight India's growing defence manufacturing and technological capabilities.

According to defence officials, Exercise PRAGATI 2026 is expected to further deepen professional ties among regional armies and contribute towards a common approach to shared security challenges in the region.

ECI recognizes merger of NDPP with NPF

Kohima, May 20: The State Election Commission, Nagaland has informed that it has received a copy of the of the Election Commission of India (ECI) order whereby the ECI has recognized the merger of the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) with the Naga People's Front (NPF) as per the meeting decision of October 18, 2025, with the NDPP subsequently ceasing to exist as a separate political party.

In the General Election to the Municipal and Town Councils, 2024, the names of NDPP candidates who were declared winners were duly notified and published in the Nagaland Gazette (Extraordinary) vide the Commission's Notification NO.SEC/ELE-RESULT/2024/279 dated 01.07.2024.

Now therefore, in light of the official recognition of the merger as stated above and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 31 (1) read with Section 44 of the Nagaland Municipal Act 2023, the party name of NDPP (Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party) against each corresponding winner, wherever it appeared in the aforesaid Gazette, shall hereby stand amended as NPF (Naga People's Front) for all practical purposes in the concerned municipalities with effect from the date of publication in the Nagaland Gazette, the order stated.

Upgraded Health Sub-Centre Inaugurated in Kohima

Kohima, May 20: The newly upgraded Nagabazar health Sub-Centre was inaugurated on Wednesday by Chief Medical Officer, Kohima, Dr N. Leamnye Konyak, in the presence of Kohima Municipal Council Ward Councillor Zeneivonuo Nakhro, Nagabazar Panchayat members, health officials, community leaders and residents. Speaking at the inaugural programme, Dr Konyak described the occasion

as a significant step towards strengthening accessible and affordable healthcare services at the grassroots level.

He noted that the sub-centre, established in 1987, had served the community for nearly four decades without major infrastructural upgrades and said the new facility was made possible through support from the 15th Finance Commission Health Grants (2021-2022), along with contributions from the Ward Pan-

chayat, Ward Councillor and Kohima Municipal Council.

Dr Konyak informed that the upgraded centre is staffed by eight healthcare professionals and will provide twelve essential healthcare service packages, including maternal and child healthcare, adolescent health services, management of communicable and non-communicable diseases, elderly and palliative care, and emergency medical ser-

vices. He also announced that 106 essential medicines and 12 diagnostic services will be made available under the Government of India's Free Drug Service initiative.

Dr Konyak further stated that the sub-centre could be upgraded to a Primary Health Centre (PHC) or Community Health Centre (CHC) in the future, provided adequate land is made available for expansion. Delivering the keynote address, Councillor



Zeneivonuo Nakhro termed the occasion a "historic mo-

ment" for the community and said the facility would

significantly improve access to timely and affordable healthcare for residents. She said the centre would provide essential services including emergency care, treatment for minor illnesses and injuries, blood pressure screening, diabetes testing, and maternal and child healthcare. She also called on residents to take ownership of the facility and fully utilise its services to ensure better health outcomes for the community.

Goswami's Statement on Char-Chapori Muslims Triggers Row

Guwahati, May 20: Remarks made by Basanta Kumar Goswami on the role of char-chapori Muslims in preserving the Assamese language have sparked a major debate across Assam, drawing mixed reactions from literary circles, student organisations and political leaders.

The controversy began after the Asam Sahitya Sabha president said during a public interaction that Assamese-speaking Muslims living in the riverine char-chapori areas have played a significant role in strengthening the Assamese linguistic community. He stated that their continued identification as Assamese speakers in the census is important for protecting the language and cultural identity of Assam.

Goswami said that if Muslims from char-chapori areas did not support the Assamese language movement, Assamese people could one day become "second-class citizens." He further described the char residents as Assamese and sons of the soil, adding that a large section of Assamese speakers today comes from these areas.

However, the remarks triggered sharp criticism from several quarters, with many accusing him of linking language identity with census politics and making divisive statements.

All Assam Students' Union chief adviser Samujjal Bhattacharya said the organisation agreed with Goswami's statement that all Muslims should not be branded as Bangladeshis, but disagreed with his comments relating to language and census issues. He said AASU would discuss the matter with the Asam Sahitya Sabha. AASU president Utpal Sarma also expressed disagreement with Goswami's views on Assamese language and cultural identity, stating that the organisation did not accept his remarks.

The issue intensified after scholar Gahan Mahanta strongly criticised Goswami and questioned his understanding of Assam's history and social realities. Mahanta termed the comments irresponsible and harmful and demanded that Goswami resign from the post of Sabha president and apologise to the people of Assam.



At the same time, Goswami's remarks received support from Mandia MLA Sherman Ali Ahmed, who described the statement as long-overdue recognition of the Assamese identity of char-chapori Muslims. Ahmed thanked Goswami for his comments and urged him to repeat the statement officially from the platform of the Asam Sahitya Sabha. However, he also expressed concern that such recognition often surfaces during census periods, while later the same communities are labelled as Bangladeshis.

Defending his position, Goswami argued that many indigenous communities such as Bodos and Mishings primarily identify themselves through their ethnic identities, whereas many Muslims from char areas continue to identify as Assamese speakers in official documents and public life.

The remarks have now triggered a wider discussion across Assam on language identity, census politics and the contribution of different communities to the state's cultural and linguistic landscape.

Three Bangladeshi Nationals held in Police Operation at Gumra

Cachar, May 20 (Agency): A police operation conducted at Gumra under Katigorah in Assam's Cachar district led to the detention of three Bangladeshi nationals, including a woman last night.

According to police sources, the detained individuals have been identified as Mohammad Awal, Mohammad Harun and Rina Akhtar. The operation was carried out by Gumra Police following specific inputs. Police said the trio is currently being interrogated and necessary legal procedures have been initiated. Authorities have also launched a detailed investigation to ascertain how they entered the state and whether any local network was involved in facilitating their stay.

Assam, Meghalaya among fastest-growing state economies in India: Report

Shillong, May 20: Assam and Meghalaya have emerged among the fastest-growing state economies in India over the past five years, according to a report released on May 19, highlighting a changing pattern in the country's economic growth beyond the traditionally dominant industrial states.

The study said major states such as Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat continue to remain the main contributors to India's economy, together ac-

counting for nearly 48 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, the report noted that several smaller and mid-sized states are now recording some of the strongest growth rates in the country.

Among the states studied, Assam recorded the highest nominal GDP growth among large states with a five-year compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17.3 per cent. The report linked Assam's growth to improvements in connectivity infrastructure,

including the expansion of roads and bridges with support from central government funding.

It also pointed to growth in the tea industry, agro-processing sector and a more favourable investment environment in the state. Meghalaya also featured prominently in the study, registering a five-year nominal GDP CAGR of 15.3 per cent. The report said that although Meghalaya's economy started from a relatively smaller base, the pace of expansion remained notable in per-

centage terms. According to the study, the five-year nominal CAGR figures present a more "democratised" picture of India's economy compared to traditional GDP rankings.

It observed that structural catch-up growth is increasingly visible across different regions of the country. Besides Assam and Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh recorded a 15.3 per cent CAGR during the same period. The report described the growth as significant considering the size of the state's economy. It credited reforms

such as the NIVESH MITRA single-window clearance portal, digitisation of land records and expansion of logistics and defence manufacturing infrastructure for helping drive economic activity.

The report further noted that Karnataka and Manipur also recorded nominal GDP growth above 15 per cent during the five-year period, at 15.14 per cent and 15.04 per cent respectively. The national average nominal GDP growth until FY25 stood at 14.78 per cent.

Mizoram eyes Olympic glory, focuses on grassroots sports development

Aizawl, May 20: Mizoram Sports Minister Lalnghinglova Hmar has said the state government is strengthening sports at the grassroots level with a long-term vision of producing athletes capable of representing India at the Olympic Games.

Speaking at the inauguration of the P C Gabriel Lalliansanga Memorial MBA Junior Official Badminton Championship in Aizawl, Hmar said the government is restructuring Mizoram's sports ecosystem to identify and nurture talent from an early stage, particularly in Olympic disciplines where athletes from the state have shown strong potential. He said the state is focusing on eight key Olympic sports — archery, badminton, boxing, hockey, judo, taekwondo, weightlifting and wrestling — aiming to build a systematic framework for talent development and competitive excellence.

Encouraging young athletes to pursue ambi-

tious goals, the minister urged them to cultivate an "Olympic vision" and aspire to represent the country on the global stage. Highlighting Mizoram's achievements in badminton, Hmar noted that the state has made significant strides in junior and sub-junior categories, producing several talented players and champions over the years.

He stressed that with proper coaching, infrastructure and structured training programmes, Mizoram can scale greater heights in badminton and other sporting disciplines. The minister also underlined the broader role of sports in society, describing it as a powerful tool for improving both physical and mental well-being among young people. The Mizoram government's renewed emphasis on grassroots sports development is aimed at creating a sustainable pathway for future athletes while strengthening the state's sporting culture.

Demanding the safe release of six kidnapped Naga men, sit-in protests break out throughout Manipur

Imphal, May 20: A sit-in protest demanding the safe release of six abducted Naga men was held at Tribal Market in New Checkon, Imphal East, on Tuesday under the banner of the Naga Women Union. Similar protest demonstrations were also reported from several Naga-inhabited districts across Manipur, including Senapati, Noney, Ukhrul, Kamjong, Churachandpur, Chandel and Tamenglong.

A large number of demonstrators gathered at the protest site expressing anger and concern over the continued captivity of the six men nearly a week after their abduction. Protesters carried placards with slogans such as "Human lives, not hostages", "Bring our people home alive", "Bring back six hostages safe" and "Don't test our patience".

Addressing the gathering, Houreilu Kamei accused the government of failing to take decisive steps to secure the release of the abducted men, who she alleged were being held by a suspected Kuki militant group.



She said repeated appeals had been made to the authorities, but the response from the government remained unsatisfactory. Kamei further alleged that the administration was not acting proactively and termed the lack of urgency in rescuing the abducted civilians as "very unfortunate". Describing the ongoing crisis in Manipur as a "dark and melancholic phase", she said such incidents had sadly become "the new normal" in the state.

She stressed that the is-

sue must be resolved politically through dialogue and negotiations. Another protester alleged that the six men had been abducted from Leilon Vaiphei village on May 13 and questioned why central security forces had failed to take direct action in the matter. "The Naga men were picked up from a Kuki area by Kuki people. Why can't the security forces directly interrogate the residents of Leilon Vaiphei village to secure their release?" the protester asked. She further

warned that delays in rescuing the hostages could further escalate tensions and endanger the lives of the abducted civilians.

According to local sources, the abduction took place after a deadly ambush at Kotlen in Kangpokpi district in which three Thadou church leaders were killed. Around 20 Naga individuals were reportedly abducted following the incident. While 14 of them have since been released, six are still believed to be in captivity.

Twelve countries are participating in the multinational military exercise PRAGATI 2026, which starts in Meghalaya

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The participating countries include Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. The contingents received a traditional welcome from the Indian Army upon their arrival, reflecting India's cultural heritage and hospitality.

PRAGATI, which stands for Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region, is being conducted to promote friendship, equality and mutual respect among participating nations.

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by senior military officials and dignitaries. Addressing the gathering, Major General Sunil Sheoran, Additional Director General of Infantry of the Indian Army, welcomed the participating contingents and stressed the importance of collective engagement in tackling emerging security challenges.

He urged all participants

to interact with openness and mutual respect while learning from each other's operational experiences and military practices. He also said the diverse strengths and perspectives brought by each participating country would contribute to achieving the collective goals of the exercise. The two-week exercise will primarily focus on count-

er-terrorism operations in semi-mountainous and jungle terrain.

The training programme includes joint planning exercises, tactical drills and coordinated field operations aimed at improving adaptability, endurance and operational efficiency among troops. Officials said special emphasis would be placed on discipline, physical fitness and coordination while operating under challenging conditions.

As part of the exercise, Indian defence and technology companies will also showcase indigenous military equipment and innovations developed under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

The event is expected to serve as a platform for knowledge-sharing and highlight India's growing defence manufacturing and technological capabilities. According to defence officials, Exercise PRAGATI 2026 is expected to further deepen professional ties among regional armies and contribute towards a common approach to shared security challenges in the region.

Prior to the revision of the voter roll, the CEO of Arunachal requests that political parties expedite BLA appointments

Itanagar, May 20: Pawan Kumar Sain urged political parties in Arunachal Pradesh to appoint booth-level agents (BLAs) for all polling stations before the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls begins from June 15.

Chairing a state-level coordination meeting at Nirvachan Bhawan, Sain expressed concern over the low participation of party representatives and the slow pace of BLA appointments despite repeated appeals made during earlier meetings.

Election officials said the state has a total of 2,288 polling stations and active involvement of political parties is necessary to maintain accurate and error-free electoral rolls. Arunachal Pradesh has been included in the third phase of the nationwide



Special Intensive Revision exercise being carried out by the Election Commission.

Officials said the revision process has become necessary after nearly two decades due to rapid urbanisation, migration, duplicate

voter entries and failure to remove the names of deceased voters from electoral rolls.

According to figures reviewed during the meeting, the Bharatiya Janata Party has appointed 2,286 BLAs across the state. The

Indian National Congress has appointed 422 BLAs, while the People's Party of Arunachal has appointed 239. The National People's Party has appointed 100 BLAs, followed by the Nationalist Congress Party with 43 and NCP(A) with

41. In total, 3,131 BLAs have been appointed in the state so far. Sain asked political parties to direct their district-level representatives to actively participate in meetings organised by district election officers and

electoral registration officers during the revision process. Officials also gave a detailed presentation on the SIR exercise, covering training of election staff, distribution of enumeration forms, rationalisation of polling stations, publication of draft electoral rolls, claims and objections, and preparation of the final voter list.

The meeting was attended by Liken Koyu, Shania Kayem Mize and representatives from the BJP, Congress, PPA and NPP. Discussions during the meeting also focused on legal provisions related to electoral roll revision under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, voter eligibility under Article 326 of the Constitution and citizenship-related provisions under the Citizenship Act, 1955.

Egg and Bread Prices Hits Consumers Across Assam

Nalbari, May 20: The continuous rise in prices of essential commodities has triggered widespread public concern across Assam, with consumers now facing another major blow as the prices of eggs and bread have increased sharply once again.

On Monday, egg prices in markets across the state witnessed a fresh hike. According to traders, the price of a tray of eggs, which was around Rs 170 during the last week of April, had already increased to Rs 200 and later to Rs 220 during the second week of May. From Monday, the price has reportedly gone up further to Rs 230 per tray in several markets.

Similarly, the prices of ordinary eggs imported from states such as Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, and West Bengal have also risen from around Rs 200 to Rs 210 per tray. Traders fear that the rates may increase further in the coming days.

The All Assam Egg Traders' Association attributed the price hike to rising temperatures and declining production in egg-producing states. However,

questions have been raised over the steep rise in Assam, especially when the National Egg Coordination Committee reportedly stated that the average egg price at the national level currently stands at around Rs 150 per tray. Consumers and citizens have expressed frustration over what they describe as the absence of effective market monitoring and price control mechanisms. Many allege that despite repeated price hikes of daily necessities, the Food and Civil Supplies Department and administrative authorities have failed to take visible steps to regulate the market.

Adding to the burden on common people, the prices of all major bread brands have also been increased by Rs 5 from Monday. Under the revised rates, the price of a 400-gram loaf has risen from Rs 35 to Rs 40. Brown bread prices have also increased from Rs 35 to Rs 40. In some cases, traders said that the price of Rs-20 bread packets was kept unchanged, but the quantity or weight had been reduced.



Ambubachi Mela 2026 dates have been announced, and Kamakhya Temple is starting to get ready

Guwahati, May 20: Preparations have commenced for the annual Ambubachi Mela at the Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati, one of the largest religious gatherings in north-eastern India, with just a month remaining for the event.

According to members of the temple's Doloi community, the four-day festival will begin on the night of June 22, corresponding to the seventh day of the Assamese month of Ahaa, and will conclude at sunrise on June 26. Temple authorities have initiated preliminary planning

for the annual congregation and are holding discussions with the district administration over security, crowd management and logistical arrangements. The mela is expected to attract lakhs of devotees, ascetics and pilgrims from different parts of the country.

In a move aimed at easing congestion and improving movement of pilgrims, authorities have decided to introduce an additional access route from the Pandu side this year. Along with the existing Nursery route, devotees will also be able to



approach the temple through the newly developed Pandu-side road.

Several sadhus have already started arriving at Kamakhya Dham

ahead of the festival, while temple authorities anticipate a substantial increase in the number of ascetics and visitors in the coming weeks.

To strengthen surveillance and security during the mela, advanced CCTV cameras are also set to be installed across the temple premises.

The Ambubachi Mela, often referred to as the "Mahakumbh of the East," is one of Assam's most prominent spiritual events and annually witnesses large gatherings of devotees at the Nilachal Hills shrine dedicated to Goddess Kamakhya.

Innovation Council at Assam RGU to Encourage Entrepreneurship

Guwahati, May 20: The Assam Royal Global University (RGU) on Tuesday inaugurated its Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) and Entrepreneurship Cell in a significant step towards promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and industry-academia collaboration among students and young innovators.

The programme was organised by the Entrepreneurship Cell of RGU. The inauguration ceremony was graced by Loken Das, Chief General Manager, NABARD, as the chief guest, and Shri Bajrang Lohia, President of FINER, as the guest of honour.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Sriparna Bhuyan Baruah, Director of Entrepreneurship Cell, RGU, stated, "The inauguration of the Entrepreneurship Development Cell marks a transformative chapter for our institution. By integrating academic rigor with an active network of ecosystem stakeholders, we are not merely teaching business; we are actively cultivating the next generation of visionary leaders, problem solvers, and job creators who will drive the economic landscape of Northeast India."



The programme began with the felicitation of the special guests, followed by the declaration of results and prize distribution ceremony of the Business Pitch competition organised for students. The participants also shared their entrepreneurial experiences and innovative business ideas during the event.

A panel discussion was also held as part of the programme, where industry experts and academicians deliberated on the evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem, start-up opportunities in Northeast India, and the significance of innovation-driven enterprises.

Speaking on the occasion, Lohia highlighted the growing entrepreneurial potential of the region and encouraged students to embrace innovation and enterprise creation as viable career paths.

In his address, Das appreciated the initiative taken by RGU and stressed the importance of entrepreneurship in generating employment and strengthening the regional economy. He also emphasised the need for institutions to nurture innovative thinking and provide platforms for young entrepreneurs to flourish.

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Y Khemchand Singh stresses urgent need to disarm civilians amid fresh tensions in Ukhrul

Ukhrul, May 20: Amid rising tensions in Ukhrul, Y Khemchand Singh on May 20 said that disarming individuals possessing firearms across all parts of the state has become an urgent necessity to restore peace and stability in violence-hit Manipur. The Chief Minister made the remarks during a meeting with a delegation of the Tangkhul Naga community from Sinakeithei village in Ukhrul district. The delegation, accompanied by Ram

Muivah of the Naga People's Front, urged the government to strengthen security deployment in the area due to the prevailing tense situation. Village representatives demanded increased deployment of state police personnel, adequate manpower at the Sinakeithei police station and proper functioning of the Sub-Divisional Collector's office in the region. The area has reportedly witnessed repeated attacks allegedly carried

out by suspected militants following clashes between Kuki and Tangkhul Naga groups earlier this year. The development comes a day after a controversial press statement allegedly issued on May 19 by a group identifying itself as "Kuki Village Volunteer Ukhrul Gamkai." The statement reportedly warned that passenger helicopters and drones flying over Kuki-inhabited villages in the Ukhrul area could be shot down.

DigiPay Sakhis Equipped With Laptops for Digital Services

Guwahati, May 20: A laptop distribution programme for DigiPay Sakhis was held at the Integrated District Commissioner's Office, Amingaon in Assam's Kamrup district on Tuesday.

The programme was attended by District Commissioner of Kamrup, Deba Kumar Mishra, Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Parishad, Siddhartha Goswami, ASRLM, DPM Sumit Prasad Das and other senior officials of the district administration.

Altogether 71 laptops were distributed to DigiPay Sakhis during the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, the District Commissioner said, in line with the rest of the nation, Assam is working relentlessly towards digitisation of financial transactions in the age of smartphones.

He said online payments and mo-



bile transactions are increasingly becoming the norm and therefore the

role of DigiPay Sakhis at the grassroots level is crucial.

Security forces continue search operation to trace hostage by armed groups in Manipur

Imphal, May 20: Security forces have been conducting search operations in the hill areas of the Kangpokpi district in search of people still held hostage by armed groups.

Sniffer dogs have also been deployed for the operation.

"Combing and search operations are being continued by security forces to rescue the missing persons in the hill ranges surrounding Leilon Vaiphei, Songtun, Khunkho and P Molding villages of Kangpokpi district," police said in a statement on Wednesday. Shutdowns and an indefinite blockade over the

hostage crisis continued to disrupt normal lives in the hill districts of the violence-hit state, even as two church teams visited Kangpokpi and Senapati districts on Tuesday to try and broker peace between the Kuki and Naga communities. United Naga Council (UNC), an apex body, has criticised the state government over the failure to rescue six Naga hostages from the custody of Kuki groups. It launched an "inter-district economic blockade" along the national highways in Manipur's Naga areas until the safe rescue and release of all the hostages.

Love Trap Used for Human Trafficking; Rising Crimes Against Women Trigger Serious Concern in Assam

Guwahati, May 20 (Agency): Amid rising incidents of crimes against women in Assam, a deeply disturbing case of human trafficking has surfaced from the Garchuk area of Guwahati, where a minor girl was allegedly trapped in a fake love relationship, abducted and later sold outside the state.

According to police sources, the trafficking gang first took the victim to Bihar, where she was reportedly kept in a brothel for several days before being sold in Rajasthan. During the investigation, police safely rescued the girl from the traffickers' custody and arrested three accused, including a woman, in connection with the case. The minor girl had allegedly been lured away from the Katabari area of Guwahati through a romantic relationship trap.

Acting on a FIR lodged by the victim's mother, police arrested the prime accused Abu Bakkar Siddique from Chhaygaon in Kamrup district, while Ankit Kumar and Kajali Kumar were apprehended from Bihar.

The incident has once again exposed the dangerous methods being adopted by active human trafficking networks operating across states. Preliminary investigation has revealed that such gangs are increasingly using fake love affairs, false promises of marriage and emotional manipulation to target young girls and women. The repeated emergence of such cases has triggered serious concern over women's safety and security in the state.

Police suspect that the arrested accused may be linked to a larger inter-state human trafficking network. A detailed investigation is underway and efforts are on to identify and apprehend other persons involved in the racket. Social organisations and local residents have demanded stronger surveillance in vulnerable areas and stricter action against trafficking syndicates.

Notably, on Tuesday, South Kamrup's Jorshimuli Police also arrested one Jiaur Rahman from Batahidia Char area in Chamaria in connection with another woman abduction case. Police said



the accused already has cases related to kidnapping of women registered against him at Chhaygaon Police Station.

The continuous rise in incidents of abduction and human trafficking has further intensified public concern regarding law and order and the safety of women across Assam.

International military exercise Pragati 2026 commences in Meghalaya

Shillong, May 20: Exercise PRAGATI 2026, a multilateral military exercise involving 12 friendly nations, commenced on Wednesday at Umroi Military Station in Meghalaya. Participating countries include Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

The visiting contingents received a traditional welcome from the Indian Army upon arrival. PRAGATI short for Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region aims to strengthen military cooperation, promote professional exchange and enhance coordination among participating armies. The exercise is being conducted in the spirit of equality, friendship and mutual respect.

Assam Chief Secretary directs strict compliance with Solid Waste Management Rules

Guwahati, May 20: Assam Chief Secretary Dr Ravi Kota has ordered strict compliance of the provisions of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules and the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court relating to scientific waste management and environmental safeguards.

He gave the directive during a video conference with all District Commissioners and concerned departments to review implementation of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026 across Assam. Dr Kota emphasized strengthening of source segregation, door-to-door waste collection systems, decentralized waste processing

infrastructure, and scientific remediation of legacy waste dump sites. He asked districts to ensure identification and notification of bulk waste generators, including markets, educational institutions, hospitals, industries, government establishments, tea gardens and other large entities.

The Chief Secretary reviewed the constitution of district-level Special Cells for monitoring implementation and directed all districts to ensure regular compliance reporting and monitoring mechanisms. He stressed the need for coordinated action by Urban Local Bodies, Panchayati Raj Institutions and district administrations for ef-



fective implementation of waste management practices at the grassroots level. He directed districts to identify tourist destinations, pilgrim centres and other high-footfall areas for focused solid waste management interventions.

Dr Kota also laid emphasis on awareness generation, accountability of stakeholders, regular review meetings and strengthening of grievance redressal mechanisms to ensure sustainable and scientific waste management across the state.

Manipur Sees Widespread Protests Demanding Release of Abducted Naga Men

Imphal, May 20: A sit-in protest demanding the safe release of six abducted Naga men was held at Tribal Market in New Checkon, Imphal East, on Tuesday under the banner of the Naga Women Union.

Similar protest demonstrations were also reported from several Naga-inhabited districts across Manipur, including Senapati, Noney, Ukhrul, Kamjong, Churachandpur, Chandel and Tamenglong.

A large number of demonstrators gathered at the protest site expressing anger and concern over the continued captivity of the six men nearly a week after their abduction. Protesters carried placards with slogans such as "Human lives, not hostages", "Bring our people home alive", "Bring back six hostages safe" and "Don't test our patience".

Addressing the gathering, Houreilu Kamei accused the government of failing to take decisive steps to secure the release of the abducted men, who she alleged were being held by a suspected

Kuki militant group.

She said repeated appeals had been made to the authorities, but the response from the government remained unsatisfactory. Kamei further alleged that the administration was not acting proactively and termed the lack of urgency in rescuing the abducted civilians as "very unfortunate".

Describing the ongoing crisis in Manipur as a "dark and melancholic phase", she said such incidents had sadly become "the new normal" in the state. She stressed that the issue must be resolved politically through dialogue and negotiations.

Another protester alleged that the six men had been abducted from Leilon Vaiphei village on May 13 and questioned why central security forces had failed to take direct action in the matter. "The Naga men were picked up from a Kuki area by Kuki people. Why can't the security forces directly interrogate the residents of Leilon Vaiphei village to secure their release?" the protester asked.

AGP MLAs Visit Swahid Smarak Kshetra to Honour Assam Agitation Martyrs

Guwahati, May 20: The newly-elected Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) MLAs visited the Swahid Smarak Kshetra here and paid tributes to the martyrs of the Assam Movement on Wednesday. Led by AGP chief Atul Bora, the team of legislators comprised Keshab Mahanta, Prithviraj Rava, Tapan Das, Dharmeswar Roy, Bikash Saikia, Dipak Kumar Das, Jibeswar Roy and Prakash Chandra Das. "I joined the newly elected AGP MLAs in paying heartfelt tribute to the 860 martyrs of the historic Assam Movement. The memorial stands as a symbol of the great struggle and sacrifice made to protect the identity, culture, and rights of the Assamese people.

We offered our sincere homage to the brave sons and daughters of Assam whose sacrifices will always remain an inspiration for future generations," the AGP president stated on social media. Bora, who was recently sworn in as a Cabinet minister, said that the Assam government, under the visionary leadership of chief minister

Himanta Biswa Sarma, remains fully committed to the proper and effective implementation of all the clauses of the Assam Accord. "Our government is continuously working to safeguard and protect the interests, identity, and future of the indigenous communities of Assam.

It is also a matter of great pride for every Assamese that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah have paid solemn tribute to the martyrs of the Assam Movement at Swahid Smarak Kshetra," he said. The memorial was inaugurated by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on the occasion of Swahid Diwas on December 10 last year. "I have already directed the senior officials of the Implementation of Assam Accord department to take up 100-days action plan, and discharge their responsibilities with utmost sincerity so that the objectives and spirit of the Assam Accord are fulfilled in letter and spirit," Bora, who holds the Assam Accord implementation portfolio, said.



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The Need for More Inclusive Cities

Cities are often designed around convenience for the majority while overlooking the needs of vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, the elderly, and children. Broken footpaths, inaccessible public transport, and lack of ramps or safe crossings limit mobility and indepen-

dence for many citizens. Inclusive urban planning is not simply about infrastructure—it is about ensuring dignity and equal access in public life. Cities become truly modern only when they are accessible to everyone. Development must include all sections of society rather than leaving some behind.

Pricks that are sharp



During a period of extreme external uncertainty brought on by the West Asian crisis, two successive increases in fuel prices revealed the extent of India’s economic vulnerability. Due to increased transportation, production, and home consumption expenses, the prices of gasoline, diesel, and LPG are currently spreading inflation throughout the economy. Petroleum and natural gas prices had already increased more than 67% year over year in April, and analysts predict that increases in fuel prices alone might contribute 10–25 basis points to inflation in the upcoming months. A nation that imports 50% of its natural gas and over 90% of its oil is seeing its bills rise due to crude oil prices above \$100 per barrel. All sectors are affected. Prices for bread, milk, and home-cooked meals have all gone up, and major FMCG companies have enacted price increases ranging from 3% to 7%. Due to limited employment creation and stagnating pay, household budgets are under increasing pressure. Interestingly, India’s employment elasticity fell from 0.41% in the 1990s to 0.01% in 2026, suggesting that formal employment is hardly increasing at all as a result of economic growth. This problem will be made worse by the development of artificial intelligence, which is predicted to eliminate 20 to 25 million employment in India by 2030. Under such circumstances, rising inflation directly jeopardizes livelihoods by lowering demand for consumption and compelling companies to reduce expenses. As food,

transportation, and energy prices continue to climb more quickly than incomes, lower-middle-class households, small businesses, and informal workers are most severely impacted. India currently faces three concurrent economic challenges that it has little control over: a worsening job crisis, a drastically declining currency, and inflation brought on by the cost of imported energy. Imports are now significantly more expensive because the rupee has already dropped more than 11% over the last year and hit a record low of Rs 96.39 versus the dollar. Following the West Asian crisis, foreign portfolio investors withdrew about Rs 2 trillion from Indian stocks, and the merchandise trade gap increased from \$20.7 billion in March to \$28.4 billion in April. Even worse, there are significant costs associated with any possible policy response. Aggressively defending the rupee runs the risk of eroding reserves, which have already dropped from \$728 billion to \$690 billion since February. Increasing interest rates in an effort to stabilize the currency will further hinder employment, growth, and investment. Fuel price subsidies would significantly increase the state’s financial burden. Lower energy costs, consistent capital inflows, and controllable inflation all contributed to India’s previous period of macroeconomic stability. The Goldilocks phase is over. The economy has entered a phase where currency weakness, unemployment, and inflation are compounding one other without an easy or quick fix.

The Bitter Economics of Sacrifice and PM Modi’s Austerity Appeal

The word “austerity” has a harsh etymology. The Greek root *austeros* originally referred to a harsh, drying, astringent taste on the tongue, similar to the bitterness left by unripe fruit or rough wine, rather than austerity or state discipline. The closest modern counterpart might be “yuck.” The fact that the word made its way from Latin and Old French to dominate the contemporary vocabulary of crisis administration shows how governments have searched for a word that would protect them while leaving the people with the bitter dosage. The deepest roots of austerity are spiritual rather than financial; in sermons by those referencing scripture, this idea ran parallel to penance. Austerity is strengthened by religious convictions; for example, Islam honors *Zuhd* and supports *Wasaf*, while Jews are aware of the *Tzena* era. While Hinduism’s *tapas* burns impurity with the inner fire of self-control and denial, Christian monasticism elevates renunciation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced his own brand of passive austerity earlier this month, urging people to adopt work from home and virtual learning, avoid traveling abroad, and refrain from purchasing gold. The rupee’s current surge above Rs 96 per dollar, which has moved India from fourth to sixth place and is vying for the top spot, is undoubtedly the main factor. All of this at about \$110 per barrel for Brent yo-yos. The economy is overburdened because increased expenses are projected to add more than \$90 billion. The price of war and a declining currency are becoming apparent. For example, the GST receipts in April reached a record of Rs 2.43 lakh crore. However, the government was unable to celebrate the accomplishment. The piece told a disturbing tale. While import-related GST sales increased by 25.8%, domestic sales GST (i.e., taxes collected on local sales) only increased by 4.3%. The rupee is both the cause and the result of its current situation; each decline in value causes outflows that exacerbate the decline. Those who claim that a declining rupee boosts exports and



attracts investment are being ridiculed by data. The spreadsheets do not contain all of the expenses and suffering. It’s a treble and double whammy. Thousands of facilities lack gas to power their operations due to the molecular contagion; from Morbi’s pottery kilns to Panipat-Sonipat’s textile centers, footwear facilities are facing an existential dilemma. Compared to the 1990s, India’s economy has grown significantly in size and complexity. It is now more connected than ever with the global economy of commodities and services. Approximately 30% of India’s exports are thought to rely on imported intermediates. All five of the main exports—refined petroleum, machinery, jewelry, electrical and pharmaceuticals—need imported components. A plea does not constitute a policy. The appeal made by PM Modi is more of a sermon on austerity, and a sermon is not yet a policy. You may now contend that worries that conditions in West Asia might worsen are the root of the call for austerity. Another argument is that the Prime Minister is promoting his *Atmanirbhar Bharat* initiative. This, that, both, and more could be the case. In actuality, PM Modi takes great satisfaction in his ability to communicate with the general public. He is calling for dollar austerity by asking them to participate in the defense

of the national currency in addition to urging them to consume less. Social and economic issues are encountered in the appeal. Please refrain from purchasing gold. The chatterati class of analysts does not perceive the yellow metal as such. Gold can be used as an investment, a hedge, a liquid liquidity pool, and a crisis management tool in an economy where enterprises still have to go through a lot to get credit. Therefore, it is not shocking that gold mortgage businesses have made loans totaling more than Rs 15 lakh crore. Thousands of craftspeople and small businesses are supported by the gold economy. India is thought to have between 8 and 10 million marriages. Politically, the heat of *tapas* worked, but it burned economic development and consumerism. The perspective is significantly sharpened by India’s history of austerity. The year 1991, when India had to pledge gold and seek a rescue from the IMF, is still the most instructive chapter. Demand was reduced by the devaluation, tax increases, subsidy cuts, and devaluation, but growth was made possible by the revolutionary steps taken in the demolition of the Licence Raj. The imposed austerity of the 2016 demonetization reduced economic activity as GDP slowed and jobs were lost. Politically, the heat of *tapas* worked, but it burned economic development and consumer-

ism. How the appeal impacts the economy is the important question. The economy functions similarly to a watch, with numerous tiny and big wheels interlocking, powered by the mainspring, controlled by the escapement and gear train, and paced by the balance wheel. The only reason the hour, minute, and second hands move is because each component rotates in unison. The true question is whether stopping or slowing one or two of the watch’s components will still allow it to keep time. In actuality, consumption reductions have both direct and indirect effects, much like private investment does. The underlying conflicts of austerity are most harsh when it comes to the growth dilemma. The theoretical promise is straightforward: fiscal discipline restores market confidence, sovereign borrowing costs fall, private investment rushes in to fill the gap left by retreating government spending, and growth resumes. It turns out that reality is less cooperative. And the Greeks know a thing about *austeros* and bad taste. Athens was transformed into an austerity lab in 2010. The neat reasoning was that Greece required discipline to recover from living beyond its means. Ten years of destruction ensued, with hospitals running out of medications and GDP declining. In “Austerity - A history of a dangerous idea,” Mark Blyth examined its past and came to the conclusion that “Austerity doesn’t work. Period.” Cutting during a downturn not only lowers the deficit but also the economy from which the deficit must be repaid, as Keynes explains through the idea of the fiscal multiplier.

As the numerator decreases, so does the denominator. “Austerity has never worked” is the mantra of Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz. Both in principle and in practice, it is a failure. Some have suggested that PM Modi’s call for dollar austerity is aimed at a certain group of wealthy urban households whose spending habits contribute to a portion of the current account or dollar leakage. Given his influence among wealthy demographics, there may be a change in behavior. This could

manifest, for example, in the quarterly figures of major players like Titan, airlines like Indigo, and tourism-related hospitality companies. Almost 60% of India’s GDP comes from private consumption. The second-order effect on sentiments, which could result in a drag on headline GDP, business revenues, and eventually tax receipts crucial to maintaining the fundamentals in balance, is more concerning than direct dollar austerity.” Its imposition in Germany after World War I, according to economist Clara Mattei, paved the way for fascism in Europe” is how economist Clara Mattei put it: “Austerity dropped anchor at different times in different conditions” in the fiscal politics of economics over the previous century. Following widespread riots in January 1936, France’s 1932–1936 austerity measures, which severely damaged the country’s economy, were put on hold. The term “austerity” became a derogatory term after Chancellor Stafford Cripps implemented the Cripps Austerity in the United Kingdom in 1947.

Austerity in the UK in 2010 didn’t work any better. Canada’s 1994 exercise is essentially the exception to the norm, as it was successful because Canadian output was swallowed by the US boom. The truth is that India’s dollar gap was evident long before the conflict in West Asia; it stems from a decline in net foreign direct investment, the relative underperformance of Indian corporations, and the attraction of alternative yields. The fact that FIIs sold more than Rs 1.6 lakh crore in 2025 and more than Rs 2.1 lakh crore so far this year indicates structural flaws in the competitiveness of the economy. The question is not whether India must safeguard its currency, but rather how it must do so. India must look for unconventional ways to overcome the investment and resource gap in order to enhance growth in uncertain times, such as dollarizing state assets, given its demographics and deficits. John Maynard Keynes once said, “The boom, not the slump, is the right time for austerity at the Treasury.”

Although France is pessimistic, far-right rule is not inevitable

One comforting aspect of France is its consistency throughout time: trains continue to operate largely on schedule, coffee in the country of cafés is still unfit for consumption, and the intellectual elite consistently offers sophisticated variants on the same theme: France is constantly on the verge of collapse, regardless of the season. Fatalism is, of course, a habit in France, and the current atmosphere feels familiar. I was recently treated to a classic balanced menu at a dinner with friends in Paris: excellent cuisine and atmosphere combined with apocalyptic predictions. As he chopped off the head of an asparagus, one man observed, “France stands at the abyss after nine years of Emmanuel Macron’s right-leaning rule.” Another said, cooling her forehead with a glass of icy white wine, “The country hovers between civil war and financial bankruptcy.” There was little consensus under the gray Paris sky that blended into the zinc rooftops of the city. However, the French appear to have come to the same conclusion a year before the 2027 presidential election: the far-right

National Rally (RN) will win the Élysée Palace for the first time. Author Michel Houellebecq famously remarked, “France has a talent for depression,” before adding, with his usual ambivalence, “I resemble France.” It may have also been an admission of how blatantly incorrect Houellebecq has frequently been regarding French politics. In 2017, he said Macron had little chance of defeating Marine Le Pen. In a nation where Islamophobia is accepted and cocktail hour is revered, he had the audacity to envision a fundamentalist Islamist party winning the 2022 presidential election in his book *Submission*. Thus, the query comes up again. In the history of a nation prone to hysteria and pessimism, is the worry around the presidential election next year just another fleeting moment? The far right has never been closer to power, to be sure. Recent surveys indicate that the RN candidate, whether Marine Le Pen or Jordan Bardella, would prevail in every conceivable runoff, with the exception of Macron’s former prime minister Édouard Philippe. However, it is far from guaranteed that Philippe will

emerge as the center-right candidate, let alone go to the second round, given that he is now under investigation for alleged corruption and that about half of the French political elite is considering running for president. Over the past ten years, France’s electorate has moved so far to the right that a fragmented left will have a difficult time winning. Therefore, the key question may be whether left-wing voters can swallow their pride and support the center-right candidate in the runoff, just like in the previous two presidential elections. As mayor of Le Havre, a historically working-class port city, Philippe is still somewhat respected by left-leaning people. However, many were just fed up with constantly having to select the lesser of two evils and maintain the center-right in power, even before prosecutors launched their probe on Tuesday. Additionally, some members of the non-far-right electorate appear to almost want the RN disaster to occur. from nihilism. due to a desire for spectacle. But more often than not, it’s just resignation. Sometimes, French folks look like

someone who is constantly hearing on the news that there is a burglar out in the neighborhood. They finally placed the jewelry box on the porch, exhausted from terror. Maybe by next year, France will decide to let RN to assume control instead of continuing to cope with the fear. However, there are two historical lessons that are important to keep in mind. First, political elites and experts forecast the results of French presidential elections a year in advance, therefore they rarely happen. There are countless examples. When Dominique Strauss-Kahn was forced to withdraw from the campaign due to his detention on rape allegations (which were ultimately dismissed), François Hollande emerged, even though no one had him on their bingo cards for victory in 2012. Few people predicted that Macron, a young, little-known former banker turned politician, would win in 2017. Therefore, no, the die hasn’t been cast yet. The presidential contest is still very much up for grabs. The second lesson is more intriguing. To the best of my knowledge, the only nation experienc-

ing what I would refer to as a reverse “shy far-right voter” situation is France. In presidential runoffs, polls frequently overstate support for registered nurses. Marine Le Pen received 41.45% in 2022, whereas the average of all polls taken within a year of the first round placed her at 44.2%. She finished at 33.9% in 2017, when a comparable average of polls placed her at 37.78%. Voters are generally unwilling to acknowledge that they support the far right. Things are different in France. People may declare in the locker room or at the bar that they will either vote RN to stick it to Paris or abstain. In the same manner that they continue to drink the awful coffee that everyone loves to hate, many people still vote for candidates that represent the current quo. Apathy is also a kind of performance in *blasé* France. Additionally, the majority of French people are surprisingly satisfied with their current life, despite surveys revealing intense fear about the future. According to the Ipsos Happiness Index, 75% of participants reported being happy in 2026. Compared to 2024, that was even 4% higher.

Additionally, the majority of French inhabitants are still conservative and asset-holders, with over 60% of them owning their homes. Indeed, France still has a taste for grandiose political exploits. Every protest cycle serves as a reminder that the revolutionary liturgy is still very much alive. However, only once in the Fifth Republic’s history has France elected a president with a really radical platform: the socialist François Mitterrand in 1981. RN, which seeks a revolution of a completely different, unsettling kind, is currently the only radical force with a plausible route to power. However, it will be important to remember the poet Paul Claudel’s caution to his fellow countrymen as the 2027 presidential campaign picks up steam after the summer: “The worst is not always certain. France’s strong voluntarist and idealist tradition—which gave rise to the nation of liberty, equality, and fraternity—is the reason behind its fatalist and depressing tendencies. Instead of being apathetic, the nation’s political life is sustained by this tension. For this reason, there are grounds for optimism.”

GOP Senator Cassidy Loses Primary After Trump Backs His Opponent

Washington: Republican Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, a two-term incumbent, lost his primary after President Trump backed his challenger, Congressman Julia Letlow. Cassidy is the first GOP senator in nearly a decade to lose renomination. President Trump had vowed revenge against Senator Cassidy after he voted to impeach Trump following the January 6 insurrection. In his concession speech on Saturday, Senator Cassidy made an apparent reference to Trump, saying, “Our country is not about one individual.”Sen. Bill Cassidy: “And when you participate in democracy, sometimes it doesn’t turn out the way you want it to. But you don’t pout. You don’t whine. You don’t claim the election was stolen. You don’t find a reason why.”President Trump endorsed Representative Julia Letlow, who finished first in Saturday’s primary with 45% of the vote. Louisiana state Treasurer John Fleming came in second with 28%. Both of them will advance to a runoff in June. President Trump took to Truth Social to celebrate Senator Cassidy’s defeat and went after Kentucky’s Republican Congressman Thomas Massie, who co-authored the bill compelling the Justice Department to release the Epstein files. Trump wrote, “Tom Massie of Kentucky, the worst and most unreliable Republican Congressman in the history of our Country, is an even bigger insult to our Nation than Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, who suffered an unprecedented loss tonight by not even being allowed to run in the Republican Primary. This is the first time such a thing has ever happened to a sitting U.S. Senator!” President Trump escalated his threats against Iran on Sunday, posting on Truth Social, “For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won’t be anything left of them.” Ceasefire negotiations remain deadlocked over Iran’s demands for war reparations, an end to the U.S. blockade and a halt to fighting in Lebanon. On Sunday, a drone strike sparked a fire at an electrical generator on the perimeter of the UAE’s Barakah nuclear power plant, the first and only nuclear power station on the Arabian Peninsula. No group claimed responsibility, but the UAE has faced repeated Iranian drone and missile attacks since the war began in February. Meanwhile, The New York Times reports that Israel built two covert military outposts in Iraq’s western desert in advance of its war against Iran, with preparations for at least one site dating back to late 2024. According to The Wall Street Journal, Baghdad had notified Washington in late March over suspected covert military activity, calling it a violation of Iraqi sovereignty. Israel killed at least six people in southern Lebanon, including three paramedics on Friday, just hours after the U.S. State Department announced Israel and Lebanon had agreed to extend their ceasefire by 45 days, following two days of negotiations in Washington. Israel then continued strikes into the weekend, killing at least five more people while injuring over a dozen in a series of air attacks on southern and eastern Lebanon on Sunday. More than 670 people have been killed by Israeli strikes on Lebanon since the ceasefire first took effect in mid-April. And the number killed since early March is rapidly approaching 3,000. More than 1 million people, one in five Lebanese, have been forced to flee their homes. Israel has assassinated Izz al-Din al-Haddad, the head of Hamas’s military wing, in a strike on a residential building in Gaza City on Friday. Al-Haddad was killed alongside his wife and their 19-year-old daughter. Hamas



condemned what it called Israel’s “treacherous and cowardly assassination.” On Sunday, Israeli attacks killed at least eight Palestinians across the Gaza Strip; three victims were community kitchen workers, according to Al Jazeera. Israeli attacks have killed at least 871 Palestinians in Gaza since the so-called ceasefire took effect last year. This is Walaa Baroud, whose brother was killed in an Israeli strike. Israeli forces have begun intercepting ships with a Gaza-bound humanitarian aid flotilla off the coast of Cyprus. The Global Sumud Flotilla says Israeli military vessels intercepted the fleet in international waters, actions it condemned as “illegal acts of piracy.” Organizers of the flotilla said Israeli forces had intercepted 17 boats and that contact had been lost with nearly two dozen vessels in the eastern Mediterranean. The flotilla had been attempting to breach Israel’s maritime blockade of Gaza to deliver humanitarian aid to Palestinians. This is an activist aboard one of the aid ships.Martina Comparelli: “We are being intercepted in broad daylight. The occupation forces have no shame whatsoever. They’re doing it in front of the whole world, because they know that everything they did in the past has been met with full impunity. This means that this is the moment to mobilize as much as we can to go into the streets and show that the people of the world are against their criminal acts. This is how far they’re willing to go to continue their genocide of the Palestinian people. More than 50 ships with the Global Sumud Flotilla set sail from the Turkish port city of Marmaris last week. Israeli media reported that Israel’s Navy will transfer the arrested activists to the Israeli port of Ashdod. Walaa Baroud: “Every citizen in the Gaza Strip is at risk of being directly hit by the Israeli occupation at any moment. The occupation makes no distinction between charitable workers, journalists, security personnel, Civil Defense workers, security forces, emergency responders or doctors. The Israeli occupation has targeted every segment of the Palestinian people. The Israeli war continues. It has not stopped to this day, and the bloodshed continues, and the number of martyrs increases daily.” Israel’s Cabinet has approved plans to build a military compound at the former site of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees in occupied East Jerusalem. Israel bulldozed UNRWA’s headquarters in January after seizing the site last year in an act condemned by the U.N. and governments around the world.Meanwhile, Israeli authorities have forced dozens of Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem’s al-Bustan district to make way for a biblical theme park called the King’s Garden. The Guardian reports some Palestinians were forced to demolish their own family homes, where multiple generations previously lived.

CIA Chief Travels to Havana as Cuba’s Oil Reserves Run Dry Amid U.S. Fuel Blockade

Cuba: CIA Director John Ratcliffe traveled to Havana on Thursday to meet with Cuban officials as the Trump administration ramps up pressure on the island. Ratcliffe’s trip came a day after Cuba announced it had run out of diesel and fuel oil due to the U.S. blockade and sanctions. For decades, the CIA has carried out covert operations inside Cuba, from orchestrating the Bay of Pigs invasion to repeatedly attempting to assassinate the late leader Fidel Castro. Meanwhile, the Trump administration is reportedly taking steps to indict Castro’s 94-year-old brother Raúl, who served as Cuban president from 2008 to 2018. In related news, more than 30 House Democrats have signed a letter urging the Trump administration not to take military action on Cuba and to lift the blockade. The House of Representatives has rejected another effort to rein in President Trump’s ability to wage war against Iran. On Thursday, House members failed to advance an Iran war powers resolution on a tied vote of 212 to 212, after Democrat Jared Golden of Maine joined most Republicans in opposition. It was the third failed attempt by House Democrats to end Trump’s attacks on Iran. This comes as NBC News reports the Pentagon is considering renaming “Operation Epic Fury” to “Operation Sledgehammer” in a bid to circumvent a 60-day limit under the War Powers Act for the president to order military strikes without congressional approval. Foreign ministers from the BRICS group of nations have gathered in India’s capital New Delhi, with the issues of Iran and the Strait of Hormuz high on the agenda. On Thursday, Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi addressed the summit, appealing to BRICS countries to help resist U.S. and Israeli attacks.Abbas Araghchi: “To virtually everyone in this room, our resistance against U.S. bullying is not an unfamiliar battle. So many of us encounter slight variations of the same repugnant coercion. It is high time for us to jointly step up and work towards making clear that those practices belong in the dustbin of history. Today, our nations are closer to one another than ever before, and we cannot ignore the common and dangerous challenge we all face.” President Trump has departed China after a two-day state visit to Beijing, where he met with President Xi Jin-



ping. Their meeting failed to secure a breakthrough in efforts to forge a U.S. peace deal with Iran or to reopen traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. On the flight back from China, President Trump told reporters he has not yet decided on whether he will move forward with a new \$14 billion arms package for Taiwan. During their talks, President Xi warned Trump that differences over Taiwan could lead to conflict between China and the U.S. Lebanon’s National News Agency reports an Israeli “double-tap” strike on a car earlier today killed two men and damaged three ambulances. It followed an overnight bombing by Israel that killed four people in a house in the town of Harouf. UNICEF reports at least 59 children in Lebanon have been killed or wounded by Israeli strikes over the past week, despite a U.S.-brokered ceasefire that was supposed to have taken effect in April. The latest attacks came as Lebanese and Israeli officials in Washington began a third round of U.S.-brokered direct talks on Thursday; Hezbollah is not participating. The head of the U.S. Border Patrol resigned on Thursday, effective immediately. Michael Banks had served as Border Patrol chief since January 2025, overseeing the Trump administration’s violent mass deportation efforts and the deployment of masked federal agents to U.S. cities. In a statement, Banks said his sudden departure would give him “time to enjoy family and life.” His resignation came just weeks after the Washington Examiner reported that Banks had “bragged” to Border Patrol colleagues about paying for sex with prostitutes while traveling in Colombia and Thailand over the

course of a decade, prompting an investigation into the claims that ended abruptly last year while Kristi Noem served as homeland security secretary.In Jerusalem, Israeli nationalists chanted “Death to Arabs” and “May your villages burn” on Thursday as they joined a state-sponsored march near the Damascus Gate in the Old City to mark the 59th anniversary of Israel’s capture and annexation of East Jerusalem. Several journalists were harassed and assaulted as mobs of Israelis attacked Palestinians in Jerusalem’s Muslim Quarter, vandalizing storefronts and throwing items at bystanders.This comes as the U.N. Children’s Fund said Thursday Israeli soldiers and settlers have killed 70 Palestinian children in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem since early 2025, amounting to around one child killed per week. Another 850 children were injured by Israeli attacks during that period. This is UNICEF spokesperson James Elder. James Elder: “March 2026 saw the highest number of Palestinians injured by settler attacks in the last 20 years, and we’re seeing attacks become increasingly coordinated. So, documented incidents include children shot, stabbed, children beaten and children pepper-sprayed.” Today, Palestinians around the world are commemorating “Nakba Day.” Nakba means “the catastrophe” in Arabic. It was 78 years ago that over 750,000 Palestinians were violently displaced and dispossessed from hundreds of towns and villages in Palestine, and thousands more killed, during the creation of the state of Israel. After headlines, we’ll speak with Muhammad Shehada, writer and analyst from Gaza.

Trump Says He Called Off “A Very Major Attack to Give Iran

Israeli: President Trump said Monday he had postponed an imminent U.S. attack on Iran at the request of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Trump’s reversal came after he repeatedly threatened to launch new strikes, warning Iran “there won’t be anything left of them.”President Donald Trump: “We were getting ready to do a very major attack tomorrow, and I’ve put it off for a little while, hopefully maybe forever, but possibly for a little while, because we’ve had very big discussions with Iran, and we’ll see what they amount to.”It’s not clear whether there have been any breakthroughs in stalled talks to end the U.S. and Israeli war on Iran. Iranian negotiators continue to demand an end to the U.S. naval blockade of Iran’s ports, the release of Iran’s frozen assets and the lifting of international sanctions. Iran’s Foreign Ministry said it remains skeptical, after President Trump twice ordered attacks on Iran while negotiations were underway.Esmail Baghaei: “We approach every diplomatic process with deep distrust and serious skepticism in order to safeguard the national interests of Iran. Iran is aware that given the U.S.’s track record of undermining negotiations, it might repeat the same actions at any moment.”Republic of the Congo, Uganda or South Sudan in the past three weeks. The order came as the World Health Organization said an outbreak of Ebola virus in the DRC and Uganda has reached 500 suspected cases and 130 suspected deaths, with those numbers expected to rise. This is the WHO’s Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus: “I’m deeply concerned about the scale and speed of the epidemic.” The WHO says the DRC will open three Ebola treatment centers in the eastern Ituri province, where the outbreak began. Meanwhile, the Centers for Disease Control says a U.S. doctor tested positive for Ebola after working with a medical missionary group in Congo. Dr. Peter Stafford was exposed to the virus while treating patients in the capital of Ituri province. He’s been evacuated to Germany for treatment. Click here to see our interview with Dr. Craig Spencer, who was positive for Ebola virus about a decade ago but now is critiquing U.S. policy on Ebola and other viruses. In California, two teenage attackers fatally shot

three people on Monday at the Islamic Center of San Diego, the largest mosque in San Diego County. Among the dead was a security guard, Amin Abdullah, a father of eight, who police said played a pivotal role in saving lives. The suspects, aged 17 and 19, were found dead from apparent self-inflicted gunshot wounds in a car near the scene. Police are investigating the attack as a hate crime. Law enforcement officials told CNN that hate speech was scrawled on one of the weapons. A suicide note that contained writings about racial pride was also found, according to the officials. The Council on American-Islamic Relations noted the attack comes as anti-Muslim bias complaints reached their highest level on record last year, with 8,683 complaints filed nationwide. This is Taha Hassane, the imam and director of the Islamic Center of San DiegoIsraeli forces are continuing to intercept ships with a Gaza-bound humanitarian aid flotilla off the coast of Cyprus. More than 50 ships with the Global Sumud Flotilla set sail from the Turkish port city of Marmaris last week. According to organizers, Israeli forces have intercepted 41 of their boats in the eastern Mediterranean, about 250 nautical miles from Gaza, which is under an Israeli maritime blockade. Video shows armed Israeli commandos climbing onto boats. Three hundred thirty-seven activists have been taken into custody. Ten boats are still sailing toward Gaza. Meanwhile, thousands of protesters took to the streets in Italy and Greece in solidarity with the Gaza-bound activists as world leaders condemned the raid. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim wrote on social media, “The world cannot continue to bow to tyranny and corruption. The oppression against Palestinians and those who mobilize and deliver humanitarian aid must be stopped immediately, and Israel must face justice and accountability!” This is Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: “I urge in the strongest terms this act of piracy and banditry against the passengers of hope on the Sumud flotilla, comprised of citizens of 40 different countries. We are taking the necessary steps to ensure the safe return of our citizens on the flotilla. We call on the international community to take action against Israel’s lawless and rule-breaking actions.”

Israeli strikes on Lebanon kill at least 19 as clashes with Hezbollah continue despite ceasefire

Israeli: Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon on Tuesday killed at least 19 people, including four women and three children, Lebanon’s health ministry said, the latest in near-daily attacks from both sides that have not stopped despite a fragile, US-brokered ceasefire.Israel’s military did not immediately comment on the casualties or specific incidents, but said that between Monday afternoon and Tuesday afternoon, it had targeted more than 25 sites of Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon The Israel-Hezbollah latest fighting began on 2 March, with the Lebanese militant group firing rockets at Israel, two days after the US and Israel attacked Iran. In Beirut, the government said a single strike on the village of Deir Qanoun al Nahr in the coastal Tyre province killed 10 people, including three children and three women. Three were wounded, including a child. The ministry provided no further details about the strike but the state-run National News Agency said it destroyed a house, leaving several people under the rubble. Their bodies were pulled out later in the day.According to the ministry, another airstrike – this one on the southern city of Nabatieh – killed four people and wounded 10 others, including two women. A third strike in the nearby village of Kfar Sir killed five people, including one woman.The latest deaths came a day after the death toll in the latest round of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah surpassed 3,000, and two days after the US-brokered truce that



has been in place since 17 April, was extended for 45 days.Israel has since invaded southern Lebanon and bombarded its capital, Beirut, and other areas, saying it is targeting Hezbollah infrastructure. Hezbollah, both a militant group and a powerful political organisation in Lebanon, has resisted pressure to disarm, including by the Lebanese government.More than a million people have been displaced in Lebanon by

the fighting, with some sheltering in tents along roads and the Mediterranean Sea in Beirut.Israel, meanwhile, has struggled to halt frequent Hezbollah drone attacks targeting its troops on Lebanese soil and northern Israeli border towns. Israel’s military said one of its soldiers was killed on Tuesday in battle in southern Lebanon, raising the Israeli troops’ death toll to 21 since the latest conflict started.

Minnesota Officials Charge ICE Agent Immigrant & Falsely Reported What Happened

Minnesota: State prosecutors in Minnesota have filed criminal charges against an ICE officer who allegedly shot a Venezuelan immigrant in north Minneapolis in January, then lied about what happened. Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty announced Monday that federal agent Christian Castro will face four counts of second-degree assault and one count of falsely reporting a crime when he allegedly shot Julio Sosa-Celis through a door. Federal authorities have refused to cooperate with the investigation, as well as separate probes into the

killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti.Emilia González Avalos, executive director of the Minnesota-based social justice organization Unidos MN, welcomes the charges as a victory for civil society and the rule of law. allegedly shot a Venezuelan immigrant in north Minneapolis during an immigration raid in January, then lied about what happened. On Monday, the Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty announced federal agent Christian Castro will face four counts of second-degree assault and one count of falsely reporting a crime.The four counts of assault

are a result of Mr. Castro shooting through the front door of a residence with the intent to cause fear of immediate bodily harm or death to the four adults who were just inside the door. These charges have activated a nationwide warrant for his arrest. Venezuelan immigrant Julio Sosa-Celis suffered a leg wound when Castro allegedly shot him through the door. The Trump administration initially claimed that Castro fired in self-defense after accusing Sosa-Celis and another man of beating an officer with a broom handle and a snow shovel.

Bandhani kurta sets are gradually emerging as the most popular fashion trend

Bandhani has long been a staple in India’s festive fashion lexicon, yet what is particularly noteworthy in 2026 is its evolution beyond being solely for special occasions. Rather than the heavy, intricately adorned garments typically associated with weddings, Bandhani kurta sets are increasingly becoming a part of daily attire, featuring lighter designs, breathable materials, and patterns that maintain a traditional essence while remaining comfortable for everyday wear.

The shift is clear: people want Indianwear that carries cultural detail without feeling too heavy or overdressed. Bandhani fits that gap perfectly. It is vibrant, recognisable, and rooted in tradition, but when done in cottons, muslins, and lighter viscose blends, it becomes surprisingly wearable for regular days too.

What’s also driving the trend is versatility. These sets are no longer restricted to festivals. They’re being worn for office days, small functions, travel, and even casual outings where you want something more put-together than basic kurtas.

Bandhani kurta sets for women

1. Pistaa’s Women’s Bandhani Printed Regular Pure Cotton Kurta Set With Dupatta: This pure cotton Bandhani kurta set keeps things simple and wearable with a regular-fit silhouette that doesn’t cling to the

body, making it ideal for long hours in warm weather. The dupatta adds traditional structure without making the outfit feel heavy, while the print gives enough visual interest for everyday ethnic dressing.

Styling tip: Pair with oxidised studs, flat kolhapuris, and a simple tote bag for an easy everyday ethnic look.

2. MEERA FAB Women’s Pure Cotton Bandhani Printed Kurta with Palazzo & Dupatta: This set combines a straight kurta with palazzo pants, giving it a more structured and modern ethnic silhouette. The cotton fabric keeps it breathable, while the coordinated set-up makes it feel more put-together than a basic kurta-dupatta combination. The Bandhani print adds a traditional layer without overwhelming the outfit.

Styling tip: Style with block heels and a structured handbag for a polished office-to-evening ethnic outfit.

3. Pinkmint Women’s Bandhani Print Flared Anarkali Muslin Kurta Set: The flared Anarkali silhouette gives this set a more festive and flowy appeal, while the muslin fabric keeps it light and comfortable. The Bandhani print sits well on the flare, making the outfit feel more dressed-up without relying on heavy embellishments. It works especially well for semi-festive occasions.

Styling tip: Add statement jhumkas and wedges or heels to enhance the



festive flow of the outfit.

4. Klosia Women Pure Cotton Kurta Pant Set with Dupatta: This cotton kurta set keeps things minimal and

functional with a straight-cut kurta and coordinated pants. The Bandhani print is subtle enough for everyday wear while still giving the outfit a tra-

ditional edge. The dupatta completes the set, making it suitable for office ethnic days or casual outings.

Styling tip: Pair with white flats or

sneakers and small silver jewellery for a clean, modern ethnic look.

5. Pistaa’s Women’s Bandhani Printed Pure Cotton Kurta Set With Dupatta: This cotton kurta set leans into a classic Bandhani aesthetic with a focus on comfort and repeat wear. The breathable fabric makes it suitable for long summer days, while the traditional print keeps it visually rich even with minimal styling.

Styling tip: Style with a messy bun, oxidised earrings, and comfortable flats for effortless daily ethnic dressing.

6. EthnicJunction Women’s Pure Viscose Bandhani Print and Embroidered Kurta Palazzo Set: This viscose-based kurta set feels more elevated due to its smoother drape and added embroidery detailing. The combination of Bandhani print and embroidery makes it more occasion-ready, suitable for weddings, festive events, or evening gatherings where you want a richer ethnic look.

Styling tip: Go for gold-toned jewellery, embellished juttis, and soft glam makeup for a festive-ready finish.

Bandhani is no longer restricted to heavy festive dressing. With lighter fabrics, simpler silhouettes, and more wearable designs, it has become one of the most versatile ethnic trends, easy to wear, easy to repeat, and easy to style across different occasions.

Compact powders containing SPF are a worthwhile alternative to foundation



Who could have imagined that in just a few days, sun protection would extend beyond traditional sunscreens? Introducing compact powders with SPF. You can now enjoy the benefits of a matte finish with your compact powders, while also receiving sun protection. Doesn’t that sound appealing? No longer will you need to layer sunscreens on your face and still be concerned about sun safety. In fact, your final makeup application now also serves to protect your skin.

These compact powders are infused with sun protection ranging from SPF 15 to 50. From a matte finish to skin-loving formulas, these 7 compact powders with SPF are perfect for keeping your makeup fresh while shielding your skin from the sun. Whether you want a natural everyday glow or full coverage on the go, there’s a compact here for every skin type and budget.

While curating this list of 7 compact powders with SPF, we have carefully chosen them according to their higher ratings and reviews listed on Amazon India.

1. Lakme Sun Expert Ultra Matte Spf 40 Pa+++ Compact: This compact gives a lightweight matte finish with SPF protection during hot, humid days. It has SPF

40 PA+++ protection which makes it ideal for everyday wear, especially for oily and combination skin. This compact powder is infused with vitamin E and iron oxides which prevents sunburn, prevents dark spots, and prevents premature ageing and skin darkeneing. This compact powder is dermatologically tested, suitable for all skin types and travel-friendly. Many Amazon reviewers mention that it controls oil well without making the skin look cakey. A few users also appreciate its universal shade and smooth texture that blends easily for a natural look.

2. BELLAVITA SPF 50 Compact Powder: This compact powder is appreciated for giving a soft matte finish while offering SPF 50 sun protection. With its UV protection, Shea Butter, and Vitamin E-infused formula you are promised a hydrating matte finish that your skin and makeup will thank you for. This compact powder is lightweight, breathable, deeply hydrates, and gives an airbrush finish. It feels comfortable on the skin and helps reduce excess shine throughout the day. Users with oily skin particularly enjoy its lightweight texture and pore-blurring effect. Several buyers also liked its travel-friendly packaging and long-lasting wear during

humid weather.

3. KEYA SETH AROMA-THERAPY Umbrella Sunscreen Powder: Keya Seth aromatherapy sunscreen with SPF 50 offers all-round sun protection against UVA and UVB rays. This compact powder is enriched with Micronized Zinc Oxide that regulates your skin’s oil production with its mild astringent properties, making it suitable for oily and acne-prone skin. Its lightweight texture and shine-control benefits make it a favourite for daily outdoor use. It also has Tinosorb S maintains a photo stable broad-spectrum UV-Filter for advanced sun protection. Reviewers enjoy this sunscreen powder for its easy application and non-greasy feel, especially during summer. Many customers mention that it helps absorb sweat and oil while giving the skin a smoother appearance.

4. Colors Queen Sun Expert Compact Powder: Customers describe this compact as affordable, lightweight, and suitable for quick makeup touch-ups. Many users appreciate the SPF 60 protection combined with oil-control benefits that help maintain a matte finish for hours. Reviewers mention that the powder blends smoothly and gives a soft-focus look without feeling heavy on the skin. Some

users especially like carrying it for travel and daytime re-application because it feels comfortable even in humid weather.

5. Maybelline New York Fit Me Compact Powder eith SPF 32: The Maybelline SPF 32 compact powder is highly loved for its smooth matte and pore-blurring effect. This compact powder also gives oil control for up to 16 hours, keeping your makeup fresh all day. Its clay formula is oil-absorbing and does not clog pores, giving you flawless skin. Many customers say it controls oil effectively for long hours while still looking natural on the skin. Users with oily and combination skin frequently mention that it feels lightweight and helps makeup stay fresh throughout the day.

6. Mamaearth Glow Oil Control Matte Compact: Mamaearth glow oil control matte compact powder has SPF 30 for ultimate sun protection. This compact powder is known for its soft matte finish and lightweight texture that feels comfortable during daily wear. Many reviewers mention that it helps absorb excess oil without drying out the skin. The added SPF 30 protection makes it useful for quick daytime touch-ups, especially for people who spend time outdoors. Users also appreciate the natural glow effect and smooth blending formula. Some reviews highlight that it works well for normal to oily skin types.

7. Million Colors Compact Powder SPF 30: This compact powder shields your skin from harmful sun rays while giving a flawless matte finish, making it ideal for everyday wear. This lightweight compact powder for oily skin that blurs pores and imperfections, leaving your skin smooth and shine-free all day. Customers mention that it provides decent oil control while helping the skin look smoother and more even-toned. Many users enjoy its lightweight feel and natural matte finish that does not appear overly heavy. Reviewers also appreciate the SPF 30 protection for basic daytime coverage and quick touch-ups. Several buyers say it works well for casual daily makeup routines.

Mouni Roy showcases Indian culture at Cannes in an elegant patola print gown

This year, Indian performers have been taking center stage on the red carpet at Cannes. From Alia Bhatt and Aditi Rao Hydari to Huma Qureshi and Diana Penty, these stars are showcasing their fashion sense at the 79th edition of the international film festival taking place in the French Riviera. Sharing the pictures of her first look, Mouni Roy wrote, “Launched my film poster and teaser today here in Cannes. Big moment for me. (Pictures coming soon) proud to be wearing a dress crafted by Puja Shah and all the artisans who put 300 hours into embroidering this dress. Thank you! For those who do not know, it’s a Gujarati Patola work, which, btw, I think is stunning.”

The ensemble is from the shelves of the clothing label The House of Patola. It is a backless, full-length gown with a sleeveless silhouette, a figure-hugging fit, a square neckline, colourful

patola embroidery, and a train at the back. She wore the ensemble with white strappy heels and cocktail rings. Lastly, for her tresses, she left them loose in a side parting, styled with soft waves, and for the glam, the actor went with kohl-lined eyes, smudged winged eyeliner, darkened brows, mascara-coated lashes, rouge-tinted cheeks, and light pink lip shade.

For the Chopard event, Mouni slipped into a midnight blue and black gown featuring an off-the-shoulder plunging neckline, floral embroidery, a corseted bodice, a figure-hugging silhouette, a flowy skirt, a cinched waistline, and a thigh-high slit on the front.

To complement the chic ensemble, she wore diamond and sapphire-encrusted jewels from Chopard, including a statement ring and triple-string necklaces. As for her tresses, she tied them in a side-parted, neat



bun, with a few strands in the front, sculpting her face and adding an old-Hollywood glamour.

Lastly, for the glam, the actor chose smoky eye shadow, smudged kohl-

lined eyes, mascara-coated lashes, feathered brows, rouge-tinted cheeks, beaming highlighter, bronzer to highlight the contours of her face, and a glossy mauve lip shade.

This travel tip will transform how you keep cool during the summer

There are two types of holidays. The first type is characterized by pleasant weather, extended walks, and relaxed sightseeing. The second type is marked by stepping out of your hotel and feeling as though you have been enveloped in a warm, damp towel. Singapore in May undoubtedly fits into the latter category. The heat was severe. The humidity was unyielding. Within moments of exiting our air-conditioned hotel room, we were all flushed, sticky, and questioning how the locals managed to appear so composed. It was at that moment that one small device completely transformed our experience. I had brought along the Nuuk handheld fan, believing it might prove useful. I did not anticipate that it would become one of the most frequently used items during our trip.

Is the Nuuk handheld fan worth it?

Absolutely yes. After using it through the heat of Singapore and then continuing to use it almost every day back home in India, I can say this is one of the most practical travel accessories I have used in recent years. It is compact, powerful, easy to charge, and genuinely makes hot weather far more bearable. The Nuuk Fan is priced at an MRP of ₹2700, which is about 3 times more expensive than ge-

neric brands available in the market. But, the battery life that the fan offers, and the convenience to charge it, paired with the high-quality build and style, make it worth the splurge. Of late, I seem to be travelling mainly to warm destinations. As much as I enjoy beach holidays, city walks, and outdoor markets, extreme heat can make even the most exciting plans feel exhausting. And this is not just a travel issue. Back home, rising temperatures have made everyday routines feel far more uncomfortable. A quick walk to the vegetable market can leave you overheated. In Bangalore, I often take an auto to avoid traffic, but the afternoon heat can be draining. In Mumbai, you may want to enjoy a lovely seaside café, but after a few minutes outdoors, the humidity starts to get to you. This is exactly where a handheld fan turned out to be surprisingly useful. I used to think handheld fans looked a little unnecessary. Then I travelled through Singapore and noticed something interesting. Everyone seemed to carry one. Children had them. Adults had them. Office goers used them while waiting for the MRT. Parents used them while pushing strollers. I noticed the same thing in Hong Kong and Malaysia a few years ago. After a while, carrying

one stopped feeling awkward and started feeling like a very sensible thing to do.

What makes the Nuuk handheld fan better than cheap alternatives?

I have seen plenty of inexpensive portable fans that feel flimsy and underpowered. This one feels much better made. It has a clean, modern design and feels substantial without being bulky. It is compact enough to slip easily into my crossbody sling bag, so I never have to think twice about carrying it. The USB-C charging was especially useful during travel. I charged it once with my power bank, and it was ready to go again. Small details like this make a big difference when you are moving around all day. The real test came during long walks between attractions. Walking from the MRT to places like Merlion Park in the afternoon heat can be surprisingly uncomfortable. The humidity hits you immediately, and within minutes, everyone starts looking flushed. This fan made those walks much easier. The moment the cool air hit my face, I felt instant relief. The ice touch function was particularly refreshing after spending time under the sun. It helped cool me down much faster than I expected. I found myself reaching for it repeatedly throughout the day.

Siddharth Randeria returns with family drama Jindagi once more



Mumbai: Dharma Productions is stepping into Gujarati cinema with Jindagi Once More, a family drama produced in collaboration with Vaartakaar Films. Slated to release on June 19, 2026, the film stars veteran actor Siddharth Randeria alongside Aarti Patel and

marks the directorial debut of Jaymin. Backed by producer Vaasu Dholakia, the film arrives as a significant moment for the Gujarati film industry, bringing together a strong blend of established talent and fresh creative voices.

The film revolves around



an emotional father son relationship and highlights the often unspoken reality that children rarely know who their father truly was before becoming a parent. With its heartfelt narrative and relatable emotions, Jindagi Once More is positioned as a perfect family entertainer

for the Father’s Day weekend. The screenplay has been written by Deep Dholakia, who also makes his acting debut in the film. Actress Jahanvi Dhakanjoins the cast as another fresh face, making the project a combination of experienced performers and promising

newcomers. The makers believe this mix brings a modern and authentic storytelling approach to Gujarati cinema.

Speaking about Dharma Productions entering the regional space, Apoorva Mehta, CEO of Dharma Productions said, “At Dharma, we have always believed that great stories know no linguistic boundaries. The Gujarati film industry is currently witnessing a phenomenal creative renaissance, backed by a deeply passionate and loyal audience. Our decision to enter this vibrant market with Jindagi Once More stems from our desire to support high concept, culturally rooted narratives that resonate universally.” Producer Vaasu Dholakia also shared that the collaboration is a proud moment for Gujarati cinema and expressed confidence that the film will set a new benchmark with its emotional storytelling and high production values.

Dragon teaser sparks online buzz on NTR’s birthday

Hyderabad: The teaser of “Dragon”, starring N. T. Rama Rao Jr (NTR), was released on Tuesday night ahead of the actor’s birthday and drew responses from fans across social media platforms. The teaser marked the first official reveal of the film’s title after the project was referred to as “NTRNeel” for several months.

The film is directed by Prashanth Neel and produced by Mythri Movie Makers and NTR Arts. The teaser was released shortly before midnight on May 20 as part of NTR’s 43 rd birthday celebrations. The video introduced NTR’s character, named “Luger”, and showed scenes linked to a 1960s backdrop connected to the Golden Triangle region and the opium trade. The teaser also confirmed that actors Anil Kapoor, Biju Menon and Rukmini Vasanth are part of the cast.

Soon after the release, hashtags including #Dragon, #DragonGlimpse and #HappyBirthdayNTR trended on X and other social



media platforms. Fans shared clips, posters and screenshots from the teaser through the night. Several fan groups also organised birthday celebrations and special screenings of older NTR films in parts of Hyderabad, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam. The birthdayteaser was also among the top trending videos on YouTube within

hours of release. The makers are yet to announce official 24-hour viewing figures. This is the first collaboration between NTR and Prashanth Neel, known for directing the “KGF” film series and “Salaar”. The project has drawn attention since its announcement because of the combination of the actor and director.

Fans celebrate Mohanlal’s Drishyam 3 moment

Kochi: A brief behind-the-scenes video featuring Mohanlal has struck an emotional chord with fans, offering a warm reminder of the personality behind one of Malayalam cinema’s most enduring stars. Shared on Instagram by cinema photographer Alif Nazar, the reel was shot on the sets of Drishyam 3 and has already crossed 3.5 lakh views on social media. With his characteristic spontaneity, the actor smiles and replies, “I don’t know, does it have a meaning?” before turning away and leaning against a car. The understated response, delivered with the ease that has long defined his off-screen persona, has delighted fans across platforms. The reel also captures another charming exchange. As he settles down to rest between shots, Mohanlal asks Alif, “Will you call me when the shot is ready? What if I fall asleep?” The moment has resonated strongly with admirers who cherish these glimpses of the superstar in an unguarded setting. What begins playfully turns emotional as Alif blends candid Mohanlal footage with a montage of his iconic roles, creating a heartfelt tribute to an actor deeply woven into Kerala’s cultural memory.

Insider reveals Samay Raina’s nervousness on India’s got latent Alia Bhatt episode

Mumbai: Alia Bhatt fans were recently left surprised after a viral photo claimed that the actress would be attending the first episode of Samay Raina’s India’s Got Latent 2. While there has been no official announcement regarding the same as of now, a social media user has revealed that Alia will indeed be attending IGL season two episode one.

Recently, a user named Roshan Sahu took to his Instagram handle and dropped a video claiming he attended the recently shot India’s Got Latent 2 episode. “I was amongst the 80 people who



attended this episode live and the show was terrific,” he said. Sahu confirmed that Alia Bhatt was the special guest on the episode and ad-

ded, “I am a fan of Samay and I booked the ticket just to see raw Samay performing live. During the first 15 minutes of the show, when Samay was

performing alone, recalling the incidents of season one, he looked super nervous but as the panel joined, he was in his full zone. The whole show was as hilarious as season one.” Reportedly, Alia Bhatt will be seen promoting her upcoming movie, Alpha, in India’s Got Latent episode. The film, also starring Sharvari in the lead, is the first female-led installment of Yash Raj Films’ Spy Universe. Alpha, which also features Anil Kapoor and Bobby Deol, is set to hit the theatres on July 10, 2026.

Meanwhile, Samay Raina

confirmed the second episode of his controversial India’s Got Latent during his ‘Still Alive’ act. “People keep asking me, will this show come back? I will bring the show, bro. I wanna do a wild, wild f***ing show. I’m gonna take away all your phones. And the first question I will ask the contestant, ‘would you rather...?’ And rahi baat India’s Got Latent ki, log poochte rehte hain mujhse, kya yeh show wapas aayega? Let me rephrase that, I don’t think isse high point pe mere show ka season 1 end ho sakta tha,” he said.

Farrhana Bhatt reveals she left family behind to chase dreams

Mumbai: Actress and reality show contestant Farrhana Bhatt has opened up about one of the toughest decisions of her life, revealing that she has asked her family to publicly announce their disassociation from her.

In an exclusive conversation with IANS, the actress shared that cutting herself off from close blood relatives was the ‘biggest risk’ she ever took in pursuit of her dreams. Speaking candidly about the emotional turmoil, Farrhana said, “The biggest risk in life taken by me, is that I completely cut myself off from my close blood relatives. To a limit where I told them you can pub-

licly announce ‘she doesn’t belong to us’. That was the biggest risk I took.” The actress further explained how difficult it was to distance herself from family despite emotional expectations attached to blood relations. “Somewhere in your blood relation, if you are at your lowest, you have certain expectations that maybe someone from your family will someday come up and help you, or say a few words that motivate you. But at that point, when you have actually no one around, it’s just you and your mother, and you are cutting off everyone, publicly telling them, ‘You don’t belong to me.

Release date announced for Kunal Kemmu, Preity Zinta’s VIBE

Mumbai: VIBE starring Kunal Kemmu is gearing up to bring a mix of action, comedy and chaos to the big screen. Earlier today, Amazon MGM Studios unveiled a new poster of the film featuring silhouettes of the lead cast including Preity G Zinta, Sparsh Shrivastava and Vanshika Dhir. Along with the poster reveal, the makers confirmed that the film will release in theatres on September 18. Sharing the announcement on social media, the studio wrote, “punch aur punchline dono guaranteed with VIBE.” The poster gi-

ves a fun glimpse into the characters, with Kunal striking a dramatic pose, Preity holding books and files, Vanshika appearing ready for work with a handbag and laptop, and Sparsh seen working on his laptop. The story follows two inseparable friends whose otherwise ordinary lives suddenly turn into a fast paced adventure packed with unexpected twists. As situations spiral out of control, the duo is forced to rely on both their survival instincts and friendship while navigating the madness around them. Written and directed by



Kunal Kemmu, the film is produced by Kemmu and Chirag Nihalani under the banner of Drongo Films, marking the production house’s first project. The film

also marks Preity G Zinta’s much anticipated return to the screen, alongside Sparsh Shrivastava and debutant Vanshika Dhir in leading roles.

Pathak responds to Mohanlal, Ajay Devgn collaboration in Drishyam

Mumbai: Speculation surrounding the future of the Drishyam universe has intensified after director Abhishek Pathak opened up about the possibility of seeing Mohanlal and Ajay Devgn together in the franchise. His latest statement has now sparked excitement among fans of both the Malayalam original and its Hindi adaptation.

Talking to Zoom, Abhishek reacted to Mohanlal and Ajay’s collaboration in Drishyam 3, “Not this time, but maybe some time later. We might come up with something, but not right now.” Speaking of venturing into Malayalam cinema and backing Drishyam 3, Abhishek added, “Bollywood is our home zone. Malayalam is something which we really got excited. People are appreciating the content created, especially in Malayalam. That is what excited me to create content here as well. That is when I decided to go to Kerala, set up a studio there, and we started meeting writers, directors and others. I think this is experimental cinema. That is what I prefer to do, and we will with our past movies.”

The Hindi version, directed by the late Nishikant Kamat and starring Ajay Devgn, was also a big hit, with the first part released in 2015. The second part, directed by Abhishek Pathak, came out in 2022. He is also directing ‘Drishyam 3’, which will be released in theaters on October 2. Abhishek Pathak and his father Kumar Mangat Pathak are distributing Mohanlal’s ‘Drishyam 3’ under



their banner Panorama Studios. According to Abhishek, the scripts for the two versions of ‘Drishyam 3’ were developed separately. ‘I wrote my story with the Hindi audience in mind, so they get what they expect from Vijay Salgaonkar (Ajay’s character) in the film. Jeethu Joseph wrote his version. Later, we read each other’s drafts and liked both,’ said Abhishek, who wrote the third part with writers Aamil Keeyan Khan and Parveez Shaikh. The 2-minute and 5-second trailer of Drishyam 3 shows Georgekutty and his family trying to move on. On the surface, life appears to have settled. The world seems to have accepted their innocence, but not everyone around them is convinced. The trailer suggests that old doubts continue to linger, with certain people still questioning what really happened. This time, the story appears to dig deeper into Georgekutty’s mind, exploring not just his intelligence and survival instinct, but also the emotional burden he has carried while protecting his family.

Mohanlal returns as Georgekutty, bringing back the quiet tension that has defined the franchise. Meena, Siddique, Asha Sharath, Murali Gopy, Ansiba Hassan and Esther Anil also reprise their roles. Veena Nandakumar joins the cast in a new role as a journalist determined to uncover the truth behind the case.

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Huma Qureshi slams Bollywood’s gender bias in film budgets

Cannes: Huma Qureshi, who is currently at Cannes, spoke candidly about the challenges faced by women-led films in Bollywood, saying that despite changing times, female-oriented projects still struggle to receive the same budgets and backing as films headlined by male stars. Talking about India’s cultural diversity and mythology, she said that there is a lot of potential in India to have stories with female-forward narratives. However, she said that female-led movies don’t get the kind of budgets that films with male stars get. Despite the challenges, Huma said female actors across the industry are continuously pushing bounda-



ries and working to change the landscape for future generations.

During an interaction with Brut India at the Cannes Film Festival, Huma Qureshi was asked whether audiences have become more accepting of women-centric cinema and if more Hindi adaptations of female-led films are on

the horizon. The actress replied, “I hope we don’t do any remakes. I hope we do more original content. We have so much potential in our country to have our own kind of female forward narrative. We have such a diverse country. Look at our mythology, culture. Look at the stories that come from our country.

I feel like the focus should be on that constantly.” Huma also reflected on the industry’s long-standing perception that women-led films have limited box office potential. “Honestly, if you ask me, it’s something that I am also going through or struggling with right now. Where we don’t get the kind of budgets that male movie stars get. There’s always that bias that female films have a certain box office potential.”

When asked whether such bias still exists in the industry today, the actor replied, “Yes, definitely. Maybe people wouldn’t say it as much, but that doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. And that’s something you have to constantly navigate. But

the only way to break that is to keep going through and just constantly keep working. And not just me, I feel so many of my female colleagues are constantly pushing that envelope and pushing hard to change the reality for not just themselves in their careers, but also for many others that will follow through.” The actress is set to captivate audiences in Geetu Mohandas’ directorial venture Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups, where she will essay the dark and intriguing character of Elizabeth. The action thriller, headlined by Yash, brings together an ensemble cast including Nayanthara, Kiara Advani, Tara Sutaria, Rukmini Vasanth, and Sudev Nair.

The chemistry teacher from Rajasthan who initially reported the NEET paper leak said, “I was shocked after matching the questions”

Jaipur: The Chemistry teacher who was among the first to flag the NEET-UG paper leak has recalled how he came across a viral PDF that allegedly matched a large number of questions from the test. Shashikant Suthar, an educator at a coaching centre in Rajasthan, said he was “shocked” after cross-checking the document with the NEET question paper. The NEET-UG 2026 examination was cancelled earlier this month after allegations of a question paper leak. It has been rescheduled for June 21.

“When I saw the May 3 paper, after the exam was over, I analysed the NEET paper and prepared an answer key for it,” Suthar said the PDF contained around 104 Chemistry questions and was being circulated with claims that it could predict the NEET exam.“In that viral PDF, there were around 104 chemistry questions. The purpose behind showing it was to ask whether any of these questions had appeared in today’s NEET paper,” he said. “Then I matched it with the NEET paper, and I was surprised to find that around 45 of those questions were exactly the same as those asked in NEET.” He added that the discovery immediately raised concerns within his circle. Suthar said he then involved another teacher to verify a second document.

“After that, I called a fellow teacher and got the biology PDF checked as well,”



he said. “When we checked the biology PDF, all 90 out of 90 questions were matching with the biology paper as well.” Following the verification, Suthar said the group escalated the matter to authorities.“We informed the administration about it. The administration then guided us on how to take the matter forward, and we emailed the NTA about it.” “The very next morning, I received a call from Abhishek Singh from the NTA. He collected all the information, I submitted all the proof to him, and then things moved very quickly.” Suthar added that investigative agencies soon got involved.“We also start-

ed receiving calls from the CBI, and by evening, the investigation team from Delhi had already reached us.” “The investigation team came and we explained the entire matter to them physically and provided all the evidence.”He further said the Special Operations Group (SOG) also joined the probe.“I would like to express gratitude to the government and the NTA for resolving this issue very quickly, keeping in mind the mental health of the students,” he said. The teacher strongly pushed back against criticism being directed at Sikar, Rajasthan’s coaching hub.“Across the coun-

try, students come to study, but nowadays questions are being raised about Sikar. I completely reject these claims, they are baseless allegations being made against Sikar.”“Sikar students were not involved in the leak, nor was any institute from Sikar involved.”He said the city’s academic ecosystem is built on hard work.

“People from Sikar are known for hard work. The students here work hard, the teachers work hard, everyone works hard, and that is how results are produced, not through any cheating or paper leaks.”Suthar also pointed out that there had been no arrests linked to the

city.“As you may have seen, there has been no arrest from Sikar. Only Sikar’s name is being unnecessarily dragged into this matter.”The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested 10 people so far in the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case. Among those arrested are individuals allegedly linked to the paper-setting process, coaching institutes and an organised network suspected of circulating the question paper before the May 3 exam.

According to investigators, retired chemistry lecturer PV Kulkarni and senior botany teacher Manisha Gurunath Mandhare, both associated with the National Testing Agency (NTA) panel, are among those identified as key figures in the alleged leak network.The probe also includes coaching operators, intermediaries and local facilitators who are suspected of buying and distributing the leaked material. Officials said parts of the question paper were accessed and shared ahead of the examination.

Others arrested include Manisha Waghmare, a Pune-based beauty parlour owner accused of facilitating links between candidates and coaching operators, Dhananjay Lokhande from Ahilyanagar, and Shubham Khairnar, a Nashik-based BAMS student. Most recently, coaching institute operator Shivraj Raghunath Motegonkar from Latur was also arrested.

Arsenal wins Premier League title for first time in 22 years

Agency: Arsenal ended their 22-year wait to win the Premier League title on Tuesday (May 19, 2026) when they were confirmed as champions following second-placed Manchester City’s 1-1 draw at Bournemouth.Leaders for almost the entire season, Mikel Arteta’s side are now four points clear with one game remaining and Sunday’s clash at Crystal Palace will now be a coronation.

Arsenal had beaten Burnley 1-0 on Monday, meaning City had to win on the south coast to extend the race to the final day. But City trailed to Eli Junior Kroupi’s first-half goal and Erling Haaland’s stoppage time reply was too late for the visitors, who are reportedly set to say goodbye to manager Pep Guardiola at the end of the season after a glittering decade.

Arsenal had been dubbed the nearly men under Arteta after finishing runners-up in the previous three seasons. It is Arsenal’s first title since 2003-04 when Arsene Wenger’s side went through the season unbeaten and their first major trophy since the 2020 FA Cup in Arteta’s first season after taking over from Unai Emery.

A memorable campaign could get even better for Arsenal as they face Paris St Germain in the Champions League final in Budapest on May 30, bidding to



win the trophy for the first time. Do that and Arteta’s team will go down as one of the greatest in the club’s 140-year history.

Arsenal’s triumph sparked huge celebrations in North London and even at 10 Downing Street where Prime Minister Keir Starmer, a keen Gunners fan, posted on X: “22 long years for Arsenal. But finally we’re back where we belong.”Arteta, at 44 the youngest Arsenal manager to win the English top-flight title, said the previous day that he would be Bournemouth’s “biggest fan” for a couple of hours on Tuesday.

Fittingly the title was delivered with the help of close friend Andoni Iraola whose Bournemouth side held City. Arteta’s sentiments would have been echoed by Arsenal fans watching the game in pubs and bars before descending en masse to the Emirates

Stadium for a party that was set to go on late into the night.

Minutes after the final whistle at Bournemouth, large crowds of Arsenal fans were gathering, many with red flares.The first-team squad and staff had gathered at the club’s training ground, north of London, with videos posted of wild celebrations as the final whistle at Bournemouth confirmed the title was in the bag.

Arsenal’s success has been built on the fierce intensity, defensive discipline and attention to detail instilled by the innovative Arteta, who has revamped the club culture on and off the field.Even when they were knocked off the top of the table by Manchester City in April after 200 days in first place, Arsenal’s belief never wavered and they can now enjoy their triumph after a gripping title race.

Supreme Court agrees to examine plea on SHANTI Act



New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the decision to cap the liability of private players in the event of a nuclear tragedy is a matter of “fiscal policy” that courts cannot second-guess, even as it agreed to examine in July a challenge to the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, 2025. A bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant said, “When the state, based on its own policy, decides to cap the liability of private entities under the Act, we are not here to second-guess it.”

The court was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by a group led by former bureaucrat EAS Sarma, which raised concerns over public safety due to provisions in the SHANTI Act capping the liability of private operators at as low as ₹100 crore and limiting the government’s residual liability to USD 300 million (around ₹3,000 crore).Appearing for the petitioners, advocate Prashant Bhushan argued that such provisions could encourage private suppliers to compromise

on safety standards. He referred to laws in foreign jurisdictions where the liability of private entities is unlimited. The bench, also comprising justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, said, “This Act is limiting the liability of persons who are coming to invest. That does not take away the power of constitutional courts to determine the compensation payable to a victim.”Observing further, the court said, “We want to ensure people are safe and secure. Unfortunately, if an accident takes place and if a citizen suffers injury, our concern is do we have a robust compensatory mechanism. The Act does not say constitutional courts cannot do that.” The bench also observed that nuclear energy is a necessity and that hardly any developed country does not harness this source of energy. Bhushan cited Germany and Japan as examples of countries that have moved away from nuclear-based plants. He argued that setting up a nuclear plant costs 20-30 times more than establishing a solar power plant. “Sitting here, we cannot command the government. If Parlia-

ment, in furtherance of its foreign direct investment (FDI) goals, runs the risk of limiting liability of suppliers and states that the remaining burden will be shared by the state, it is a matter of fiscal policy,” the bench observed.Bhushan contended that public safety was jeopardised because even the state’s liability had been capped. He said earlier laws governing the sector did not impose such limits. “You cannot question the validity of a law based on motive,” the bench told Bhushan, while agreeing to hear the matter in July and assuring the petitioners, “We will clarify your apprehensions.”The petition referred to the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the erstwhile Soviet Union, where losses were estimated between USD 235 billion and USD 700 billion, and the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident in Japan, where damages were estimated at USD 400-445 billion. Citing these examples, the petition said, “SHANTI Act, 2025 caps the liability of the largest plant operator in India at a mere ₹3,000 crores amounting to less than

0.1% of the cost of damage caused by the accidents at Chernobyl or Fukushima.”

This is the second time the court has indicated that capping liability under the nuclear law is a policy decision aimed at attracting investment.The petition also challenges the Act on other grounds, including an alleged “conflict of interest” in the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), which performs regulatory functions. It said the selection, appointment and removal of the board’s chairperson and members remain under government control, contrary to India’s obligations under the Convention for Nuclear Safety, ratified in 2005, which requires meaningful separation of regulatory functions.The Act also empowers the Centre to exempt nuclear power stations from the provisions of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, and exempts operators from liability for damage caused by natural disasters. The petition argued that these provisions violate the principles of “absolute liability” and “polluter pays” evolved through Supreme Court judgments.

Luís Castro eclipses famous namesake after taking Levante to verge of safety

Luís Castro was 11 when he started vomiting blood. Taken to hospital and diagnosed with purpura, initially doctors told his parents there was no chance of him living and even when he was cured they said he couldn’t do any physical exercise ever again. But three lonely years later, driven by an inner strength he ascribed to a higher power, he was back on a football pitch, building a career that took him through the lower leagues in Portugal as a player and around the world as coach, winning trophies in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine and Brazil, until one day in December his name landed on the president’s desk at Levante: just the kind of man the Spanish club needed in their impossible fight for survival

Oh, wait. No, that’s not right. “I had heard of another Luis Castro but not this one,” Pablo Sánchez admitted on Sunday night, “and this one turned out to be the ideal coach for our club.” This Luís Castro, also Portuguese but born 70km west and 19 years later than that one, a quiet, softly spoken man that Levante’s president could now reveal he didn’t know and nor did anyone else, began at the bottom coaching five-year-olds, isn’t the Grêmio manager who twice defeated Real Madrid while at Shakhtar Donetsk, but is the best thing to happen to Levante in a long time.

Castro wouldn’t ever say so himself, but Sánchez would: he had just watched the Ciutat de València go wild again, his manager silently slip away and his captain take the mic, leading fans in a thunder clap. He had watched the forward Roger Brugué go next, suggest it was best to keep it simple, avoiding songs with lots of lyrics, and launch into a chant of “yes, we can!” instead. He had seen them mean it too.Somewhat, Levante really can. Mallorca, Girona and Osasuna still really could not.Nine teams went into this weekend knowing that they could end the season occupying the final two relegation places and joining Real Oviedo in the second division in what had become the tightest, most expensive fight for survival in Spanish history. With Sevilla, Valencia, Alavés and Espanyol clambering clear, five came out of it still at risk, and if one is Levante, they can almost touch safety now. For them to go down, it would take a specific combination of results next Saturday: they would have to lose at Betis, Girona would have to beat Elche in the final day’s ultimate final, Mallorca would have to fail to



beat Oviedo, and Osasuna would have to get at a point at Getafe, creating a three-way tie on 42 points, from which they would fall owing to their inferior goal difference.It’s not impossible but it’s not likely either: according to Opta, Levante’s chances of going down are 6%, while Osasuna’s are 9%, Elche’s 35%, Girona’s 55% and Mallorca’s 95%. Even if it was, it’s a miracle they got this far. Not so long ago, that percentage looked close to 100%; a fortnight ago it did, in fact. And then, 2-0 down against Osasuna, they came back to win 3-2. They were 1-0 and 2-1 down against Celta in the next game, but won that 3-2 as well. And this weekend they defeated Mallorca 2-0 at the Ciutat. But if three consecutive wins pulled them clear of the relegation zone for the first time this year, this goes back further. When Levante sacked Julián Calero in November, they were 19th, level with bottom of the table Real Oviedo. Newly promoted, they have the smallest salary limit in the first division on €17.4m (£15.1m), compared to €22.1m (£19.2m), €34.8m (£30.3m) and €36.9 (£32.1m) at Sevilla, Getafe and Elche respectively. They had picked up just nine points from 14 games, and got only one more in the next two under the interim coaches Alvaro del Moral and Vicente Iborra, dropping to the bottom. As 2026 started they were six points adrift and would slip as far as seven from safety.Within an hour of full-time in De Moral and Iborra’s second game, they had announced the arrival of Castro and, if most fans had no idea who he was, if those who Googled came up with the wrong one – try

it, the other Castro still comes first – they weren’t alone. “The first time I heard his name, I didn’t know him,” Sánchez said on Sunday evening. “He has written his name into Levante’s history in gold letters,” Las Provincias wrote this morning.

It is a history Castro said he knew, that he had been studying, and one he said he shared: fighting against the tide. No playing career at all to promote him, he won the Uefa Youth League as coach of Benfica’s Under-19s and saved Dunkerque in France, also taking them to the semi-final of the cup. That experience was important he said; so too was the experience at academy level for a club like Levante where there is no money to spend. The first session of the new year, a new era, began with a minute’s silence in memory of Delia Bullido, beloved press officer at the club over 25 years, and then they got to work, a clarity to the message. They were going to go for it. Three days later, they beat Sevilla 3-0. Three games after that, a 96th-minute winner helped them defeat Elche 3-2, and so it began.Convicted that there wasn’t such a deficit in quality as it might appear, Castro ensured there were defined roles, non-negotiable tasks, a mechanism. A simple thing to start: “We were letting too many goals in transitions; when we were attacking, we weren’t ready to lose the ball,” he told Cadena Ser.

Levante stepped forward, opened the pitch, pressed. “But this isn’t athletics: it’s more often about your brain than your physical qualities,” he said. “Players are people, intelligent, and if you’re honest with them, just, they know what they have to do. If they’re not playing they know why not and what they have to change. We tell them: ‘You’re good at this, this, this; in this, you have to change.’ We’ll train it, work on it, talk about it; tell me what you think. And if you can change, you’ll play.” There’s something apparently unremarkable about Castro, who has the look of a provincial bank manager and the voice of a snooker commentator. It is as if he is trying to go unnoticed, but for all that he is quiet, there is an authority about him, something uncompromising; an honesty and directness that might sound blunt if it wasn’t said so softly. There are no explanations if you’re out the team, just an expectation that you react. “If the worst player has the best salary, it doesn’t matter: he doesn’t play,” he says.

Phil Salt’s Return Gives RCB A Massive Boost Ahead Of The IPL 2026 Playoffs

New Delhi: Royal Challengers Bengaluru received a major boost ahead of the IPL 2026 playoffs as Phil Salt is all set to return to the tournament this week, according to a report from ESPNcricinfo. Salt has been out for a month with a finger injury and went back to the UK to spend time with his family. Salt suffered the injury to his left hand as he was trying to save a boundary during the loss against the Delhi Capitals at home on April 18. Since then, RCB has gone on to qualify for the playoffs for the third consecutive time and are expected to play Qualifier 1 in Dharamsala, unless there is a late swing in the net run-rate. It remains to be seen if Salt will be available to play the final league game against SRH in Hyderabad on Friday, but it is unlikely that RCB will risk him ahead of the playoffs.

In Salt’s absence, his England teammate Jacob Bethell has filled the opening slot alongside Virat Kohli over the last month, but the youngster has found it difficult to leave a mark. Bethell has managed just 96 runs across seven innings, with 27 being his highest score so far. His position in the XI could face further scrutiny, even if Salt remains unavailable for Friday’s game, especially after Venkatesh Iyer impressed with an unbeaten 73 during the win against Punjab Kings in Dharamsala



on Sunday. Iyer had come into the side in place of Rajat Patidar, who missed the trip to Dharamsala after being hit on the helmet by a sharp bouncer from Kartik Tyagi during last week’s clash against Kolkata Knight Riders. However, stand-in skipper Jitesh Sharma said after the victory that Patidar was recovering well and is expected to return for Friday’s fixture in Hyderabad, potentially leaving the team management with a tough selection call. Salt has scored 202 runs in six matches that he played this season, with an average of 33.67. Jacob Bethell struggled to find his rhythm while filling in for the injured Phil

Salt during the IPL 2026 season. Opening the batting alongside Virat Kohli, Bethell managed to score only 96 runs across seven innings, with a top score of 27. The young England batter faced significant scrutiny during this period, particularly following a heated debate between former captains Alastair Cook and Kevin Pietersen regarding his development in the IPL versus playing county cricket. Despite the low scoring output, Jacob Bethell defended his decision to stay with Royal Challengers Bengaluru, asserting that training with world-class players provided invaluable exposure.

Indian Racer Akshay Gupta Secures A Brilliant Podium Finish In Cup3 AM

Bournemouth: Indian endurance racer Akshay Gupta delivered a strong and resilient performance at the 2026 ADAC RAVENOL 24h Nurburgring, finishing 35th overall and second in the AM classification of the Cup3 class in the number #949 SRS Team Sorg Rennsport Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport. Gupta shared the car with Aaron Wenisch, Bjorn Simon and Tommy Graberg, competing in one of the deepest classes of the race.



for the 2026 season. The weekend began in extremely challenging conditions, with cold and wet qualifying practice sessions on Thursday. In Q1 and Q2, the team showed a strong pace and ran as high as P3 out of 17 cars in class. However, in mixed conditions during Q3 on Friday, Gupta’s fast lap was compromised by a double yellow zone in the final sector, preventing the #949 car from showing its true potential. The team ultimately qualified P11 in Cup3, P4 in AM and 89th overall. The race started at 3 pm on Saturday, with Bjorn Simon taking the opening stint. Simon immediately moved the car forward, climbing from P11 to P6 in Cup3 by the end of his eight-lap run. Gupta then took over and continued the charge,

moving the car up to P4 in class during a strong nine-lap stint before handing over to Tommy Graberg. The team’s first major setback came on Lap 19, when Graberg suffered a slow puncture, forcing an unscheduled pit stop for a tyre change. Despite the lost time, he completed a further nine laps and handed the car to Aaron Wenisch in P5. Wenisch then brought the #949 Porsche back into contention, climbing to P4 and briefly into P3 during a 13-lap stint.

As conditions changed, Wenisch was forced into an unscheduled stop to switch to wet tyres. During the sunset phase of the race, he also narrowly avoided disaster at Brunnchen, where an oil spill caught out several leading cars. The same incident zone

saw two high-profile GT3 cars crash into the barriers, including the Manthey “Grello” Porsche driven by Kevin Estre and the Ford Mustang GT3 of fellow Indian driver Arjun Maini, ending Maini’s race prematurely. Wenisch somehow saved the #949 Porsche, keeping it away from the barriers by inches, a release said. Through the night, Simon returned to the car and produced fast lap times despite losing the main headlights. Gupta then took over for a difficult nine-lap night stint, with much of the circuit covered by Code 60 zones due to multiple heavy crashes. He handed the car back to Simon, before Simon was forced to stop early due to health issues, triggering an urgent driver change in the pits.

India Under Eighteen Women Register Emphatic Four One Win Over Australia

Bhopal: The Indian U-18 Women’s Hockey Team produced a dominant display to defeat Australia U-18 Women’s Team 4-1 in the fourth and final match of the series at the Udhav Das Mehta (Bhai Ji) Central SAI Centre in Bhopal on Wednesday. Australia took the lead early in the first quarter through Aurora Kovacevich (8’), putting the visitors ahead. India, however, responded quickly with captain Sweety Kujur (13’) scoring the equaliser before the end of the opening quarter, as per a release. The hosts continued their momentum in the second quarter and took the lead when Diya (25’) found the back of the net to give India a 2-1 advantage heading into halftime. India maintained control in the second half and extended their lead in the third quarter through Priyanka Minz (44’). Nausheen Naz (50’) then added another goal in the final quarter to cap off a dominant win for the hosts. The victory marked a strong finish for the Indian team in a hard-fought series, preparing them well for the U-18 Asia Cup beginning later this month in Japan. However, Australia won the four-match series, which was part of an exposure tour, 3-1.

Earlier, India Women also faced a defeat in the third match of the series. In



the match, Australia took an early lead in the first quarter when Anneliese Cullen (5’) scored. India responded well just before the end of the quarter, with Sandeepa Kumari (15’) scoring a fine equaliser to make it 1-1. However, the visitors regained the lead early in the second quarter through a goal from Stella Bartholomeusz (17’). The Indian defence kept the Australian attackers from scoring further in the second half, but the hosts could not find a second goal to equalise. Speaking to ANI about the squad, which includes experienced names and some promising juniors such

as Sonam, Shilpi Dabas, selected after fine Hockey India League (HIL) campaigns, Salima said, “Our team is good. There are definitely a lot of young stars. So we are excited to play with them. When they went to Argentina last time (where India won two matches out of four), it was a very good performance. Everyone is doing a lot of hard work. So we will do well this time as well. The young stars are doing their best. We will push them more. We can do better.” “We have got a very good tour before the Nations Cup. So thank you, Hockey India.

Australia Great Turns Sooryavanshi Fanboy In Jaipur: “Photo Please?”

New Delhi: For three and a half decades, Justin Langer has lived his life inside cricket’s most unforgiving cauldrons. He has ducked under Shoaib Akhtar bouncers, traded verbal volleys with standard-issue fast-bowling greats, and coached Australia with the kind of intense, unblinking grit that defines the baggy green myths. He is not a man easily moved to awe. Yet, on a humid Jaipur evening, the 55-year-old Australian legend found himself reduced to the ultimate modern cricketing condition: becoming a fanboy for a 15-year-old. As Vaibhav Sooryavanshi stood on the outfield of the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, dutifully churning out platitudes for a standard post-match IPL digital video, a shadow fell over the frame. It was Langer. The Lucknow Super Giants head coach hadn’t just stayed back to offer a polite, perfunctory handshake.

He wanted a memento. “Can I get a photo, please?” Langer asked, almost gently, interrupting the recording. The teenager paused, momentarily shedding his status as the tournament’s premier destroyer to offer the respectful compliance of a schoolboy. Langer beamed, tucked into the frame, and delivered a parting line that belonged in a time capsule: “I am going to treasure that photo. Good luck for your career. Go well.” It was a vignette that perfectly captured the surreal nature of the Sooryavanshi phenomenon. The Rajasthan Royals prodigy hadn’t just beaten LSG with his breathtaking 38-ball 93; he had entirely disarmed them. Hours later, the sheer disbelief had not worn off. Sitting in the press room, Langer’s mind was still reeling, trying to contextualise what the IPL was witnessing. “We’ve seen it all season, he’s the leading run scorer,”



Langer remarked, shook. “In all my time, I’ve seen some amazing players in 35 years of cricket. To see a young man bat like that, not just tonight, but throughout the series, is breathtaking.” For Langer, the definitive proof of Sooryavanshi’s genius wasn’t just the trajectory of the ball sailing over the Jaipur drop-in pitches, but the sheer existential dread he was inducing in the world’s most feared bowling elite. “I think the last game, Mitchell Starc, who’s one of the all-time great white ball bowlers, he’s bowling and look at the expression on his face,” Langer recalled. “And Nortje, who’s a world-class international bowler and Sooryavanshi is hitting him. And the expression on their face is such that, ‘what is happening here?’” “The scary thing going forward is, if the expressions on the face of Mitch Starc and Nortje and every bowler tell a story now, what about when he learns how to bat? My gosh, he’s so young. So, yeah, he’s a brilliant, brilliant player. And it’s a real privilege to watch him bat, actually.” What makes Langer’s “when he

learns how to bat” thesis so compelling is that the evolution is already happening in real-time. Until this week, the teenager was a force of nature – all raw reflex and unbridled, ball-one aggression. But against LSG, he unveiled a template. He gave the opening overs the kind of old-school respect that would have modern T20 data analysts breaking out in hives. “I think this was his best innings,” his Royals teammate ad captain Riyan Parag reflected later. “He was on 5 off 11 or something like that. But he took his time. He played that first big shot of Mayank over covers, which really gave me a sense of satisfaction and understanding that he has a larger understanding of the game.” Justin Langer leaves Jaipur with a dented playoff campaign, a headache for his bowling coaches, and a digital image tucked away on his phone. Long after the 2026 season fades into memory, that photograph will remain – a snapshot of the night an icon of Australian grit looked into the future of Indian cricket, and asked it to say cheese.

PV Sindhu Reveals Priceless “Never Back Down” Advice From Virat Kohli



New Delhi: Double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu recently opened up on the priceless advice she received from Virat Kohli during their meeting at the Indian Sports Summit hosted at the RCB Innovation Lab in Bengaluru. Sindhu shared how Kohli has consistently guided and encouraged her whenever she needed support. Calling him a true senior figure in Indian sport, Sindhu praised Kohli’s humility, generosity, and willingness to inspire

fellow athletes. The badminton star also revealed Kohli’s simple yet powerful message to her, to never back down, words she said she would always carry as motivation in her sporting journey. “Every time I’ve needed guidance, you’ve always been there with the right advice and the right words. There is no better example of what a true senior in Indian sport should be: generous, grounded, inspiring, and always willing to lift others up,” Sindhu wrote

in a heartfelt post on Instagram. “Never back down, PV. Advice taken. Keep being the absolute force of a human being that you are. Indian sport is better because of people like you,” Sindhu added. PV Sindhu has endured a mixed run in recent months. After struggling with injuries during the latter half of 2025, Sindhu returned to competition with a few encouraging performances. One of her standout moments came at the 2025 BWF World Championships, where she stunned World No. India’s badminton star PV Sindhu received the powerful message to “never back down” from Virat Kohli during their meeting at the Indian Sports Summit. Sindhu described the advice as “priceless” and noted that she would carry these words as a primary source of motivation throughout her sporting journey.

Gill Takes A One-Shot Lead Over Vihaan At Southern India Junior Golf Championship

Coimbatore: On a wind-swept day at the Coimbatore Golf Club, Adhiraaj Singh Gill braved testing conditions to seize the lead on the opening day of the IGU Southern India Junior Boys Golf Championship on Tuesday. The 16-year-old from Jalandhar, a relative greenhorn on the IGU circuit, shot two-over 74 for a one-shot lead over the in-form Vihaan Jain (75). Prince Bainsla, winner of the first event of the season, sat a further shot back in third place, according to a release.

The blustery conditions seemed to play havoc with the yardages and club selection, but Gill, playing his first full season on the IGU circuit, held his own on a tough scoring day. Gill birdied the sixth and ninth



holes on the front nine, as well as the 18th. On the closing hole, he shanked his drive into the trees on the right of the tee box but recovered brilliantly. He hit a stunning 3-wood second shot, followed by a wedge to within 12 feet, and drained the putt. He dropped shots on the fifth, 12th and 16th holes. He had a double bogey on the par-3 seventh hole, where he went right of

the green with a 7-iron tee shot. Vihaan, meanwhile, got off to a rough start, dropping strokes on four straight holes from the fifth. But before much damage could be done, he found his rhythm and range. He picked up a shot on the ninth by holing a 10-foot putt, and made amends for a dropped stroke on the 11th with a 12-foot birdie putt on the 15th to snap at the leader’s heels.

Chaitanya Pandey and Shan Alvi were in the lead in Category ‘B’ (13-14) and Category ‘C’ (11-12) respectively. Apeksha, a 10th-tee starter, drained a 25-foot putt for birdie on the 12th, but the youngster struggled to come to grips with the speed of the greens. She three-putted for a bogey on the 13th hole and dropped another shot on the 18th to turn at one-over. However, Apeksha made amends on her back nine. She hit her 9-iron third shot to four feet and made the putt for a birdie on the fourth. She holed a seven-foot putt on the fifth for another birdie. The promising teenager then sank a 10-footer on the closing hole for a 70. In Category ‘C’ (11-12 years), Aaliyah Kalra and Ridhima Kapoor were tied

for the lead with an identical 79s. Ojaswini Saraswat, Janneya A Dasannee and Rehnoor Malik were a shot further back in fourth spot. The partnership also feels like the kind of coaching project Murray hinted he wanted after stepping away from Djokovic’s camp. The former Wimbledon champion had earlier admitted that helping build a younger player’s career, similar to how Juan Carlos Ferrero guided Carlos Alcaraz, appealed far more to him long-term. And Draper, when fit, remains one of the ATP Tour’s most exciting talents. The Brit was ranked as high as world No. 4 last June and has already shown his ceiling by winning the BNP Paribas Open and reaching the US Open semi-finals before injuries.