

The Bengal government has ordered an investigation into a hospital that gave a patient “expired” saline

Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari made an unexpected visit to Swasthya Bhawan, the headquarters of the state health department located in Salt Lake. During this visit, he assessed the advancements in a hospital monitoring system that is designed to enhance patient care. This initiative highlights the government's commitment to improving the quality of health services and ensuring better healthcare outcomes for the population.

Kolkata, July 09: The Bengal Health Department on Thursday ordered an inquiry and announced stricter monitoring measures, after the family of a patient alleged that she had been administered expired saline at a state-run medical college and hospital.

Health minister Sharadwat Mukherjee said a report has been sought from the Midnapore Medical College and Hospital in this regard, and assured that corrective measures would be put in place. In January 2025, too, the medical facility was embroiled in a controversy over allegedly administering expired saline to a patient.

“Health officials are expected to follow the standard operating procedures, and the department will ensure compliance. Weekly checks will be undertaken to ensure such lapses do not recur,” Mukherjee said. The patient, identified as Mansi De, a resident of Vidyasagarpally in Midnapore town, was admitted to the hospital on July 5 after suffering a stroke.

According to her family, she complained of a burning sensation in her chest on July 8 while receiv-

ing intravenous saline. Her son later alleged that upon examining the bottle, he found the expiry date to be March this year.

“My mother has multiple health issues apart from the stroke. I want to know how such a saline was administered to her,” he said. The patient was subsequently shifted to the intensive care unit (ICU), and the hospital authorities initiated an inquiry. Medical Superintendent-cum-Vice Principal Indranil Sen said the patient was stable and under close observation.

“Medicines are stocked in the hospital, and somehow an expired saline appears to have been administered. The lapse was identified immediately and rectified. She has been shifted to the critical care unit,” Sen added. Bengal chief minister Suwendu Adhikari on Thursday paid a surprise visit to Swasthya Bhawan, the state health department headquarters, in Salt Lake near here, and reviewed the progress of a hospital monitoring system aimed at improving patient care.

He said the live CCTV-based monitoring system has already been in place at 15-16 state-run



hospitals in the city and in a few districts, and directed the officials concerned to expand the facility to all sub-division hospitals by July 30. “I have directed that the live hospital monitoring system be expanded to all subdivision hospitals by July 30. The surveillance will not be limited to emergency wards and OPDs but will also cover kitchens, parking areas, and

fair price medicine shops to ensure transparency, cleanliness and better patient care,” Adhikari said. He also said this would help eliminate the activities of touts in government hospitals.

After inspecting the monitoring facility, the chief minister held a meeting with state Health Minister Sharadwat Mukherjee and senior departmental officials and

announced that 250 beds would be added to the state-run SSKM Hospital in south Kolkata, possibly before Durga Puja this year. He also directed officials to increase the hospital’s ICU capacity from around 112 beds to 200 to reduce the burden on patients.

The CM also called for strengthening the hospital’s burn unit, which currently has only 60 beds.

The chief minister also stressed the need for strengthening emergency healthcare infrastructure and called for increasing trauma centre capacities to provide primary care to at least 250 patients simultaneously.

The CM said such a facility was essential in view of major accidents and emergencies. He also announced that the state has signed an agreement with the Adani Group to set up a 2,000-bed international-standard hospital in New Town, with 1,000 beds reserved for poor patients.

He said private hospitals built on government land have also agreed to earmark 10 per cent of their bed capacity free of cost for economically weaker sections. While the original agreements required them to reserve 15 per cent of beds, “moving from nothing to 10 per cent is a good beginning”, he said, expressing hope that these hospitals would eventually comply with the full commitment.

Seeking to improve patient welfare, the chief minister said the daily food allocation for patients in government hospitals had been increased from Rs 54 to Rs 110 for three meals, while allocations un-

der nutrition schemes for school-children, pregnant women and children below five years had also been enhanced.

He also directed officials concerned to create accommodation facilities for relatives of patients by developing additional infrastructure on available land near hospitals.

Calling for hospitals to function as “Ayushman Mandirs”, Adhikari said the government would work to eliminate middlemen from hospital premises through live monitoring, introduce colour-coded identity cards for healthcare staff, patients and attendants to improve security and accountability.

The CM also said the government will ensure that doctors and healthcare workers get a pressure-free working environment with adequate administrative support.

Asked about alleged non-cooperation by the health department in police cases, Adhikari directed health authorities to extend full cooperation to the police by promptly providing all documents and information sought under provisions of law.

The “most important witness” and rape-murder suspect from Baruipur were shot twice above the waist

Kolkata, July 09: Pravas Mondal was shot dead by police after allegedly attempting to escape during a reconstruction of a crime involving the sexual assault and murder of an 11-year-old girl. Initially, Pravas missed his mark but was ultimately struck by police bullets as he tried to flee after snatching a gun from an officer. This incident has stirred a mixed response, with some viewing it as instant justice while others question the legitimacy of such encounters. The girl’s father expressed satisfaction, stating that the government has honored its promise to bring the perpetrator to justice.

Pravas Mondal, considered a crucial witness by



police due to his involvement, allegedly lured the girl away, and his statements helped recover her body, thus tying him closely to the crime. The local police confirmed that their preliminary investi-

gations indicated Pravas was the first to assault the girl, followed by two others currently in custody. Following the shooting, police conducted an inquest, adhering to guidelines set by the National

Human Rights Commission (NHRC), including conducting a post-mortem with a three-member medical board.

This encounter has reignited debates about extrajudicial killings, a controversial tactic employed by law enforcement in India. In the past, similar encounters targeting alleged criminals, particularly in states governed by the BJP, have raised moral and legal questions regarding human rights and the justice system’s integrity.

The scrutiny of police actions continues, with officials stating that all aspects of the incident will undergo formal investigation, ensuring adherence to legal protocols.

Meet "justice" versus "jungle law": Bengal's opposition denounces the death of a key accused in Baruipur

Kolkata, July 09: The recent encounter killing of Prabhas Mondal, the prime suspect in the gang-rape and murder of a 12-year-old girl in Baruipur, has ignited a significant political polarization in Bengal. Following the incident during a police operation, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) celebrated the death as "divine justice," while opposition parties such as the Congress, the Left, and the Trinamool Congress led by Mamata Banerjee condemned it as "jungle law." According to police accounts, Mondal allegedly grabbed a police revolver and fired during a reconstruction of the crime scene before being killed.

This incident marks the first custody-encounter death since the current BJP government took office in May, reflecting their campaign promises to adopt encounter-style justice. BJP spokespersons hailed the action, with state president Samik Bhattacharya linking it to the party's commitment to



women’s safety. Conversely, Mamata Banerjee and her supporters accused the government of adopting extrajudicial standards from Uttar Pradesh, criticizing this approach as a dangerous precedent for governance.

Mamata emphasized the need for a legal framework and criticized the government’s methods, accusing it of creating a climate of impunity and extrajudicial execution. She connected this encounter to a pattern of increas-

ing violence against women, noting numerous cases of sexual assault and murder across Bengal. Other political figures, including those from the Communist Party of India (Marxist), argued that the encounter was a ploy to distract from systemic issues and administrative failures.

Moreover, several leaders expressed concern that the encounter killing points to a broader trend of adopting violent state tactics reminiscent of historical abuses during past political regimes in Bengal. A historian reflected on the brutal tactics used in the 1970s against the Naxalite movement, suggesting that the current government risks repeating a history marked by state-sanctioned violence and a disregard for civil liberties. Such critiques assert that the move towards encounters not only undermines the rule of law but could lead to a culture of fear and repression reminiscent of authoritarian states.

Calcutta High Court declines interim relief against eviction of Manglahat hawkers from Howrah

Kolkata, July 09: The Calcutta High Court refused to grant any interim relief to hawkers of the century-old Manglahat in Howrah city from police action aimed at maintaining road and pavement space.

Alleging overaction by the police, the Howrah Hawkers’ Samity prayed for an order restraining the police from evicting them and interfering with their businesses. Refusing any interim order restraining the police, as prayed for by the association, Justice Saugata Bhattacharyya on Wednesday said that the hawkers’ association could not prima facie satisfy the court regard-

ing their right to earn livelihoods by hawking wares while blocking roads and pavements.

The court observed that the issue needs consideration upon the exchange of affidavits, and directed the respondent authorities to file their affidavits in opposition to the petitioner’s contention within the next two weeks. The petitioner would have the liberty to file their affidavit in reply to those within the subsequent week, Justice Bhattacharyya directed.

Petitioner’s lawyer Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya stated that while certain restrictions can be imposed on the

marketplace, the hawkers cannot be evicted entirely in view of the Hawkers’ Vending Act.

He stated that the century-old market in the central district of Howrah city takes place twice a week on the streets. Maintaining that earning a livelihood by hawking is a fundamental right, he stated that the Howrah Municipal Corporation (HMC) authorities had not given any notice for the eviction of the hawkers. Representing the state, lawyer Suryaneel Das stated that the police have a duty to keep the roads clear.

He stated that the market blocks thoroughfares and creates traffic jams.

Many passengers said the stalls had obstructed free movement near the station and that the premises appeared cleaner after the demolition.

Opposition parties in Bengal accused the government of destroying livelihoods by importing bulldozer culture.

Several hawkers said they were facing severe financial losses and were uncertain about their future. On May 15, the court stayed the demolition of two buildings in Tiljala after lawyers for the owners argued that no advance notice had been served. Three people had died in a fire at a leather unit in one of the buildings on May 12.

Man stabs wife on busy road during argument in North 24-Parganas



North 24-Parganas, July 09: A 33-year-old homemaker was allegedly stabbed and killed by her husband on a busy road in Sodepur, North 24-Parganas, on Wednesday afternoon.

The accused attempted to end his own life by stabbing himself. He is now fighting for his life.

The incident took place on School Road near the Future Gate area of Sodepur town, triggering panic among residents, commuters and passersby. Police said that Subhas Das, 37, stabbed his wife, Gita Das, 33. The couple lived in Mahendranagar in the Natagarh area of

Sodepur.

According to local residents, the couple often fought at home and in public. On Wednesday afternoon, another altercation broke out between the two near the Future Gate area. While arguing, Subhas allegedly pulled out a sharp knife and repeatedly stabbed Gita in front of shocked eyewitnesses.

As Gita collapsed on the road in a pool of blood, local people rushed to her rescue. Subhas, still holding the knife, allegedly threatened to attack those who tried to intervene before turning the weapon on himself and stabbing his abdomen.

Senior officers of the Barrackpore police commissionerate, including deputy commissioner Kartik Chandra Mandal, rushed to the spot after receiving information about the incident.

Both Subhas and Gita were taken to Sagar Dutta Medical College and Hospital, where doctors declared the woman dead. Hospital sources said Subhas was critical.

Police have seized the knife and launched an investigation. Preliminary findings suggest that the murder was the culmination of an ongoing marital dispute and a suspected extramarital affair.

After spending a year in Bangladesh, Sunali's husband was returned to India

Malda, July 09: Four Indian nationals, including a woman and two minor children, who had been deported to Bangladesh last year after being mistaken for Bangladeshi nationals, returned to India through the Mahadipur land port in Malda on Wednesday.

The returnees — Danesh Sheikh, the husband of Sunali Khatun, along with their neighbour Sweety Bibi and her two children — reached India nearly a year after their deportation. A pregnant Sunali and her minor son, who had also been deported, were

brought back to India on December 5 last year. Danesh, Sweety and her two children, residents of Paikor village in Birbhum district, remained lodged in a prison in Bangladesh for seven more months after Sunali’s release. Visibly relieved after stepping on Indian soil, both Danesh and Sweety expressed gratitude to the Supreme Court for its order that directed the authorities to facilitate their return. According to sources, Sunali, her husband Danesh, their son, and their neighbour Sweety with her two children had migrated to

Delhi for work. On June 22 last year, they were detained by the Delhi Police from the Rohini area on suspicion of being Bangladeshi nationals, reportedly because they were speaking in Bengali among each other.

They were subsequently pushed across the border into Bangladesh through Assam. Eventually, their families approached the Supreme Court, seeking their return to India. While a heavily pregnant Sunali and her son were repatriated in December, the others continued to be in custody in Bangladesh. Sunali gave birth

to a baby boy in January this year.

In May this year, the Supreme Court directed the authorities to bring the four back to India. Following the court order, arrangements were made by the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Malda police at the Mahadipur port to facilitate their return. Recalling her ordeal, Sweety described her stay in Bangladesh as traumatic. “It was a horrible experience in the Bangladesh prison. Other inmates abused us because we were Indians. It feels wonderful to be back in my own

country. From now on, I will try to earn my livelihood locally and won't migrate to another state for work,” she said. Her brother, Amir Khan, who reached Malda to receive them, said his sister suffered despite having committed no offence. “My innocent sister was detained by the Delhi Police merely because she spoke in Bengali, and was deported to Bangladesh. We are deeply grateful to the Indian judiciary.

It was because of the Supreme Court’s intervention that my sister and her children could return home,” he said.

Thane Doctor Assaulted By Sena Corporator Resigns, Saying “There’s Lots Of Fear”

New Delhi, July 09: One of the physicians beaten by Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde faction) leader Ramesh Mhatre at a hospital in Maharashtra’s Thane has quit due to terror. The doctor has left the city and will “never go back”.I’ve quit because there is so much dread. Goons are monitoring us, and I’ve already left the city. They are really dangerous people. The other physicians may continue to work there, but I cannot. “I will not return there again,” the doctor stated. On July 6, an event occurred at the Shastri Nagar Hospital in Dombivli, which is managed by the Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation. According to hospital officials, it began when two doctors, one male and one woman, urged the parents of a newborn to transfer the infant to another institution since the hospital’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit was full. The physicians had emphasized the need of providing suitable care for the infant.



The families then phoned Mhatre, who showed up at the hospital with his cronies. One of the doctors sustained injuries.Mhatre, however, showed no remorse over the incident. He denied hitting the physicians and refused to apologise. “I didn’t strike the female doctor at the hospital. I smacked her phone

since she wasn’t listening to us. I was merely trying to get her off the phone. Our actions saved the lives of a mother and her kid. “We don’t care about anything else,” he explained.According to Mhatre, he would be disappointed if the physicians apologized for their actions, noting that Sena

founder Balasaheb Thackeray instructed them to oppose injustice.A complaint was filed against Mhatre and his five colleagues.Mhatre was detained last evening in connection with the offense. He was eventually transferred to Thane Civil Hospital when his condition apparently worsened.

Six companions murdered in traffic accident during pilgrimage in Karnataka’s Uttara Kannada

Bengaluru, July 09: Six individuals, all friends, were killed and three others injured on Thursday after their Tempo Cruiser crashed head-on with a lorry in Karnataka’s Uttara Kannada district, according to authorities.The accident happened near Balagar on the Arabail Ghat portion when the group was heading towards Dharmasthala and Chikkamagaluru. The crash smashed the Tempo Cruiser, forcing rescuers to deploy heavy equipment to liberate people trapped inside.MN Deepan, Uttara Kannada superintendent of police (SP), told HT that a Tempo Cruiser traveling from Yellapur to Ankola struck head on with an approaching lorry, killing six people and badly injuring three others. “All of the deceased were Dharwad residents.” The victims were identified as driver Sanjay Angadi, 48, Basavaraj Kanakammanavar, 48, Abhishek Es-hwar, 28, Akshay, 26, Abhishek, 26, and Manjunath Chulaki, 33.Deepan



added, “The injured Shivaraj Madivalar, 22, Naveen, 24, and Channappa Kalaghatagi, 28, were shifted to a private hospital in Hubballi for treatment.” According to initial reports, the pals left Dharwad on Wednesday night after work for a pilgrimage and leisure vacation.Police said the remains were

recovered from the wrecked truck and transported for postmortem examination.Police have opened an investigation and are looking into the cause of the incident. Officers are investigating whether speeding, driving mistake, poor vision, or slick roads from monsoon rains contributed to the crash.

Mamata Banerjee slaps a man during a Trinamool-BJP clash during a rally in Kolkata

Kolkata, July 09:Mamata Banerjee’s comeback to her signature streetfighter persona on Friday was punctuated by a firm smack to a Trinamool Congress member in Kolkata.On Wednesday, Trinamool Congress workers marched in protest of the rape and death of an 11-year-old girl in Baruipur.However, the demonstration was reportedly stopped by BJP workers. The procession was regularly interrupted by jostling, pushing, and shoving between workers of the two parties. Security forces were forced to intervene with a baton charge.The BJP workers even formed a human shield to stop the rally from advancing and raised slogans like “chor, chor”. Some of the Trinamool workers still loyal to Banerjee endured eggs being thrown at them.A large crowd gathered outside Mamata Banerjee’s house as the rally neared its end. She stepped forward to disperse the crowd, and in the process, she slapped the man, a member of her own party. She also pushed others around. The BJP workers had protested against the rally because they claimed the party had no right as it “shielded criminals perpetrating crimes against women, shamed victims”.



Nine people are still trapped after a building collapse in Pune caused by rain and a garbage pile



Mumbai, July 09: Rescue teams are attempting to reach nine individuals who remain buried beneath debris after a three-story structure in Pune’s Moshi Pradhikaran collapsed Wednesday afternoon.There were 23 individuals inside the building when a “mountain-like” mass of rubbish next door collapsed under heavy rain and crashed into the structure. Five people were able to flee the fallen building on their own, while nine others were rescued from below debris by 8 p.m.

The rescued individuals were shifted to nearby hospitals for treatment.Officials said employees of a renewable energy company that works with the district administration to run a 14MW

power plant in the region were among those trapped. The company was reportedly using the building as an administrative office.A multi-agency rescue operation — involving teams from the local police and fire services, the Army, and the National Disaster Response Force — is underway to save the remaining people, Deputy Commissioner of Police Ganesh Ingale told reporters. The operation includes special instruments, including rescue cameras (mounted on flexible fibre-optic cables that can be inserted through cracks) and listening devices capable of detecting sounds such as tapping or scratching from beneath piles of debris. Heavy machinery, including earth movers, and medical

teams have also been deployed.Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Commissioner Dr Vijay Suryawanshi and Police Commissioner Vinaykumar Choubey are monitoring the rescue operation, while Maharashtra Water Resources and Disaster Management Minister Girish Mahajan visited the site and reviewed the situation.Meanwhile, relentless monsoon rains continue to batter Maharashtra, severely disrupting normal life across Mumbai, Thane, Palghar, Pune, Nashik, and the wider Konkan region. Heavy rainfall over the last week has caused significant waterlogging, landslides, transportation disruptions, and a number of rain-related accidents, including the temporary closure of the newly opened ‘missing link’ stretch of the Pune-Mumbai Expressway due to a landslide. The section was obstructed by rocks, mud, and debris, causing damage to a protection slab and a portion of a retaining wall at the tunnel entrance. Traffic was diverted while debris cleanup activities were underway.The area has been reopened, although motorists are advised to take caution.

Rohini building collapse: two additional dead rescued from wreckage toll increases to three

Mumbai, July 07: The death toll following the collapse of twin four-story buildings in Delhi’s Rohini has risen to three, with two additional corpses discovered in the wreckage early Thursday morning. The structures fell on Wednesday afternoon.Despite the fact that search and rescue activities persisted, one person was retrieved. The remains of Ram Dua, 62, the father of the owner of one of the buildings, and Kafe alias Nurul, 24,

a laborer, were discovered between 12.45am and 2.30am on Friday. A third person declared dead at a hospital was identified as Ram,42, who worked as a two-wheeler mechanic. On Wednesday evening, another labourer, Mohammad Saddam, 32, was rescued.Deputy police commissioner (Rohini) Shashank Jaiswal said the collapse was reported on Wednesday around 4.28pm as some labourers worked at the site.

3,000 gas cylinders float in river as floodwaters reach HPCL plant

Raigad , July 09: Officials have asked to individuals who locate these floating gas cylinders in the river to quickly turn them over to the authorities or the corporation.Is this a fish? No. It is a cylinder. Wait! There are many of them.A disturbing video came from Maharashtra’s Raigad during heavy rain. The rapid flow of water from the HPCL Patalganga LPG Bottling Plant carried away around 3,000 gas cylinders, which were later found floating in the Patalganga River. Officials stated that the plant’s protective wall broke due to severe rain, allowing flood water to access the premises immediately. The cylinders were eventually swept away in the Patalganga River and Kharpada Creek.

Amazed citizens were observed filming the floating cylinders from a bridge.A disturbing video came from Maharashtra’s Raigad during heavy rain. The rapid flow of water from the HPCL Patalganga LPG Bottling Plant carried away around 3,000 gas cylinders, which were later found floating in the Patalganga River. The administration has said that some of the cylinders that flowed into the river may



be filled with gas.Raigad Collector Kishan Javle has appealed to citizens who find these floating gas cylinders in the Patalganga River or in nearby areas to immediately hand them over to the concerned authorities or the company. He added that citizens can deposit the cylinders at the following locations:Directly at the HPCL companyAt any nearby HPCL dealerTehsildar Office, Khalapur Tehsildar Office, Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) Office.For safety reasons, the administration has requested people not to keep these cylinders in their homes

and to cooperate in handing them over to the administration or the company at the earliest.“There is no guarantee whether the cylinders washed into the river contain gas or whether they are in a safe condition. Picking them up, opening them, or taking them home out of curiosity or for use could be extremely dangerous,” the collector said. Over the previous week, continuous rain has wreaked havoc across Maharashtra. Raigad is one of the hardest impacted districts, with various places experiencing floods and overflowing rivers.

On Camera, Andhra State Bus Crushes Man Who Was Crossing the Road

Vijayawada, July 09: An unmanaged Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) bus crushed a man to death while crossing the road at a traffic crossroads in the state’s Vijayawada region.The event was recorded on a CCTV camera. The 46-second video depicts around eight to 10 persons crossing the road. The victim, dressed in a green t-shirt, black shorts, slip-ons, and carrying what seemed to be a purse, began crossing. After a few paces, he took out his mobile phone from his jeans pocket. Within seconds, a green and white state bus crashed into him. While the bus did not seem to be speeding, it did not stop after hitting the man. The bus then drove over the man, crushing him to death.According to locals, the man was distracted as he was scrolling on his mobile phone while crossing the road. The bus driver has been detained, officials said.The police are also investigating the accident further with the help of CCTV footages and eyewitness accounts, they added.



The state has announced a Rs.13,000 crore flood control strategy for Mumbai



Mumbai, July 09: The Maharashtra government has revealed a ₹13,000-crore flood-control plan in response to criticism over Mumbai’s flooding after the first heavy rains of the season. The plan aims to prevent the city from flooding again.The initiative intends to eliminate 370 flood-prone sites by improving the city’s drainage infrastructure, chief minister Devendra Fadnavis told the legislative assembly on Wednesday.“We discovered 370 flooding sites where water gathers following heavy rains, particularly during high tides. The project will use a mechanism that will clear waterlogging at all 370 locations in 30 minutes,” he stated. Fadnavis described the massive floods that nearly brought Mumbai to a halt as unprecedented. “In July, Mumbai receives an average of 734mm of rainfall in Colaba and 856mm at Santacruz. This year, however, in only the first six days of the month, Colaba received 882mm of rain, or 111% of its annual July total, while Santacruz received 988mm, or 102% of its usual July rainfall,” Fadnavis stated.He claimed the rain was so heavy that Mumbai received over 90% of its usual July rainfall in only four days. “On average, Mumbai re-

ceives 2,318mm of monsoon rainfall. “The rainfall received in those four days accounted for 42% of the city’s average seasonal monsoon total,” he said. Responding to criticism on the damage to the newly inaugurated Connecting Link on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, Fadnavis reiterated that it was an “engineering feat” and said experts from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) had recommended measures to prevent a recurrence.The Connecting Link was closed for nearly 18 hours on Monday after a landslide triggered flooding and waterlogging at the mouth of the tunnel’s Khandala exit.“What occurred was a landslide. There was no crack in the bridge or the tunnel. A crane reached the site 3 minutes after the emergency button was pressed,” he said. “You are free to criticise me, but I will not allow anyone to defame Maharashtra,” Fadnavis remarked, warning those who, he alleged, were spreading misinformation about the state on social media in exchange for money. Fadnavis said Mumbai’s daily water requirement is 4,665 MLD, against a supply of 4,100 MLD, leaving a 565-MLD deficit. He said the Gargai project, expected to be

completed by May 2029, will add 500 MLD to the city’s supply, after securing forest clearance.He admitted that the city had narrowly avoided a water crisis, with reservoir levels falling below 10%. He also said the 400-MLD and 200-MLD desalination projects at Manori and Versova, along with Gargai, would add more than 1,000 MLD to the city’s water supply by 2030. To address Mumbai’s parking crisis, the government is mulling the construction of parking infrastructure beneath maidans. Citing the Oval and Cross maidans as examples, Fadnavis said, “The project will involve significant investment, but we will develop a viable financial model.” He announced a G+23 robotic parking facility at Worli with a capacity for 640 cars and 112 two-wheelers, along with an underground parking project in ‘A’ Ward. He said 27 proposals for underground parking facilities had been received and advisors were being appointed to take the projects forward. The chief minister said the situation in Vasai-Virar remained serious due to incessant rainfall. The region has been receiving around 100mm of rain daily, with 325mm recorded on July 6 and 202mm on July 7. Over the last 72 hours, the region received 672mm of rainfall.“NDRF and SDRF teams had been deployed, while repair work was underway to restore damaged mobile and power infrastructure. Electricity supply has been suspended in some areas due to extensive damage to the network and would be restored as soon as it is safe,” he said.

Wayanad Landslide: Focus on Contractor’s Note Following ‘Man-Made Disaster’ Claims

Thiruvananthapuram, July 09: The Kerala government’s position on the catastrophic Wayanad tunnel collapse appears to be altering, according to a memorandum filed to the state by the contractor defending its participation in the accident.Just a day after senior ministers and elected representatives referred to the incident as a “man-made disaster,” the government’s tone has softened, with Chief Minister VD Satheeshan stating that the final conclusion will be based on scientific investigation rather than preliminary findings. Contractor Dilip Buildcon presented an official notice to the Kerala government. In the letter, the corporation vehemently denied any culpability for the landslide, blaming the collapse on extremely strong rainfall and topography rather than building activities.In the message, the contractor stated that the meteorological service had issued a Red Alert and that Wayanad had received around 240 mm of rainfall in 24 hours. It stated that the landslide began around 240 metres above the tunnel top and surged downhill due to the natural elevation differential. The company further



stated that all construction, drainage, and slope protection measures were carried out according to approved engineering designs, and that tunnelling work had already been suspended since mid-June due to the monsoon. The note is significant because it counters the assessment emerging from government experts, who have pointed to violations in muck disposal practices and failure to comply with repeated directions to remove accumulated excavated material. The government’s public position also appears to have evolved.Speaking to reporters at the Wayanad Collectorate on Wednesday, Satheeshan said he had ordered a detailed investigation into the disaster. He said an expert team would determine the exact nature and cause of the

landslide, and only after receiving that report would the government officially state whether it was a natural or man-made disaster.He also said a police case would be registered if wrongdoing is proved and that if the contractor had indeed failed to comply with government directions, including removal of the muck pile, appropriate legal action would be initiated. The comments were a significant shift from Tuesday’s narrative, in which ministries and local officials categorically labeled the situation as a man-made disaster. On Wednesday, the administration stressed that the remarks just represented what elected officials had heard from people on the ground and were not the state’s final expert evaluation.

Tribal Forum Submits Rights Charter to Bengal BJP Chief

Kolkata, July 09: The West Bengal Adivasi Unity Manch submitted a memorandum demanding constitutional rights and welfare measures for tribal communities to state BJP president Shamik Bhattacharya on Tuesday. Assuring the delegation, Bhattacharya promised that tribals in West Bengal would receive the same rights and benefits being extended to them across the country. “There will be no discrimination. Whatever is being done for Adivasis in the rest of India will be implemented here as well,” he said.



The submission took place during a programme organised by the Adivasi Unity Manch at Mahajati Sadan in Kolkata. The event began with traditional lamp lighting by Bhattacharya. Prominent attendees included North Kolkata

BJP president Tamoghna Ghosh, Adivasi Unity Manch president Ruben Rava, general secretary Tarak Bag, Samir Hansda, Limba Lepcha, Tanshi Darje Sherpa and office bearers from 35 different tribal communities.

After a PIL challenges a state action, the Calcutta High Court requests a response about ISKCON meals



Kolkata, July 09: In response to a PIL claiming that the state’s intention to give religious organization Iskcon control over midday meals in Calcutta schools would rob tens of thousands of self-help group workers of their livelihood, the high court on Wednesday requested an affidavit from the state. On behalf of the petitioner, senior attorney Kalyan Bandyopadhyay contended that the ruling will have an impact on the livelihood of 2.5 lakh employees of self-help groups.A division bench

led by acting Chief Justice Tapabrata Chakraborty was informed by advocate-general Surajit Mitra that the PIL could not be maintained because no official notification had been sent and the ruling had not yet been put into effect.The chief minister had declared that Iskcon will be in charge of supplying midday meals, Bandyopadhyay informed the court.Finance Minister Swapan Dasgupta declared that Iskcon will be given the responsibility of providing meals to schools under the Kolkata Municipal Corporation when he presented the state budget on June 22.The elimination of non-vegetarian products from the school menu would be the biggest impact.The midday food program was implemented to promote attendance in government and assisted schools, Bandyopadhyay informed the court.

”As a pilot project, Iskcon is being given the responsibility of providing midday meals to schools in Calcutta... Try it, the quality is good,” the chief minister stated at a press conference that same day. Don’t say “Hare Krishna” if you don’t want it.

Bandyopadhyay asked the court to order the chief minister to submit an affidavit denying making those statements.After four weeks, the bench posted the case for hearing and instructed the state administration to submit an affidavit.

On Hazra Road, a TMC demonstration for justice is marred by violence and eggs; dozens are hurt

Kolkata, July 09: On Wednesday afternoon, a Trinamool demonstration against the rape and killing of an 11-year-old girl from Baruipur turned violent on Hazra Road.

The Trinamool marchers were outnumbered, outshouted, heckled, and attacked by BJP supporters. Eggs were thrown, chants overpowered the demonstrators’ demands for justice, and police were accused of failing to stop the altercations while being heavily present.Although there have been numerous political conflicts on Hazra Road throughout the years, many longstanding residents claimed to have never observed anything “like this.”With approval from the Calcutta High Court, the Trinamool planned the march from Ballygunge Phari to Hazra. Around 1.45pm, hundreds of BJP supporters assembled at Ballygunge Phari, on foot and on two-wheelers. Hazra Road was lined with BJP flags and loudspeakers had been set up along the route. As Trinamool supporters gathered near the Ballygunge Phari petrol pump, BJP supporters initially

taunted and shouted at them. A modified version of a BJP campaign song accusing Mamata Banerjee, Abhishek Banerjee and the Trinamool of corruption, along with chants of “Jai Shri Ram”, blared from loudspeakers, drowning out the marchers’ slogans of “We want justice”, “Tomar sur amar sur, justice for Baruipur” and “Joy Bangla”. BJP supporters squatted on the road at several points to block the procession, triggering clashes at multiple locations. Trinamool marchers were largely at the receiving end. A man in a saffron stole repeatedly hit a marcher with a helmet close to the New Allenberry Works unit. Another marcher was attacked by a mob near Paramount Nursing Home and was left bleeding. Before police intervened and scattered the attackers, a third marcher who was shouting anti-Suvendu Adhikari slogans was pinned to the ground. During the parade, a few males with masked faces threw eggs. A gang of ladies yelling “chor, chor” dragged a woman by her hair at the Hazra crossing. The police seemed hesi-

According to active and former police personnel, there has been no government action throughout the Baruipur gap



Kolkata, July 09: Despite the rape and death of the 12-year-old girl and the surfacing of several charges of police wrongdoing, a number of active and retired police officers stated it was remarkable that no administrative action had been taken.The missing person’s diary was

turned in around 11:50 p.m. on Saturday, Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari announced on Tuesday. However, the officer in command of the Baruipur police outpost had not reported the complaint to the local police station until the next morning, according to early police findings.The

camp (outpost) in charge stated that he had notified the RT (radio telephony) party. However, the RT party officials claimed to be preoccupied with another location where an accident had been reported, according to an officer. It was alleged that a team of officers from Baruipur police station under the leadership of the IC reached the spot of violence at 10.30am, which was around three hours after the girl’s body was found. By then, a violent mob had attacked the outpost, started to damage public property and got hold of a man they thought was a suspect.The man was lynched as the police failed to rescue him in time.

Sources said the Baruipur police station is about 12km from the spot where the girl’s body was found, yet it took officers nearly three hours to reach there. Residents also alleged that the prime accused, Ananda Sardar, had escaped from the police outpost, raising further questions over the police response.Despite these alleged lapses, no administrative action had

been initiated against any police personnel till Tuesday. ”The public and the force both receive a message from prompt action. A retired IPS officer who had been Bengal’s director-general of police stated, “Taking action against officers who are prima facie found to be at fault helps build public confidence in the administration.”According to sources, during his meeting with top police officials at the Baruipur superintendent of police’s office, chief minister Suvendu Adhikari requested that at least four policemen connected to the issue be suspended.However, following talks, he granted the director-general of police seventy-two hours to finish the administrative procedure and turn in a report.

In a money laundering investigation, the ED freezes Rs 440 crore in TMC accounts

Kolkata, July 09: On Wednesday, the Enforcement Directorate announced that it has frozen around ₹440 crore in three Trinamool bank accounts. “During searches, balances amounting to ₹440.42 crore in the bank accounts of AITC have been frozen under Section 17(1A) of PMLA, 2002,” the ED said in a statement.

Among the locations searched was the office of Carewell Aviation India Pvt Ltd, an aviation company that allegedly provided chartered flights to Trinamool MP Abhishek Banerjee, Mamata Baner-



jee, and others. Additionally, the ED searched an office in central Calcutta and a businessman’s home in Salt Lake.

About ₹160 crore was transferred from Trinamool bank accounts to Carewell and a connected company, according to the ED.In order to buy an Embraer Legacy 600 aircraft and one Augusta 109 helicopter, Carewell Aviation Pvt Ltd transferred ₹82.96 crore to another newly created connected firm between 2023 and 2026, according to the ED. It stated that ₹112 crore was spent on the purchases.In order to buy the

After a night of Messi magic, supporters from Atlanta to Calcutta yell Vamos Argentina

Kolkata, July 09: At Atlanta Stadium, a father and son from Siliguri witnessed their dreams come true as Argentina secured a spot in the quarterfinals. Pallab Bhowal, 61, and his 27-year-old son Rahil claimed that they felt as though they were in Buenos Aires as soon as they left the stadium.The walk back to the hotel took twenty minutes. People in blue and white crowded the streets. There was singing, dancing, and drumming. We could see supporters from different nations, including Indians, but the majority were Argentinians, according to businessman Pallab. Rahil works as a robotics engineer in the United States. ”I also traveled to Qatar to see the World Cup. I’ve participated in two World Cups. I’m here to watch Messi. “The charm is gone if Messi isn’t there,” Pallab remarked.He was nervous after the game against Egypt. The Argentina team outperformed this team in terms of weight and penetration in Qatar. However, Messi alone has the ability to alter the game’s color at any time, he claimed.

“I liked the festivities of the Argentina supporters. Inside the stadium, they were in enormous numbers. They took over the streets outside, according to Pallab.When Argentina was proclaimed the champion, firecrackers went off back in Calcutta. Messages on fans’ WhatsApp groups read, “Vamos Argentina.” Software developer Abhishek Das Choudhury, whose group consists of Argentina supporters from Dum Dum to Garia, stated, “At half-time, some of my friends messaged our WhatsApp group asking whether Argentina would be knocked out and if this would be Messi’s last World Cup match.”The atmosphere shifted after the last whistle. “Vamos Argentina!” was the group’s message.Suprio Upadhyay and Arun Sarkar, two buddies from Calcutta, were also present at Atlanta Stadium.“I will never forget the match at Mercedes-Benz Stadium. One of the best football stadiums in the United States is this fully covered, air-conditioned arena. The game was exciting and reminded me of the Argentina vs. France World Cup final in 2022,” Upadhyay remarked.”Among all the World Cups I have attended, this was one of the best matches I have witnessed,” he remarked.The Portugal-Spain game was also seen by the two.

Gunfire ends reconstruction: Inside the police effort at the crime scene in Baruipur



Kolkata, July 09: Around 12.45 a.m. on Wednesday, a group of officers left the Baruipur police station.Pravas Mondal, a suspect in the kidnapping, rape, and killing of the 11-year-old girl, accompanied them. The idea was to reconstruct the crime by taking Pravas to the location where the girl’s body was discovered on Sunday morning.According to sources, Pravas was picked above his co-accused because he guided the locals to the pond and assisted them in finding the girl’s body.Metro reconstructs what transpired during the crime investigation.Pravas was brought to the scene by the case’s investigating officer (IO),

the officer in charge of the police constable (PC) party, and a few other policemen. According to a senior officer of the Baruipur police directorate, “the IO of the case, along with his team, left Baruipur police station with accused Pravas Mondal for the reconstruction of the crime in the place of occurrence at Suryapur around 12.45am on Wednesday.”In the center of a field is the pond where the girl’s body was discovered. When the squad arrived, the marshy area—which is abandoned even during the day—was empty, according to sources.Police sources claim that after being requested to guide the crew to the precise location,

18 detained for lynching and vandalism in Baruipur: 16 for attacking a police officer, 2 for murder

Kolkata, July 09: The fourth suspect in the kidnapping, gang rape, and death of the 11-year-old girl in Baruipur on Sunday was taken into custody by police on Wednesday. Soon after the child’s death was discovered on Sunday, eighteen people were also taken into custody on charges of violence. Two of the eighteen were detained for lynching a young guy, while the other sixteen were detained for vandalism, assaulting police, and damaging public property.Kabir Mollah was



the fourth individual detained in the rape and murder investigation, according to the police.Prior to this, police had stated that it appeared that four males were involved in the crime. “Now all four have been arrested,” an officer said. Mollah will be produced before the Baruipur court on Thursday, police said.Chief minister Suvendu Adhikari had said during his visit to Baruipur on Tuesday that 200 persons had been identified for their involvement in the mob violence.He had assured

the families of both the slain girl and the lynched youth that strong action would be taken against the accused in both cases.Police said on Wednesday that the 18 arrested were produced before the Baruipur court. They were remanded in police custody.Raids were being conducted to arrest the other accused in the case, sources said.The discovery of the girl’s body stuffed in a gunny bag in a pond had triggered mass anger on Sunday morning. Railway lines were uprooted, police officers were beaten, and a police camp was vandalized.A young man named Indrajit Tanti, a suspect in the rape and murder case, had also been captured by the mob. Police were present when he was lynched,

but it is said that they were unable to manage the crowd.Suvendu stated on Tuesday that Tanti was “innocent” based on the police probe. The individuals who were detained in relation to his lynching have been charged with murder.

In the rape and murder case, police had previously detained Pravas Mondal, Ananda Sardar, and Dibakar Sardar. During a crime reconstruction early on Wednesday morning, Pravas was shot and killed by the police.



Editorial

The Power of Ordinary Habits

Grand resolutions often receive attention at the beginning of the year, but lasting change usually depends on ordinary habits repeated every day.Saving a small amount each month, walking instead of driving short distances, reading for twenty minutes daily, or switching off unused lights may appear

insignificant in isolation. Over months and years, however, these habits shape health, finances, and even the environment. The future is rarely transformed by a single dramatic action. More often, it is built through small choices made consistently over time.

A Library Is More Than a Building

For many people, a library is simply a place to borrow books. In reality, it is one of the few public spaces that welcomes everyone without expecting them to buy anything. Libraries provide students with quiet study areas, job seekers with access to information, and communities with opportunities for learning and discussion. As digital platforms expand, the role of libraries is changing rather than disappearing. A society that invests in libraries is investing in informed citizens, equal opportunity, and lifelong learning.

The perils of dedication

The link between popular admiration and political ambition is not novel nor regionally limited. What separates the current period, particularly in a democracy, is the magnitude and complexity with which celebrity status is transformed into political wealth. This conversion is not necessarily illegitimate. However, it necessitates inspection. Understanding the phenomena starts with its psychological origins. Researchers have uncovered what they call ‘parasocial interactions’, one-sided emotional attachments that audiences create with prominent individuals who are completely ignorant of their admirers’ presence. These range from casual admiration to profound personal connection, to what psychiatrists call borderline pathological attachment, in which followers will do anything for their idol. charisma and governance can, over time, be assessed against outcomes. Cinema, however, is a different proposition altogether. Its power rests on illusion, on the deliberate construction of an identity that has no necessary connection to the person behind it. An actor who portrays courage or social conscience on screen may have demonstrated neither quality in life. However, for audiences that have spent years investing emotional energy in that persona, the distinction between character and person frequently dissolves.The conversion of cinematic popularity into electoral support is well-documented across democracies. In the United States of America, Ronald Reagan, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Donald Trump each leveraged celebrity capital to enter politics. In the Philippines, Joseph Estrada rode mass adulation to the presidency, only to be convicted of corruption. Closer home, the intersection of cinema and electoral politics has been structurally embedded in several Indian states for decades.C.J. Vijay’s trouncing of the two Dravidian majors in Tamil Nadu is a recent case in point. A 2019 paper in the journal, Perspectives on Politics, introduces the concept of “epistemic power” — the disproportionate capacity of celebrities to shape public belief. When celebrities’ epistemic authority exceeds that of the political institution they seek to represent, their image begins to set the party’s agenda rather than the other way around.The transition from public prominence to public service has, in certain cases, been grounded in demonstrable civic engagement where a public figure has consistently used such a platform to address poverty, injustice, or governance issues.What is categorically different is the celebrity who, having accumulated wealth and fame, discovers a political vocation only when a viable electoral opportunity presents itself. This distinction matters because motivation largely determinesconduct. Those already rich and famous often enter politics to obtain the kind of power that wealth and celebrity cannot purchase: the authority of the State over legislation, public resources, and so on. Hero worship does lasting damage to the electorate’s capacity for independent judgment. When admiration hardens into devotion, the normal mechanisms of democratic accountability are suspended. Social media is complicit in this, trapping followers in closed circles where any criticism of their idol feels like a personal attack. Studies show that celebrity candidates win on name recognition alone, crowding out better-qualified but lesser-known rivals.None of this diminishes the legitimate role that public figures can play in political life. What it does suggest is that the voter’s responsibility is not discharged by enthusiasm alone. Relevant scrutiny is what hero worship discourages. The fan club and the ballot box operate under different logic. Conflating them serves neither the voter nor the republic.

Teacher training is the focal point of future-ready education

Teaching is fundamental to education, yet quickly changing classrooms and curricula necessitate ongoing professional development for teachers to ensure that their lectures remain academically relevant, internationally benchmarked, and engaging for students. Strengthening the teacher training ecosystem in India is more than just a goal outlined in the National Education Policy 2020; it is a long-term institutional investment aimed at improving teaching quality, resulting in a future-ready education system that prepares students across the country to compete on a global scale. . Ensuring that such reforms are inclusive and teachers across the country are given equal opportunities to learn the latest pedagogical innovations is essential for closing the learning gaps among students that divide them. Two significant reforms for teacher education and training pushed under NEP 2020 are the introduction of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme and the upgrading of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) into DIETs of Excellence. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, and Children and Youth; therefore, it is incumbent upon the states to strengthen the DIETs that Sports has issued a warning regarding both issues, which requires the attention and action of the central and state governments. The parliamentary panel has observed that many institutions, particularly private and non-multidisciplinary ones, lack the infrastructure and trained faculty; therefore, it is incumbent upon the states to strengthen the DIETs with resources to implement ITEP effectively. It also pointed out that the variation in DIETs’ scores suggests inconsistent infrastructure and human resource quality across DIETs. The committee’s observation highlights that the quality of teacher education programmes relies on the quality of institutions, and it cautions that the growth of substandard private institutions driven by commercial interests can significantly undermine the ITEP’s goal of NEP 2020 to

produce high-quality teachers, as many institutions prioritise profit over quality; this serves as a timely reminder for the need for stricter regulation and effective quality control. The constitution of an ITEP review committee for periodic updation based on feedback from educators and students; therefore, it is incumbent upon the states to strengthen the DIETs that schools have, ensuring continued relevance and effectiveness is a laudable initiative. Another critical gap flagged by the committee is that ITEP mandates that a significant portion of the programme, at least 25%, be dedicated to school-based activities and internships, but many institutions lack partnerships with quality schools for internships, leading to inconsistent practical training experiences.

The committee’s recommendation for the department and the National Council for Teacher Education to develop partnerships with diverse schools (government, private, rural, and urban) in order to provide varied teaching experiences, along with the creation of a framework for internship evaluation that includes mentor feedback and student performance metrics, requires prompt administrative action. DIETs that secure a score of 60 points or above are being considered eligible for upgradation under the scheme of converting into DIETs of Excellence. While this benchmark ensures a DIET meets minimum preparedness for central support, the risk of disparity from those failing to secure the required score raises concerns about equitable teacher capacity-building. The central government has prioritised only those DIETs with relatively better infrastructure and resources for transformation; therefore, it is incumbent upon the states to strengthen the DIETs which fail to make it to this list. As DIETs scoring below the prescribed benchmark are required to be strengthened through state-level interventions, state budgets earmarking adequate outlays for the required investment are essential to make them eligible for receiving

grants for transformation into DIETs of Excellence. Any delay in the release or utilisation of allocated funds will widen the gap between DIETs and DIETs of Excellence and adversely affect equitable teacher education, ultimately depriving students of access to quality learning. Given the rapid spread of digital technology and the disruption caused by artificial intelligence, classrooms in India must evolve at a faster pace to prepare students with future-ready competencies. This transformation can happen only when the teacher is fully equipped to design and deliver the lessons, both in the classrooms and laboratories, which are globally relevant and aligned with emerging digital and AI-driven learning needs. Achieving this goal requires continuous professional development of teachers, not through one-time training sessions or a single mid-career refresher course.

The NEP mandates that teachers complete 50 hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) each year for their professional growth, allowing them the flexibility to choose courses that align with their interests and career goals. Educational institutions having quality infrastructure, adequate smart classrooms, and smooth interest access are pivotal to enabling teachers to deliver what they have learnt through training and CPD. The issue: We must avoid the egg-and-chicken dilemma of choosing between prioritising teacher training and developing infrastructure improvements. to fall into the egg-and-chicken dilemma of choosing between developing infrastructure improvements first and prioritising teacher training. Outcome-orientated reforms demand that both must be strengthened in tandem. Even though the NEP places teachers at the centre of reforms, achieving transformation in teacher education and training must prioritise students and their learning needs. The challenge remains in removing the rural-urban divide and digital divide that limit equal access to education.

Satluj, Jaswant Singh Khalra: And When Disappearance Is The Story

Some movies are released. Some films are avoided. Some films are released, just to be hushed again.Satluj, starring Diljit Dosanjh and previously known as ‘Punjab ’95, has now joined the third category. After years of delays, title changes, and censorship disputes, the film was ultimately released on ZEE5. However, within days, it was pulled down or “paused” for Indian viewers. ZEE5 has stated that the film is temporarily inaccessible in India “in light of current developments” and that the platform is working to bring it back as soon as possible. The move has sparked strong criticism. Sukhbir Singh Badal, head of the Shiromani Akali Dal, criticized the decision as an assault on collective memory, truth, and freedom of expression. His reply is strategically significant since it situates the picture not just in the realm of cinema, but also immediately inside Punjab’s moral and political discussion.The date lends the film an extra poignancy. Punjab is actively preparing for the 2027 Assembly election. The bugle has been sounded not just by political parties, but also in villages, social media discussions, diaspora chats, and Panthic gatherings. In such circumstances, a film on Jaswant Singh Khalra is more than simply a cinematic spectacle. It forms part of Punjab’s broader political and moral discourse. Khalra’s narrative conveys a message from the past to the present generation. He was a human rights activist who recorded suspected unlawful cremations and disappearances throughout Punjab’s militancy and counter-insurgency periods. For those who lived at that time, his name is synonymous with bravery, dread, and unfulfilled justice. For many young Punjabis, Satluj may be their first real exposure to a chapter that molded Punjab’s conscience. The film reportedly revisits disappearances, alleged extra-judicial killings and illegal detentions linked to Punjab’s troubled period of the 1980s and 1990s. Punjab’s militancy years are often remembered through terrorism, police operations, security challenges and national integrity. But another story lived beneath that narrative: missing sons, unidentified bodies, cremation grounds, fear and silence. Jaswant Singh Khalra’s work emerged from this darkness. He followed municipal records, cremation registers and names of those allegedly cremated without informing families. Human Rights Watch recorded that Khalra exposed mass secret cremations by Punjab Police in Amritsar district, which then included Tarn Taran, Patti and other border areas. After his disappearance, the Supreme Court ordered a CBI investigation.The CBI identified 2,097

cremations at three crematoria grounds in Amritsar district. Activists, however, believe the scale was much larger.This is where cinema begins to do what courts, commissions and books often cannot. It converts documented history into public memory. Satluj does not merely tell the story of one man. It takes the audience into a period when fear had become normal and documentation itself became resistance. The moral force of Khalra’s story lies in its simplicity. He asked a basic question: if these bodies were “unclaimed”, who were they? Who killed them? Why were their families not informed? Why were names and records hidden?In a democracy, even the dead have dignity. Khalra’s work was a fight to restore that dignity.The Supreme Court later upheld life sentences for former Punjab Police personnel convicted in the abduction and killing of Khalra. The court record noted that he was a human rights activist working on abductions, killings and illegal cremations of unclaimed bodies during the Punjab insurgency period.But the legal record is only one part of this story. The other part lives in the memories of those who were there at that time. Rajiv Randhawa, who says he witnessed Khalra being taken away on September 6, 1995, still remembers the morning. In a conversation, he said Khalra was taken from his Amritsar residence around 9:08 or 9:10 am by the police. He recalled a sky-blue Maruti van. For him, the scene has not faded even after three decades. Randhawa also makes an important point about the film’s reach. He says books on Khalra may have reached 30,000 or 35,000 readers, but a film featuring Diljit Dosanjh can take the story to lakhs, perhaps millions. In his view, this will generate awareness about Khalra’s sacrifice and about human rights.Some human rights activists associated with that period say Ram Narayan Kumar had encouraged wider documentation of disappearances and state excesses in Punjab.Ram Narayan Kumar was already known for his work on human rights violations in different parts of India, including Punjab, Kashmir and Assam, when he came into contact with Jaswant Singh Khalra. His concern was not limited to one region or one community; he was studying patterns of disappearances, state violence and accountability across conflict-affected areas. In Punjab, this search brought him close to Khalra’s work. Ram Narayan Kumar helped place this evidence within a wider human-rights framework. His book Reduced to Ashes later became an important reference point in understanding Punjab’s troubled years. The Khalra case was not

exposed only by activists and lawyers. Journalists also played a crucial role.Senior journalist Satinder Bains, who was then with The Indian Express, recalls the Khalra investigation as one of the most important stories of his career. According to him, the breakthrough came through Kuldeep Singh, a Special Police Officer posted at Jhahal police post. Bains says Kuldeep Singh allegedly disclosed details of Khalra’s illegal detention and killing, and those reports helped bring the case into the public domain. In his conversation, Bains makes a nuanced point about the film’s release. He does not see a clear political reason behind the timing. He says there may be business reasons or other reasons behind the platform shift, but he does not believe the timing is directly linked to elections. In Punjab, almost everything can quickly be read through politics. But Bains’s view offers caution. The film’s release may have political resonance, but that does not necessarily mean it was released with a direct political design. If the film had been released only a few months before voting, the argument of electoral timing may have carried more weight. But with the Punjab election still months away, its immediate political impact may reduce by the time the campaign peaks. Bains also says the change of title may not matter much because people already know that Satluj is the same film earlier known as Punjab ’95. The original title had a sharper impact, but the long publicity around the controversy has already created public recognition.His most important point, however, is about awareness. Bains says such films become a lesson for future generations, for society and for governments. He notes that human rights conversations have become diluted, while violations still occur. A film like Satluj, he says, starts a discussion in society - and that discussion is necessary.

The story also belongs to those who refused to let Jaswant Singh Khalra disappear from public memory after he was taken away. It belongs to his family, especially Paramjit Kaur Khalra, who carried the burden of personal loss with extraordinary courage. It belongs to the human rights lawyers, journalists and activists who continued to speak his name, preserve his work and pursue justice at a time when silence was safer than truth. Human rights activist Sarbjit Singh Verka, who worked with Justice Ajit Singh Bains and assisted in the Khalra-related case, also sees the film as an instrument of awareness. According to him, Punjab went through very hard times, and today’s generation does not fully know what happened during

that period. Sarbjit Singh Verka’s own journey also reflected the risks faced by human rights voices in Punjab. He revealed that he was falsely implicated in terror cases in the 1990s, later acquitted, and after a long legal battle was awarded compensation. His experience showed that those who pursued accountability were not merely documenting the suffering of others; many of them also paid a personal price for speaking against abuse of power. Political parties have already started building their narratives for the 2027 polls. AAP wants to defend governance. Congress wants to return as the main alternative. The Akali Dal is trying to regain Panthic trust. The BJP is attempting to expand its space in Punjab.MP Vikramjit Singh Sahney described Satluj as a chilling reminder of Punjab’s “killing fields” and alleged fake encounters. He said Khalra’s cremation-ground evidence later found recognition through the Supreme Court and NHRC records on bodies cremated in Amritsar, Majitha and Tarn Taran between June 1984 and December 1994.A film on Jaswant Singh Khalra naturally carries political meaning in Punjab, raising questions of police accountability, state power, human rights, Sikh memory and justice. Yet Satinder Bains does not see Satluj as having a direct electoral impact, arguing that elections are still some distance away and the timing does not appear clearly political.But, one could argue that Satluj might not have a direct electoral impact because elections were still some distance away. That argument still holds to an extent. Films rarely decide elections. But the removal of the film has changed its political energy. The film may not decide votes. But its interruption can deepen sentiment.It may revive questions that political parties often prefer to avoid: why is Punjab’s pain still being managed? Why is memory still being treated as a threat? Why does a story about human rights require so much permission?Ironically, taking down Satluj may not reduce its impact. It may get amplified with debates on television and discussions among the people.Earlier, Satluj was a river carrying Punjab’s memory, pain and history. Now it has become a symbol of interrupted truth. Jaswant Singh Khalra followed the dead to restore their dignity.

Three decades later, a film on his life briefly appeared and then disappeared from Indian screens. That disappearance is now the story and its symbolism is impossible to ignore.Satluj may be paused. But Jaswant Singh Khalra’s question remains alive: who has the right to bury truth, and for how long?

India’s handling of the energy situation amid the US-Iran conflict

The prime minister, Narendra Modi, recently lauded his government’s handling of the energy crisis caused by the Iran conflict. This appears to indicate increasing confidence among Indian officials that the worst repercussions of the still-simmering war have passed. If this is the case, the current situation calls for a thorough evaluation of how successfully or poorly the Modi government handled the recent upheaval. The solution, predictably, is not black and white. While it may look Although it is vulgar to brag, the prime minister is correct in asserting that India fared better than most other countries during the energy constraints caused by the US and Israel’s assault on Iran. It successfully obtained waivers for the purchase of Russian oil, purchased some Iranian oil that was also exempt from otherwise strict US sanctions, and quickly turned to sources of crude that it had either ignored for years or never seriously considered — importing massive amounts of oil from Venezuela and Brazil.

Insurance regulator launches comic book series to boost life insurance awareness

New Delhi: India's insurance regulator has launched a consumer awareness comic book series to simplify life insurance concepts and improve financial literacy, as the industry steps up efforts to achieve the vision of "Insurance for All."The comic book series was unveiled by Shri Ajay Seth, Chairman of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), during National Insurance Awareness Day celebrations. The initiative brings together leaders from the life insurance sector to make insurance products more accessible, understandable and relevant for individuals and families across the country

The educational series explains key life insurance concepts such as the Married Women's Property (MWP) Act, Waiver of Premium (WoP) and Critical Illness riders through relatable stories rather than technical language. The narrative follows Supriya, a young life insurance advisor, illustrating how timely financial decisions can provide long-term security for families. Speaking at the event, Kamlesh Rao, Chairperson of the Insurance Awareness Committee-Life (IAC-Life), said strengthening financial preparedness is essential to India's long-term economic resilience and that the comic book initiative would help bring the value of life insurance closer to consumers. He also highlighted the progress of the second phase of the 'Sabse Pehle Life Insurance' campaign and outlined the committee's future priorities. Aditya Gupta, Secretary General of the Life Insurance Council, said the initiative would make insurance conversations simpler, more relatable and accessible while strengthening public trust in life insurance as a vital component of financial planning. The launch also featured a panel discussion titled "India Asks: Why Prioritize Life Insurance?" with Kamlesh Rao, LIC Managing Director Doraiswamy, PNB MetLife MD and CEO Sameer Bansal, IndiaFirst Life Insurance MD and CEO Rushabh Gandhi, moderated by financial journalist Sonia Shenoy. The discussion focused on improving awareness and expanding the adoption of life insurance across India.

Investors' wealth erodes by Rs 8.96 lakh cr as markets fall on geopolitical worries

Mumbai: Investors' wealth eroded by Rs 8.96 lakh crore on Wednesday as equity markets went into a tailspin after US President Donald Trump said the interim agreement with Iran is over, leading to a sharp surge in crude oil prices. The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,677.12 points, or 2.15 per cent, to settle at 76,503.60. On similar lines, the 50-share NSE Nifty tumbled 516.65 points, or 2.12 per cent, to end at 23,882.05. Tracking the bearish trend

in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies eroded by Rs 8.96 lakh crore to Rs 4,71,23,612.10 crore (USD 4.95 trillion). Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 6.18 per cent to USD 78.74 per barrel. "Indian equity markets witnessed a sharp sell-off as US President Donald Trump declared the interim peace deal with Iran is 'over' following Iranian attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, reigniting geopolitical tensions and

raising fresh concerns over global energy supplies."The renewed escalation triggered a sharp rebound in crude oil prices, which surged nearly 7 per cent, sending shockwaves across global financial markets," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.All firms in the Sensex pack ended in the red. InterGlobe Aviation, Maruti, Hindustan Unilever, Bajaj Finance, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were major laggards.

All sectors ended lower. Services fell sharply by 3.21 per cent, PSU Bank (2.76 per cent), MidSmall Private Banks Quality Tilt (2.74 per cent), FMCG (2.54 per cent), Financial Services (2.49 per cent), Bankex (2.46 per cent) and Top 10 Banks (2.34 per cent).The BSE MidCap Select index tanked 2.14 per cent, and the SmallCap Select index dropped 1.61 per cent.A total of 3,211 stocks declined, while 1,070 advanced and 173 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Valuations reasonable, should you subscribe What GMP hints Laser Power IPO:

Mumbai: The initial public offer (IPO) by Laser Power & Infra Ltd, an integrated power infrastructure company with operations across manufacturing and EPC segments, kicked off for public subscription on Thursday, July 9. The 742-crore issue, which comprised of a fresh issue of Rs 542 crore and offer for sale (OFS) of Rs 200 crore, is being offered in the price band of Rs 203-214 per share, valuing the stock at 25.3 times on a post-issue basis. This is significantly lower valuations than some of its larger peers and in line with peer of similar size. Analysts have 'Subscribe' rating on the IPO. "At the upper price band, the company is valued at 19.8 times FY26 EPS and 12.6 times EV/Ebitda, representing a meaningful discount to the listed peer average of approximately 36 times EPS and 24 times EV/Ebitda. The valuation appears reasonable considering the improving business mix and favourable industry outlook," said DR Choksey Research. Laser Power & Infra plans to utilise the IPO proceeds for debt reduction, which should reduce the interest cost and help improve profitability. SBI Securities recommended investors to 'Subscribe' to the issue with a LONG TERM investment horizon. Choice Broking said the proposed utilisation of a significant portion of the fresh issue proceeds towards debt repayment is expected to reduce finance costs, strengthen the balance sheet and further support earnings growth and net profit



margins. Choice said the company is backed by a diversified product portfolio, expanding EPC presence and favourable long-term industry tailwinds driven by rising investments in India's power transmission and distribution infrastructure. "Laser Power & Infra is well-positioned to sustain its growth trajectory. At the upper price band, the issue is valued at P/E of 19.8x and an EV/Sales of 1.4 times, relative to its listed peers, considering its integrated business model, improving financial profile and deleveraging-led earnings potential. Accordingly, we recommend investors "Subscribe for Long Term," it said.A total of three of the four promoters participating in the OFS. The brokerage has 'Subscribe' rating on the stock. Listed peers of Laser Power & Infra included Apar Industries Ltd, KEI Industries, Polycab India Ltd, Dynamic Cables Ltd and Universal Cables. Swastika Investmart in a note said the

IPO is price at lower valuations than peers like Apar Industries and KEI Industries. It said the company's order book of Rs 3,243 crore provides healthy revenue visibility for the next 12-18 months. "Subscribe for the medium to long term on attractive valuations, lower debt, and strong sector prospect," it said.In the grey market, the grey market premium (GMP) for Laser Power was steady at Rs 15 apiece, suggesting a potential listing gain of about 7 per cent for investors. SBI Securities noted that Laser Power & Infra delivered revenue, Ebitda and adjusted profit growth of 15.4 per cent, 39 per cent and 72.5 per cent, respectively between FY24 and FY26. It said the company is a strategically located cable and conductor manufacturer in East India catering to the power transmission segment. "The location advantage along with its partnership with leading global player gives it an edge over its peers," it said.

AU Bank, Jana SFB, Equitas SFB, Ujjivan Brokerage sees up to 74% upside SFB, Capital SFB shares

Mumbai: Systematix Institutional Equities believes the small finance bank (SFB) sector is nearing a key inflection point, citing provisional Q1 FY27 business updates and recent interactions with management teams. The domestic brokerage said growth remained resilient despite a seasonally weak quarter, while asset quality trends continued to improve."Growth remains robust and broad-based despite a seasonally weak quarter, asset quality trends continue to improve, coupled with steady margin with (a marginal negative bias) leading to PAT growth of 86 per cent YoY (supported by favourable base effect in Q1 FY26)," Systematix said. "We see no visible signs of a slowdown in underlying credit demand despite concerns around an evolving El Nino and monsoon-related risks (a key monitorable). Reflecting the improving outlook, we raise our FY27/FY28 PAT estimates by 5 per cent/1 per cent on aggregate across our coverage



universe, driven primarily by lower credit cost and higher loan growth assumptions," it added. "We also roll forward the valuation base year in our excess return framework to FY27, resulting in target price upgrades of 7-17 per cent acrossur coverage universe," Systematix also said.

Following the review, the brokerage upgraded AU Small Finance Bank Ltd to 'Buy' from 'Hold'"With valuations remaining reasonable and return ratios poised for a meaningful recovery, we continue to advocate a basket approach to the sector, while acknowledging the potential for relative outperformance among select

names, as we believe the SFB universe is entering a phase of broad-based rerating over the next 2-3 years," it stated. Among its preferred picks, Systematix assigned a target price of Rs 1,220 to AU Bank, implying a potential upside of 17 per cent from its assessed market price. The brokerage also maintained 'Buy' ratings on Jana Small Finance Bank, Equitas Small Finance Bank, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank and Capital Small Finance Bank.For Jana SFB, it set a target price of Rs 590, indicating a potential upside of 34 per cent. Equitas SFB was assigned a target price of Rs 95, implying a 24 per cent upside. For Ujjivan SFB, Systematix gave a target price of Rs 86, suggesting a potential upside of 43 per cent. Capital SFB emerged as the brokerage's most optimistic pick, with a target price of Rs 490, implying a potential upside of 74 per cent from its assessed market price

Stock markets slump over2 pc as rising US-Iran tensions

Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled over 2 per cent on Wednesday after US President Donald Trump said the interim agreement with Iran is over, leading to a sharp rally in crude oil prices.

Besides, investors shifted to a risk-off mode following pre-earnings anxiety over sluggish first-quarter forecasts amid a negative trend in global markets, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,677.12 points, or 2.15 per cent, to settle at 76,503.60. During the day, it plummeted 1,921.69 points, or 2.45 per cent, to 76,259.03.

A total of 3,211 stocks declined, while 1,070 advanced and 173 remained unchanged on the BSE.On similar lines, the 50-share NSE Nifty tumbled 516.65 points, or 2.12 per cent, to end at 23,882.05."Indian equity markets witnessed a sharp sell-off as US President Donald Trump declared the interim peace deal with Iran is 'over' following Iranian attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, reigniting geopolitical tensions and raising fresh concerns over global energy supplies," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich

Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm.

The renewed escalation triggered a sharp rebound in crude oil prices, which surged nearly 7 per cent, sending shockwaves across global financial markets, he added.All firms in the Sensex pack ended in the red. InterGlobe Aviation, Maruti, Hindustan Unilever, Bajaj Finance, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were major laggards. The BSE MidCap Select index tanked 2.14 per cent, and the SmallCap Select index dropped 1.61 per cent.

All sectors ended lower. Services fell sharply by 3.21 per cent, PSU Bank (2.76 per cent), MidSmall Private Banks Quality Tilt (2.74 per cent), FMCG (2.54 per cent), Financial Services (2.49 per cent), Bankex (2.46 per cent) and Top 10 Banks (2.34 per cent).Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 6.18 per cent to USD 78.74 per barrel.Meanwhile, the rupee tanked 59 paise to settle at 95.55 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday."A global equity market sell-off triggered a massive correction in domestic benchmarks as investors

turned risk-averse following a fresh wave of conflict in West Asia. A strong upsurge in crude oil prices, coupled with a sharp fall in the currency against the dollar, dampened sentiment," Ankur Punj, MD & Business Head at Equirus Wealth, said.

Indications that a ceasefire between the US and Iran might fall apart also prompted investors to exit stocks at will, he added.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi tumbled 5.35 per cent, Japan's Nikkei 225 index declined 2.11 per cent, and Shanghai's SSE Composite index dipped 0.49 per cent, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index jumped 2.99 per cent.European markets weretrading significantly lower.US markets ended in negative territory on Tuesday.Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 393.19 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.In the previous session, flag-end selling dragged the Sensex lower, leading the benchmark to settle 104.35 points, or 0.13 per cent, down at 78,180.72.The Nifty dipped 31.65 points, or 0.13 per cent, to end at 24,398.70.

Earnings timing, dividend, net profit, sales and deal win TCS Q1 results today:

Mumbai: Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) is expected to report a single digit rise in year-on-year (YoY) net profit for the June quarter on 12-14 per cent rise in net sales. Revenue growth in constant currency (CC) terms is seen flatish quarter-on-year (QoQ), reflecting macro headwinds, productivity pass-through in renewed mega-deals and rising AI-led cost reduction expectations from clients. Margin is seen falling sequentially on wage hikes. Deal wins are seen in the \$8-9 billion range. TCS will announce its results after-market trading hours today. The company will also host an earnings conference call at 7 pm IST, during which the leadership team will discuss financial performance and take questions.Antique Stock Broking expects the IT firm to report a 5.9 per cent YoY rise in profit at Rs 13,508 crore on 13.9 per cent YoY jump in sales at Rs 72,246 crore. EBIT Margin is seen at 23.8 per cent, down 150 basis points over March quarter's 24.5 per cent, thanks to wage hikes implemented during the quarter, coupled with ongoing business re-investments likely offsetting currency-related tailwinds.

Axis Securities sees TCS' Q1 net profit growing 5.3 per cent YoY to Rs 13,493 crore on 12.6 per cent rise in sales at Rs 71,452 crore. Analysts are largely expecting TCS deal wins in the \$8-9 billion range. Antique Stock Broking said deal activity remains soft as TCV bookings are expected to be at \$8 billion, within the company's guided range of \$7-9 billion. BNP Paribas said AI- and GenAI-related deal pipeline; an update on the international business outlook; revenue growth and margin outlook for FY27; update on the datacentre business and investments in GenAI partnership are five things investors would be watching this July 9. "We expect investor focus on: (1) any shift in AI deflation assumptions following new model releases by frontier labs; (2) timeline for convergence of growth with peers and key drivers; (3) impact of GCC ramp-up both as competitive intensity and as a growth lever; (4) progress on planned data center investments; (5) strategic priorities for inorganic investments after recent acquisitions; and (6) ability to defend margins amid sustained pricing pressure," Kotak said."Amid the uncertain macros and soft demand environment, verticals like BFSI & consumer (particularly travel) are witnessing increased caution; manufacturing is also



facing challenges due to supply chain issues; whereas Energy & Tech remain relatively healthy," Antique said.Kotak expects TCV of \$8-9 billion, down on yearly basis, due to pricing compression. Sequential moderation would reflect typical seasonality, it said.Flat CC revenue growth QoQ

Nomura India expects TCS to report a flat revenue growth quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) in constant currency (CC) terms as West Asia war likely impacted the growth. The foreign brokerage said all eyes would be on restructuring and its impact on business, client discretionary spend in wake of rising macro volatility in US, impact of AI and ongoing Middle East war on business, cost takeout projects and BFSI vertical. MOFSL expects TCS' EBIT margin to decline 140 basis points QoQ to 23.9 per cent, largely due to the annual wage hike effective April, partly offset by productivity improvements, operational efficiencies, and favorable currency."Margins are likely to decline 160bp QoQ hurt by full quarter wage hike partially offset by the currency tailwinds. We shall watch out for the outlook on US macro and BFSI segment growth," Nu-vama Institutional Equities said. BNP Paribas sees a one-time legal expense provision of \$70 million in 1QFY27 as it pegs Ebit margin at 23.8 per cent.TCS dividend

The TCS board would consider declaring an interim dividend for FY27 today. The IT firm had declared an interim dividend of Rs 11 per share in the first quarter of FY26, Rs 10 per share in the first quarter of FY25, Rs 9 per share in the first quarter of FY24 and Rs 8 per share in the first quarter of FY23. Will it announce a higher payout this time? Click here for TCS dividend historyTCS Q1 dividend record date TCS said the interim dividend, if declared, will be paid to the equity shareholders of the IT firm, whose names appear on the Register of Members of the company or in the records of the Depositories as beneficial owners of the shares as on Wednesday, July 15, 2026, which is the record date fixed for the purpose.

Vedanta Aluminium's stock price: MOFSL establishes a target for a 20% increase, highlighting a compelling structural narrative

Mumbai: MOFSL has initiated coverage on Vedanta Aluminium Metal Ltd with 20 per cent upside target, calling it one of the most compelling structural stories in the global aluminium space. It cited industry-leading scale, extensive backward integration and a multi-year earnings growth trajectory to suggest a target of Rs 540 on the Vedanta group stock. Vedanta Aluminium is uniquely positioned to benefit from both favorable industry dynamics and company-specific structural drivers, MOFSL said adding that the company is approaching a significant earnings inflection point, with Ebitda anticipated to post over 18 per cent CAGR over FY26-28. "This growth will be driven by three simultaneous factors: volume expansion, structural

cost reductions, and an increasing contribution from value-added products. Importantly, the global aluminum market is experiencing structural tightening due to China's production cap, supply disruptions in Europe and Russia, and years of underinvestment outside China," MOFSL said. MOFSL said Vedanta Aluminium is pursuing full self-sufficiency in bauxite and coal, the two most critical inputs for aluminum production. The company has secured a bauxite mine with 300 MT reserves and five coal mines with combined reserves of 1,048 MT. The Sijimali bauxite mine is anticipated to commence operations in 2HFY27 and reach full capacity by FY28. Captive coal production capacity is expected to increase from 2.6 MTPA currently to over 40 MTPA by FY28-29, MOFSL said.

"The share of value-added products (VAP) is targeted to improve further from 71% currently to 90% over the medium term, led by new downstream capacity additions. The improved VAP mix is likely to provide a notable uplift to realizations, margins, and return ratios," MOFSL said.India's robust demand growth and a substantial opportunity for import substitution is seen further aiding the growth.Vedanta Aluminium trades at 5.4 times EV/Ebitda on MOFSL's FY28 estimate.

The brokerage initiated coverage on the stock with a BUY rating as it expects the transition towards becoming more captive and backward integrated will support a structural re-rating of valuation multiples.

Pakistan Cargo Plane Crash: K2 Airways Boeing 737 Wreckage Found in Arabian Sea

Islamabad : More than 12 hours after a cargo aircraft operated by Pakistan-based K2 Airways disappeared from radar over the Arabian Sea, authorities on Wednesday located the wreckage of the Boeing 737 freighter off Pakistan’s southern coast. However, the search for the five crew members who were on board the aircraft continued as rescue teams carried out extensive operations in the sea under challenging conditions.

The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) confirmed that pieces of the aircraft were recovered from the Arabian Sea near Ormara town after an overnight search operation involving multiple agencies. The operation included personnel from the Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Maritime Security Agency, merchant vessels and military aircraft that were deployed to locate the missing plane and its crew.

In a statement, the PAA said that the wreckage had been discovered and that efforts were still underway to find the missing crew members. Officials said the search and rescue mission would continue until further information about the fate of those aboard the aircraft was established.

Images released by authorities showed rescue personnel recovering parts of the aircraft’s fuselage from the sea. The recovered debris was transported onto a larger vessel, where sections of the aircraft marked with the words “K2 Air” could be seen. The photographs provided the first confirmation of the aircraft’s location after hours of uncertainty following its disappearance.

The Boeing 737 cargo aircraft, operated by private carrier K2 Airways, was travelling from Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates to Karachi when it encountered problems during its flight. According to initial information shared by the Pakistan Airports Authority, the aircraft reported a navigational system issue while approaching its destination before losing contact with air traffic controllers.

The aircraft disappeared from

radar on Tuesday evening at approximately 9:21 pm local time. Flight tracking data indicated that the aircraft was around 155 nautical miles west of Karachi when communication was lost. Preliminary information suggested that the plane experienced sudden altitude changes before vanishing from radar screens.

According to flight tracking platform Flightradar24, the aircraft initially lost altitude, then briefly regained some height before suffering another sharp decline. The sudden changes in flight pattern raised questions about what may have happened during the final moments before the crash. Aviation authorities are expected to examine recovered wreckage and flight data to determine the exact cause of the accident.

The disappearance triggered a large-scale search operation involving Pakistan’s maritime and aviation authorities. Given the location of the incident over the Arabian Sea, rescue teams faced significant challenges while attempting to locate both the aircraft debris and the crew members. Ships, aircraft and specialised rescue units were involved in searching a wide area of ocean.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed grief over the incident and offered condolences following reports of the missing aircraft. He described the crash involving the privately operated cargo plane as a tragic event and directed authorities to provide support for rescue efforts.

K2 Airways is a private Pakistani cargo airline that operates domestic and international freight services. The airline has been involved in cargo operations connecting Pakistan with other regions. The aircraft involved in the crash was a Boeing 737 freighter, a model widely used around the world for cargo transportation.

According to aviation database Airfleets.net, the aircraft was manufactured in 1999. It originally operated as a passenger aircraft with airlines including Aeroflot and Garuda



Indonesia before being converted into a freighter aircraft in 2012. The conversion process allowed the aircraft to be used for transporting cargo rather than passengers.

Investigators are expected to examine several possibilities, including mechanical issues, navigation problems, weather conditions and operational factors, as they work to determine the reason behind the crash. Aviation accident investigations typically involve analysing flight data, maintenance records, communication logs and physical evidence recovered from the crash site.

The incident has once again drawn attention to aviation safety concerns in Pakistan, where the industry has faced scrutiny following several major accidents over the years. Safety standards, pilot training, aircraft maintenance and regulatory oversight have frequently been discussed following previous aviation disasters.

One of the country’s most serious aviation tragedies occurred in 2020 when a Pakistan International Airlines passenger aircraft crashed in Karachi, killing 97 people. The incident raised concerns about safety practices, pilot licensing procedures and regulatory monitoring within Pakistan’s aviation sector.

Following safety concerns, the European Union had previously restricted Pakistan’s national carrier from operating in European airspace.

The ban, which lasted for four years, was linked to concerns over aviation safety standards and pilot licensing issues. The restriction was lifted in 2024 after authorities implemented measures aimed at improving oversight and compliance.

The latest crash involving the K2 Airways cargo aircraft has renewed discussions about the importance of maintaining strict safety standards, particularly as Pakistan’s aviation sector continues to expand. Cargo airlines play a crucial role in international trade and logistics, making operational reliability and safety compliance essential.

As rescue operations continue, families of the five crew members remain awaiting updates from authorities. Officials have not yet confirmed whether any survivors have been located. The search teams are continuing their efforts in the Arabian Sea while investigators begin the process of examining the recovered aircraft remains.

The recovery of the wreckage marks an important step in understanding what happened to the aircraft, but the immediate priority remains locating the missing crew members. Authorities have assured that all available resources are being used in the search operation.

The coming days are expected to bring more clarity as investigators analyse evidence from the crash site and authorities continue rescue ef-

forts. Until then, the focus remains on finding the crew and determining the circumstances that led to the tragic disappearance of the K2 Airways Boeing 737 over the Arabian Sea.

Meanwhile, aviation experts said that recovering the aircraft debris from the sea would be a crucial part of the investigation process. Investigators are expected to study the condition of the recovered parts to identify whether the crash was caused by a technical malfunction, structural failure or other operational issues. The aircraft’s flight data, communication records and maintenance history will also be examined to reconstruct the final moments before the accident.

The location of the crash site has added complexity to the rescue and investigation efforts. The Arabian Sea’s challenging conditions, including strong currents and deep waters, have made it difficult for teams to conduct search operations efficiently. Specialised equipment and vessels have been deployed to assist authorities in locating any possible survivors and recovering additional aircraft components.

Officials have urged people to avoid speculation until the formal investigation is completed. They said that determining the exact cause of the crash would require a detailed technical assessment and cooperation between aviation authorities and relevant agencies.

Trump Targets Iran’s Key Oil Island

Washington: US President Donald Trump has warned that Washington could consider further military action against Iran, including a possible move targeting Kharg Island, a strategically important location that serves as the centre of Iran’s oil export operations. The warning came after Trump declared that the fragile ceasefire between the United States and Tehran had collapsed, raising concerns about renewed tensions in the region and potential disruption to global energy markets.

Speaking on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Ankara, Turkey, Trump said he believed the truce had effectively ended and warned of possible escalation.

He suggested that the United States could impose stronger measures against Iran, including expanded military strikes and a naval blockade, while also raising the possibility of taking control of Kharg Island.

Located around 25 kilometres off Iran’s southwestern coast, Kharg Island may appear small, covering only about eight square miles, but its importance to Iran’s economy is enormous. Since the 1960s, the island has developed into the main hub for Iran’s petroleum exports and has remained a critical link between the country’s oil fields and international markets.

The island’s importance comes from its unique geographical advantages. Much of Iran’s coastline has shallow waters that make it difficult for large oil tankers to operate. Kharg Island, however, has deep-water facilities capable of handling Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs), allowing Iran to load and transport massive quantities of crude oil to global buyers.

A network of pipelines connects Iran’s inland oil fields to Kharg Island, where crude is

stored before being shipped overseas. Because of this infrastructure, any major disruption to operations on the island could severely affect Iran’s ability to export oil and generate revenue.

Oil and gas remain central to Iran’s economy, with a significant portion of government income linked to energy exports. Analysts say that a prolonged blockade or loss of access to Kharg Island could create serious economic pressure on Tehran by restricting one of its most important sources of foreign income.

Trump’s remarks have already raised concerns in global energy markets. Reports indicated that crude oil prices increased following the renewed threats, reflecting fears that any conflict involving Kharg Island could disrupt supplies from the Persian Gulf, one of the world’s most important energy corridors.

However, military experts have also pointed out the challenges involved in any attempt to seize or blockade the island. Kharg Island is located deep inside the Persian Gulf and lies close to Iran’s heavily defended mainland coastline. Any military operation there could expose forces to missile attacks, drone strikes and naval threats from Iranian units operating in the region.

The island’s strategic value makes it a potential pressure point in any confrontation between Washington and Tehran. While targeting Kharg could significantly affect Iran’s economy, analysts warn that such a move could also trigger a wider regional crisis with consequences for global trade and energy security.

As tensions continue between the two countries, Kharg Island remains at the centre of the dispute, representing both Iran’s economic lifeline and a potential flashpoint in the ongoing geopolitical struggle.

Trump Claims Iran May Plot Assassination Attempt, Calls Himself ‘Number One Target’

Washington : US President Donald Trump has claimed that Iran could be planning an assassination attempt against him, saying he believes he remains the country’s “number one target” amid escalating tensions between Washington and Tehran. Trump made the remarks while attending the NATO summit in Ankara, where he addressed the worsening situation between the two nations following a series of military exchanges and diplomatic disputes.

Speaking about the threat he believes he faces from Iran, Trump said that several Iranian leaders have already been removed and suggested that individuals within the country’s leadership may seek retaliation against him. “They had leaders who are gone. They had another set of leaders who may be gone. I may be gone too, because I’m their number one target,” Trump said while speaking to reporters. He accused Iran of maintaining hostile intentions toward the United States for decades, referring to what he described as a long history of conflict between the two countries.

Trump’s comments come at a time when relations between Washington and Tehran have reached a critical point, with both sides exchanging accusations and warnings. The US President said that while Iran’s past leadership had been aggressive toward America, some of the country’s current officials appeared to be taking a more practical approach. However, he insisted that he wanted to resolve the situation rather than allow

tensions to continue indefinitely.

The President also expressed frustration over diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching an agreement with Iran. According to Trump, attempts to negotiate a settlement have become ineffective, and he suggested that continued discussions may not lead to meaningful results. He said he wanted to bring the matter to an end instead of allowing prolonged negotiations without a clear outcome.

Trump’s remarks came shortly after he stated that efforts to reach an agreement with Iran had effectively ended. His comments indicated a tougher stance from Washington as military and political tensions continued to increase. He criticised Iran’s actions and said that the country had repeatedly failed to follow agreements, claiming that further measures might be necessary.

During the NATO summit, Trump also issued a warning regarding possible military action against Iran. When asked about the situation, he said that the United States would respond forcefully and declared, “We’re gonna hit ‘em hard tonight.” He also questioned the value of continuing negotiations, saying that dealing with Iranian officials had become increasingly difficult.

Earlier, when asked whether a ceasefire agreement with Iran remained in place, Trump responded that, from his perspective, the arrangement was no longer effective. He described ongoing discussions as a waste of time but added

that US negotiators could continue talks if they believed there was still a possibility of progress.

The situation has intensified following reports of military strikes and casualties in Iran. Iranian state television reported that eight military personnel were killed in US strikes carried out on Wednesday morning. According to the report, the casualties included members of Iran’s air and naval forces in areas including Bandar Abbas and Bushehr. Iranian officials described the strikes as an act of aggression and condemned the US actions.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry also accused the United States of violating the framework of an agreement through what it called unilateral actions and military attacks. Iranian officials argued that Washington had undermined diplomatic efforts by choosing confrontation over negotiation.

The latest developments have increased concerns about the possibility of further escalation between the two countries. The United States and Iran have had a tense relationship for decades, with disagreements ranging from military influence in the Middle East to nuclear policy and regional security issues. Recent events have once again placed the two nations at the centre of international attention.

Trump’s claim that he could be targeted by Iran adds another dimension to the already tense situation. The former and current US administrations have previously faced threats from foreign adversaries, and security concerns sur-



rounding American political leaders have remained a major issue. However, Trump’s latest comments specifically linked the alleged threat to Iran’s leadership and its opposition to his policies.

The US President has frequently taken a strong position against Iran during his political career, advocating tougher measures and increased pressure on Tehran. His administration has previously imposed sanctions and supported military actions aimed at countering Iran’s influence. Trump has also repeatedly argued that a firm approach is necessary to protect US interests and national security.

Iran, meanwhile, has continued to accuse Washington of aggressive policies and interference in its internal affairs. Iranian officials have maintained that their military actions are defensive in nature and have criticised US involvement in regional conflicts.

As tensions continue, international leaders are closely monitoring developments between the two countries. NATO allies and other glob-

al powers have urged both sides to avoid further escalation and focus on diplomatic solutions. The possibility of additional military confrontations has raised concerns about broader instability in the region.

For now, Trump’s statements have highlighted the deep divisions between Washington and Tehran and the challenges facing efforts to restore dialogue. His warning that he could be a target reflects the seriousness of the ongoing dispute, while his call for an end to the conflict suggests that the US President is seeking a resolution—though he has also made clear that he is prepared to take strong action if tensions continue.

The coming days are expected to be crucial as both countries decide whether to pursue further negotiations or move toward a more confrontational path. With military actions, diplomatic disagreements and security concerns all unfolding simultaneously, the situation remains highly uncertain and closely watched around the world.

PM Modi Seeks Diplomatic Solution to Iran Crisis

Melbourne: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday stressed that dialogue and diplomacy remain the only way to resolve conflicts across the world, as tensions between the United States and Iran continued to escalate in West Asia. Addressing the growing instability in the region, Modi said that lasting solutions to international disputes can only come through peaceful negotiations rather than confrontation. “The resolution of all ongoing conflicts around the world is possible only through dialogue and diplomacy,” Prime Minister Modi said while speaking in Melbourne during the second leg of his three-nation tour. His remarks came at a time when fresh military exchanges between Washington and Tehran have increased fears of a broader conflict in the region.

The situation in West Asia has worsened following a new round of US strikes on Iran and retaliatory actions by Tehran against US-linked military facilities. The US military said it had conducted fresh strikes aimed at ensuring the security of maritime movement through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world’s most important energy routes.

Meanwhile, Kuwait’s military reported that its air defence systems had intercepted what it described as hostile missile and drone attacks, highlighting concerns that the conflict could spread beyond the immediate borders of Iran and affect neighbouring countries.

The latest escalation followed earlier US strikes targeting Iranian military installations and port facilities, after Iran reportedly carried out attacks on several merchant vessels

near the coast of Oman. The developments have raised international concerns about the possibility of a wider confrontation involving regional and global powers.

PM Modi’s comments reflected India’s consistent position that diplomacy should remain central to resolving international disputes. India has repeatedly called for dialogue, stability and peaceful solutions while maintaining that conflicts in different parts of the world can have wider economic and security implications.

During his visit to Australia, Modi addressed the India-Australia CEO Forum alongside Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. The discussions focused on strengthening co-operation between the two countries in areas including trade, defence, education, technology and people-to-people connections.

The Melbourne visit is expected to further strengthen the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which serves as the foundation of bilateral relations between the two nations. Both sides are working to expand collaboration across multiple sectors while addressing shared regional and global challenges.

As tensions continue in West Asia, Modi’s message of dialogue and diplomacy comes at a crucial moment, with world leaders closely monitoring developments between the US and Iran. The international community has urged restraint from all sides to prevent further escalation and protect regional peace and stability.



8 Offbeat Monsoon Getaways in India for a Refreshing Rainy Season Escape



Nestled in a hidden valley, Ziro comes alive in the monsoon with vibrant pine forests and terraced rice fields clad in deep emerald greens. The misty weather adds a mystical charm to the local Apatani tribal villages, making it a peaceful, crowd-free haven for slow travelers. Known as the “City of Joy,” this ancient fortress town perches dramatically on a rocky outcrop. The monsoon revives its historic stone palaces, pavilions, and lakes, enveloping the ruins in romance and dramatic fog. It is a stunning, poetic retreat for history buffs seeking quiet. As India’s first planned ecotourism destination, Thenmala offers a pristine look at the Western Ghats during the rains. The local suspension bridges, winding forest trails, and rushing rivers are at their peak beauty, surrounded by dense, wet canopy and the soothing, rhythmic sounds of the jungle. Shoja, Himachal Pradesh: Tucked away in the Seraj Valley, Shoja is a quiet Himalayan hamlet untouched by mass commercialization. The monsoon brings low-hanging clouds right

to your wooden cottage balcony. Nearby waterfalls overflow, and the surrounding meadows turn exceptionally lush, providing an idyllic, cozy hideaway from the bustling tourist circuits. Located deep within the Anamalai Hills, this serene hill station is surrounded by misty, rain-drenched tea plantations and cascading waterfalls. Because it sees far fewer tourists than nearby Ooty, you can quietly spot unique local wildlife, like the Nilgiri tahr, amidst the fresh, wet mountain air. Perched on the edge of the Sahyadri hills, this tranquil eco-hotspot receives incredibly high rainfall, turning the entire region into a paradise of mist. Countless seasonal waterfalls burst to life along the ghats, making it a dream destination for nature lovers who enjoy dramatic, rain-washed landscapes. The Betwa River swells beautifully during the monsoon, framing Orchha’s magnificent cenotaphs, temples, and palaces against moody, overcast skies. The rain washes the ancient brown stone into deep, rich hues, creating a visually striking and deeply peaceful atmosphere for travelers looking to explore India’s

royal past. Already famous as Asia’s cleanest village, this destination becomes a magical, rain-washed fairytale during the heavy monsoon. The surrounding Khasi hills turn brilliantly green, local streams rush beneath the famous living root bridges, and the entire village smells of fresh earth, offering a truly unique cultural experience. As the monsoon transforms India’s landscapes into lush green retreats, travellers are increasingly seeking destinations beyond the usual tourist hotspots. From the misty hills of Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh to the serene valleys of Chikhaldara in Maharashtra, these lesser-known escapes offer breathtaking scenery and peaceful surroundings. Agumbe in Karnataka, known as the “Cherrapunji of the South,” delights visitors with dense rainforests and spectacular sunsets. In Kerala, Gavi’s untouched wilderness attracts nature lovers, while Ziro Valley offers a perfect blend of scenic beauty and tribal culture. Mawsynram in Meghalaya, one of the wettest places on Earth, becomes a paradise during the rains. Tirthan Valley in Himachal Pradesh

and Mandu in Madhya Pradesh complete the list with rivers, waterfalls, ancient architecture and tranquil charm. These offbeat destinations promise memorable monsoon experiences away from crowded tourist circuits, making them ideal for travellers seeking adventure, relaxation and natural beauty. Monsoon is one of the best times to explore India’s lesser-known destinations, where lush landscapes, misty hills and overflowing waterfalls create unforgettable experiences. If you’re looking to skip crowded tourist hotspots, these eight offbeat monsoon getaways deserve a place on your travel list. Wrapped in clouds and surrounded by stunning mountains, Tawang offers breathtaking monasteries, serene lakes and scenic drives. Famous for its coffee plantations, rolling hills and trekking trails, this destination turns into a green paradise during the rains. Known as the “Cherrapunji of South India,” Agumbe is ideal for rainforest walks, waterfalls and spectacular sunsets. Ancient forts, palaces and monsoon-fed lakes make this historic town especially charming in the rainy season. Often called the “Kashmir of Odisha,” it offers pine forests, waterfalls and cool weather throughout the monsoon. Among the wettest places on Earth, it captivates visitors with caves, rolling hills and dramatic rain-soaked scenery. Home to lush paddy fields and the Apatani community, Ziro becomes even more picturesque after the rains. Tea estates, winding roads, wildlife and mist-covered hills make Valparai a peaceful monsoon retreat. Before planning your trip, check local weather conditions, carry waterproof gear and stay updated on road conditions.

Zendaya dazzles in Grecian Louis Vuitton gown on Odyssey tour



The world maybe be waiting for The Odyssey with bated breaths but we’re making do with Zendaya’s press tour looks for now. She isn’t just promoting a movie anymore, if her looks are anything to go by; she’s building a character in real time. Her latest stop was in all white, in Louis Vuitton, and it might be the most beautiful look in the run so far. Below the waist, the LV white gown features a slim column skirt in soft lace, slit high up one leg, trailing into a short train. Above it, the look gets far more interesting. Zendaya dons a bralette-style bodice with a plunging neckline at the centre, cut away entirely at the midriff, so the lace essentially frames bare skin rather than covering it. Around that is a pair of sleeves that barely qualifies as sleeves anymore. They are huge, ruffled shrugs built from stacked lace and raw-edged frills, standing up and out from her shoulders like something between a collar and a cape.

The silhouette has the sculpted, almost architectural quality that’s defined Zendaya’s entire press run. Her hair was pulled into a tight braided crown, which, paired with the blue-toned eye makeup, gave the whole look a slightly warrior-like edge rather than a purely bridal one. A layered necklace with blue stones (by Messika) sits close to her throat, the only real jewellery in an otherwise fabric-heavy look. Zendaya plays Athena in The Odyssey, and her stylist Law Roach has been dressing her for this press tour like a slow reveal of the character herself. A Schiaparelli moment built around a moulded sil-

houette, a Givenchy look with a gold face mask, a Valentino gown with a vine-covered bodice. Each outfit has picked up a thread of Grecian mythology and pulled it into something modern. This one works too, because Athena is meant to be commanding, and this dress doesn’t let you look away. The movie, which is slated to release on July 17, also includes Matt Damon, Tom Holland, Anne Hathaway, Charlize Theron, Robert Pattinson and Lupita Nyong’o. Zendaya turned heads once again with a striking fashion statement during The Odyssey promotional tour, embracing a Grecian-inspired look that perfectly blended timeless elegance with modern glamour. The actor wore a custom Louis Vuitton gown featuring dramatic cascading ruffles, a sculpted silhouette and a daring bare-midriff

by minimal accessories, allowing the intricate craftsmanship and architectural detailing of the dress to take centre stage. Zendaya paired the outfit with soft, glowing makeup, sleek hair and understated jewellery, creating a sophisticated look that echoed the grace of ancient Greek goddesses while maintaining a contemporary edge. Known for pushing fashion boundaries, Zendaya once again demonstrated why she is regarded as one of Hollywood’s biggest style icons. Her appearance quickly sparked admiration across social media, with fans and fashion critics praising the bold yet elegant ensemble and Louis Vuitton’s creative vision. The look adds another memorable chapter to Zendaya’s impressive red-carpet portfolio, reinforcing her reputation for effortlessly transforming high fashion into cultural moments. As The Odyssey tour continues, her fashion choices remain as eagerly anticipated as the film itself. Zendaya turned heads once again with a striking fashion statement while promoting The Odyssey, stepping out in a breathtaking Louis Vuitton gown inspired by ancient Greek elegance. The actor embraced a modern Grecian aesthetic in a flowing white ensemble featuring dramatic ruffles, an asymmetrical silhouette and a bold bare-midriff design that perfectly balanced sophistication with contemporary style. The custom Louis Vuitton creation highlighted Zendaya’s effortless ability to blend high fashion with timeless influences. Styled with minimal jewellery and sleek heels, she allowed the intricately crafted gown to remain the focal point of her appearance. Her soft,



design that instantly became one of the standout looks from the tour. The flowing ensemble was complemented

glowing makeup and neatly styled hair complemented the ethereal look, reinforcing the goddess-inspired theme.

High uric acid? These three foods could worsen swollen hands and feet, making symptoms even more severe



Confused about what to eat when your uric acid levels are high? According to experts, understanding how uric acid forms is the first step. Uric acid is produced when the body breaks down purines, compounds found naturally in body cells as well as certain foods. It is normally removed through urine, but when production increases or excretion slows down, uric acid levels can rise. Experts say both genetics and diet can contribute to elevated uric acid levels. He advises avoiding three major food groups: red meats such as beef, mutton and pork; seafood; and alcohol, including beer. According to the doctor, these foods can rapidly increase uric acid levels and may worsen the condition in susceptible individuals. Diet is not the only reason uric acid levels may rise. Kidney problems can reduce the body’s ability to remove uric acid through urine. Excessive alcohol consumption and being overweight may also contribute. Doctors note that while dietary chang-

es are important, controlling uric acid usually requires a broader treatment approach. Doctors advise taking medicines only under a doctor’s guidance. Medications that inhibit xanthine oxidase can help reduce uric acid production and consuming more milk and dairy products, including cheese, as they contain casein, a protein believed to help remove uric acid from the body. Along with following a balanced diet, drinking enough water every day is essential. Maintaining a healthy weight, walking regularly or engaging in light exercise as advised by your doctor, and avoiding soft drinks and processed foods high in sugar can all help support uric acid management. Regular blood tests are also recommended for people with high uric acid. Effective uric acid management requires four things together: a proper diet, adequate water intake, regular physical activity and medications prescribed by your doctor. Following all four measures consistently can help keep uric acid levels under control. Swollen hands and feet can sometimes be linked to

high uric acid levels, especially when excess uric acid forms crystals in the joints, triggering inflammation and pain. While swelling may have many causes, diet plays an important role in managing uric acid and reducing the risk of gout flare-ups. One of the biggest dietary culprits is red meat, including beef, lamb and organ meats. These foods are rich in purines, compounds that break down into uric acid in the body. Frequent consumption may contribute to elevated uric acid levels. Sugary drinks, particularly soft drinks and beverages sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup, can also increase uric acid production. Replacing them with water or unsweetened drinks may help lower the risk of flare-ups and improve hydration. Another food group to watch is certain seafood, such as sardines, anchovies, mackerel and shellfish. These are naturally high in purines and may worsen symptoms in people who are prone to gout or elevated uric acid. Along with limiting these foods, experts recommend maintaining a healthy weight, staying well hydrated and eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. If swelling, severe joint pain or repeated flare-ups persist, consult a healthcare professional for proper diagnosis and treatment, as symptoms may have causes beyond high uric acid. High uric acid levels can contribute to swollen hands and feet by causing uric acid crystals to accumulate in the joints, leading to inflammation and pain. While swelling has many possible causes, diet can play a key role in managing uric acid levels. Three foods that may worsen symptoms include red meat, sugary drinks, and high-purine seafood such as sardines, anchovies and shellfish.

These foods can increase uric acid production or reduce its elimination, raising the risk of gout flare-ups. To help manage uric acid, experts recommend drinking plenty of water, maintaining a healthy weight and choosing a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. If swelling, persistent joint pain or repeated gout attacks continue, seek medical advice for proper diagnosis and treatment, as these symptoms can

also result from other health conditions. Many women turn to eggs donated by younger women to overcome age-related infertility. The logic is simple: if ageing eggs are the primary reason fertility declines, replacing them with healthier eggs should improve the chances of pregnancy. But new research suggests the story may be more complicated. A study presented at the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) annual meeting has found that women aged 49 and above continue to have significantly poorer IVF outcomes, even when the eggs come from much younger donors. The findings suggest that the uterus itself may age independently of the ovaries. According to a study published by The Lancet

affected by infertility. The study also projects that the number could reach roughly 79.6 million by 2036. In India, the total fertility rate has fallen to 1.9, below the replacement level, while more women are delaying pregnancy into their late 30s and 40s. IVF, egg freezing and donor-egg pregnancies are becoming increasingly common, especially in urban India. The Italian researchers analysed pregnancy outcomes in 1,774 women undergoing IVF using donated eggs from younger women. Since every participant received eggs from young donors, egg quality remained largely constant. That allowed researchers to isolate the effect of the woman’s age on pregnancy outcomes. The results were striking. The study points out



Obstetrics, Gynaecology & Women’s Health, rates of fertility are rising worldwide in women aged between 35 and 49. In 2023, about 53.6 million women in this age group were

that women in their mid to late 30s had a 54% chance of getting pregnant with donor eggs and IVF treatment; that fell to around 43% for those aged 49 or older.

Will There Be A Sairat 2? Director Nagraj Manjule Reveals Sequel Plans

Mumbai: Nagraj Manjule’s Sairat did not merely become a box office phenomenon. It changed the way Marathi cinema was discussed across the country. Released in 2016, the Rinku Rajguru and Akash Thosar-starrer romantic tragedy became the highest-grossing Marathi film of all time and held that record for nearly a decade before Raja Shivaji surpassed it earlier this year. The film’s impact later travelled to Hindi cinema as well. Sairat was remade as Dhadak in 2018, which marked Janhvi Kapoor’s big-screen debut opposite Ishaan Khatter. Last year, Dharma Productions expanded the franchise further with Dhadak 2, starring Siddhant Chaturvedi and Triptii Dimri. Now, while promoting his upcoming acting venture Frame, Nagraj Manjule has opened up about the success of Sairat, its Hindi adaptation and whether he has ever considered making Sairat 2. Nagraj Manjule On The Idea Behind Sairat

In a conversation with SCREEN, Nagraj Manjule said that he did not approach Sairat as a challenge. For him, the film came from a need to tell a love story closer to reality than the polished romantic worlds often seen in cinema. “I never looked at it as a challenge. I said what I wanted to with the film. When I was writing Sairat, I was thinking that the world we see in films where people fall in love is very different from the real world. In real life, we face challenges when in love. I didn’t need to dramatize it, so I kept it the way it is. What we think always is that the love story ends with happily ever after; we don’t see the problems in it, so my vision was to show that,” he said. Sairat was widely praised for the way it blended innocence, romance, caste, violence and social reality without reducing its characters to stereotypes. Its songs became anthems, its performances found instant affection, and its ending left behind a silence that continued to haunt viewers long after



the credits rolled. The filmmaker also reflected on the film’s phenomenal success and said that he had never imagined Sairat would eventually be adapted by Bollywood.

“I never thought Sairat would be adapted by Bollywood. We just make our film. We don’t think about how much people will like it or if there will be a remake,” he said. The Hindi remake, Dhadak, introduced Janhvi Kapoor to films and brought the core premise of Sairat to a wider Hindi-speaking audience. While the remake became commercially visible, Sairat continued to retain its own cultural position as one of the most defining Marathi films of the last decade. Will Nagraj Manjule Make Sairat 2?

After Dhadak 2, Manjule was asked if the sequel to the Hindi franchise had made him think about returning to the world of Sairat with a second part. Responding to this, the filmmaker made it clear that Sairat 2 does not need to take inspiration from Dhadak 2. According to him, a sequel can happen only if there is a story worth telling. “Sairat 2 doesn’t need to get inspired by Dhadak 2 to be made. If there is a story, Sairat 2 will be made. I feel that the story was complete in itself, but sometimes when people like a film, they want to see what happens further in it. A lot of people still ask me when I will make a sequel to Fan-

dry. After Sairat came out, people forgot about it. But now they keep asking me about Sairat 2. I feel it is a world where much can be spoken about, but I have not thought about it,” he said. His response suggests that while he recognises the audience’s emotional attachment to the world of Sairat, he does not want to force a sequel merely because the film remains popular. Nagraj Manjule On Marathi Cinema’s Growth During the conversation, Nagraj also spoke about the rise of Marathi cinema and how the old boundaries between mainstream and regional films are gradually becoming irrelevant. His Frame co-star Amey Wagh pointed out that Marathi cinema had delivered seven hits in the first six months of 2026 and said that Sairat had “opened a door to a room full of treasure.” Reacting to the growth of Marathi films, Nagraj said, “Raja Shivaji and Deoband have crossed Rs 100 crore. A couple of other films earned around Rs 30-40 crore. So, what is counted as mainstream now? Baahubali was Telugu, Kantara was in Kannada, Pushpa was in Telugu, but so many people watched it. A film becomes mainstream when everyone likes it. Language has nothing to do with it. There are so many Hindi films also that don’t reach a wide audience, so we can call that regional too.”

Huma Qureshi Breaks Action Film Stereotypes

Mumbai: The recent theatrical release of the dark comedy thriller Baby Do Die Do has ignited a conversation regarding the representation of female action protagonists in Hindi cinema, with lead actor and co-producer Huma Qureshi calling for an end to formulaic industry tropes.

Directed by Nachiket Samant, the film stars Qureshi as Baby Karmarkar, an unremarkable-looking urban contract killer who is deaf and mute. Qureshi explained that the production team intentionally avoided the traditionally over-sexualized, physically objectified “femme fatale” archetype common in mainstream screenplays. Instead of presenting a physically glamorous assassin, the character was designed to look like an ordinary commuter on a Mumbai transit train. Furthermore, the narrative flips conventional cinematic tropes by treating her inability to hear or speak as a major tactical asset that enhances her environmental awareness and stealth, rather than as a physical vulnerability.

To prepare for the non-verbal role, Qureshi spent months training with a sign language expert and visiting specialized schools for speech and hearing impairments. Due to initial resistance from traditional financiers toward the unconventional, low-dialogue concept, the actor partnered with her brother, Saqib Saleem, to independently finance the project through their production banner, Saleem Siblings.

The movie, which features an ensemble cast including Sikandar Kher, Chunky Panday, Seema Pahwa, and Rachit Singh, centers around a suspenseful narrative involving a regional property mafia. Industry analysts suggest that this production, alongside other highly anticipated female-led projects like Geetu Mohandas’s upcoming film Toxic, reflects a growing shift toward more complex, structurally varied roles for women in the domestic entertainment sector.

Peddi Controversy Triggers Debate Over Bollywood Actresses’ Participation in Telugu Cinema



Mumbai: A fresh debate has erupted on social media over the portrayal of female characters in Telugu cinema after a viral post claimed that Bollywood actresses may now be hesitant to work in Telugu films following controversies surrounding Peddi and other upcoming projects. The discussion began after criticism emerged over the portrayal of Janhvi Kapoor’s character in Ram Charan-starrer Peddi. Several viewers expressed disappointment with the way her role was presented, alleging that certain scenes objectified the actress. The debate resurfaced recently after discussions around Kiara Advani’s scenes in Yash’s upcoming film Toxic: A Fairy Tale For Grown-Ups, bringing renewed attention to how female characters are represented in commercial cinema. Amid the growing conversation, entertainment platform Great Andhra posted on X, claiming, “After Peddi’s impact, Bollywood actresses are scared to act in Telugu films.” The post quickly went viral, drawing mixed reactions from social media users. Some users criticised the makers of Peddi and argued that the film’s treatment of Janhvi Kapoor’s character reflected problematic rep-

resentation. A section of viewers accused the film of normalising inappropriate behaviour and questioned the creative choices behind certain scenes involving Ram Charan’s character. However, Ram Charan’s fans defended the actor and criticised the viral discussion, saying that the controversy was unfairly targeting him and affecting his image. They argued that creative decisions involve multiple departments, including direction and writing, and should not be attributed to a single performer.

The controversy mainly centred around Janhvi Kapoor’s introduction sequence and certain romantic moments involving her character and Ram Charan’s role in the film. Viewers objected to dialogues and scenes they felt reduced the female character to her physical appearance rather than giving her a stronger narrative presence. Another scene that drew criticism showed Ram Charan’s character visiting Janhvi’s house and kissing her despite her objections. Many viewers felt that the sequence required a more sensitive portrayal of consent and relationships, leading to discussions about changing audience expectations in modern cinema. Fol-

lowing the criticism, Peddi director Buchi Babu Sana addressed the reaction to the scenes. In an interview with SCREEN, he said he had not expected audiences to interpret the moments negatively and explained that the intention was to portray a playful romance between the lead characters. He acknowledged the feedback and said filmmakers need to be more careful while presenting such situations. The director also indicated that changes were made to the controversial portions of the film after the public response. The debate has once again highlighted the evolving conversation around gender representation, consent and storytelling choices in Indian cinema. While commercial films often rely on dramatic romance and larger-than-life characters, audiences are increasingly demanding more balanced and respectful portrayals of women on screen. As Telugu cinema continues to expand its national reach, collaborations with Bollywood actors have become more frequent.

The ongoing discussion around Peddi reflects the larger challenge faced by filmmakers in balancing mass entertainment with changing social perspectives.

Saif Ali Khan Reflects on Evolving Cinematic Standards and Past Narrative Choices

Mumbai: Reflecting on his expansive career path across the Hindi film industry, actor Saif Ali Khan discussed the transformation of creative norms and narrative resolutions in mainstream cinema, noting structural elements in his earlier projects that contrast with contemporary audience expectations.

The discourse focused specifically on the narrative resolution of the 1995 action-drama production Kartavya, directed by Raj Kanwar, which featured Khan alongside late co-star Divya Bharti and antagonist Amrish Puri. Reflecting on the project over three decades after its cinematic release, Khan observed that structural narrative choices common in twentieth-century filmmaking occasionally failed to deliver logical accountability for central characters. Specifically, he noted that the resolution of the film permitted the primary antagonist to evade formal



consequences or clear narrative retribution, a structural conclusion he views with critical perspective under modern storytelling frameworks.

The actor contrasted the open-ended resolutions of early-career projects with contemporary audience preferences, which heavily prioritize thematic clarity, logical character arcs, and narrative resolution. He emphasized that modern filmgoers seek coherent character journeys where motivations and actions encounter definitive reso-

lutions by the conclusion of the production. Beyond structural choices, the actor noted that modern technical advancements, streamlined production pipelines, and specialized screenwriting methods have systematically elevated industry standards compared to the decades preceding the digital shift.

Kartavya represented a significant chapter in the actor’s early filmography, gaining notable media attention during its production timeline due to the tragic demise of lead ac-

tress Divya Bharti prior to completion. The production was subsequently finalized following the casting of Juhi Chawla to fulfill the remaining sequences. Khan observed that analyzing historical narrative choices provides valuable insights for evaluating the structural evolution of mainstream storytelling formats, noting that the industry has increasingly abandoned formulaic conclusions in favor of more grounded and legally or morally absolute character resolutions.

Director Siddharth Anand Rejects Claims of Staggering Production Budget for Upcoming Feature

Mumbai: Veteran film actor Rajesh Sharma remains under critical care and close medical supervision at a private hospital in the southern part of the city after a suspected toxic insect bite sustained during a film shoot triggered a rapidly progressing physiological infection.

The medical emergency originated at Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad during the production of an upcoming film titled Fauji, featuring lead actor Prabhas. According to an official statement issued on behalf of the family by actress Sudipa Chatterjee and filmmaker Agnidev Chatterjee, the actor was interacting with local production technicians in a densely vegetated area of the studio lot following the conclusion of filming for the day. Sharma reportedly felt a minor puncture wound on his lower right extremity, suspected to have been caused by either a venomous spider or a predatory bug. Because the initial discomfort appeared negligible, immediate on-site medical intervention was not requested.

The clinical condition altered significantly approximately six hours after the initial exposure, when the actor began experiencing intense pain across his right lower limb. Despite the rapid onset of physical distress, Sharma boarded a scheduled commercial flight to return to West Bengal. During the transit, the actor developed a high fever, severe physical restlessness, and systemic respiratory difficulties. Upon landing, his health deteriorated further, leading to his emergency admission to Manipal Hospital in Dhakuria on July 7, 2026.

Attending medical teams confirmed that the actor is battling a severe localized infection that has advanced aggressively from his toes up to his knee, resulting in the formation of extensive cutaneous blisters over the right leg. The clinical team, led by Dr. Avijit Bhattacharya, indicated that the patient exhibits persistent high fevers alongside acute breathlessness. Medical authorities stated that it remains too early to project a definitive recovery timeline, confirming that



the patient is not yet out of immediate danger. Specialized monitoring protocols have been enacted to watch for advanced secondary complications, specifically deep vein thrombosis or related blood clots that could cause life-threatening pulmonary embolisms if they migrate to the respiratory system.

The incident has sparked regulatory reactions within the entertainment industry. The All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) issued an official appeal to Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, demanding a formal, high-level inquiry into the workplace safety, hygiene, and emergency medical protocols main-

tained on the active film set. The association questioned the absence of immediate local hospitalization in Hyderabad and sought strict administrative accountability regarding production safety guidelines. Meanwhile, the actor’s family expressed formal gratitude to well-wishers, media outlets, the Bengal Motion Pictures Artists’ Forum, and industry veteran Prosenjit Chatterjee for providing administrative guidance and support during the hospitalization period. Sharma has maintained a prolific career spanning more than two decades, contributing prominent supporting performances across both Hindi and Bengali

Ensemble Comedy Comedy Capers Secure Substantial Worldwide Earnings After Two-Week Theatrical Run

Mumbai: The multi-starrer action-comedy production Welcome to the Jungle completed its second week of theatrical screening, consolidating its commercial standing by approaching major domestic benchmarks and securing robust overseas returns.

Led by a prominent cast that includes Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty, Arshad Warsi, Paresh Rawal, Disha Patani, and Jacqueline Fernandez, the Ahmed Khan-directed venture has demonstrated a steady holding pattern across domestic theater chains. By the conclusion of its fourteenth day in circulation, live tracking data indicated that the film accumulated approximately 123.48 crore rupees in domestic net collections. This progression places the project within close range of the 125 crore rupee milestone, which box office analysts expect the feature to cross during the initial days of its third week.

The theatrical journey began with a strong opening performance, yielding an initial domestic net of 63.75 crore rupees and a worldwide gross of 93.45 crore rupees over its debut weekend, peaking on its first Sunday at 24.75 crore rupees. Following a standard weekday stabilization during its first week—which concluded with a domestic net of 93.15 crore rupees—the film experienced a varied trajectory in its second frame. Week two operations



initiated with a 4.50 crore rupee net on day eight, followed by a weekend expansion that collected 7.50 crore rupees on day nine and 9.75 crore rupees on day ten. Daily tracking through the subsequent weekdays recorded 2.65 crore rupees on day eleven, 3.00 crore rupees on day twelve, and 2.35 crore rupees on day thirteen across 6,372 screenings.

On its fourteenth day, the production maintained a footprint of 3,365 active shows, adding an estimated 0.58 crore rupees to its domestic cumulative tally. Factoring in regional tax structures and theatrical premiums, the total gross collection within India reached approximately 146.78 crore rupees. Concurrently, international markets contributed a

gross total of 30.09 crore rupees, elevating the comprehensive worldwide gross box office valuation to 173.86 crore rupees.

Industry observers point out that the film managed to preserve consistent theater traffic from family audiences despite facing significant screen sharing from contemporary releases, including the romantic drama Cocktail 2 and the action thriller Alpha. Financial analysts note that the comedy’s manageable production layout under the established franchise banner has positioned it securely in profitable territory ahead of upcoming high-profile cinematic sequels scheduled for late-season release, including Dhamaal 4.

Egypt's coach yells at Lionel Scaloni during a heated FIFA World Cup clash Argentina's Boss Does This



Kolkata: The debate after Argentina's exciting 3-2 victory over Egypt in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 16 is showing no signs of abating. While Argentina rallied from two goals behind to win spectacularly, Egypt's players and coaching staff were furious with several of the match's officiating decisions. In a new video that has surfaced on social media, Egypt's head coach Hossam Hassan can be heard yelling at FIFA officials after the game ends. Hassan and several of his coaching staff were having a heated conversation with the officials when Argentina's head coach, Lionel Scaloni, went by without engaging. In the footage, Hassan can also be seen yelling at Scaloni. However, Scaloni did not respond and silently returned to the dressing room at Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian Football Association (EFA) stated on Wednesday that it "cannot remain silent" following what it feels was unfair and biased officiating in Egypt's 3-2 round-of-16 loss to Argentina on Tuesday. Egypt coach Hossam Hassan and some players slammed the referees after being stunned when Argentina scored three straight goals in 13 minutes to pull off one of the greatest World Cup comebacks. "Defending the rights and interests of the Egyptian national team is not a matter that can be ignored, minimized, or treated as secondary," the EFA said in a statement. "It is a responsibility that we carry with full conviction and determination." FIFA's chief of refereeing Pierluigi Collina, in a statement issued later Wednesday, said while constructive discussion about decisions

would always be part of football, "unfounded allegations have no place in our sport." "Nobody can question the integrity of the FIFA World Cup match officials," he said. "When this happens, it may provoke reactions that lead to threats against them and their families. This is not right." The EFA said that the referee failed to use the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system appropriately, leading to the loss to Argentina. Egypt thought to have scored their second goal in the 58th minute, but a VAR review revealed that Marwan Attia fouled Argentina defender Lisandro Martinez during the build-up. "Several key incidents raised serious concerns and left profound questions about the consistency and fairness of decisions that directly influenced the course of the game," the EFA stated.

SC Examines Legal Question on Arrest Memo Error in Meghalaya Honeymoon Murder Case

New Delhi, July 9: The Supreme Court on Thursday indicated that it may refer to a larger Bench an important legal question concerning whether a typographical error in an arrest memo can invalidate an arrest and serve as sufficient grounds for granting bail.

The observation came while a Bench of Justices Manoj Misra and Shree Chandrashekhara heard the Meghalaya government's appeal against the bail granted to Sonam Raghuvanshi, who is accused of conspiring to murder her husband during their honeymoon in Meghalaya. The Bench said it would also examine whether the Meghalaya High Court was justified in upholding the bail order solely because the arrest memo cited an incorrect statutory provision. Appearing for the Meghalaya government, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta argued that the mistake in the arrest memo was merely

a clerical error and should not outweigh the gravity of the allegations against the accused. Mehta submitted that the investigating agency had supplied the grounds of arrest to the accused and contended that a technical error in mentioning the relevant section of law should not become the basis for granting bail in a serious criminal case.

The Meghalaya High Court had earlier upheld the trial court's decision to grant bail after observing that the arrest memo referred to Section 403 instead of Section 103(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the provision dealing with the offence of murder. The High Court described the error as reflecting a "total non-application of judicious mind" while preparing the arrest documents. During the hearing, the Supreme Court noted that there were differing judicial views on the requirement of furnishing



written grounds of arrest and observed that the legal position may require authoritative clarification by a larger Bench. Justice Misra remarked that if the technical ground relied upon by the High Court was ultimately found to be unsustainable, the basis for granting bail could also fall. The Bench directed the Meghalaya Police

to produce legible copies of the original documents provided to the accused at the time of arrest to determine exactly what information had been communicated.

According to the prosecution, Sonam Raghuvanshi allegedly conspired with hired assailants to murder her husband, Raja Raghuvanshi, during their

honeymoon in Meghalaya for financial gain. The couple had gone missing in Sohra in May last year, and Raja's body was later recovered from a deep gorge. The Supreme Court will continue hearing the matter while deciding the broader legal issue concerning the validity of arrest memos containing clerical or typographical errors.

IMD issues red alert after Delhi receives 34.9 mm of rainfall in just three hours

New Delhi, July 09: Heavy rains pelted most of the nation on Thursday morning, with waterlogging recorded in various districts of Delhi, Mumbai, and Rajasthan. The torrential rain also caused flash floods and significant train and road traffic congestion, with 11 persons believed to be buried under a collapsed rubbish mound in Maharashtra's Pimpri Chinchwad, as well as waterlogging in Delhi and Mumbai.

Aside from that, Surat in Gujarat had severe rains, with officials reporting that at least nine people perished in rain-related events in the district during the previous several days. The administration has relocated thousands of individuals from low-lying neighborhoods to safer areas, as well as given food packages in high-rise buildings in the city's flood zones. One person died and four people were rescued after a four-storey building under construction collapsed in the Rohini area

amid rains in the city. Four to five people, besides the property owner's husband, are feared trapped under the debris. Flash floods triggered by rains disrupted road connectivity in some parts of Rampur subdivision of Himachal Pradesh's Shimla district as moderate rains continued to lash Himachal Pradesh on Wednesday, officials said.



Kharge Accuses PM Modi Government of Weakening India's Industrial Interests Over China Policy

New Delhi, July 9: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday launched a sharp attack on the Narendra Modi-led Union government, alleging that its policies have weakened India's economic interests by increasing dependence on China in several critical sectors. In a post on X, Kharge cited a media report claiming that China continues to play a major role in India's strategic industries. He alleged that despite the sacrifices of Indian soldiers during the Galwan Valley clash, the government had failed to reduce the country's reliance on Beijing. "Our bravehearts chose martyrdom, but the Modi government has surrendered India's interests to China," Kharge said in his post.

The Congress leader claimed that dependence on China remains significant across sectors considered important for India's future economic growth. He alleged that imports from China have increased substantially since the Galwan clash, contributing to a widening trade deficit between the two countries. Kharge highlighted several industries where he claimed Chi-



nese dominance remains high. He alleged that China supplies a major share of India's pharmaceutical raw materials, including active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), and said the country continues to be a key source for electric vehicle components and lithium-ion batteries. He also raised concerns over India's renewable energy sector, claiming that Chinese companies have a dominant position in the supply of solar manufacturing materials such as silicon wafers. According to Kharge, this dependence raises questions over the government's

vision of self-reliance under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative. The Congress president further criticised the government over recent decisions involving Chinese companies, alleging that restrictions were being relaxed to allow greater participation of Chinese firms in Indian projects. He also referred to concerns raised by various groups regarding China's activities along the India-China border. Kharge accused the government of failing to protect India's strategic and economic interests and said the country should reduce its dependence on China

by strengthening domestic manufacturing capabilities. "The Modi government has hurt India's national interests by allowing Beijing greater influence over critical industries," Kharge alleged, adding that the government's approach towards China needed greater scrutiny. The Union government has previously maintained that India has taken several measures to strengthen domestic manufacturing, secure supply chains and reduce vulnerabilities in key sectors while managing economic ties with other countries.

FIVB Recognises Prime Volleyball League as India's Leading Pro Volleyball League

New Delhi: The Prime Volleyball League (PVL) has received official recognition from the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) as India's premier professional volleyball competition, marking a significant milestone for the league ahead of its fifth season, which is scheduled to begin on November 30. The recognition underlines the league's growing stature in the international volleyball community and highlights its role in promoting the sport in India since its inception. Over the past four seasons, the PVL has emerged as the country's flagship professional volleyball tournament, attracting top domestic talent and increasing interest among fans.

The build-up to Season 5 will begin with the player auction in Goa on August 17, where franchises will assemble their squads from a pool of India's leading volleyball players. The auction is expected to set the stage for another highly competitive season featuring several of the country's best athletes. In another major boost for Indian volleyball, clubs competing in the Prime Volleyball League will now be eligible to participate in international tournaments organised by the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA), the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC), and FIVB club competitions, subject to the governing bodies' qualification criteria and regulations. The move is expected to provide Indian clubs and players with valuable exposure at the international level. Prime Volleyball League Director Tuhin Mish-



ra described the recognition as a landmark achievement for the competition. "Season 5 marks a defining moment for the Prime Volleyball League. The FIVB recognition is a strong validation of the work that has gone into building a credible, competitive and globally relevant league over the last four years. Our focus remains on strengthening the volleyball ecosystem and creating meaningful opportunities for Indian players to succeed at the highest level," Mishra said. PVL Chief Executive Officer Joy Bhattacharjya said the league had always aimed to create a sustainable platform that would contribute to the long-term development of Indian volleyball. "This recognition reinforces that the

Prime Volleyball League is more than just a tournament. It is a platform shaping the future of volleyball in India," Bhattacharjya said.

He also pointed to the steady progress of the Indian men's national team, which has climbed from World No. 60 to No. 42 in the latest FIVB rankings, as evidence of the sport's positive trajectory. With a mix of leading Indian players and overseas stars expected to feature, Season 5 promises another exciting edition as franchises battle for the title. The latest recognition from the FIVB is expected to further enhance the league's profile while strengthening India's ambitions of becoming a competitive force in international volleyball.

Guwahati Hosts Record 423 Players for 8th Ayodhana International FIDE Rating Chess Tournament

GUWAHATI, July 9: The eighth edition of the Ayodhana International FIDE Rating Chess Tournament got off to an impressive start at Assam down town University in Guwahati, attracting a record field of 423 players from across the country. Organised by the Chess Players Parents Forum (CPPF), Guwahati, the tournament has emerged as one of the biggest FIDE-rated chess events in the Northeast and carries a total prize purse of Rs 4 lakh.

The tournament has drawn a strong mix of experienced campaigners, titled players and promising youngsters, reflecting the growing pop-

ularity of competitive chess in the region. Participants representing several states are battling for valuable FIDE rating points as well as the championship title over the coming rounds. International Master Rathanvel V.S. of Tamil Nadu heads the field as the top seed. FIDE Master Arun Kataria of Rajasthan is seeded second, while Candidate Master Kolla Bhaavan of Andhra Pradesh occupies the third seed. The presence of several titled players is expected to raise the standard of competition and provide younger participants with valuable exposure against higher-rated opponents. The tournament

was formally inaugurated by All Assam Chess Association president Mukuta Deka, who praised the organisers for successfully hosting one of the country's leading FIDE-rated events. He highlighted the rapid growth of chess in Assam and expressed confidence that tournaments of this scale would inspire more young players to pursue the sport at the national and international levels.

Also present at the inauguration were Rajib Dhar, General Secretary of the All Assam Chess Association, Dr. Siben Dutta, President of the Chess Players Parents Forum, and Bimal Sarma, General Secretary

of the organising body. The dignitaries welcomed players, coaches and officials and wished the participants success in the competition. Speaking on the occasion, the organisers said the overwhelming response, with a record 423 entries, reflects the increasing enthusiasm for chess across India. They added that the event aims not only to provide a platform for established players but also to encourage emerging talent by giving them the opportunity to compete in a professionally organised FIDE-rated tournament. The opening round witnessed several favourites beginning their campaigns on a winning note.

Top seed International Master Rathanvel V.S. comfortably secured his first full point, while second seed FIDE Master Arun Kataria and third seed Candidate Master Kolla Bhaavan also registered convincing victories to remain on course for the title. Among the other players who opened their accounts with victories were Mahindrakar Indrajeet, Gokul G., Ghadge Harsh, Niladri Banerjee, Singh S. Vikramjit, Parambrata Sarkar, Abhrojyoti Nath, Dhrupad Kashyap and Tanmay Rajbongshi. Their wins ensured a strong start to the tournament, setting the stage for closely contested battles in the sub-

sequent rounds.

With a large and competitive field, the tournament is expected to produce several exciting encounters as seasoned professionals face talented juniors eager to make their mark. Every round will be crucial as players seek to improve their FIDE ratings while staying in contention for the overall honours. The Ayodhana International FIDE Rating Chess Tournament has steadily grown in stature over the years and is now regarded as one of the premier chess competitions in the Northeast. The record participation this year underscores the expanding reach of the sport



in the region and reinforces Guwahati's position as an emerging destination for major chess events. The tournament will continue over the next several days, with participants competing in multiple rounds before

the champions are crowned. Organisers are optimistic that the event will not only produce high-quality chess but also further strengthen the development of the game in Assam and the Northeast.

India to miss Pratika Rawal for historic Lord’s Test as Priya Punia earns replacement call-up

New Delhi: India will be without opening batter Pratika Rawal for the historic women’s Test against England at Lord’s after she was ruled out of the one-off match, dealing a significant blow to the visitors ahead of the landmark contest. Rawal has been sidelined after sustaining a cut to her knee that required stitches while representing India A against England A in Taunton last week. The opener picked up the injury during the match and was subsequently deemed unavailable for the Test. Head coach Amol Muzumdar confirmed the development during the pre-match press conference on Wednesday, July 8 with Priya Punia drafted into the squad as Rawal’s replacement. Rawal’s absence comes at an



unfortunate time for India, with the 25-year-old emerging as one of the team’s most dependable top-order batters over the past year. Since making her international debut, the right-hander has enjoyed a rapid rise, producing consistent performances across formats and establishing herself as a key member of India’s batting unit. She

made her Test debut against Australia earlier this year at the WACA in Perth, where she marked the occasion with her maiden half-century in the second innings. Rawal was also part of India’s ODI World Cup-winning campaign last year, scoring a century against New Zealand before her tournament was cut short by injury. The

Lord’s Test, the first women’s Test at the iconic venue featuring India, was expected to provide another opportunity for Rawal to cement her place in the longest format. Instead, India will have to reshuffle their top order and rely on Punia to fill the void. Punia is yet to make her Test debut for India but earned her recall after an impressive tour of England with India A. The left-handed batter was the highest run-scorer for India A in the one-day series, amassing 171 runs at an average of 57, including a top score of 87. Her consistency at the top of the order caught the attention of the selectors, who have now handed her an opportunity to be part of India’s squad for one of the biggest occasions in women’s Test cricket.

Ukraine’s Marta Kostyuk blasts IOC over easing Russian Olympic participation restrictions ahead of Paris Games

New Delhi: Ukraine’s Marta Kostyuk has strongly criticised the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) decision to ease restrictions on Russian athletes, calling the move “terrible” and insisting it is “very, very far from fair play” as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine continues. Kostyuk made the comments after reaching her maiden Wimbledon semifinal with a commanding 6-3, 6-2 victory over 2024 runner-up Jasmine Paolini.

The 24-year-old, one of Ukraine’s most outspoken athletes since the war began in 2022, said she completely disagreed with the IOC’s decision to provisionally lift the suspension of the Russian Olympic Committee. The move could pave the way for more Russian



athletes to return to international competition ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, although individual sports federations will still have the final say on participation. Speaking after her quarterfinal win, Kostyuk said, “It’s terrible. I think it’s very, very far from fair play for all the countries involved here, not just for Ukraine. I 100 per-

cent don’t agree with this decision. But I feel like a lot of people spoke out on this issue.” “They obviously don’t agree, as well. I don’t think anything is going to change. I just want to go out there and hopefully beat every single Russian I play in the Olympics, and that’s it,” Kostyuk added.

Kostyuk’s remarks came against the backdrop of

fresh Russian missile attacks on Kyiv, including strikes close to where her parents live. The Ukrainian admitted it had become increasingly difficult to separate tennis from the realities unfolding back home, saying she constantly follows developments despite trying to remain focused during the tournament.

Despite the emotional burden, Kostyuk has enjoyed the best Wimbledon campaign of her career. Seeded 12th, she brushed aside Paolini in just 69 minutes, firing 19 winners and not facing a single break point to book a semifinal clash against Czech ninth seed Linda Noskova. It is also her second Grand Slam semifinal of the season after reaching the last four at the French Open.

Mamdani’s World Cup jibe on Egypt’s robbery claim goes viral after match



New Delhi : The fallout from Egypt’s highly controversial, heartbreaking 3-2 Round of 16 exit to Argentina has transcended the footballing sphere, finding its way into the upper echelons of American civic politics. New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani has thrust himself into the centre of a global sporting debate, declaring that the North African side were “robbed” during their dramatic FIFA World Cup encounter. Political



speeches are historically renowned for calculated pivots, but Mamdani executed a masterclass in rhetorical misdirection on Wednesday. In what was scheduled to be a completely dry, administrative press conference outlining municipal infrastructure upgrades, Mamdani smoothly weaponised local transit data to deliver a scathing, globally heard verdict on the World Cup’s biggest refereeing scandal. Unveiling his new “Next Stop: Better

Buses, Faster Service” initiative, Mamdani was deep into a statistical breakdown of how streamlined bus routes could return 24 hours of personal time to local commuters over a six-month period. He began painting a picture of domestic bliss, outlining the human value of time saved. “That means breakfast with your family,” Mamdani told the gathered press corps. “It means having the time to argue balls and strikes at your kid’s Little League game. It means getting home for bedtime.” Then came the sucker punch. Without breaking stride, Mamdani added: “It means agreeing with your friends that Egypt were robbed yesterday.” The Mayor’s comments have poured petrol onto a burning row at FIFA World Cup. The source of global fury centres around a critical 58th-minute incident that fundamentally altered the trajectory of Tuesday’s match in Atlanta. With a fearless Egyptian side leading the defending world champions 1-0, midfielder Mostafa Zico finished off a breathtaking team move to ostensibly put the Pharaohs in complete control.

Sourav Ganguly inducted into ICC Hall of Fame on 54th birthday celebrations

Ganguly becomes India’s tenth ICC legend

New Delhi : Former India captain Sourav Ganguly received one of cricket’s highest honours after being inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame on his 54th birthday, becoming the 12th Indian and the 10th Indian men’s cricketer to join the elite list.

Ganguly joins an illustrious group of Indian legends that includes Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag, Bishan Singh Bedi, Kapil Dev, Anil Kumble, Vinoo Mankad, Diana Edulji, Neetu David and MS Dhoni in the prestigious Hall of Fame. The formal induction is scheduled to take place during the ICC ceremony on Saturday, July 11, following the conclusion of the governing body’s annual



conference. Ganguly acknowledged the recognition with a heartfelt message on X, thanking the ICC and ICC Chairman Jay Shah. “Thank you ICC and Chairman Jay Shah for inducting me into the Hall of Fame. It’s a huge honour. One of the 10 Indians to be inducted into the Hall of Fame ever. Amazing to be a

part of some great names,” he wrote. One of India’s greatest captains, Ganguly transformed the team’s mindset during the early 2000s, building a fearless side that challenged the world’s best both at home and away. The elegant left-handed opener scored 18,575 international runs and struck 38 centuries across

formats. In Tests, he amassed 7,212 runs in 113 matches at an average of 42.17, including 16 centuries. In ODIs, he accumulated 11,363 runs in 311 matches at an average of 41.02, with 22 hundreds. His opening partnership with Sachin Tendulkar remains one of the most successful in the history of the format. As captain, Ganguly led India to the 2003 ODI World Cup final and famously inspired the team to the 2002 NatWest Trophy triumph, celebrated with his iconic shirt-waving gesture from the Lord’s balcony. He also played a pivotal role in nurturing future stars such as MS Dhoni, Yuvraj Singh, Harbhajan Singh and Virender Sehwag, laying the foundation for powerhouse.

Austrian and British GP review: Three races, five key talking points across two weekends

New Delhi: Formula One is finally well into its European leg, which means back-to-back races with little time to turn around form or fortunes. After another breathless double-header, which culminated in a dramatic race in the sport’s spiritual birthplace of Silverstone, F1 leaves drivers, teams and fans with plenty of points to ponder from the Austrian and British race weekends.

The W17 is undoubtedly the class of the field when it comes to outright pace, but is also showing itself to be notoriously brittle when



it comes to finishing a race. So far this season, the Silver Arrows have lost a staggering 68 points due to

DNFs alone (20% of their total points this year). While this deficit is yet to actively threaten their

position at the top of the Constructors’ Championship, their drivers are feeling the heat. A combination of mechanical and operational issues have resulted in Austria being the only race in the last five rounds where both drivers finished in the points, astounding for a car that, on merit, should finish on the podium, if not win every race. As a result, both Kimi Antonelli and George Russell find Ferrari’s Lewis Hamilton breathing down their necks, with their advantage now slashed to 32 and just seven points respectively.

England great Tammy Beaumont to retire from international cricket after historic Lord’s Test

New Delhi: England opener Tammy Beaumont has announced that she will retire from international cricket after the historic one-off Test against India at Lord’s, bringing the curtain down on a remarkable 17-year career. The 35-year-old, who made her international debut in 2009, will make her final appearance in England colours at the Home of Cricket, ending a journey that has seen her establish herself as one of the country’s greatest batters across formats. One of the finest opening batters of



her generation, Beaumont leaves the game with a legacy built on consistency, resilience and match-winning performances. She has been a pillar of England’s batting line-up in Tests, ODIs and T20Is, amassing more than

8,000 international runs and producing 14 international centuries during an illustrious career. Speaking about her decision, Beaumont said: “Playing for England for nearly 17 years has been the greatest honour.

Gauff, Muchova, Kostyuk, Noskova chase Wimbledon glory in semifinal showdown

New Delhi: A new name will be etched on the Venus Rosewater Dish as Wimbledon 2026 heads into a fascinating women’s singles semifinal line-up featuring four players still searching for their first title at the All England Club. World No. 2 Coco Gauff, 2023 French Open finalist Karolina Muchova, Ukraine’s Marta Kostyuk and Czech youngster Linda Noskova have all navigated a draw that saw several leading contenders fall early, setting up two intriguing last-four clashes on Centre Court.

The first semifinal pits seventh seed Gauff against 10th seed Muchova in what has rapidly become one of the tour’s most compelling rivalries. Gauff has enjoyed a stellar 2026 campaign and reached her maiden Wimbledon semifinal after recover-



ing from a set down to beat Jessica Pegula in the quarterfinals. The American has now reached the semifinals at every Grand Slam, underlining her growing consistency across all surfaces. Muchova, meanwhile, has reminded ev-

eryone why she is regarded as one of the game’s most complete players when fully fit. The Czech produced an impressive display to eliminate Naomi Osaka, mixing her trademark slices, drop shots and net play with aggressive

baseline hitting. Her variety has troubled many of the tour’s biggest hitters, but she faces a daunting challenge against Gauff, who owns a commanding 6-1 head-to-head advantage and has beaten Muchova twice already

this season.

Grass has often been considered Gauff’s least productive Grand Slam surface, making this run particularly significant. Her movement, improved serve and greater willingness to attack shorter balls have helped her overcome the unique challenges of Wimbledon. Muchova will hope her experience on the biggest stages can tilt the contest in her favour. The Czech reached the French Open final three years ago and has repeatedly demonstrated her ability to disrupt rhythm with all-court tennis. If she can keep points short and prevent Gauff from settling into extended rallies, she could produce another upset. The second semifinal guarantees a first-time Grand Slam finalist as 12th seed Marta Kostyuk meets ninth seed Linda Noskova.

FIFA rejects France appeal over star’s yellow card before quarterfinal clash

New Delhi: Coach Didier Deschamps has confirmed that world football’s governing body has officially rejected the French Football Federation’s (FFF) appeal to rescind the yellow card shown to Michael Olise. The decision leaves the Bayern Munich winger on a disciplinary tightrope ahead of France’s crucial quarter-final clash against Morocco at FIFA World Cup 2026. “There was no change when it comes to Olise’s yellow card,” Deschamps revealed during his press conference on Wednesday. “We received FIFA’s decision this morning that the yellow card was maintained.”

The caution was brandished in the 97th minute of Les Bleus’ 1-0 Round of 16 victory over Paraguay following a late altercation with midfielder Matas Galarza. Although video replays strongly indicated that Olise merely grasped the Paraguayan’s jersey before



Galarza went to ground claiming a facial blow, FIFA’s disciplinary panel chose not to alter the referee’s original on-field decision. The FFF’s decision to lodge a formal complaint was framed by a dramatic precedent earlier in the tournament, where the United States successfully managed to get a booking overturned under entirely different circumstances.

US striker Folarin Balogun had been shown a straight red card for a challenge during the Americans’ victory over Bosnia and Herzegovina, which carried an automatic one-match suspension. However, following unprecedented political lobbying—including three personal phone calls from US President Donald Trump to FIFA Belgium.