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The BJP misses an opportunity to blame the rain problems in Kolkata on Mamata and Trinamool

Kolkata, Sep 28: Since Monday night's flood in Kolkata, which killed at least ten people by electrocution and caused severe miseries for those living in both highrises and slums, the Bengal BJP has been inexplicably absent from the scene. Social media was used to release statements, and the renowned IT cell was mobilized to spread memes and criticize the Mamata Banerjee administration. The saffron warriors were invisible on the ground. Since other tried-and-true tactics, such as accusations of corruption, have failed to produce any political or electoral results in the state or national elections, the Kolkata flood, which occurred months before the 2026 Assembly election, gave the BJP the chance to expose the Trinamool government's incompetence and administrative inefficiencies. There are some BJP leaders who disagree. "What are we able to do? obstruct the roads before Durga Puja? "cause more harassment to the people?" a former president of the BJP



Bengal asked.

Bengal has simply failed to be enthralled with the party. The late Jyoti Basu was still the chief minister of the Writers' Buildings exactly twenty-five years ago when Mamata Banerjee, the main opposition leader in Bengal at the time and the Union railway minister, used the bogey of "man-made flood" to attack the Left Front government over district floods. As chief minister, she continues to use this bogey against the Center and the central agency, the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC). That particular day in September

Statements were issued on social media, the famed IT cell activated to attack the chief minister and share memes. On the ground, the saffron warriors could not be seen

2000, water from Tolly's Nullah that flows right behind Mamata's house on Harish Chatterjee Street had entered her bedroom. She had described it as "unprecedented."It was an adjective that she would repeat on the morning after Monday's deluge. She blamed everyone from the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, the DVC and the Calcutta Electricity Supply Corporation (CESC) for the inundation and the electrocution deaths on the streets of Kolkata.In the 14-plus years that Mamata has been at the helm of the administration, every salvo fired against her by the Opposition has failed to yield political dividend. A section of the Bengal BJP concedes that this was a missed opportunity."The state president [Rajya Sabha MP Samik Bhattacharya] is yet to get his own team in the organisation," said a party insider. "Those who are managing the day to day affairs of the party are weighed by the uncertainty of whether they will retain their posts once a new committee is formed."Most of them don't have any clue on which issue will spring political and electoral dividend." Other sources in the BJP said the party has been busy with the formation of election-related internal committees. Since Narendra Modi's 75th birthday on September 17, the BJP is nationally observing Seva-paksha (Service fortnight) till Gandhi Jayanti on October 2. "These programmes are being held throughout the country. All the leaders and karyakartas are busy with these events," said a BJP source. Leader of Opposition in the Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari, the most visible face of the BJP in Bengal, denied that the BJP has been absent."Who says? Yesterday our MLAs went to the homes of those who died of electrocution. BJP is always active in all issues," Suvendu told.

CM Tamang warns of turmoil and emphasizes togetherness

Gangtok, Sep 28: In response to calls from the opposition for a "Nepal-style movement" to overthrow his government, Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang stated on September 23 that his government will not allow any actions that endanger national security. "Our government has zero tolerance for threats to national security," Tamang declared while speaking at a public gathering in Gangtok. He emphasized that while democratic opposition and constructive criticism are welcome, any attempt to promote violence or disturb peace will face harsh legal consequences. The chief minister emphasized the strategic significance of Sikkim as he celebrated the state's 50th anniversary of independence. "This occasion is a reminder of how this small Himalayan state has contributed



to the nation in a peaceful and dignified manner by protecting the Union through its crucial geopolitical position, and it also reflects how the people of Sikkim cherish their identity as proud Indians," he said. Sikkim shares borders with China, Bhutan and Nepal, making its stability crucial to India's security. Tamang noted that state institutions will act swiftly against sedition, incitement or any effort to disturb public order.

Doka-La and Cho-La will be accessible to domestic travelers in Sikkim starting on October 1

Gangtok, Sep 28: The Government of Sikkim has declared that the high-altitude passes of Doka-La and Cho-La would formally open to domestic tourists on October 1, 2025, which will significantly promote adventure tourism. With stringent regulations in place to strike a balance between tourism and environmental preservation, the project seeks to assist sustainable lives in border regions while promoting tourism. These beautiful locations will only be open to Indian citizens who have legitimate voter IDs. Permits must be obtained by travelers from authorized tour operators under the Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation. Entry to wildlife sanctuaries and donations to the Tsomgo Pokhari Sangrakshan



Samiti are included in the Rs. 1,120 per person permit price. Fees will not apply to visitors who have valid Home Department licenses.

Permits will only be granted upon confirmation of a required one-night homestay at specific Silk Route locations, such as Kupup, Gnathang, Zuluk, and Padamchen, in order to guarantee genuine local experiences. Due to the difficult terrain, private automobiles are still forbidden and only vehicles with engines 1,400 cc or larger are permitted. Each pass will allow up to 25 motorcycles and 25 tourist cars each day. For two days, tour companies offer packages that start at Rs. 12,000 for category Z vehicles and Rs. 11,000 for category J vehicles. Security and monitoring will be jointly handled by the Sikkim Police, the Army's 17 Mountain Division, and the Tourism Department. Police escorts will accompany groups from Kupup to Doka-La and from Cho-La diversion points to Cho-La to ensure safety. Departure timings will be staggered to avoid congestion: from Tsomgo to Cho-La at 10 am and 11 am, and from Kupup to Doka-La at 9 am and 10 am the following day.

In Brief

Shut JU hostels

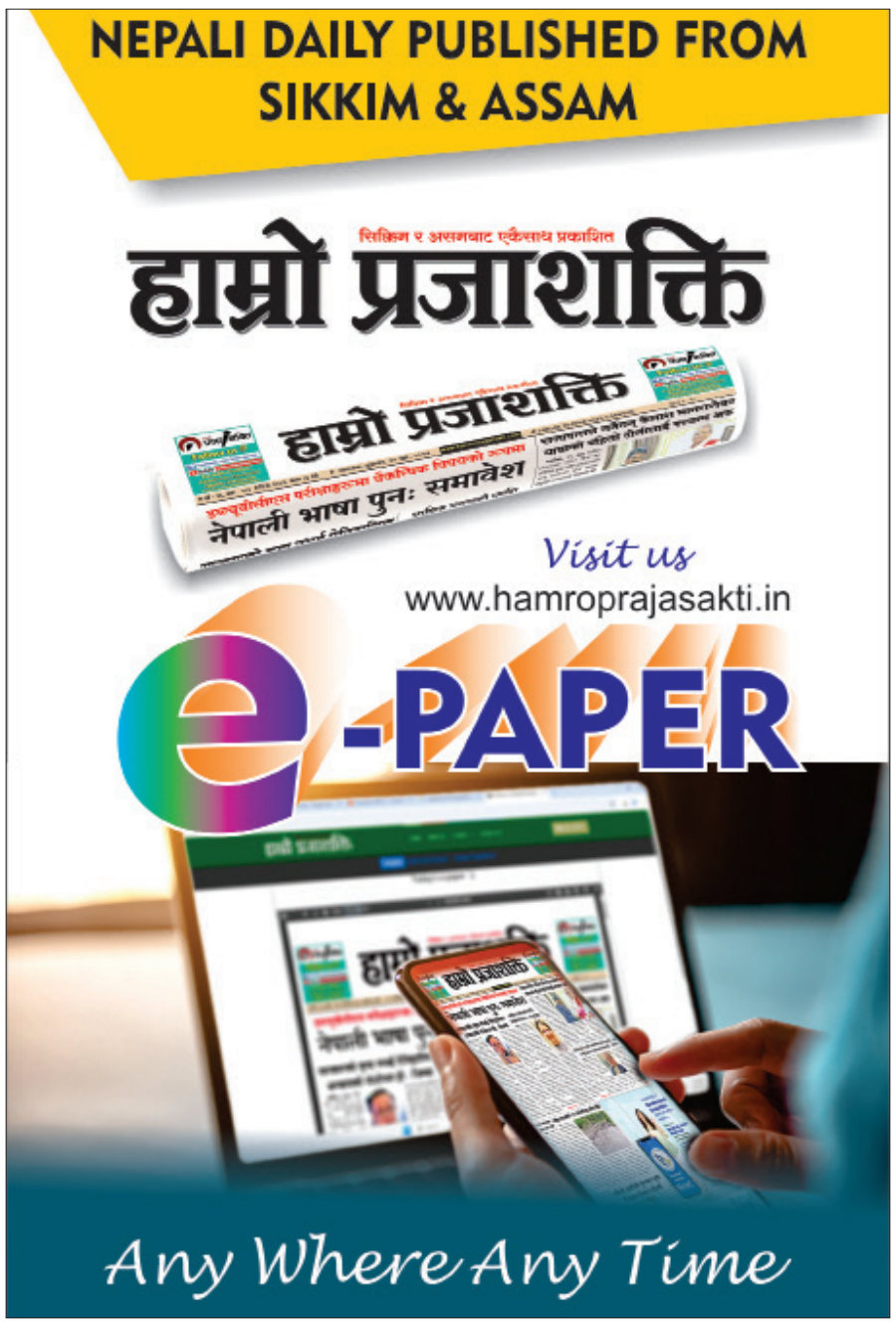
Kolkata: The Jadavpur University residence halls shall stay closed until the conclusion of the Durga Puja holiday, the high court said on Friday. Police were instructed by a division bench consisting of Justices Sujoy Pal and Smita Das De to make sure that no hostels were left unlocked over the vacations. On October 9, the university will reopen.The ruling stated, "We deem it proper to direct that the hostel should remain closed and no persons should be permitted to reside in the hostel during the period when Jadavpur University is closed due to Puja vacation." The court was hearing a petition on safety and security on the campus filed after education minister Bratya Basu was harassed and heckled on the campus by a section of students on March 1.

Fund drive for booksellers

Kolkata: In order to support College Street booksellers who have lost their resources and means of subsistence due to the floods, a fundraising campaign has been started.The Kolkata Creative Publishers' Welfare Association has launched a program called the College Street Relief Fund to help small and mid-sized publishing firms, printing presses, and binding workshops.Readers, authors, publishers, cultural workers, and book lovers worldwide have been urged by the association to support College Street "in its darkest hour."

Murder of Class VII student

Birbhum: Within ten days of finding the girl's disfigured body parts and apprehending a teacher at a high school in the Birbhum district near Rampurhat, where she was a student, Birbhum police filed a charge sheet on Friday in relation to the murder of a young girl. "We gave it our all, making every attempt to finish the study as soon as possible. In order to quickly file the charge sheet and get evidence against the accused schoolteacher, our special investigation team put in a lot of overtime.



Calcutta High Court to Delhi: Return Bangladeshi deportees within four weeks

Kolkata, Sep 28: On Friday, the Calcutta High Court ordered the Center to return all six members of two Birbhum families—including Sunali Khatun, also known as Sonali, who is eight months pregnant—from Bangladesh in four weeks.In June, all six individuals—three of whom were minors—were deported to Bangladesh after being identified as citizens of the neighboring nation. On Friday, a division bench consisting of Justices Tapabrata Chakraborty and Reetobroto Kumar Mitra also overturned the central government's decision to deport Sunali, her husband, and their little son. The court gave Sweety Biwi the same order. After being



held in Delhi on suspicion of being Bangladeshi nationals, Sweety Biwi and her two young children were deported to Bangladesh along with Sunali. The court granted the same order for them. The senior judge of the division bench, Justice Chakraborty, stated that the deported individuals had to return to the nation within four weeks of receiving the court decision.

In order to guarantee their return, the court requested that the central government communicate with the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, Bangladesh, as needed. The central government's allegation that Sunali had unlawfully entered India in 1998 was criticized by the court. Sunali was born in the year 2000, as evidenced by the fact that her Aadhaar and PAN cards show her age as 26. Additional solicitor-general of eastern India, Ashok Chakrabarty, prayed before the bench to stay the operation of the day's order for at least two weeks, which the court rejected.Raghunath Chakrabarty, counsel for the petitioner, told the court: "Voter ID, land deeds and other documents clearly prove that my client and her family members are bona fide citizens of India.

The sustainable growth model of Sikkim attracts attention from around the world

Gangtok, Sep 28: During a two-day Northeast India cultural event in the United States, Sikkim's distinctive approach to sustainable development and cultural preservation was highlighted. The gathering, which united communities from northeastern Indian states, gave visitors a firsthand look at the local way of life through traditional dances, music, food, and artisan exhibits. Panelist Mamta Somani, speaking on behalf of Sikkim, emphasized the state's citizen-driven programs and policies that combine environmental preservation with modernization. The pioneering of organic farming, the rigorous enforcement of smoke-free public areas, plastic-free living,



state-of-the-art sanitary facilities, and inclusive urban development with parks and recreation centers were among the accomplishments she listed. Additionally emphasized were Sikkim's status as India's cleanest state and its dedication to sustainable, secure food systems.

Sikkim CM inaugurates youth hostel-cum-gym

Gangtok, Sep 28: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang officially opened the renovated Mangan Public Ground and the newly built Youth Hostel-cum-Gym, signifying a major advancement in North Sikkim's youth involvement and sports infrastructure.In addition to senior government officials, advisors, local athletes, and youth representatives, the Chief Minister was warmly welcomed by Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs Raju Basnet, Minister-cum-Area MLA Samdup Lepcha, Minister for Forest and Environment Pintso Namgyal Lepcha, and Minister for Ecclesiastical and Public Health Engineering Sonam Lama. Before the new facilities were unveiled, a ceremonial guard of honor kicked off the event. Formally inaugurating the Youth Hostel-cum-Gym, the Chief Minister unveiled the plaque and inspected the state-of-the-art amenities.

A female journalist complains to the Kerala BJP chief



New Delhi, Sep 28: A journalist from Kairali TV, the official party channel of the CPI(M), has filed a complaint with the Kerala Director General of Police against BJP state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar, alleging that he threatened, insulted and shouted at her while she was on duty. She has sought a criminal case against the BJP leader. The incident occurred on Sunday when Chandrasekhar was addressing the media. Sasikumar questioned him about the death of BJP councillor K Anil Kumar, who was found hanging at his ward council office. In a video that has since gone viral, Chandrasekhar can be seen visibly angry, asking which channel she represented and, upon learning she worked for Kairali, telling her not to ask questions. He also addressed her with the Malayalam word "Nee" ("you"), considered disrespectful in this context. The Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ) condemned Chandrasekhar's reaction, saying, "In addition to insulting and threatening women, the state president also showed abusive behavior that shows intolerance towards the media." The body demanded action and expressed solidarity with the journalist.Police have registered a case of unnatural death in the councillor's suicide. BJP leaders have alleged a conspiracy involving the CPI(M) and police, while the CPI(M) countered that the suicide note mentioned only a lack of support from "their own people" and made no reference to the party or the police. The video of the confrontation has drawn sharp criticism on social media and from journalist groups across Kerala.

The ED has attached properties worth Rs 7.44 crore belonging to former Delhi minister Satyendar Jain



The ED's money laundering probe stems from a CBI case filed in 2017, which accused Satyendar Jain of amassing disproportionate assets between February 2015 and May 2017 while serving as a minister in the AAP-led Delhi government.

New Delhi, Sep 28: Properties valued at Rs 7.44 crore that are connected to businesses purportedly run by AAP leader and former Delhi minister Satyendar Kumar Jain have been seized by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). In accordance with the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, the action was taken on September 15. The CBI's 2017 complaint, which accused Jain of accumulating excessive assets between February 2015 and May 2017 while working as a minister in the AAP-led Delhi government, is the basis for the agency's money laundering investigation.

In December 2018, he, his wife Poonam Jain, and others were charged by the CBI. A Delhi court later noted that the ED had already filed a criminal complaint and attached assets valued at Rs 4.81 crore in March 2022. The most recent move has brought the total attachment to Rs 12.25 crore, which the agency claims is the full worth of the disproportionate assets purportedly purchased by Jain. Ankush Jain and Vaibhav Jain, close associates of Satyendar Jain, deposited Rs 7.44 crore in cash as advance tax under the Income Disclosure Scheme (IDS) shortly after demonetisation in November 2016, according to the ED. Authorities subsequently concluded that Satyendar Jain beneficially owned and controlled the four firms in which they had disclosed assets valued at Rs 16.53 crore. Both the Income Tax Department and the Delhi High Court held the associates to be benami holders for Jain, a finding upheld by the Supreme Court after dismissing their appeals. Following this, the ED shared its findings with the CBI, which filed a supplementary chargesheet enhancing the disproportionate assets attributed to Jain. The ED has said it will soon file a supplementary prosecution complaint in the case. Meanwhile, the trial is underway at the Rouse Avenue Court in New Delhi.The Aam Aadmi Party leader was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on May 30, 2022, on the charge of laundering money through four shell companies allegedly linked to him. He was granted bail two years later by a Delhi court.

PM Modi introduces "Bachat Utsav" to increase economic growth and savings

GST 2.0 launched



New Delhi, Sep 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to the nation on the eve of Navratri to announce the introduction of GST 2.0, a significant revision to the country's Goods and Services Tax system. In order to alleviate household financial strain and increase India's attractiveness to investors and businesses, the Prime Minister referred to the program as the beginning of a "Bachat Utsav"—a festival of savings. "The country will commemorate GST Bachat Utsav starting tomorrow. You will be able to purchase your favorite items with your increased savings. In his speech, Prime Minister Modi declared that this reform would benefit all facets of society. The GST Council approved a simpler two-tier GST structure earlier this month, which forms the basis of the revisions. Commencing on September 22, the first day of Navratri, the new system will levy tax rates of 5% and 18%. Approximately 90% of commodities that were previously in the 28% slab will now be in the 18% tax bracket, while nearly 99 percent of goods that were previously taxed at the 12% bracket will now be in the 5% bracket. However, luxury and sin items will still be subject to a 40% compensation cess.

In order to eliminate the complexity of many levies that previously drove up expenses and put a burden on household budgets, PM Modi emphasized the joint efforts of the Center and states to unite India under the principle of "one nation, one tax." Prior to 2014, the complex web of different taxes presented daily difficulties for millions of citizens and enterprises. The impoverished were forced to pay the greater transportation expenses, and prices were raised for consumers. "The nation had to be liberated from this predicament," he stated. The Prime Minister described GST 2.0 as a "double bonanza" for citizens, simultaneously making essentials more affordable and increasing household savings. He linked the tax reforms with the Union Budget's earlier decision to make income up to ₹12 lakh tax-free, a move designed to ease the burden on India's growing middle class. "When income tax relief up to ₹12 lakh is granted, the lives of the middle class undergo a profound transformation. Now, the poor, neo-middle class, and middle class are receiving a double bonanza. With the reduction in GST, citizens will find it easier to fulfil their dreams," he stated.

Sanjay Singh, an AAP MP, mocks the GST 2.0 savings festival

New Delhi, Sep 28: Sanjay Singh, the leader of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), mocked the Center's significant revision of the Goods and Services Tax, known as "GST 2.0," on Tuesday, calling it a festival of theft rather than savings. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the target of the jibe from the Rajya Sabha MP on his rollout description. In his speech to the nation on Monday, the prime minister referred to the reform as "Bachat Utsav," or the festival of saves, which would ease household burdens and improve the nation's appeal to foreign investors. The BJP has also launched a 7-day "GST Bachat Utsav" from Monday to September 29 to highlight the benefits of GST and promote a festive atmosphere. However, criticising the Centre's move, Sanjay Singh said, "This is not a 'bachat utsav'. Whenever PM Modi declares anything as 'utsav', I become concerned. This is a festival of loot." He also dubbed the BJP as the "Bharatiya Jebkatra (pickpocket) Party, that loots from the common man". The AAP MP claimed that a GST of Rs 127 lakh crore was collected in the past eight years, while in the same period, Rs 80 lakh crore was looted from citizens. "This tax was collected from common man not the super rich. Sixty-four per cent of GST was collected from 50 per cent of the common people.

The High Court has questioned the maintainability of the plea to prohibit Sanatan Sanstha



Mumbai, Sep 28: A petitioner who filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in 2011 to ban the right-wing organization Sanatan Sanstha was ordered by the Bombay High Court on Tuesday to provide an explanation of how his petition might be upheld. Petitioner Vijay Namdeo Rokade and others were instructed by the court to either drop their plea or risk being dismissed. The petitioners' attorney complied with orders and withdrawn the PIL. Under the Unlawful operations Prevention Act (UAPA), the petition aimed to designate Sanatan Sanstha as a terror organization on the grounds that its members engaged in "hypnotism and terror activities." The Union of India and the Sanstha were already ordered by the court to submit responses to the plea. In 2017, the Union of India told the court that the State Government's testimony was insufficient for the Center to determine that the Sanstha's operations met the criteria for being a "terrorist organization." In its reply, Sanatan Sanstha strongly refuted the accusations and demanded that the petitioners pay exceptional expenses. The managing trustee of Sanstha in Goa, Virendra Marathe, said that the petition was founded "on the flight of imagination of the petitioners." The organization stated that "there is absolutely no single criminal proceeding that is pending against Sanstha" in response to the terrorism accusations. Addressing the allegations linked to blasts in Thane, Vashi and Panvel targeting theatrical shows, the affidavit said the organisation's enquiries revealed "there was not even a whisper about the Sanatan Sanstha anywhere in the chargesheet or judgement passed in those proceedings." The affidavit further stressed that out of six accused persons in those cases, four were acquitted and the two convicted were not found guilty under UAPA terror charges.

Union cabinet clears RS. 6,014 crore road, rail projects in Bihar



Patna, Sep 28: The ₹6,014 crore railway and highway project in Bihar was approved by the union cabinet on Wednesday. The Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) will be used to construct the 78.94 km four-lane highway that would connect Patna and Bettiah in Bihar on the Sahebganj–Areraj–Bettiah segment of National Highway (NH) 139W. The project is valued at ₹3,822.31 crore. According to a government release, "it will link important districts like Vaishali, Saran, Siwan, Gopalganj, Muzaffarpur, East Champaran, and West Champaran, opening access to agricultural zones, industrial hubs, and religious tourism circuits." Following the cabinet meeting, union rail minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the project is aimed at improving travel efficiency, reducing congestion, and facilitating faster movement of goods and passengers. The centre expects the corridor to play a key role in strengthening economic activity and cross-border linkages with Nepal. The Cabinet also approved the doubling of the Bakhtiyarpur–Rajgir–Tilaiya railway line, a 104-km section in central Bihar, at a cost of ₹2,192 crore. "The initiatives are expected to generate jobs during construction and support long-term regional growth once operational," Vaishnaw said. Earlier this month, the Cabinet had sanctioned the construction of the Mokama–Munger section of the Buxar–Bhagalpur high-speed corridor and approved the doubling of the Bhagalpur–Dumka–Rampurhat rail line, aimed at strengthening connectivity across Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone for multiple infrastructure projects on September 15 alongside Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar, which included a thermal power plant at Pirpainti and a newly built terminal building at Purnea Airport.

The Supreme Court releases new rules to address the alarming backlog of cases involving bounced checks



New Delhi, Sep 28: The Supreme Court has released new instructions to reduce the backlog of "staggeringly high" check dishonor cases in major city district courts. These guidelines include voluntary concessions and the release of accused individuals on probation. When the Bombay High Court overturned the district courts' concurrent decision to free the accused in check bounce cases, a bench of Justices Manmohan and N V Anjaria modified the 15-year-old guidelines on compounding of offenses under the Negotiable Instrument (NI) Act. It stated that this court takes judicial notice of the fact that, in spite of the court's repeated directives in a number of rulings, the number of NI Act-related check bouncing cases still pending in district courts in India's largest cities is still startlingly high.

The bench stated that as of September 1, there were 6,50,283 Section 138 cases pending in Delhi district courts, 1,17,190 in Mumbai district courts, and 2,65,985 in Calcutta district courts, citing statistics from the National Judicial statistics Grid. "This pendency is putting an unprecedented strain on the judicial system as in some States, cases under Section 138 of the NI Act constitute nearly fifty per cent of the pendency in trial court (in Delhi section 138 NI Act cases constitute 49.45 per cent of total trial court pendency)," it said. Tweaking the existing top court guidelines, the bench underlined the necessity owing to a huge pendency of such case and the falling interest rates in the last few years. Under the revised guidelines, if the accused pays the cheque amount before recording of his evidence (namely defence evidence), then the trial court may allow compounding of the offence without imposing any cost or penalty on the accused."If the accused makes the payment of the cheque amount post the recording of his evidence but prior to the pronouncement of judgment by the trial court, the magistrate may allow compounding of the offence on payment of additional 5 percent of the cheque amount with the legal services authority or such other authority as the court deems fit," it said.. The top court said similarly, if the payment of cheque amount is made before the sessions court or a high court in revision or appeal, such court may compound the offence on the condition that the accused pays 7.5 per cent of the cheque amount by way of costs.

The center may add two years to the mandates of parliamentary panels

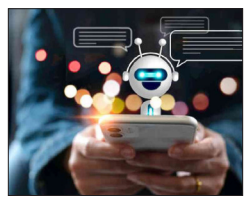
New Delhi, Sep 28: According to insiders, the government is thinking of extending the one-year term of parliamentary standing committees to two years. Enhancing continuity and facilitating in-depth examination of laws, reports, and policy issues are the goals of the action. The periods of the present committees will end on September 26. For Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who presently serves as the external affairs committee's chair, the plan holds special political significance. Despite recent disagreements with his party, he might keep his job for a further two years with an extension. Parliamentary standing committees are permanent bodies comprising a fixed number of MPs from both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

Yogi Adityanath's harsh warning to rioters during Uttar Pradesh festivals



Lucknow, Sep 28: According to the Chief Minister, Dussehra represents the victory of good over evil, and law enforcement must take firm action against any criminals at this time. He gave officials instructions to make sure that rioters' properties are thoroughly probed and that FIRs are filed right away for unrest situations in areas like Kanpur, Varanasi, and Moradabad. He went on to say that social media monitoring and video evidence should be used to identify all those involved in such incidents. Women's safety is still a primary concern, CM Yogi emphasized, ordering authorities to hold everyone responsible for events like harassment, chain snatching, and acid attacks, from police stations to PRVs. For the Garba and Dandiya festivities, specific instructions were provided, including how to implement Mission Shakti 5.0 on the ground and screen for intruders. The Chief Minister emphasized that directives must be followed exactly as written and issued stringent steps to avoid intercommunal conflicts. Avoiding large idols and setting up alternate immersion locations are two safety measures that will be crucial during Durga Puja and Ravana effigy burning ceremonies. Police chiefs are in charge of conducting surprise inspections of slaughterhouses and making sure safety regulations are being followed. To prevent crowding at UP ITS and other major sites, CM Yogi instructed authorities to prioritise smooth traffic flow and tight security. Districts are to be closely monitored, with ministerial visits and meetings coordinated for maximum administrative oversight. Reports from core group meetings are to be sent directly to the Chief Minister's office for prompt action. In Lucknow, a new poster campaign responded to the earlier display of "I Love Muhammad" posters in some areas.

Ama Sathi, a WhatsApp chatbot for 120 citizen services is launched by Odisha



Bhubaneswar, Sep 28: On Friday, Odisha introduced "Ama Sathi," a unified WhatsApp chatbot that provides more than 45 million citizens with access to 120 citizen-centric services. The platform, which was created in collaboration with Meta, enables users to access vital services via the WhatsApp number 9437292000. These services include everything from driving licenses and the National Family Benefit Scheme to birth and income certificates. The voice-activated chatbot serves as a one-stop digital assistant and is available in Odia and English. In addition to housing, urban development, education, horticulture, agriculture, police services, land records, and revenue details, it allows individuals to file and monitor concerns. Benefits for intercaste marriage and other government programs are also covered. To improve accountability in service delivery, a chatbot and a dynamic dashboard of the Odisha Right to Public Services Act (ORTPSA) Central Monitoring System were introduced together. "With Ama Sathi, Odisha takes a transformative step towards truly citizen-centric governance," stated Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja. Additional chief secretary Surendra Kumar stated that information boards, TV, radio, hoardings, and bus branding will all be used to spread the word about Ama Sathi and ORTPSA throughout the state.

The Durga Puja invitation barometer is encouraging for the BJP

A BJP source said the party's MLAs, MPs, and senior leaders have been receiving a large number of Puja invitations, significant at a time when the party's main aim is to connect with the community during the festive season as part of its outreach ahead of the polls



Kolkata, Sep 28: This Durga Puja season, senior BJP leaders like Samik Bhattacharya and Suvendu Adhikari are optimistic because they have received a "unprecedented" number of requests from all over the state to launch community pujas, which they see as a sign of good things to come for the party ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections. According to a BJP source, the party has been sending out a lot of Puja invites to its MPs, MLAs, and senior officials. This is noteworthy because the party's primary goal is to engage the community throughout the holiday season as part of its outreach before the elections. In comparison to previous years, there are a lot more invitations this time around for the opening of Durga Puja and visiting pandals. The Bengal BJP chief and Rajya Sabha member Bhattacharya said, "Even though I don't personally inaugurate Durga Pujas, I have received over 100 such invitations and will be visiting different Puja pandals across the state, including the Sundarbans." Bhattacharya also received three invitations from the UK to inaugurate Pujas organized by the Bengali community based there. According to a BJP source, Union Home Minister Amit Shah was set to inaugurate three Puja pandals in Calcutta: the BJP-organized Durga Puja at the EZCC, the Puja at Sevak Sangha in south Calcutta, and the Santosh Mitra Square one, which was organized under the guidance of BJP leader Sajal Ghosh. Nandigram BJP MLA Suvendu Adhikari, also the leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, has received "at least 350 invitations" for Durga Pujas in Bengal, including over 100 from Puja committees requesting him to inaugurate their pandals. A source close to Adhikari told The Telegraph: "Suvendu-da's number of invitations for Durga Puja has doubled last year. Apart from Bengal, he was invited by 200 Puja committees from outside the state, including some from the US and the UK. Significantly, he has also been invited by different Durga Puja committees in Bangladesh." Party MLAs and district leaders have also been invited to more pujas than last year. "Last year, I was invited by only 20 Puja committees who wanted me to inaugurate. This time the number is 50," said BJP's Pursurah MLA and Arambagh president Biman Ghosh.

The tea bonus protest reaches the highway

20% will be paid in three installments

Malbazar, Sep 28: On Wednesday, hundreds of employees from the Bagrakote tea estate in Jalpaiguri's Malbazar subdivision marched on NH17 and staged a three-hour blockage in demand of their bonuses and pay. From noon to about 3 p.m., traffic on the highway stopped between Odlabari and Sevoke. Detours were necessary for those traveling from the western Dooars to Siliguri and vice versa. Employees said that the management was unwilling to give bonuses at the state labor department's recommended rate of 20% of yearly salary. They said that the management offered to give a 10% bonus. Management representatives dismissed the accusation, stating that they had agreed to pay 20% in three installments. At midday, workers gathered on the highway to demonstrate. We requested that our four-fortnightly earnings be paid in addition to the bonus, which we agreed to accept at a rate of 10%. However, management representatives informed us that they



were unable to pay the outstanding salary at this time and that the bonus would be paid in two installments of 5% each before and after Puja. We used this roadblock and demonstration for that reason," Purnima Tamang, a worker who participated in the protest, stated. The tea estate employs 1,460 people. During the blockade, protesting workers shouted slogans demanding either 20 per cent bonus at one go or due wages with 10 per cent bonus. They also wanted elected representatives to intervene in the matter. "The MLA of Malbazar (Bulu Chik Baraik, also the state tribal development minister) should come here and tell us how they will ensure implementation of the state's advisory on bonus. They talk big and stay away when we need their help," said Gagan Moktan, a worker. Staff members also joined the protest. "We are yet to get the wages of the past two months. The management should immediately disburse it," said staff member and protester Pawan Pradhan. A police team reached the spot from the Malbazar police station and asked them to clear the road. The workers, however, did not budge.Eventually, around 3pm, the workers voluntarily dispersed and traffic resumed.

Women's plogging competition in Darjeeling

Darjeeling, Sep 28: From plogging roads in Darjeeling to cleaning homes prior to Dashain (Durga Puja), the women of the hills have transformed an ancient custom of cleanliness into a contemporary competition.The inaugural women's plogging tournament in the region, sponsored by the Mero Darjeeling initiative, was held in Darjeeling on Friday. Over 180 female competitors competed in the competition. The terms "jogging" and "plocka upp," which means "pick up" in Swedish, are combined to form the term "plogging." Erik Ahlström initiated the practice. Ahlström's idea has expanded to more than 90 nations, and for the last five years, Italy has hosted the international yearly plogging championship. By gathering trash while running and transporting it back for appropriate disposal, Darjeeling transformed the custom of holiday cleanup into a source of municipal pride. The women's squad combined tradition, fitness, and responsibility to collect an amazing 895 kg of litter from the Chowrasta-Mall-Darjeeling zoo and Chowk Bazar regions. Instead of rewarding speed, the format awarded the amount of rubbish collected. Manita Thami, a student of Nepali Girls' Higher Secondary School, claimed first place with a waste collection of 6.17kg over a period of two hours, followed by Remit Lepcha (6.03kg) and Anupama Tamang with 5.65kg. Winners received ₹10,000, ₹7,000, and ₹5,000, respectively. On average, each participant carried nearly 5kg of waste.

Sikkim Governor highlights crop value addition and drone technology at agri workshop



Gangtok, Sep 28: Sikkim Governor Om Prakash Mathur on Friday emphasized the importance of value addition in agriculture, particularly for high-value crops like large cardamom, and highlighted the growing role of drone technology in modern farming. Speaking at a workshop organized by the ICAR–Agricultural Technology Application Research Institute (ATARI), Zone VI, Guwahati, in collaboration with Central Agricultural University (CAU), Imphal, Mathur urged scientists and researchers to focus on enhancing crop quality and income for farmers through innovative technologies. The workshop, attended by senior officials and agriculture experts, also underlined the need to expand Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in Sikkim. These centers serve as critical hubs for farmer training, technology dissemination, and capacity building. Governor Mathur noted that additional KVKs would strengthen outreach and help farmers adopt modern techniques more effectively.Addressing the program virtually, Union Agriculture Minister Shivaraj Singh Chouhan stressed the importance of natural and organic farming, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for agriculture in the North East. Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Bhagirath Choudhary highlighted the role of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) in improving livelihoods and boosting farmer incomes. Sikkim Agriculture Minister Puran Kumar Gurung called for the establishment of two new KVKs in the state, emphasizing that these centers would bridge gaps in training, technology adoption, and extension services. The workshop also reviewed agricultural technologies, On-Farm Trials (OFTs), and Front-Line Demonstrations (FLDs), recommending region-specific strategies for Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim. A technology exhibition showcased innovative tools, techniques, and flagship products, while publications released by KVKs under ICAR-ATARI Zone VI offered valuable insights for researchers and farmers alike. Technical sessions featured experts in horticulture, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, farm machinery, natural resource management, and secondary agriculture, providing a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration. Discussions stressed the integration of drone applications, precision farming, and organic practices to enhance productivity, sustainability, and farmer profitability in the North East.

A BJP delegation requests that the Sikkim Garib Awas Yojna beneficiaries be reexamined



Gangtok, Sep 28: To check on the progress of the Sikkim Garib Awas Yojna (SGAY), a major housing project started by Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, a delegation from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) paid a visit to the Rural Development Department (RDD) office in Pakyong District. The group expressed concerns about the present beneficiary list to RDD officials during the visit. To make sure the program only helps those who are truly in need, BJP leader Sangay Gyatso Bhutia emphasized the urgent necessity for a thorough re-evaluation and re-scrutiny of the entire recipient list. "Assuring that the program reaches the truly needy is our top priority," Bhutia stated.

"In order for worthy individuals to eventually benefit from this important initiative, a strict procedure must be in place to weed out any non-genuine recipients." The party emphasized that SGAY must be executed with total transparency and justice, free from political interference, in order for the State Government to fulfill its commitment to the people under the slogans "Sunaulo Sikkim, Samarth Sikkim, Samriddha Sikkim." In order to maintain social equity in the allocation of housing aid, the BJP has called on the RDD to take prompt corrective action.

Sikkim CM visit Namchi hospital



Gangtok, Sep 28: Prem Singh Tamang, the chief minister of Sikkim, visited the recently constructed 500-bed Namchi District Hospital on September 26 to commission its expanded facilities and examine the entire infrastructure and services. He openly discussed ongoing problems caused by ineffective management and public behavior throughout the tour, citing general disarray, chewing gum, and broken bottles as examples. CM Tamang emphasized that such carelessness puts additional strain on staff members in addition to impairing hospital operations. Citing instances where diagnostic tests had to be transferred to Bangalore, he pointed out facilities' shortcomings and urged the public and government to work together for improved hospital administration.

Workers shut down Subarnapur tea garden

Jalpaiguri, Sep 28: The 20 percent bonus advise given by the state labor administration is disproportionately affecting tea farms, which are not considered tea estates. Last Monday, protests broke out at Subarnapur Tea Garden in Jalpaiguri's Kranti block after the management, after a two-way meeting with trade unions, offered a bonus at a reduced amount. The plantation was closed down by workers on Friday. With 169 permanent employees and an area of about 150 acres, Subarnapur sells tea leaves to an estate in Kalimpong. "We are not considered to be tea estates. We attended a bipartite meeting called by the Indian Tea Planters' Association, just like other tiny tea plantations, and it was determined that estates similar to ours (in terms of area) would pay a bonus at a rate of 13.75 percent.



"We are willing to pay, but the employees are hesitant and want a 20 percent bonus," Subarnapur Tea Garden manager Riyaz Choudhury stated. "Time and again, workers are referring to the state's advisory and are not ready to follow the bipartite agreement signed with the trade unions," he added. Mohammad Khadimul, a worker, said: "We are joining our work but simultaneously demonstrating at the garden. We will not settle at any rate lower than 20 percent.

Sikkim wants to repair its roads immediately to safeguard its tourism and economy

Gangtok, Sep 28: Following significant damage from floods and landslides that impacted the state's economy and tourism, Sikkim is calling for the quick restoration and improvement of its major road networks. In order to discuss urgent infrastructure improvements, BJP Sikkim State President DR Thapa met with Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi on September 24. Restoring vital connectivity throughout the state, which is commemorating its 50th anniversary as a state, was the main goal of the gathering. Thapa drew attention to the state of National Highway 10, the main thoroughfare in Sikkim, which sustained significant damage from the 2023 Glacial Lake Outburst Flood and frequent landslides. Monsoon closures have put livelihoods and the hospitality industry at risk by causing supply disruptions, halving tourist visits, and raising commodity prices.

He suggested climate-resilient actions like realigning highways, stabilizing slopes, and enhancing NHIDCL-state coordination. In order to guarantee continuous connectivity, he also recommended constructing a different route between Singtam and Sevoke. The meeting also addressed North Sikkim, where 14 bridges and sections of NH-10 were destroyed by



floods and landslides. Temporary repairs have repeatedly failed, leaving towns like Dzongu, Chungthang, Lachen, and Lachung isolated. Thapa urged swift reconstruction with durable infrastructure, using expertise from NHIDCL and BRO to secure both livelihoods and national security. Traffic congestion in Gangtok was another key issue. With over 1 lakh vehicles on the roads, daily delays of 3–4 hours are common. Thapa proposed a Ring Road around the capital to improve mobility for residents, businesses, and tourists, and requested feasibility studies and prioritised funding. Gadkari assured Thapa that the Centre remains committed to addressing these challenges and outlined ongoing and planned projects to strengthen Sikkim's road network.

Partha Chatterjee, the former minister, is granted bail by the Calcutta High Court



Kolkata, Sep 28: Partha Chatterjee, a former West Bengal minister, was granted bail by the Calcutta High Court on Friday in relation to the CBI's investigation into teacher recruitment violations. In a case involving irregularities in primary school recruitment, the CBI filed a charge sheet on December 27 of last year. Chatterjee, the prime accused in the cash-for-jobs scam in Bengal's state-run schools, which has rocked state politics for years and perceptibly amounts to several thousand crores, was granted bail. The central investigating agencies, the ED and CBI, have previously granted bail in the other cases that have been brought against the former minister, who has been in jail for more than three years.

He can leave jail after the procedures of providing bail bonds are completed thanks to the most recent bail ruling. However, attorneys questioned if the former minister would be released before Durga Puja, stating that Chatterjee's paperwork could only be finished once the courts reopen following puja vacations due to a Supreme Court judgment in a similar case. On Friday, the bench of Justice Suvra Ghosh directed Chatterjee to surrender his passport and not leave the jurisdiction of the trial court, as conditions of the bail. Justice Ghosh also directed that the former minister, who is a Trinamool Congress MLA, not be appointed to any public office during the pendency of the trial.

BJP calls for re-scrutiny of beneficiaries under Sikkim Garib Awas Yojna



Gangtok, Sep 28: A Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) delegation visited the Rural Development Department (RDD) office in Pakyong District on Thursday to review the implementation of the Sikkim Garib Awas Yojna (SGAY), a flagship housing scheme launched by Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang. During the visit, the delegation met with RDD officials to raise concerns over the current list of beneficiaries. BJP leader Sangay Gyatso Bhutia emphasized the need for a thorough re-evaluation of the list to ensure that the scheme benefits only genuinely deserving individuals. "Our primary concern is that the housing scheme reaches the truly needy," Bhutia said. "A strict and transparent process must be in place to remove any non-genuine recipients, so deserving citizens can benefit from this important initiative."The party stressed that for the state government to fulfill its commitment under the slogans 'Sunaulo Sikkim, Samarth Sikkim, Samriddha Sikkim,' SGAY must be implemented with fairness and transparency, free from political interference.

HIMALAYAN MIRROR

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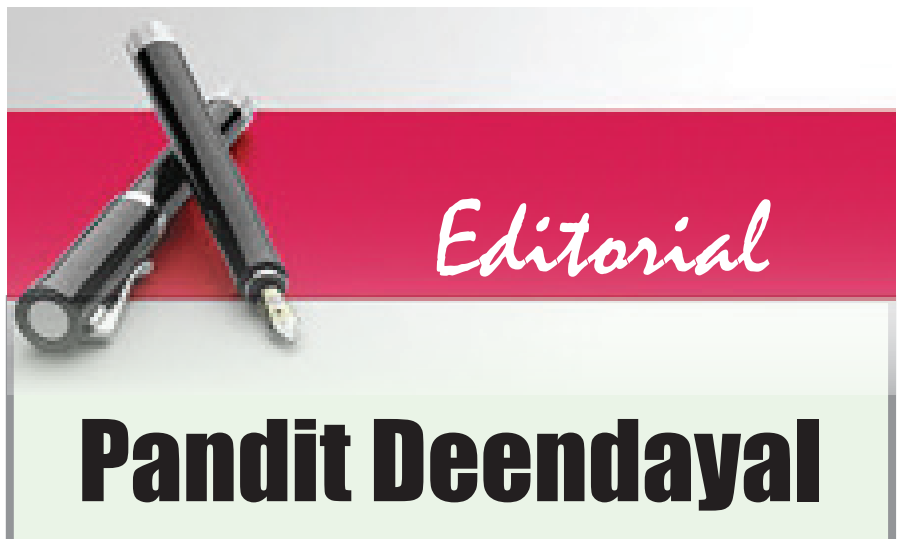
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Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay's

On the solemn occasion of his birth anniversary, tributes poured in from across the nation for Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, a leader whose personality continues to inspire millions, with Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, and Delhi BJP president Virendraa Sachdeva leading the homage and emphasizing that Deendayal Ji was not only a politician and philosopher but also a man of profound character, immense humility, and unwavering dedication to public service, qualities that made his personality unique and unforgettable in the annals of modern Indian history, as Vice President Radhakrishnan reflected in his message that Pandit Deendayal lived a life of simplicity so deep that at the time of his untimely death he carried just five rupees in his pocket, a striking example of his detachment from material possessions and his absolute devotion to serving the people of India, showing that his personality was a seamless blend of moral purity, intellectual depth, and practical vision, further underlined by his vision of Bharat as a land rooted in cultural identity, driven by compassion, and guided by the principle of *Ekatma Manavta Vad* or Integral Humanism, which reflected his capacity to see human beings not as isolated individuals but as integral parts of society and nation, an idea that stemmed from his deeply empathetic and humane personality; Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his homage, remembered Deendayal Ji as the great son of Mother India and the pioneer of Integral Humanism, stressing that his nationalist ideals and principle of *Antyodaya*— the welfare of the last man in the line—continue to guide India's development journey, a thought that reveals how Upadhyay Ji's personality was both visionary and grounded, idealistic yet pragmatic, embodying the best of India's civilizational ethos, and Mr Modi further emphasized that his life was not about self-glorification but about selfless service, a quality that defines the rare personality of a leader who sought no wealth, fame, or power for himself but instead worked tirelessly for the upliftment of the poorest and most marginalized, reflecting his remarkable integrity and moral compass; Union Home Minister Amit Shah in his tribute highlighted that Deendayal Ji, through Integral Humanism, gave the nation a philosophy that balanced material progress with moral and cultural upliftment, a philosophy that continues to inspire patriots and thinkers, but beyond philosophy what shines brighter is the personality of a man who combined sharp intellect with deep compassion, a nationalist who saw India's future as inseparable from its cultural roots yet expansive enough to embrace modernity, a leader whose calm demeanor, clarity of thought, and disciplined lifestyle left a lasting impression on all who encountered him, and Mr Shah further noted that his principles of Cultural Nationalism and Antyodaya are timeless because they were rooted in his personality, which always put the nation and society above himself, showing a humility and selflessness that is increasingly rare in public life; Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Delhi BJP president Virendraa Sachdeva, while offering floral tributes, also recalled his qualities of leadership and simplicity, with Mr Pradhan emphasizing that his unwavering commitment to social justice reflected his compassionate personality, while Mr Sachdeva pointed out that the Bharatiya Jana Sangh under his leadership was built not merely as a political party but as a movement shaped by his personal example of honesty, discipline, and service, which later provided the foundation for the Bharatiya Janata Party to emerge as a global political force, a journey made possible by the moral authority and personal charisma that Deendayal Ji infused into the organization; beyond political leadership, his personality was marked by resilience, as he faced personal tragedies like the early loss of his parents and endured financial hardships, yet never allowed these struggles to weaken his spirit or distract him from his mission, instead they deepened his resolve and shaped his empathy for the suffering of others, making him a man of extraordinary willpower and unmatched simplicity, a personality that could attract and inspire even those who disagreed with his ideology, as his sincerity and selfless dedication were universally admired; scholars often describe Deendayal Upadhyay not just as a thinker but as a personality who embodied his thoughts in his everyday actions, whose life was itself a message of humility, integrity, and service, as he walked lightly on earth with no wealth or possessions, yet left behind a rich legacy of thought and action, inspiring leaders and citizens alike to live for a higher cause, and his ability to communicate profound ideas in simple language reflected both the clarity of his intellect and the accessibility of his personality, enabling him to connect deeply with the common man, a quality that set him apart from many contemporary leaders; the tributes offered today were therefore not just about remembering his ideas but also about celebrating his personality, which radiated honesty, warmth, and conviction, inspiring those around him to pursue lives of purpose and service, and his persona continues to guide the philosophy of governance in India today, where policies focusing on Antyodaya, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and cultural pride echo the qualities he personified—compassion, resilience, vision, and humility; indeed, his personality remains a living force because it was not constructed for show but grew naturally from his beliefs, hardships, and experiences, making him a rare leader whose inner life and outer actions were in harmony, and as the Vice President, Prime Minister, and Home Minister all stressed today, India needs to continually draw strength from such personalities who represent timeless values of service, integrity, and national pride.

Trump's attack dog Navarro made a string of bogus claimson social media

Have you watched or attended an MEA press conference? It is easier to watch paint dry. Certainly not for the faint-hearted. The Indian foreign policy establishment has mastered the art of deflection and revels in understatement and ambiguity. For instance, prime minister Narendra Modi reached China on Saturday after a two-day visit to Japan where he attended the 15th annual summit with Japanese prime minister Shigeru Ishiba. During his stay in Japan, Modi had also had the chance to meet former prime ministers Yoshihide Suga and Fumio Kishida. You can bet that Donald Trump's targeting of India, and the global chaos unleashed by Trump's tariffs must have come up for discussion. The Indian foreign secretary confirmed it during his press briefing Friday, but you'll have to read between the lines. "Former PMs Suga and Kishida called on the prime minister, and discussed issues of mutual interest relating to the bilateral relationship, and regional and global developments." The words "regional and global developments" doing heavy lifting here. And not without reason. Values such as structure, due process, order and consistency play foundational roles in India's strategic culture and statecraft. Under the overarching framework of strategic autonomy, India's diplomacy gives preference to private diplomatic exchanges over public posturing, quiet dialogue, consensus-building and peaceful conflict resolution. You won't find a South Block bureaucrat blabbering before the media.

Shekhar Gupta isn't far from the truth in his column for The Print, where referring to Pakistan's lightning fast moves in pandering to Trump's vanity and ego, he writes, "India's rule-bound system would never be able to do so. Even a terrorist won't be handed over so summarily without a pretence of due process." Policy decisions in India are distilled from extensive deliberation, hierarchical evaluation and aligned with national interest, ensuring that decisions are based in due process instead of impulsive moves. It does lead to slow decision-making. Honour and respect are of paramount importance, even when dealing with adversaries. For instance, faced with an onslaught of public threats, mockeries and abuses from Trump and his troops, India's stated responses have been sparse, measured, dignified and courteous, even when such courtesy is undeserved. The US president has repeatedly and recklessly lowered the dignity of his high office, his side kicks even more so, but India has refused to deviate from the path of decency. Trump has made crude and brash behaviour his signature. He uses his social media platform as the primary medium to take potshots at critics (that includes even TV anchors), communicate national security decisions or foreign policy positions, bypassing government protocol and established diplomatic channels. On this unusual practice – given that India has frequently been at the receiving end – foreign minister S Jaishankar simply said, "We have not had a US President who has conducted foreign policy as publicly as the current one. That itself is a departure that's not limited to India…" Richie Benaud would've been proud at the understatement. It is difficult, therefore, to reconcile India's strategic culture with the persistent obnoxious behaviour from the Americans. Trump himself appears frustrated at not being able to bend India to his will, and his officials are trying their best to elicit some sort of response from New Delhi. But India isn't helping. The prime minister has remained resolutely silent, and the ministry of external affairs has not commented beyond the initial reaction when it termed the 50% tariffs from the US "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable".

India's disdainful silence is perhaps annoying the White House even more. Among the stream of Trump's aides who bark daily at India, White House trade adviser Peter Navarro tops the list. Navarro froths at the mouth, desperate for attention. Not content with writing a column for Financial Times where he accused India of "enabling Putin's war machine", Navarro has upped the ante. He has called the Russia-Ukraine conflict "Modi's war" and New Delhi a "laundromat for Kremlin". On Friday, the White House trade advisor in a series of social media posts used AI imagery and a bunch of blatant fabrications to pretty much blame Russia's invasion of Ukraine solely on India. Navarro's allegations are so outlandish, farcical and absurd that a logical refutation is almost impossible. He epitomizes the roguish behavior of a Trump regime that is uniquely ahistorical, completely ignorant and utterly contemptuous of India's strategic imperatives, political sensitivities, structural realities of the war or the global geoeconomic landscape. Punch drunk on strong-arm diplomacy and unable to grasp the fact that unjustified economic coercion will not compel alignment or obedience from India that fiercely guards its strategic independence, Trump's cronies resemble headless chickens – a set of arrogant fools and 'America First' douchebags who believe the sun revolves around their megalomaniac president.

I have in these columns pointed out the hypocrisy of America's targeting of India's energy trade with Russia many times in the past. Short point, if Trump's secondary sanctions on India are really intended to degrade Vladimir Putin's capability of continuing with the war, then the US president should have imposed these sanctions on all countries that purchase hydrocarbons from Russia. That includes China, the largest buyer of Russian fuels, European Union, the largest buyer of Russian natural gas and Turkiye, a NATO member and the third-largest buyer of Russian fuel. In fact, EU is currently the top buyer of Russian LNG, purchasing about 51% of Russia's LNG exports in 2025. China ranks second with 21%, with Japan third with 18%. To top it all, the United States is a major importer of refined petroleum from India (sourced from Russian crude). It is the fourthlargest importer by monetary value from India's private refiners, with imports worth about $1.4 billion in 2025 till date. It is beyond parody that the Trump regime, while imposing 25% additional levy on India for buying Russian crude, has made a specific carve-out to exclude both crude and refined petroleum products such as gasoline from Indian refiners. Ostensibly the fuel that Trump regime purchases from India is clean from any moral culpability. To take Navarro's twisted logic, energy purchased by India is adding to Russia's coffers, but the tens of billions of dollars' worth of energy purchased by EU since 2022 (according to estimates, the EU bought Russian energy worth almost 23 billion euros in 2024 alone), not to speak of largest buyer China, is not enabling Russia's war. In 2024, when the Russian invasion had extended to its third year, the total value of EU's purchase of Russian fuel surpassed the value of financial aid the Europeans sent to Ukraine. India has complied with the G7 price cap that was imposed on Russian oil to keep Moscow's crude flowing at lower than international prices – an endeavour supported by the Biden administration to ensure stability in global oil market. China, however, adheres to no such restrictions.

BRICS vs G7: Who's winning the GDP race?

The statistics are stark. The combined GDP of the four largest members of BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India and China – has overtaken the combined GDP of the four largest Western members of the G7 – the United States, Germany, Britain and France. Measured by purchasing power parity (PPP), the GDP of the four leading BRICS economies is $64.7 trillion. The GDP (PPP) of the four leading Western G7 economies is $43.9 trillion. Here's the break-up: China ($37.1 trillion), India ($16 trillion), Russia ($6.9 trillion) and Brazil ($4.7 trillion). The total: $64.7 trillion. The G7 break-up: US ($29.2 trillion), Germany ($6.0 trillion), France ($4.4 trillion) and Britain ($4.3 trillion). Total: $43.9 trillion. Not only have the BRICS nations surpassed the G7 economies, they are growing at a faster annual pace. For example, Britain (0.9 per cent), Germany (0.3 per cent), France (0.5 per cent) and the US (2 per cent) will average GDP growth of less than one per cent. In contrast, India is growing at 6.5 per cent, China at 4.8 per cent, Russia at 3 per cent and Brazil at 3.4 per cent. The average among the four is 4.4 per cent a year compared to the G7's 1 per cent. The gap between the West and the Global South is growing. Obviously, geopolitical power depends on a host of other factors as well. The US has dominated the world as the sole superpower since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

China's emergence as a challenger to US global supremacy represents the most decisive shift in global power from the West to the Global South in over three centuries. As late as 1700, China and India accounted for over 50 per cent of global economic output. Invasive colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade changed the course of history. Now another transformation is taking place. The combined GDP (PPP) of China and India is currently $53.1 trillion ($37.1 trillion and $16 trillion respectively). That is already over 33 per cent of total global GDP. By 2050, it is estimated that China and India will once again, as in 1700, command over 50 per cent of total global GDP. This obviously brings with it new opportunities and challenges.

Despite their differences, China and India will need to learn to live as good neighbours just as Germany and Britain have learnt to live as allies after the two devastating world wars. India and the West The West has never been a true friend of India. When India was newly independent, the West patronised it but did everything to support Pakistan at the United Nations and other international forums. India was at the time too small to be taken seriously by the West. The US supported Pakistan during the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971. In 1998, it imposed harsh economic and technology sanctions on India following India's nuclear test. The objective was to thwart India's growth till it accepted US suzerainty like Japan had been forced to. India's refusal prompted the US to try another tactic in the early-2000s. It co-opted India with the India-US civil nuclear deal in the expectation that it would place a tourniquet around India's independent nuclear plans while allowing US firms to build commercial nuclear reactors in India. Neither has happened. The civil nuclear deal remains largely on paper. US nuclear reactors have been waiting for 20 years for the Indian government to amend the nuclear accident liability clause. The proposed legislation is in limbo. US President Donald Trump has lent clarity to America's bid for global hegemony. He knows China is a tough nut to crack. What the West fears now is a new alliance forming between China, India and Russia. With Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi scheduled to visit China for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit on August 31– September 1, Washington will keep a close eye on the optics between Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Zubeen Garg's legacy

In a dramatic turn of events that reflects the depth of public emotion across Assam, the state government has announced that a fresh postmortem will be carried out on the body of legendary singer Zubeen Garg at Guwahati Medical College, despite the fact that an autopsy had already been completed in Singapore, with officials stressing that the decision comes purely in response to massive public demand for transparency and reassurance, as citizens, fans, and cultural organizations raised their voices for a local examination before the final rites, prompting the administration to revise the funeral schedule and affirm that no step would be taken that could be construed as a slight to the legacy of a man revered as the voice of Assam; speaking to the media, state leaders clarified at the outset that there was never any intention to dishonor Garg, explaining that Singaporean authorities, as per international norms, had already completed their autopsy procedures in a fair and unbiased manner, but with appeals mounting in Assam for a second autopsy on native soil, the cabinet collectively decided to honor these demands, stressing that this was about respect for Zubeen Garg's legacy and about reassuring the people of Assam, whose connection with the singer transcended the boundaries of art and entered into the realm of cultural identity, and accordingly, Health Minister Pijush Hazarika and Minister Pabitra Margherita held extensive discussions with Garg's wife Garima Garg, who gave her consent to the plan, confirming that the family would not object to a second postmortem, which would be carried out at Guwahati Medical College with the involvement of doctors from AIIMS to guarantee credibility and professionalism, a process expected to take about one and a half hours, following which the funeral and cremation schedules were adjusted to accommodate the new timeline, ensuring both procedural compliance and public participation; officials explained that once the autopsy is complete, the body would be brought by ambulance and prepared for the funeral procession, during which Garg's family has already provided a list of 85 close relatives and associates, including several artists, who will directly accompany the final journey, with two buses being arranged by the government for their transport.

Preserving strategic autonomy in US-China great game

As was to be expected, the recent US-India-China and Russia-India-China equations have raised as many questions as they have answered. Or, they have answered as many questions as have arisen. At the heart of it all is the key question: Will India be able to retain its strategic autonomy amid the evolving international landscape? Of course, US President Donald Trump kickstarted it all by launching a tariff war on India unlike any other nation, including strategic contestant China.Yes, the severity of doubling the India tariff might have been less in comparison to sanctions elsewhere. Likewise, an intention to negotiate from a 'position of strength' on tariffs and other aspects of bilateral relations, including defence procurement, might have been the driver, too. However, the current Indian governmental mood, combined with the public outrage over the Trump announcements on tariffs and opposition to the import of cheap oil from Russia, seems to have caused a very different response from New Delhi compared to what was expected by Washington. What should be of interest to India at the same time is the seeming revival of India's China relations, as if on an American cue of a different kind. It's not about the recent India visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi; his meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar carried a message of their own. So did his separate revival of border talks with National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval. The two are the designated Special Representatives (SR) for the border talks that have dragged on for decades and seen many SRs on either side. This round too was not expected to produce anything substantial on the ground or otherwise. Yet, the very idea of such revival and the timing carried another message of its own. A third and fourth angle(s) may have been added to the evolving regional act by the overarching presence of Russia in the backdrop and India seemingly putting its heart more than in the past into promoting Brics as a 'fiscal and economic alternative'. An 'alternative' to what, why and how, though, remains hazy just now. Where does it all lead to? Coupled with Trump's sudden revival of eternal American love for Pakistan, the triangular relations involving India, China and Russia cannot go too far, too fast, either. Even if it happened, it is one thing for India and China to reach a level of cordiality in bilateral relations, erasing India's hurt and wound from the unprecedented 'Galwan clash', 2020. India cannot think of China independent of the latter's Pakistan relations, and of Pakistan sans China. If anything, Beijing has talked about a trilateral on Kashmir. This goes against the very grain of the Indian belief that it's a bilateral and that a bilateral has to be treated only as a bilateral. Good on paper Be it as it may, India's foreign and security policies are at the crossroads as never before.Yes, but there has to be clarity in processing and progressing on the multilateral front if India has to have a win-win situation and not a win-lose or lose-lose situation. In a way, the current global trend is forcing India's hand to choose between nations and blocs, where again there is visible confusion and ruptures, however temporary. Only one thing is clear in the milieu. Despite talking trade and renegotiating tariffs, the US and China are not going to be friends. They are the post-Cold War poles and are polarising forces. There is already talk of a China-India-Russia axis. For long, there have been those who have been talking about such an axis, plus Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, but that is workable at best, good on paper but not on the ground. Such a construct, all at once, converts the belt into the new geostrategic and geopolitical axis of the world. Will it also be the geo-economic axis? That is another question, as it would have to be presaged by ethnological superiority, which still rests in the geographical North or political West? This is all the more so because the incongruity of the Indian situation vis-à-vis China and Pakistan is the defining aspect of such a construct.

L&T and BEL will support India's fifth-generation fighter aircraft program



Mumbai: Larsen & Toubro (L&T) announced in a statement that it has partnered with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to support the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) program, as part of a strategic initiative to bolster India's defense capabilities. In the upcoming weeks, the consortium will reply to the government's Aeronautical Development Agency's Expression of Interest (EOI), according to L&T. In keeping with the government's vision of a "Atmanirbhar Bharat," the agreement seeks to support the AMCA program by fusing BEL's competence in defense electronics and systems with L&T's knowledge of strategic defense and aerospace platforms.

The companies hope to provide the IAF with a state-of-the-art, superior solution through this partnership. "Our dedication to modernizing India's defense capabilities has advanced significantly with the partnership with BEL. In order to strengthen national security and promote self-reliance in defense technologies, our united efforts will be extremely important," stated S N Subrahmanyan, chairman and managing director of L&T. Both L&T and BEL have already contributed significantly to India's Light Combat Aircraft program by creating mission-critical avionics and electronic systems and supplying significant aerostructure modules.

Commenting on the partnership, Chairman & MD of BEL Manoj Jain said the AMCA project represents India's growing capabilities in defence technology.

"With L&T's engineering and systems integration capabilities and BEL's expertise in defence electronics, we are confident of delivering a world-class solution that will serve the IAF for decades to come," he said. Under the AMCA project, India is building its first homegrown fifth-generation stealth fighter aircraft. Led by the Aeronautical Development Agency under the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the project aims to create a medium-weight fighter with stealth technology, advanced avionics, and supercruise capability. The programme is now in the prototype stage, with prototypes expected by 2027. BEL is one of sixteen Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) under the MoD and has been granted Navratna status by the government.

Swiggy will use a slump sale to move Instamart to a wholly owned subsidiary

Swiggy approved the transfer of its Instamart quick commerce business to Swiggy Instamart Pvt Ltd through a slump sale to create a focused entity for long-term growth

Mumbai: Swiggy, a meal delivery and fast grocery platform, announced on Tuesday that its board has authorized the process of selling and transferring its rapid commerce (q-commerce) business, Instamart, through a slump sale to Swiggy Instamart Pvt Ltd, an indirect, step-down fully owned subsidiary. According to the stock filing, "Today, Tuesday, September 23, 2025, the Board of the Company has approved the slump sale of the Instamart undertaking of the Company, including authority to directors and officers of the Company to enter into a business transfer agreement (BTA) and other related documents to give effect to the transaction." It is anticipated that the slump sale will be finished after the third quarter of FY26. According to the corporation, the sale includes all pertinent assets, liabilities, documents, intellectual property, permits and licenses, employees, and contracts. "The proposed transfer is aimed at developing a focused, efficient, and strategically aligned corporate entity for the long-term development and performance of the Instamart business, along with enhanced flexibility in deployment of resources," Swiggy stated when explaining the reasoning behind the potential sale. It further stated that following the slump sale, the company's shareholding pattern will remain unchanged. In addition, the transaction will be based on the book value of assets and liabilities of Instamart as of the effective date.The revenue from the q-commerce business in FY25 contributed 24.21 per cent of Swiggy's standalone revenue. Commenting on the development, a Swiggy spokesperson said, "Instamart has experienced rapid expansion over the past 3 years. In Q1 of FY25-26, our Quick-commerce business continued to accelerate, recording 108% year-on-year growth in gross order value. Instamart has also emerged from the shadow of Swiggy's food delivery business to become a standalone brand, with its gross order value and user base slated to exceed food delivery business in the near future. The subsidiary structure is designed to support this growth momentum by providing sharper strategic focus, operational flexibility, and enhanced transparency, while ensuring full ownership remains with the listed parent company."

Apple Pay is integrated with Cashfree Payments to facilitate international transactions

Mumbai: Apple Pay and the fintech company Cashfree Payments have teamed up to allow international card purchases for Indian businesses. According to the Bengaluru-based startup, businesses may now provide Apple Pay as a checkout option to foreign clients in countries like the US, UK, Canada, UAE, and Europe by utilizing its international payment gateway (IPG). Cashfree claims that by doing away with manual card entry, the integration will cut transaction drop-offs for Indian exporters and merchants by up to 75%.

Nitin Pulyani, Head of Product at Cashfree Payments, said: "By offering a payment flow that feels native to international buyers, we're bringing them even closer to Indian merchants, while improving trust, reducing drop-offs, and making global commerce truly seamless."

The company added that the integration would give international buyers faster and more secure access to Indian offerings, while helping exporters overcome long-standing payment bottlenecks. Cashfree's move comes just a week after rival Razorpay announced support for Apple Pay as a payment option for Indian merchants. Razorpay said its integration will power transactions for brands such as Mokobara, Akasa Air, Pernia's Pop Up Shop, Sabyasachi, Nish Hair, and the House of Masaba.

Apple Pay has over 500 million global users, with more than nine in 10 merchants in the US accepting the payment method.

NII interest in Atlanta Electricals' IPO is high

New Delhi: On the last day of its subscription period, non-institutional investors (NIIs) are driving demand for Atlanta Electricals' initial public offering (IPO), a firm that manufactures transformers. Qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) and retail investors are also paying close attention. Until 12:55 PM on Wednesday, September 24, the NSE data revealed that the public offering, which opened for subscription on Monday, September 22, 2025, had received bids for 6,33,32,320 equity shares versus 65,38,439 shares on offer, resulting in a 9.69-fold oversubscription.Retail investors have oversubscribed by 6.05 times, QIBs by 5.83 times, and NIIs by 23.56 times their reserved category. The favorable sentiment extended to the grey markets too, where the unlisted shares of Atlanta Electricals were commanding a decent premium on Wednesday. Sources tracking unofficial market activities revealed that Atlanta Electricals shares were trading at around ₹878 per share, reflecting a grey market premium (GMP) of ₹124 or 16.45 per cent over the upper end of the issue price. Brokerages have given broadly favorable reviews for the Atlanta Electricals IPO.

Bajaj Electricals will purchase the rights to the Morphy Richards brand

New Delhi: The intellectual property rights of Morphy Richards, including the brand rights for India and nearby markets, will be purchased by domestic appliance manufacturer Bajaj Electricals from Glen Electric, a division of the Ireland-based Glen Dimplex Group. The board of Bajaj Electricals has authorized a transaction of Rs 146 crore to purchase the trademark rights of Morphy Richards for India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka, the company said exchanges in a regulatory filing on Tuesday after market hours. Following the announcement, Bajaj Electricals Ltd. shares were up 5.69 percent on Wednesday morning trading hours, trading at Rs 609.80 on the BSE. In the filing, Bajaj Electrical stated: "The Board of Directors of the company, at its meeting held on September 23, 2025 has given its consent to a proposal for the acquisition of the Morphy Richards' brand and related intellectual property rights... from Glen Electric Limited (part of the Glen Dimplex Group, Ireland), the owner of the MR Brand/Business IP, for a consideration of Rs 146 crore" . It further stated that the completion of final agreements between the parties and the acquisition of the required statutory and regulatory approvals, if any, will be prerequisites for this transaction. The trademark agreement between Bajaj Electricals and Morphy Richards was renewed for a further 15 years earlier in March 2022, taking effect from July 1, 2022. Morphy Richards is part of the Irish international electrical appliances group Glen Dimplex. Bajaj Electricals sells its premium range of appliances, such as mixers, ovens, toaster grills, coffee makers, air fryers, and garment steamers. It also has a presence in the Female Grooming segment with Morphy Richards, where it has products such as hot air brush, hair straightener, hair dryer, etc. In FY25, Bajaj Electricals' revenue was at Rs 4,828.43 crore.

Swiggy brings festive flavours home with 'Bhog Experience Box' in Kolkata

Kolkata: Food delivery platform Swiggy has partnered with seven of Kolkata's leading Durga Puja pandals to launch a unique 'Bhog Experience Box', offering devotees an opportunity to enjoy the rituals and flavours of the festival at home. Priced at a token amount of ₹21, a total of 6,000 curated boxes are available for pre-order on the Swiggy app starting September 28, with deliveries beginning from September 29.Each Bhog Experience Box includes flowers used in puja rituals, sindoor, a clay idol of MaaDurga, and traditional dishes from the pandals such as AlooBhaja, Labra Curry, Kichuri, Luchi, Polao and Payes. Some of the participating committees include AhiritolaSarbojoninDurgotsab, Santoshpur Lake Pally and BokulBaganSarbojoninDurgotsav.In Kolkata, the Bhog Experience Box is expected to add a new dimension to festive consumption. Traditionally dominated by sweet shops, caterers and local stalls, the market is witnessing a shift as digital platforms like Swiggy bring puja flavours directly to households. This blend of culture and convenience could also drive increased engagement for both pandal committees and small vendors associated with them.



Swiggy, known for its innovative cultural campaigns, previously introduced the "BhogElo Boney" floating pandal in the Sundarbans in 2024 and partnered with pandals in Mumbai and Pune for Ganesh Chaturthi earlier this year.

Maruti's $57 billion valuation places it as the eighth most valuable automaker in the world



New Delhi: According to The Economic Times, which cited ETIG data, Maruti Suzuki India has risen to eighth place globally by market capitalization of over $57.6 billion, placing it in the top tier of the most valuable automakers in the world.Global titans like Ford Motor, General Motors, and Volkswagen AG have been overtaken by Maruti Suzuki India, the biggest division of Suzuki Motor, a Japanese company. It has even outperformed its parent firm in Japan. Ford Motor ($46.3 billion), General Motors ($57.1 billion), and Volkswagen ($55.7 billion), all of which have either remained unchanged or fallen in the ranks over the last month, were overtaken by Maruti in terms of valuation. Additionally, its market capitalization has surpassed Suzuki's $29 billion. Billionaire Elon Musk's Tesla continues to lead the global car arena with a market worth of $1.47 trillion, followed by Toyota ($314 billion), BYD ($133 billion), Ferrari NV ($92.7 billion), BMW ($61.3 billion), and Mercedes-Benz Group ($59.8 billion). Immediately behind Honda Motor, which has a $59 billion market valuation, Maruti is ranked eighth. Maruti Suzuki, which is India's largest carmaker, derives over 60 per cent of its sales volume from small cars. It has also been one of the biggest beneficiaries of the next-generation Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms, implemented on September 22.

PhonePe files draft documents through a secret process

New Delhi: Ahead of its anticipated initial public offering (IPO), the fintech startup PhonePe has submitted draft documents to the market regulator via the private pre-filing process. PhonePe has chosen to use the confidential IPO filing path, which enables businesses to send their draft red herring prospectus to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) and stock markets in a private manner. Groww, Physics Wallah, and Imagine Marketing (Boat) have also chosen this approach. Additionally, it enables them to promote their offer to certain investors. "Under Chapter IIA of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2018, the company has filed the pre-filed draft red herring prospectus ("PDRHP") with the Securities and Exchange Board of India and BSE Limited and the National Stock Exchange of India Limited in connection with the initial public offering of its equity shares," PhonePe said in a statement. It stated, "The company will not necessarily undertake the initial public offering if the PDRHP is filed." By taking the secret path, businesses can keep important financial and strategic information out of the public eye until they're prepared to submit the RHP, which is a requirement for starting an IPO. In FY25, PhonePe's income increased by 40% to Rs 7,115 crore, as the Registrar of Companies received regulatory filings. PhonePe improved its bottom line, with adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (excluding employee stock option plan costs) more than doubling to Rs 1,477 crore in FY25 (from Rs 652 crore in FY24). Adjusted profit after tax (excluding ESOP costs) more than tripled to Rs 630 crore (Rs 197 crore in FY24). The company also recorded positive adjusted ebit (excluding ESOP costs) for the first time at Rs 117 crore.

Monin invests Rs. 350 crore in Hyderabad plant

Eyes ₹450 crore turnover

New Delhi: The domestic division of the French artisanal syrup manufacturer Monin has invested roughly Rs 350 crore in its first Indian facility, located in Sangareddy, close to Hyderabad. From Rs 50 crore in 2021 to Rs 150 crore by FY26, the company wants to treble its volumes. The 40-acre facility would be operational by the second quarter of 2026, according to Germain Araud, managing director of Monin India. For the first time, we are establishing a cutting-edge facility in the Sangareddy district of Hyderabad, India. We have purchased a sizable piece of land and invested Rs 350 crore in capital projects. By the second quarter of 2026, the unit is expected to be fully operational. We think that clients should always have access to both quantity and quality. Our goal is to guarantee both are available. Being "glocal"—reintroducing Indian flavors into the repertoire with a dash of French—is the goal, he stated.

The facility will have a Phase-1 unit comprising two lines: one for syrups, with end-to-end production in India, and another for crush and purée bottling. Founded in 1912 by Georges Monin in France, the brand entered India in 2019 and has since built a network of over 100 distribution channels.



Around 90 per cent of its portfolio caters to B2B clients such as restaurants and cafés, with partners including Tim Hortons and Starbucks. Monin has two experience studios in India—Delhi and Bengaluru—opened in 2021 and 2023, respectively. It plans to expand the concept to Hyderabad, followed by Kolkata, in the coming years. Monin, which competes with Indian brands such as Swa, noted that new-age companies are tapping into this niche market, expanding its scope. "Quality is also becoming a core focus with every new entrant. Competitors are helping us stay on our toes and serve our customers better," Araud said.

The Supreme Court maintains JSW Steel's proposal to acquire Bhushan Power & Steel

New Delhi: Despite protests from its previous promoters and some creditors, the Supreme Court on Friday accepted JSW Steel Ltd's resolution plan for Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd (BPSL), according to Bar and Bench.

Justices Vinod Chandran and Satish Chandra Sharma made up a bench headed by Chief Justice of India BR Gavai, who noted: "We have held that the delay is not attributable to CoC or SRA. They have been making an effort to resolve the issue and implement the resolution plan. We have ruled that SRA-issued CCDs should be regarded as equity. It is impossible to tamper with commercial wisdom... Permitting any claims to be reopened after the committee of creditors (CoC) has approved the resolution plan would be a violation of the law. The court further stated that JSW shouldn't be punished for his substantial effort in making BPSL a lucrative business. The dispute began with the Supreme Court's decision on May 2, 2025, which invalidated JSW Steel's takeover proposal and mandated BPSL's liquidation in accordance with Article 142 of the Constitution. According to that ruling, which was given by Justices Satish Chandra Sharma and Bela M. Trivedi, the CoC erred in accepting the scheme.

A special bench led by Chief Justice Gavai and consisting of Justices K Vinod Chandran and Satish Chandra Sharma reheard the case on August 11. The Bench revisited the court's earlier 2 May ruling, which had set aside JSW Steel's ₹19,700 crore takeover plan of BPSL citing alleged violations of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). The earlier decision had ordered banks to return ₹19,350 crore paid by JSW Steel and put around ₹34,000 crore of bank exposure at risk, sending shockwaves through the IBC framework.



Vidhu Vinod Chopra on winning the National Award for 12th Fail

New Delhi: The night of '12th Fail' was significant. At the 2025 ceremony in New Delhi on September 23, the moving drama directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra, which is based on the remarkable journey of Manoj Kumar Sharma from poverty to the IPS, won a National Award. And in keeping with tradition, the director decided to emphasize what his film has always stood for—truth—rather than revel in his success.After the victory, Chopra went back to one of the main quotes from his movie in an interview with Aaj Tak. He explained that the true darkness in people's lives is caused by concessions and the allure of ease, saying, "Fear does not come from the darkness outside, but from the darkness within."



He added, "If even a few people could grasp this through my work, I would be very happy. I also hope audiences engage deeply with my films and truly understand them." For Chopra, storytelling has never been about noise, but about clarity of conviction. He admitted he keeps himself away from the buzz of social media, a task handled instead by his wife, film critic Anupama Chopra. "I don't follow it - I'm not on Instagram, I'm not on social networks, I don't really know what's happening outside. My focus is only on expressing the truth as I see it through my work. If people understand it, that's wonderful; if they don't, that's also fine." '12th Fail', starring Vikrant Massey and Medha Shankar, has been hailed as one of Chopra's most affecting works in recent years. By chronicling Sharma's path from hardship to triumph, the film has struck a deep chord with audiences — and now, with the jury at the National Awards.

Vikrant Massey is introduced to Dharma in Dostana 2



New Delhi: 'Dostana 2' has finally received an update after a protracted wait. Vikrant Massey, an actor who recently received his first National Award, has announced that he will play the main character in the eagerly awaited movie. Additionally, this is his first project working with Dharma Productions. 'The Ba***ds of Bollywood' star Lakshya will be working with Vikrant, the actor disclosed in an interview. He also talked about how excited he was to appear in the movie sporting expensive luxury clothing and eyewear. "You will see me doing that soon," the actor revealed in a Times Now interview. I believe the news has already been released. I'm not sure why I'm not speaking. 'Dostana 2' is what I am doing. I'm working on my first Dharma film. "You will see me wearing good designer clothes," the National Award winner said in reference to his future feature. Karan (Johar) sir will see to it that I dress nicely and don those expensive sunglasses. shooting in Europe. In addition, the actor answered a query concerning the movie's heroine. "I think wo main nahi bolunga," he shared. Bolenge toh behtar hai, wo Karan sir. I won't give that away. Uski bhi toh badi announcement hai. If Karan Sir shares it, it will be better. It's a significant announcement as well. 'Dostana 2' originally featured Kartik Aaryan, Janhvi Kapoor, and Lakshya. However, the production was halted after Kartik exited the film due to creative differences, prompting Dharma Productions to recast the project. In an earlier interview with our sister channel, The Lallantop, Janhvi shared, "We had even shot for that film for about 30 to 35 days. The shoot was going very well, according to me. I don't know why the film was shelved. I guess (it was because) we began shooting for that film long before Covid. And then Covid happened, and there was a one-and-a-half year delay. Then people felt that to restart the film, I don't know." With Vikrant's confirmation, 'Dostana 2' is set to return to production with a new cast.

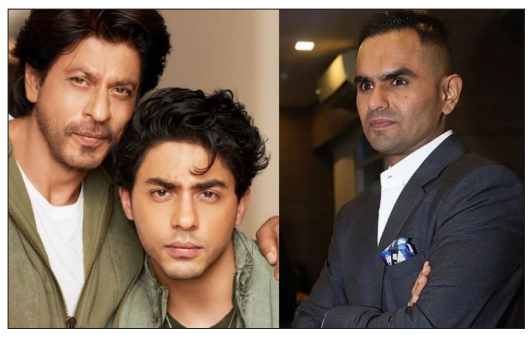
Vivek, Riteish, and Aftab, the original trio, swear four times to have fun and laugh Mastiii 4 teaser

New Delhi: The beloved comedy series is making a triumphant return! On September 23, the teaser for "Mastiii 4," which stars the legendary trio of Riteish Deshmukh, Vivek Oberoi, and Aftab Shivdasani, was made public. The actors will reprise their beloved parts as Meet, Prem, and Amar. Four times as much chaos, comedy, and crazy are promised in the movie. On November 21, 2025, "Mastiii 4" is scheduled to be released in theaters. In addition to the three, Shreya Sharma, Ruhii Singh, and Elnaaz Norouzi are joining the cast,



bringing new life and glitz to the comedy trip. The film, which was directed by Milap Zaveri, was filmed in Mumbai and the United Kingdom. The teaser highlights the madness and a laugh riot that the film is going to be. 'Mastiii 4' is produced by A Jhunjhunwala and Shikha Karan Ahluwalia of Waveband Production with Indra Kumar and Ashok Thakeria's Maruti International, Shobha Kapoor and Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Motion Pictures, along with Umesh Bansal.

Sameer Wankhede moves Delhi HC against Shah Rukh Khan



New Delhi: Asserting that Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan have defamed him through their Red Chillies Entertainment series The Ba***ds Of Bollywood, IRS officer Sameer Wankhede has petitioned the Delhi High Court. Wankhede referred to Aryan Khan's debut web series as "false, malicious, and defamatory" in his appeal, which also cites the over-the-top (OTT) platform Netflix. He claimed that the show "erodes public trust in law enforcement institutions by disseminating a false and unfavorable portrayal of anti-drug enforcement agencies." Wankhede further asserted that the show was "deliberately" designed and produced with the intention of damaging Sameer Wankhede's reputation in a way that is "colorable and prejudicial." "Furthermore, the series, among other things, shows a character making an obscene gesture—specifically, showing a middle finger after the character recites the slogan 'Satyamev Jayate' which is part of the National Emblem," Wankhede stated, pointing to a specific scene. There are legal repercussions for this act since it violates the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, in a serious and sensitive way. According to reports, the officer has requested Rs 2 crore in damages, with the addition that the money will be given to Tata Memorial Cancer Hospital to help treat cancer patients.

Salman Khan talks about his experiences with trigeminal neuralgia



New Delhi: Salman Khan talked candidly about the severe facial agony he experiences due to trigeminal neuralgia, a chronic nerve ailment. The actor, who suffered from the illness for over seven years, talked extensively about the struggle when he appeared on the chat show "Two Much." Khan described the illness as the'suicidal disease' and described how it interfered with his day-to-day activities, making even basic tasks like eating very difficult.

Khan revealed during the performance that the first time his symptoms manifested was on the set of the 2007 movie "Partner," when the actor Lara Dutta removed a lock of hair from his face. "Wow Lara, you're electrifying!" he joked as the pain started. Initially, the pain was mistaken for a dental issue, but further investigation revealed it was nerve-related. Describing the severity of the disorder, Khan stated, "It is the worst pain. It is called 'the suicidal disease.' The highest number of suicides happen because of this condition." "You would not want your biggest enemy to have that pain. And I had it for seven and a half years," he added. Khan's daily life was severely affected. He explained, "It used to pain every 4-5 minutes. It would happen suddenly. It used to take me about an hour and a half to have my breakfast. For an omelette, I couldn't chew it, I had to force myself, hurt myself, take as much pain, so I could get rid of the meal." After years of pain, Khan underwent gamma knife surgery, which lasted eight hours. He shared, "They fix screws on your face for 7-8 hours. They make you lie down with the gamma knife..." The procedure brought significant relief, despite initial concerns that only partial improvement was possible. Post-surgery, Khan mentioned, "Now the aneurysm is there. An arteriovenous malformation is present. But you have got to live with it." He noted that the pain is now gone and expressed hope for others living with similar conditions.

Indian Stars at the International Emmy Awards: Diljit Dosanjh and Vir Das

New Delhi: Diljit Dosanjh: For his role in Amar Singh Chamkila, actor and singer Diljit Dosanjh received his first-ever nomination in the Best Actor category at the International Emmys. Vir Das: The comedian-actor won the Emmy for Best Comedy Special for Vir Das: Landing in 2023, making history. India received its first International Emmy nomination in the Best Actor category thanks to Arjun Mathur. His performance of gay wedding planner Karan Mehra in Made in Heaven was notable for its complex depiction of acceptance, love, and identity. Nawazuddin Siddiqui: For his role in Serious Men, he was nominated. Siddiqui became well-known as Ayyan Mani, a father who pretends to be clever in order to make his family wealthy. Shefali Shah: Shefali Shah was nominated in 2023 for her portrayal of DCP Vartika Chaturvedi in Delhi Crime: Season 2, displaying authority and vulnerability with such ease. Jim Sarbh: He was also nominated in 2023 for Rocket Boys, where he played scientist Dr Homi J. Bhabha.

Kareena Kapoor begins filming for Meghna Gulzar's 'Daayra'



New Delhi: On Thursday, actress Kareena Kapoor Khan announced that filming had begun for her 68th movie, Daayra, which is directed by Meghna Gulzar and co-stars Prithviraj Sukumaran. Day 1 of the 68th movie. Daayra with the most incredible @therealprithvi and @meghnagulzar... The actress shared a behind-the-scenes video from the movie set along with the message, "Send love and blessings." On Instagram, Meghna posted the identical video with the remark, "A trip of blurred and crossed lines.We get started. Prana Films, Pen Movies, and Junglee Pictures support Daayra. Yash Keswani, Meghna Gulzar, and Sima Agarwal wrote the screenplay. Further details about the cast, plotline and release date of the film are yet to be announced. Kareena was last seen in Singham Again alongside Ajay Devgn, Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Tiger Shroff and Jackie Shroff. Prithviraj, on the other hand, recently starred in Sarzameen alongside Kajol and Ibrahim Ali Khan. The actor will also appear in the highly anticipated sequel to Salaar: Part 1 - Ceasefire, Salaar: Part 2 - Shouryanga Parvam. Prithviraj has S. S. Rajamouli's next directorial co-starring Mahesh Babu and Priyanka Chopra in the pipeline. Meghna's last directorial venture was the 2023 biographical war drama Sam Bahadur, starring Vicky Kaushal and Sanya Malhotra. At the 71st National Film Awards, the film bagged three awards — Best Feature Film Promoting National, Social and Environmental Values, Best Costume Design, and Best Make-up Artist.

Deepika writes a heartfelt post about their sixth partnership with SRK

New Delhi: In an emotional social media post, actor Deepika Padukone revealed that she will be appearing in Shah Rukh Khan's upcoming movie "King," which she co-starred in with in "Jawan." The announcement comes after she just left the "Kalki 2989 AD sequel." "The very first lesson he taught me almost 18 years ago while filming Om Shanti Om was that the experience of making a movie, and the people you make it with, matter far more than its success," Deepika wrote as the caption for a photo she posted of herself holding a hand. I completely agree, and I've used what I've learned in all of my subsequent decisions.



And that's most likely the reason we're back together to make our sixth film. Recently, Vyjayanthi Movies, the production house backing 'Kalki 2989 AD sequel' officially confirmed that Deepika was no more a part of the movie. Their X post read, "This is to officially announce that @deepikapadukone will not be a part of the upcoming sequel of #Kalki2898AD. After careful consideration, we have decided to part ways. Despite the long journey of making the first film, we were unable to find a partnership." "And a film like @Kalki2898AD deserves that commitment and much more. We wish her the best with her future works (sic)," the statement concluded. Earlier this year, Deepika Paudkone opted out of director Sandeep Reddy Vanga's 'Spirit' after reportedly demanding an eight-hour work schedule. According to reports, she had differences with the filmmaker over certain intimate scenes, work timings, remuneration and profit-sharing agreements. It was later confirmed by Vanga that actor Triptii Dimri had come on-board as the female lead for 'Spirit'.

Big charge by Karisma's kids in father Sunjay Kapur's estate battle

New Delhi: The children of Bollywood actor Karisma Kapoor and the widow of their late father, Sunjay Kapur, Priya Sachdev, are engaged in a growing inheritance battle. During the most recent Delhi High Court hearing regarding a plea by Priya Sachdev, several new points were revealed. She had filed a plea in court seeking to disclose details of her late husband's estate in a sealed cover. As the court heard arguments over her plea, the counsel representing Karisma Kapoor's children Samaira Kapur and Kiaan Raj Kapur alleged that "banks have been wiped off, there is nothing left in the bank account", a LiveLaw report said, not specifying which bank accounts were being referred to. However, according to an NDTV report, the counsel representing Karisma's children was referring to bank account details of the purported will belonging to Sunjay Kapur. The inheritance dispute stemmed from the alleged will, which the actor's children claimed Priya Sachdev "forged and fabricated", and disclosed to them seven weeks after their father's death in June this year.

Review of Balti: Shane Nigam and Shanthanu's intriguing murder drama is overshadowed by clichés

New Delhi: The film "Balti" begins with a graphic murder and the four buddies who painstakingly prepare and carry out the crime. They swiftly change into new clothes and participate in a temple rite just minutes after the incident. The film captures your attention right away with throbbing music by Sai Abhyankkar, the discovery of this decade. Does it, however, keep your interest throughout? Let's investigate!"Balti," which is set on the border between Tamil Nadu and Kerala, centers on the lives of four friends who play kabaddi. The captain of the Panchami Warriors Kabaddi squad is Kumar (Shanthanu Bhayaraj), while Udhayan (Shane Nigam) is the team's top player. Bhairavan (Selvaraghavan) owns Porthamarai, their rival team, and



they have never defeated Panchami. An unexpected situation makes the four friends meet Bhairavan, who has an ongoing feud with Soda Babu (Alphonse Puthren) and Gauri aka G Maa (Poornima Indrajith). Bhairavan, Soda Babu, and G Maa are moneylenders and are fighting to prove each other's superiority. When the four friends get acquainted with Bhairavan, the crime world sucks them into chaos. What happens to them? Why did they join hands with Bhairavan? All these and more are answered over two hours and 34 minutes. Director and writer Unni Sivalingam's 'Balti' shows a lot of promise, especially in the characterisations of the four friends. While the film is an action drama at its core, it also uses Kabaddi moves to form the characterisations. Udhayan is an impulsive man, who strikes before he talks. Kumar is naive and greedy for money. His greed drags all four of them into trouble. Their camaraderie and playfulness make the first half of 'Balti' interesting. It leaves you wondering what's next despite treading a predictable route. Like every action drama, the characters go through manipulation, betrayal, and lots of emotions.

Kartik Aaryan and Luv Ranjan reunite

New Delhi: In 2011, Luv Ranjan and Kartik Aaryan teamed up for the first time on Pyaar Ka Punchnama. The film emerged a sleeper hit and attained a cult status among the cinema-going audience. In 2015, they reunited on the sequel to Pyaar Ka Punchnama, and the film seamlessly carried forward the legacy of part one, and found appreciation from audiences all across. They scored a hat-trick in 2018 with Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety, which proved to be a box office winner, and also has a special place in the heart of youth. 7 years after the blockbuster success of Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety, Kartik Aaryan and Luv Ranjan are reuniting. Sources confirm that Kartik Aaryan and Luv Ranjan are coming together for an outright entertainer, much like their earlier successful films. "Luv Ranjan, and Kartik Aaryan have always been discussing a potential collaboration, and there's finally a script that warrants the union of this duo responsible for as many as three pathbreaking entertainers. The film rolls in 2026 and is presently in the pre-production stage," revealed a source close to the development.

3-ingredient dessert that has more fibre than 5 slices of bread



Craving dessert but worried about the guilt that usually follows? What if your sweet treat could actually nourish your gut and boost your brain health at the same time? Dr. Karan Rajan, a UK based NHS surgeon and popular health content creator, has shared a fibre-packed, antioxidant-rich dessert that does just that. In an Instagram video posted on August 24, he revealed a simple three-ingredient recipe that turns an indulgence into a legit health snack.

Ingredients

1.100g of frozen raspberries (you can use any berry; can be fresh or frozen) [7g of fibre]
2.50g of 70% (or higher) melted dark chocolate [7g of fibre]
3.30g of crushed pistachio (you can use any nut) [3g of fibre]
4.Parchment paper

Process

Dr Rajan said, "If you want a dessert that's 16 g of fibre with just three ingredients and is a powerhouse for your gut and brain, here's how to do this."

1.Dr Rajan said, "If you want a dessert that's 16 g of fibre with just three ingredients and is a powerhouse for your gut and brain, here's how to do this."

2.First, break the frozen raspberries into individual drupelets. According to the gut health expert, frozen raspberries are a better option, as compared to fresh ones, since they are easier to break, and they are a cheaper alternative with the same benefits.

3.Transfer the chopped/broken raspberries on to parchment paper.

4.Melt the dark chocolate and pour over the raspberries. The surgeon recommends using 70% to 80% dark chocolate and adds, "The higher the cocoa percentage, the higher the fibre, antioxidants, and lower the sugar."

5.Before the molten chocolate sets, quickly sprinkle the crushed pistachios on top.

6.Freeze the prepared dessert for a minimum of one hour, or for however long you can resist eating.

7.Gobble it up before anyone else asks for a share!

Health benefits

"This DIY dark chocolate, raspberry, and pistachio mix is a legit gut-and-brain snack," says Dr Rajan. According to him, "Raspberries are rich in soluble fibre and polyphenols, good for the gut and brain." The soluble fibres act as prebiotics for your gut microbes. Dark chocolate contains cocoa flavanols, which supports blood flow and brain function. The surgeon continues, "Pistachios add more prebiotic fibre, healthy fats, and polyphenols for both gut health and cognition." They add more fibre diversity to your gut microbiome. He also adds that this snack gives you more fibre than five slices of whole wheat bread.

Emraan Hashmi and Yami Gautam return the Shah Bano case to the courtroom



Mumbai: Tuesday saw the debut of the teaser for "HAQ," a movie that was inspired by the Supreme Court's historic ruling in the Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum case. The movie explores one of India's most well-known court cases from the late 1970s and early 1980s, starring Yami Gautam as Bano and Emraan Hashmi as her husband. The case that continues to provoke debate in Indian society over justice, individual convictions, and secular law is depicted in the teaser. "HAQ" is a dramatized and fictionalized rendition of the events described in Jigna Vora's book "Bano: Bharat ki Beti." The Shah Bano issue, which sparked public discussion more than 40 years ago and is still relevant today, is revisited in the movie. The case brought forward questions about equal access to justice and the ongoing tension between personal religious laws and broader secular principles. The film's creators highlight the broader social questions raised by the case. They ask: "Shouldn't the opportunity of justice be equal for all? Where do we draw the line between personal belief and secular law? And should there be a Uniform Civil Code (UCC)?" In 'HAQ', Yami Gautam Dhar plays a Muslim woman wronged and abandoned by her husband, who decides to fight for her rights and those of her children under section 125. The narrative begins as a personal story but grows into a courtroom drama exploring critical issues of law, religion, and identity. The film also features Sheeba Chaddha, Danish Hussain, and Aseem Hattangady. The makers describe the film's transformation from an individual dispute to a national conversation. As described by the makers, 'Haq' begins as a love story, and seemingly a private dispute between a husband and wife shifts to a rousing debate on a provocative topic that begs a solution even today. The courtroom proceedings in the film highlight broader policy matters, such as the Uniform Civil Code under Article 44 of the Constitution. 'HAQ' is directed by Suparn S Varma, and produced by Junglee Pictures, in association with Insomnia Films and Baweja Studios. It is scheduled for release in theatres on November 7, 2025.

Actor Vishal Jethwa tears up at Homebound premiere



Mumbai: Actor Vishal Jethwa's emotional outburst on the red carpet last night was heartbreaking. At the 'Homebound' launch in Mumbai, the actor couldn't contain his emotions as he posed for the photographers. The actor, who was wearing a striking black traditional dress, started crying, and his mother, Preeti Jethwa, intervened to give him a comforting hug. Vishal regained his composure a few moments later and smiled for the photographers with his family. The evening drew a glittering turnout, with filmmakers Karan Johar and Neeraj Ghaywan, along with cast members Ishaan Khatter and Janhvi Kapoor, in attendance. But it was Vishal's teary-eyed moment that stole the spotlight and quickly went viral online. On social media, fans showered him with affection. One user wrote, "Genuinely happy for Vishal. He was phenomenal in Mardaani 2. Was worried he might fade away during the pandemic. But so happy to see him shine. Extremely well deserved!" Another added, "To the people who used to call him "Kaam Wali ka beta" look at him now! Super proud of him!" Directed by Neeraj Ghaywan, 'Homebound' tells the story of two rural boys and childhood friends who dream of clearing the national police exam to gain dignity in society, only to encounter the harsh realities of caste and communal discrimination. Starring Ishaan Khatter, Vishal Jethwa, and Janhvi Kapoor, the film earned a standing ovation at its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in May. It is slated for release in India on September 26 and has already been selected as India's official entry for the Best International Film category at the 2026 Oscars.

Raj Kundra's payment of Rs 15 crore is rejected by Shilpa Shetty

Mumbai: The actress Shilpa Shetty has vowed to sue media outlets for disseminating what her attorney described as "fake and mischievous" claims claiming that she received Rs 15 lakh from her husband, Raj Kundra.In a statement released on Friday, her attorney, Prashant Patil, denied allegations that Shetty received Rs 15 crore from Raj Kundra over ten years ago in a transaction that is currently being investigated by the Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW). "At the outset, we would like to state that this piece of information is totally fake and mischievous, intentionally planted in the public domain to defame my client," Patil said. He added that Shetty is "compelled to initiate criminal and civil cases" against those who spread the allegations.The reports come at a time when the EOW is investigating a Rs 60-crore cheating case linked to Kundra and Shetty.



Fatima Sana Shaikh not in The Wives



Mumbai: 'The Wives', Madhur Bhandarkar's next film, is now complete, but the excitement surrounding its casting has been as intense as the shoot itself. The director has recently clarified that Fatima Sana Shaikh was never involved in the movie, despite long-standing rumors that she was one of the protagonists. All of the rumors regarding her casting were false. In an interview with Hindustan Times, Bhandarkar put an end to weeks of rumors by clarifying that she never signed the movie or was cast as one of the wives. 'The Wives' features Regina Cassandra, Sonali Kulkarni and Mouni Roy in pivotal roles, with Arjan Bajwa also on board. The film, true to Bhandarkar's style, dives once again into the glitzy and complex world of show business, a space he has previously explored in 'Page 3', Heroine and Calendar Girls. Speaking about the wrap, Bhandarkar said, "The shoot of the film has been wrapped up, and I can't wait to see the audience reaction. The film has come out well and will start post-production soon." As for Fatima, she continues to build a diverse filmography with recent appearances in 'Metro... In Dino' opposite Ali Fazal and 'Aap Jaisa Koi'.

South Indian podi paneer bhurji is the cuisine crossover you



Put simply, podi means powder. But no two podi recipes are ever the same. As a matter of fact, food blogger Parichay shares how often, households also have their own unqiue version of podi. Not just this, podi recipes differ to the point of the one being had with idlis is completely different from the one being served along side curries. Keeping the versatility of the powder-style condiment, he throws in it's flavour bomb profile to take over a whole staple dish — and the result is this spicy, nutty, South Indian style, podi paneer bhurji recipe.

Podi paneer bhurji

Ingredients: Ghee - 2tbsps, mustard seeds - 1tsp, dried red chillies - 2, curry leaves - 8 to 10, chopped garlic cloves - 3 to 4, finely chopped onion - 1, chopped tomato - 1, turmeric powder - 1/4tsp, red chilli powder - 1/2tsp, grated paneer - 200gms, podi masala - 1 to 1.5tbsps, fresh grated coconut - 2tbsps or coconut milk - 2tbsps, salt to taste, fresh coriander for garnish .

Method: Heat ghee in a pan, add mustard seeds, red chillis and curry leaves. Add garlic and sauté till fragrant, then add in the onions. Once the onions are soft, add tomatoes & cook till they break down. Go in with the turmeric powder, red chilli powder and salt. Mix well and add the grated paneer and podi masala, toss to coat. Add grated coconut or coconut milk and mix — this is what makes the bhurji creamy. Garnish with coriander and serve hot with dosa, roti, or pav. Have it with a slice of toasted, butter-slathered sourdough in the morning, scoop it up with some roti for lunch or even relish it as is, this recipe will hands down become a sure shot, spicy favourite the second you whip it up!

Leonardo DiCaprio leads Paul Anderson's wild ride

New Delhi: 'One Battle After Another' shows how Paul Thomas Anderson welcomes turmoil, which is his forte. After returning to the world of Thomas Pynchon with 'Inherent Vice' (2015), Anderson riffs on the 1990 novel 'Vineland', turning it into a pulpy, political, and surprisingly tender action thriller that is equal parts ridiculous, humorous, and unabashedly extravagant. Bob (Leonardo DiCaprio), a disgraced former revolutionary and single parent who spends most of his time intoxicated or high, is at the heart of the movie. Having received martial arts training from her eccentric sensei Sergio (Benicio Del Toro), his teenage daughter Willa (newcomer Chase Infiniti) is far more adept than him. Perfidia, Bob's partner, betrayed their radical cell, French 75, and vanished years ago. Now the past comes crashing back and Colonel Lockjaw is after Willa, forcing Bob to pull himself together, call on old comrades, and try, with little success, to remember crucial passwords that could save them all.

Bollywood tried to sabotage Kartik Aaryan, Sushant Singh Rajput

Muzammil Ibrahim

Actor Muzammil Ibrahim spoke about the challenges faced by outsiders in Bollywood, revealed how industry treats people who have potential to become stars.

Mumbai: Actor Muzammil Ibrahim spoke about the challenges faced by outsiders in Bollywood, revealed how industry treats people who have potential to become stars. The insider vs outsider debate in Bollywood continues to dominate conversations within the industry. Over the years, several actors and composers have spoken out about how newcomers or "outsiders" often face challenges and resistance if they shine too brightly or pose a threat to established stars. Now, actor and model Muzammil Ibrahim has added his voice to the discussion. In a recent conversation with Filmygyan, Muzammil claimed that the industry goes out of its way to sabotage outsiders who perform better than A-listers. He pointed out that it's not just a matter of being sidelined but a narrative designed to weaken rising talents. When asked if Bollywood tries to suppress actors who outperform A-listers, Muzammil said, "Oh, they sabotage you. If you are too good or good enough, there's a narrative carried out against you and every actor who's been good enough has faced it. I've seen Kartik Aaryan go through it, Sushant Singh Rajput go through it. But it's only those guys who have the potential to become A-listers—big stars—not just those who are seen as minor threats. Those who have the real potential, they face this."

Muzammil's remarks echo earlier statements by music composer Amaal Mallik, who had also alleged that some of Bollywood's biggest producers were attempting to sideline Kartik Aaryan, just as they allegedly did with Sushant Singh Rajput. Muzammil began his career as a model, walking the ramp for leading fashion designers and top brands. He made his Bollywood debut in 2007 with Pooja Bhatt's thriller Dhokha. While the film did not fare well at the box office, his intense performance won him praise.

He went on to appear in films such as Horn 'Ok' Pleassss and Will You Marry Me, but it was his role in Neeraj Pandey's acclaimed web series Special Ops that marked a turning point in his career. Most recently, Muzammil revealed that he has been approached for Sanjay Leela Bhansali's much-anticipated film Love & War, which stars Alia Bhatt, Vicky Kaushal, and Ranbir Kapoor. However, he did not confirm whether he has officially joined the cast.

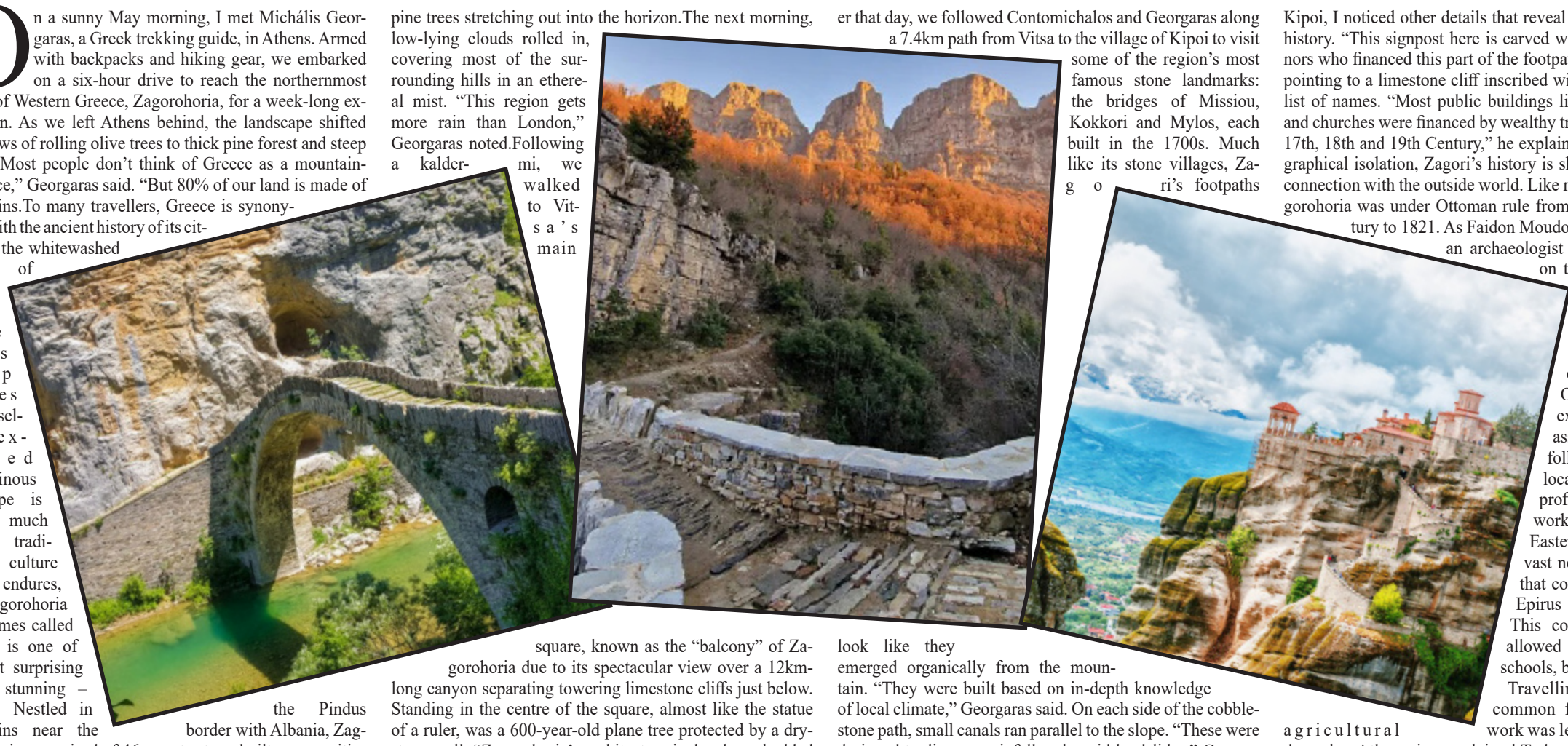
Bobby Deol supports the gray characters played by Sandeep Reddy Vanga

Mumbai: Recently, actor Bobby Deol showed his respect for director Sandeep Reddy Vanga. But he didn't want to become involved in the public discussion about the director's filmmaking style. Speaking about Vanga's style, Deol stated, "I really enjoyed Sandeep Reddy Vanga's films. I adore his creations. In any case, there is a lot of disagreement regarding the type of films he produces, and I don't want to get into that. I don't give any of these things any thought. It doesn't matter what people think of the person or don't think of them when I choose a project. He further said, "It's an entertainment business. I think about the characters I will play. Unless they don't have substance, they don't motivate me, or I don't have the gut instinct about them, I don't want to do them. For me, I love the way Sandeep Reddy Vanga brings out the other side of every character which is not shown in movies, because movies are always about good." "Every good has bad in it, but he brings out the grey shades in every character. He brings a reality to it in a commercial way. When he offered me 'Animal' I couldn't believe that he had messaged me. For me, working with Sandeep Reddy Vanga was the biggest moment, and I'm not just saying that," the actor added.



A hiking trail linking 46 ancient Greek villages

On a sunny May morning, I met Michális Georgaras, a Greek trekking guide, in Athens. Armed with backpacks and hiking gear, we embarked on a six-hour drive to reach the northernmost region of Western Greece, Zagorohoria, for a week-long exploration. As we left Athens behind, the landscape shifted from rows of rolling olive trees to thick pine forest and steep ridges."Most people don't think of Greece as a mountainous place," Georgaras said. "But 80% of our land is made of mountains.To many travellers, Greece is synonymous with the ancient history of its cities and the whitewashed houses of its islands. Yet, the nation's deep ravines and seldom-explored mountainous landscape is where much of its traditional culture still endures, and Zagorohoria (sometimes called Zagori) is one of its most surprising – and stunning – corners. Nestled in the Pindus mountains near the border with Albania, Zagorohoria is comprised of 46 remote stone-built communities separated from the nearest region by the Mitsikeli mountain range. In fact, the name Zagorohoria itself means "the villages behind the mountain", and because of its far-flung location, the region has remained isolated until relatively recently. Paved roads only arrived here in the 1970s, but in the centuries prior, residents travelled between villages via a series of arching stone-built bridges, cobblestone paths and stone-hewed staircases that still connect these 46 communities today. The unique stone network linking these ancient rock towns led Unesco to inscribe Zagorohoria as a World Heritage Site in 2023. Nowadays, it's possible to explore this remote region by car, but the best way to experience it is by hiking along the ancient kalderimia footpath network, built in the 15th Century to serve nomadic shepherds, tradesmen, pilgrims and farmers and still used by residents today.



"You can find these kinds of footpaths in many parts of Greece, but Zagori definitely has one of the largest kalderimia in the country," said Stephanie Contomichalos, who designed a five-day hiking excursion with Georgaras that allows visitors to explore the region's ancient stone paths and stay in traditional stone homes-turned family-run guesthouses. Six hours after setting out from Athens, we finally made it to the mountains and one of Zagori's largest villages: Vitsa, population 84. The view from the outdoor terrace of our inn, the Selini Guesthouse, opened to a seemingly endless expanse of oaks, beeches and pine trees stretching out into the horizon.The next morning, low-lying clouds rolled in, covering most of the surrounding hills in an ethereal mist. "This region gets more rain than London," Georgaras noted.Following a kalderimi, we walked to Vitsa's main square, known as the "balcony" of Zagorohoria due to its spectacular view over a 12km-long canyon separating towering limestone cliffs just below. Standing in the centre of the square, almost like the statue of a ruler, was a 600-year-old plane tree protected by a dry-stone wall. "Zagorohoria's architecture is deeply embedded into nature," explained George Karvelas, an architect who led two restoration projects in the nearby villages of Mikro Papingo and Tsepelovo.As Karvelas explained, most villages in Zagori are organised similarly: stone homes typically radiate from a central square built around a plane tree, which signals the presence of groundwater. The village's main church is typically located around the square, and some communities are surrounded by forests that were once considered sacred. Cutting down their trees for anything other than communal projects like building schools was punished by the Greek Orthodox Church with excommunication. Later that day, we followed Contomichalos and Georgaras along a 7.4km path from Vitsa to the village of Kipoi to visit some of the region's most famous stone landmarks: the bridges of Missiou, Kokkori and Mylos, each built in the 1700s. Much like its stone villages, Zagori's footpaths look like they emerged organically from the mountain. "They were built based on in-depth knowledge of local climate," Georgaras said. On each side of the cobblestone path, small canals ran parallel to the slope. "These were designed to disperse rainfall and avoid landslides," Georgaras explained. "While if you look at this column," he said, pointing to the limestone pillars built in 1750 to support the arching Kokkori bridge, "you'll see that they are V-shaped to withstand the predominant currents of the river."According to Polyxeni Mantzou, a professor of architecture at the University of Ioannina, the fact that these paths, bridges and homes were designed to embrace nature rather than control it has allowed them to survive for centuries with relatively little maintenance. "They built according to the climate, the morphology and using local materials," said Mantzou. "They had an excellent understanding of place."As we walked to Kipoi, I noticed other details that reveal the region's unique history. "This signpost here is carved with the name of donors who financed this part of the footpath," Georgaras said, pointing to a limestone cliff inscribed with a cross, date and list of names. "Most public buildings like bridges, schools and churches were financed by wealthy tradesmen during the 17th, 18th and 19th Century," he explained. Despite its geographical isolation, Zagori's history is shaped by its special connection with the outside world. Like much of Greece, Zagorohoria was under Ottoman rule from the mid-15th Century to 1821. As Faidon Moudopoulos-Athanasiou, an archaeologist who wrote a book on the region's history, explained, beginning in the 1400s, Zagori's leaders negotiated a degree of autonomy with Ottoman rulers in exchange for military assistance. During the following 300 years, local elites established profitable trading networks in Southern and Eastern Europe, via the vast network of footpaths that connected this part of Epirus with the Balkans. This cobblestone highway allowed them to finance schools, bridges and wells.

Travelling abroad was so common for men that most agricultural work was left to women, Moudopoulos-Athanasiou explained.Today, walking along the kalderimia (rather than driving around them) allows visitors to better grasp the unique culture and history of these villages. "All activities, from farming to trade, began by walking on these footpaths," Moudopoulos-Athanasiou said. "Merchants reached distant parts of the empire on the kalderimia and women walked on these trails each day to go out to the fields." Hiking also allows travellers to experience the many engineering marvels that led these villages to become inscribed by Unesco. On our 8km hikefrom the village of Kapesovo to Vradeto, we scaled the Vradeto staircase, a 1.5km stone path winding 1,100 steps up the slope of Mount Tymfi where it was hard to distinguish the dry-stone construction from the natural limestone formations. From Vradeto, we continued along a dirt trail cutting through orchid-dotted meadows to reach the Beloi viewpoint, and a breathtaking view of the region's geological star: the Vikos Gorge.

Sometimes called "the Greek Grand Canyon", the 20km-long chasm is much greener than its US counterpart and its deep V-framed jagged cliffs are no less dramatic. After traversing moss-covered forests and a dried-out riverbed, we eventually reached the springs of the Voidomatis river, where pools of emerald water were crowned by centuries-old plane trees. We reemerged in Vikos, a village famous for the medicinal properties of its herbs that grow naturally on its slopes.

High-fat diet sets off metabolic dysfunction in cells



Researchers find high-fat diets set off metabolic dysfunction in cells, leading to weight gain, but these effects can be reversed by treatment with an antioxidant. Consuming a high-fat diet can lead to a variety of health problems -- not only weight gain but also an increased risk of diabetes and other chronic diseases.At the cellular level, hundreds of changes take place in response to a high-fat diet. MIT researchers have now mapped out some of those changes, with a focus on metabolic enzyme dysregulation that is associated with weight gain. Their study, conducted in mice, revealed that hundreds of enzymes involved in sugar, lipid, and protein metabolism are affected by a high-fat diet, and that these disruptions lead to an increase in insulin resistance and an accumulation of damaging molecules called reactive oxygen species. These effects were more pronounced in males than in females. The researchers also showed that most of the damage could be reversed by giving the mice an antioxidant along with their high-fat diet. "Under metabolic stress conditions, enzymes can be affected to produce a more harmful state than what was initially there," says Tigist Tamir, a former MIT postdoc. "Then what we've shown with the antioxidant study is that you can bring them to a different state that is less dysfunctional," added Tigist Tamir.

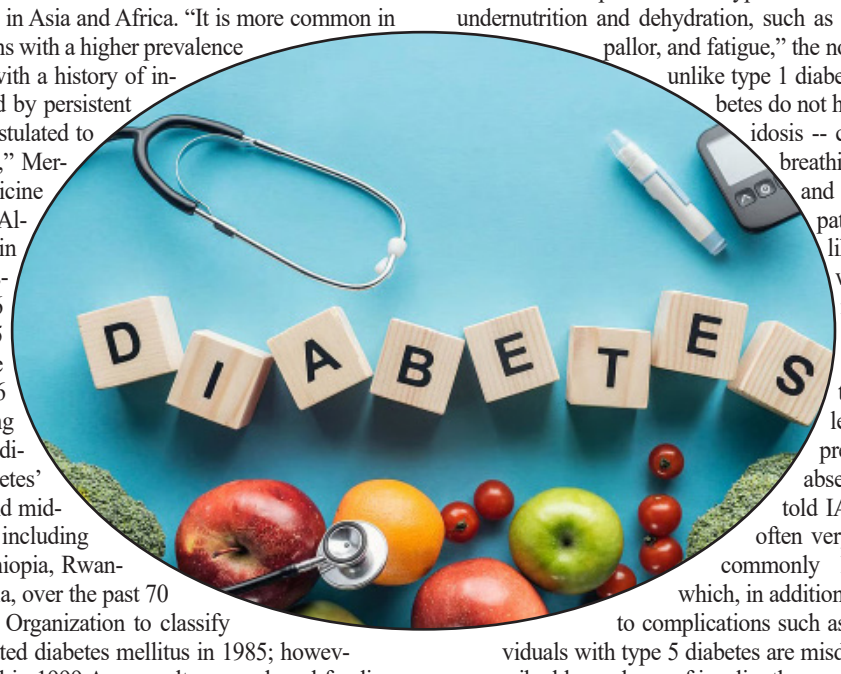
Tamir, who is now an assistant professor of biochemistry and biophysics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine, is the lead author of the new study, which appears today in Molecular Cell.Forest White, the Ned C. and Janet C. Rice Professor of Biological Engineering and a member of the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research at MIT, is the senior author of the paper.

In previous work, White's lab has found that a high-fat diet stimulates cells to turn on many of the same signaling pathways that are linked to chronic stress. In the new study, the researchers wanted to explore the role of enzyme phosphorylation in those responses. Phosphorylation, or the addition of a phosphate group, can turn enzyme activity on or off.

This process, which is controlled by enzymes called kinases, gives cells a way to quickly respond to environmental conditions by fine-tuning the activity of existing enzymes within the cell. Many enzymes involved in metabolism -- the conversion of food into the building blocks of key molecules such as proteins, lipids, and nucleic acids -- are known to undergo phosphorylation. The researchers began by analysing databases of human enzymes that can be phosphorylated, focusing on enzymes involved in metabolism.

Why the malnutrition-related condition needs to be formally recognised?

Formally recognising Type-5 diabetes, a lesser-known malnutrition-related form of diabetes, can help develop diagnostic criteria and aid in effective management of the condition, affecting an estimated six million people in India and 25 million worldwide, global experts outlined in a new article published in The Lancet Global Health journal on Thursday. Type-5 diabetes is a type of diabetes that typically affects lean and malnourished teenagers and young adults in low- and middle-income countries. It is estimated to affect 20 to 25 million people worldwide, mainly in Asia and Africa. "It is more common in low-resource settings and in regions with a higher prevalence of undernutrition. An individual with a history of intrauterine undernutrition, followed by persistent undernutrition in adulthood, is postulated to be at high risk of type 5 diabetes," Meredith Hawkins, Professor of Medicine at the Global Diabetes Institute at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, US, told IANS. "It is estimated that approximately about 6 million people in India have type 5 diabetes (given 101 million people with diabetes in India, with about 6 per cent of those with diabetes being underweight)," she added.The condition now known as 'type 5 diabetes' has been reported in many low and middle-income countries (LMICs), including India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, Nigeria, and Indonesia, over the past 70 years. This led the World Health Organization to classify this condition as malnutrition-related diabetes mellitus in 1985; however, this classification was removed in 1999.As a result, research and funding opportunities became limited, which later also caused confusion and inconsistency in diagnostic reports."Establishing formal recognition with standardised diagnostic criteria would?help bring clarity and consistency to how the disease is defined across different healthcare settings. It would also increase awareness among clinicians, leading to improved screening and diagnosis, especially in individuals who might currently be misclassified as having Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes. A structured and evidence-based definition is crucial for the accurate identification and effective management of type 5 diabetes," Hawkins said.



What are the symptoms of Type 5 diabetes?

Hawkins explained that Type 5 diabetes primarily affects individuals under the age of 30 from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly in regions with a high prevalence of chronic undernutrition.These individuals typically present with a body mass index (BMI) below 18.5 kg/m², in contrast to those with type 2 diabetes, who are often overweight or obese.

However, the clinical presentation of type 5 diabetes differs from types 1 and 2 diabetes in that patients with type 5 diabetes may exhibit signs of severe undernutrition and dehydration, such as sunken eyes, stunting, wasting, pallor, and fatigue," the noted researcher said. In addition, unlike type 1 diabetes, individuals with type 5 diabetes do not have a history of diabetic ketoacidosis -- characterised by rapid and deep breathing with acetone breath, nausea, and vomiting."Biochemically, these patients are insulin sensitive, unlike those with type 2 diabetes, who are more commonly insulin resistant. Their serum insulin levels are lower than those seen in type 2 diabetes but higher than in type 1 diabetes. The islet cell antibodies, commonly present in type 1 diabetes, are also absent in type 5 diabetes," Hawkins told IANS.Notably, type 5 diabetes is often very poorly controlled, so patients commonly have severe hyperglycaemia, which, in addition to vitamin deficiency, may lead to complications such as peripheral neuropathy."If individuals with type 5 diabetes are misdiagnosed as type 1 diabetes and are prescribed large doses of insulin, they can be at high risk of severe hypoglycaemia due to high insulin doses in addition to preexisting food insecurity. On the other hand, if these individuals are misdiagnosed as type 2 diabetes and are prescribed medications such as GLP-1 agonists, resultant weight loss can be detrimental to them as they are already undernourished. More research is needed to understand the long-term complications of type 5 diabetes," Hawkins said.With the formal recognition, a diagnostic criterion will be developed for type 5 diabetes, which can then be applied to diverse populations. It will also help develop recommendations for managing type 5 diabetes, tailored for use in various healthcare settings.

SWOT analysis of the Bangladesh Women's World Cup 2025 squad



New Delhi: As Bangladesh gets ready for their second Women's Cricket World Cup appearance, the 15-member team combines youth and experience.On October 2, Bangladesh will play Pakistan in the Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 at Colombo. Bangladesh had defeated Pakistan to win its first-ever Women's Cricket World Cup when the two countries faced off at the tournament's previous iteration in 2022.

Bangladesh, which is participating in its second ICC Women's ODI World Cup, is strong at bat. Highlights of the 2022–25 cycle have included Fargana Hoque (715 runs at 34.04) and captain Nigar Sultana Joty (557 at 29.31), who is backed by Sharmin Akter Supta (348 at 34.80). Beyond the top four, Bangladesh's batting lacks reliability. Middle- and lower-order contributions remain inconsistent, often leaving the side short of competitive totals. Despite occasional knocks from Ritu Moni or Fahima Khatun, depth remains limited. In this cycle, Bangladesh managed only eight wins in 24 matches, underlining its struggles against higher-ranked teams and exposing a fragile core. Beyond the top four, Bangladesh's batting lacks reliability. Middle- and lower-order contributions remain inconsistent, often leaving the side short of competitive totals. Despite occasional knocks from Ritu Moni or Fahima Khatun, depth remains limited. In this cycle, Bangladesh managed only eight wins in 24 matches, underlining its struggles against higher-ranked teams and exposing a fragile core. Over-dependence on individual brilliance leaves Bangladesh vulnerable. Victories over India and South Africa in this cycle were rare and often hinged on one player firing. The pace attack, led by 20-year-old Marufa Akter, lacks depth, making Bangladesh one-dimensional. Against stronger batting lineups, over-reliance on spin and an underpowered middle order may unravel quickly. Bangladesh's spinners can keep matches competitive, but an underpowered batting line-up remains a major hurdle. Without middle-order support, the team risks finishing at the bottom of the group stage.

The mascots for the 2026 FIFA World Cup are Clutch, Zayu, and Maple



FIFA made the announcement on Thursday in a news release, less than nine months before the June 11 opener, the first World Cup to be played across three nations.

New Delhi: The three mascots for the World Cup next year are: Maple, a moose for Canada; Zayu, a jaguar for Mexico; and Clutch, a bald eagle for the United States. Less than nine months before the competition begins on June 11, FIFA named the three on Thursday. This is the first World Cup to be held in three different countries. In contrast, at a press conference in Hollywood in October 1992, the U.S. World Cup of 1994 unveiled their mascot, a dog named Striker. More than 25,000 names were submitted by fans in response to the initiative.

Jannik Sinner is making "many minor adjustments" after Carlos Alcaraz's loss



New Delhi: After losing to Carlos Alcaraz in the U.S. Open final, world number two Jannik Sinner has started to make significant changes to his style of play. The Italian's current goals are to win the title again and come up with fresh strategies to take on his Spanish opponent on the ATP Tour. Sinner lost the U.S. Open championship and the top spot in the world rankings as a result of his defeat in New York. Before the China Open in Beijing, he reflected on the defeat, saying, "We've been reflecting a lot on that final." Now, the task is to incorporate a number of focused adjustments into his style and strategy for the rest of the season. Sinner described a process of experimentation in his pre-Beijing remarks:

"We're working on new things and changing a lot of small things." There are currently a few more errors, but I'm hoping that this will improve. While acknowledging that there may be a brief decline in performance during this changeover phase, he is still focused on the long-term advantages. Sinner's realization that he had to become "a lot more unpredictable" in order to compete against Alcaraz at the highest level is what led to the technical change. "Time is the only factor to consider. Since one thing is practice and another is the match, I'm not sure how much I can alter the real match court," he continued. Despite these difficulties, Sinner remains motivated. "I have a lot of motivation. As he moves into the Asian swing of the ATP calendar, he emphasized his resolve by saying, "It's great to work on something new, then we see how this ends up."

Archery

Sheetal aims for gold at Para Worlds; the all-Indian men's final is historic



New Delhi: With an all-India final scheduled in the men's compound open category and teenage sensation Sheetal Devi dominating the women's compound final on Thursday, September 25, India has guaranteed itself at least three medals at the Para Archery World Championships in Gwangju, South Korea. In a historic feat, relative international newcomer Toman Kumar and Paris-based Paralympic bronze champion Rakesh Kumar advanced to the gold-medal match of the men's compound open solo competition. Due to their disparate semifinal wins, an all-India final has been scheduled, which would be momentous for Indian para archery as one of the two competitors will win the event's first-ever gold medal. In a close all-Indian semifinal, Toman defeated fellow countryman Shyam Sunder Swami 144-143, while Rakesh, ranked seventh, shocked third seed Nathan Macqueen of Great Britain 147-143. In the para-archery circuit, Rakesh Kumar has been a mainstay due to his experience and consistency.

Years of commitment and perseverance have led him to the final. However, despite being relatively new to the global scene, Toman Kumar has made a big impression with his outstanding performances, demonstrating the breadth of talent that is developing in India. Teenage archer Sheetal Devi stormed into the women's compound final, continuing her meteoric rise in the sport. At just 18 years old, Devi has already made a significant mark in para, becoming one of India's youngest Paralympiic medallists with a bronze in the mixed team compound event at the Paris 2024 Paralympics.

She secured a commanding 145-140 win over Great Britain's Jodie Grinham in the semi-final. Sheetal will face Turkiye's Oznur Cure Girdi, the World No. 1 archer in the category. Notably, Girdi had beaten Sheetal in the 2023 World Championships final in Pizen by the narrowest of margins – 2 points. Born with phocomelia, a rare congenital condition leading to underdeveloped limbs, Devi has overcome physical challenges to excel in archery. Her determination and skill have inspired many, and her journey serves as a beacon of hope for aspiring athletes with disabilities. Her ability to consistently perform at the highest level has earned her recognition and admiration both in India and internationally. The outstanding performances of Rakesh Kumar, Toman Kumar, and Sheetal Devi highlight the growing strength of India's para archery programme. With a rich pool of talent and increasing support from sporting bodies, India is poised to make significant strides in the sport on the global stage.

India defeats Bangladesh by 41 runs to advance to the Asia Cup 2025 final



New Delhi: With a 41-run victory over Bangladesh in Thursday's Super Four match in Dubai, India advanced to the final and extended their winning streak in the Asia Cup 2025. The outcome also eliminated the tournament's reigning champions, Sri Lanka, paving the way for India to play either Bangladesh or Pakistan for the trophy. With a scorching 75 off 37 balls and five sixes in his blazing innings, Abhishek Sharma's bat spoke for him as he dominated the Bangladeshi attack. He gave India a strong start by scoring 77 runs in just 6.2 overs while opening alongside Shubman Gill. Before he fell while attempting to go big again, he reached his half-century off just 25 deliveries, which were full of clean hits over the field.

The middle order was unable to maintain the momentum after Gill 29 (19) appeared to be sound but dropped at the wrong moment. With a vital 38 off 29 balls, Hardik Pandya calmed the situation and made sure India finished at 168/6. In the final overs, Mustafizur Rahman and Mohammad Saifuddin kept things tight, while Rishad Hossain (2/27) bowled disciplinedly for Bangladesh. After Tanzid Hasan was removed early by Jasprit Bumrah, Bangladesh found it difficult to match the asking rate and the chase never really got off the ground. Other than Parvez Hossain Emon (21), no batsman reached double figures, although Saif Hassan put up a valiant 69 off 51 balls. Kuldeep Yadav spun through the middle overs with 3/18, while Varun Chakaravarthy (2/29) and Axar Patel chipped in. India was sloppy in the field with four dropped catches, but it made little difference as Bangladesh folded for 127 in 19.3 overs.

India's dead rubber predicament before Pakistan's final



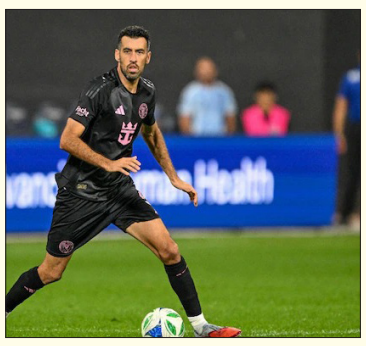
New Delhi: It will be what commentators refer to as a dead rubber when India and Sri Lanka play their final Super 4 match of the Asia Cup 2025 in Dubai because India has already guaranteed their spot in the final and the Lankan Lions have already been eliminated, therefore the outcome will not affect which teams proceed. However, that position itself poses an intriguing conundrum: to what extent should India take the competition seriously in terms of trial and error? While there is pressure to keep momentum and unity before the final versus Pakistan, there is also a chance to test combinations and blood bench strength in a low-stakes environment. Stay updated on Asia Cup 2025 with India Today! Get match schedules, team squads, live score, and the latest Asia Cup points table. India have already drawn criticism for persistently shuffling their batting order during this Asia Cup.

The Indian football team is unlikely to receive government approval for the 2026 Asian Games



New Delhi: Only athletes who have a "real chance of winning medals" will be permitted to compete in the Asian Games 2026 and other multidisciplinary competitions, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced on Wednesday, September 24. The sports ministry emphasized in a five-page press release that teams rated in the top eight and individual athletes ranked in the top six in Asia will be permitted to compete. In a comprehensive document posted on its website, the sports ministry also outlined the selection criteria, indicating that continental rankings will be the main emphasis of the selection process. The memo further said that even if they are not being paid by the government, private coaches will not be allowed to compete in the Asian Games unless they have been authorized by the government. The ministry said, "The aim is to ensure that the athletes who have a real chance of winning medals are only considered for participation in multidisciplinary sports events," strengthening the previously criticized procedure. "If it comes to the notice of the Ministry and the Sports Authority of India (SAI) that the aim is just for participation and not aiming for excellence (medal winning), names of such sportspersons and teams will not be approved after giving proper justification," it said. "Only those sportspersons, coaches and support staff will be part of the contingent, whose names have been cleared at cost to the government, and no additional sportspersons, coaches and support staff will be included even at no cost to the government," it added, addressing an often contentious issue that arises when athletes demand their personal coaches and support staff at personal cost. The selection criteria would also cover the Commonwealth Games (July-August 2026), Para Asian Games, Asian Indoor Games, Asian Beach Games, Youth Olympics, Asian Youth Games, and the Commonwealth Youth Games.

At the conclusion of the MLS season, Sergio Busquets is scheduled to retire



New Delhi: At the conclusion of the 2025 Major League Soccer season, Sergio Busquets, a former midfielder for FC Barcelona and Inter Miami, will retire, capping one of the most illustrious careers in contemporary game. On social media, the 37-year-old verified the news and expressed his gratitude and pride at having fulfilled the dream of an almost two-decade career. Busquets has played a key role in the club's success since moving to Miami in 2023.

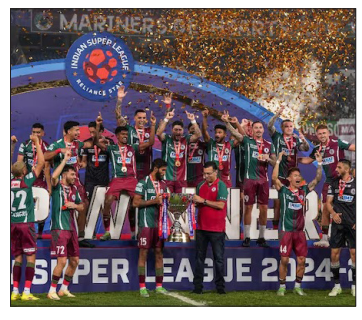
He reunited with Lionel Messi, Jordi Alba, and Luis Surez to lead Inter to the 2023 Leagues Cup and 2024 Supporters' Shield. Busquets is focused on leading the squad to their first-ever MLS Cup as he gets ready for his last stretch. Busquets played for Barcelona for eighteen years, joining the senior squad under Pep Guardiola in 2008 after graduating from the renowned academy. After that, he made 722 appearances and won 34 trophies, including three Champions Leagues, seven Copa del Reys, and nine La Liga crowns. In addition, he has 48 El Clasico appearances, which is the most in club history. On the international stage, the Spaniard earned 143 caps and anchored the midfield during Spain's golden era, helping secure the 2010 World Cup and Euro 2012. Praised for his tactical intelligence and ability to control tempo, he formed one of football's most iconic midfield trios with Xavi and Andres Iniesta. After retiring from international football in 2022, Busquets made the move to the United States, where he extended his legacy with Inter Miami.

Smriti Mandhana hopes to set more Women's World Cup records



New Delhi: Smriti Mandhana is poised to pursue even bigger milestones at the 2017 Women's World Cup after her incredible run of form against Australia. She demonstrated her ability to perform under duress in the just finished ODI series by smashing 300 runs in three innings with scores of 58, 117, and 125. In the third ODI at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, she made history by smashing a century off just 50 balls, the second-fastest by an Indian in women's ODIs. With 781 runs—the most ever in a women's ODI—as well as 99 fours and 12 sixes, that match became a record-breaking spectacle. With 13 ODI hundreds, Mandhana now shares second place in women's cricket with Suzie Bates, only surpassed by Meg Lanning's 15. Surprisingly, she has already reached four hundred runs in 2025, which is equal to the record for the most in a single year. The left-hander is predicted by many to challenge the record for most runs in a single edition going into the World Cup. Mandhana is more than simply India's batting backbone; with home conditions, form, and momentum on her side, she appears ready to make a lasting impression on cricket history. 5. In Women's ODIs, Smriti Mandhana needs just 112 runs to become the fifth hitter to reach the 5000-run milestone. Suzie Bates, Charlotte Edwards, Stafanie Taylor, and Mithali Raj are the others.

Citing player safety, Mohun Bagan requests a change of venue for the ACL match in Iran



New Delhi: The current Indian Super League champions, the Mohun Bagan Super Giants, have officially asked the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to postpone their September 30 AFC Champions League 2 matchup against Iran's Sepahan SC, citing concerns about player safety and uncertainty surrounding the participation of multiple foreign players. The Mariners have already made travel arrangements and applied for visas, but given the additional travel restrictions placed on citizens of the UK and Australia, there are still questions about whether Tom Aldred, Dimitri Petratos, Jamie Maclaren, and Jason Cummings will be permitted entry into Iran.

The management of Sepahan, meanwhile, has insisted that all the preparations are in place. "All members of the Mohun Bagan team, including their international players, have been granted visas.

There is no concern from our side," the Sepahan manager declared, underlining that the event should proceed as scheduled. Bagan stressed that they are not refusing to go, but they have encouraged the AFC to address the ambiguities regarding the eligibility of their foreign players. Bagan lost 1-2 to Ahal FK in their ACL-2 opener at Salt Lake Stadium on September 16. Absence could result in harsh penalties and possibly put Indian clubs' ability to compete in future ACL 2 tournaments in jeopardy. The Mariners' back-to-back away games, the second of which is against Al Hussain in Jordan on October 21, further exacerbate the problem. In a parallel development, Mohun Bagan have written to the All India Football Federation (AIFF) ahead of the upcoming Super Cup, requesting that the foreign player quota be capped at four instead of the proposed six. The federation had initially allowed up to six foreigners to accommodate ISL's top domestic players on national duty.

Mohammed Shami is working hard to preserve India's dream of a comeback, but there are no Bumrah benefits



New Delhi: When Ajit Agarkar, the chairman of the national selection committee, announced India's Test team for the home series against the West Indies on September 25, he stated that there was no news on Mohammed Shami. Agarkar stated that Shami had not played enough domestic matches to merit a comeback, which is why the 35-year-old fast bowler was excluded from the two-Test series. Shami, who was once thought to be inseparable from Jasprit Bumrah in India's pace attack, has fallen from grace in every format. The 2023 World Test Championship final and the Champions Trophy 2025 were the last Test matches played by the 2023 ODI World Cup hero. Since Shami dropped off the radar, India have played five Tests against England, enjoyed a strong Asia Cup 2025 campaign, and named their squad for the first home Test series of the season.

The selectors picked Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, and Prasidh Krishna, the trio from the England Tests, as the specialist pacers for the West Indies series. India Today has learnt that the omission has frustrated those close to Shami, who believe the veteran still has plenty to offer in all formats.Once a permanent fixture in the playing XI, Shami's fortunes changed after he was ruled out with ankle and knee injuries suffered during the 2023 ODI World Cup. After going under the knife for his ankle issue, It took him nearly six months in rehab to get back in the field once again. But despite repeatedly declaring himself fit during the 2024-25 Border-Gavaskar Trophy, when India's bowling stocks were stretched, Shami was overlooked. He returned in time for the Champions Trophy and led India to victory in Dubai, finishing as the team's best pacer with nine wickets in five games. Yet, despite that form, he has been sidelined again. The snub, particularly in the red-ball format, has not gone down well. A source close to Shami said the mood in his camp is grim, with frustration stemming from what they believe are double standards in selection. "Shami has played so many matches for India. For a player of his experience to start from zero again, that's just a little sad. Was Bumrah fully fit when he went to England? If not, then why can't Shami get at least one Test match against the West Indies?" said a source close to the pacer.

Karun Nair will not be included in India's Test series lineup



There was no spot for Karun Nair as India announced their squad for the upcoming Test series against the West Indies.

New Delhi: In the announcement of a 15-man squad led by Shubman Gill for the forthcoming two-Test home series against the West Indies on Thursday, chief selector Ajit Agarkar left out Karun Nair and injured vice-captain Rishabh Pant. Ravindra Jadeja has been selected as the two-Test series' vice captain in lieu of Pant. After almost seven years, Nair finally returned to the Test fold in England. He played in four games but only achieved one half-century, which he hit in the final Test at The Oval. The middle-order batsman was calm at the crease and frequently had starts, but he found it difficult to turn them into significant runs that would have solidified his spot in the starting lineup. The Indian team that competed in the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy draw in England is essentially the same as the one that will play in the West Indies series. The first-choice wicketkeeper is Dhruv Jurel, with N Jagadeesan of Tamil Nadu serving as his deputy. Pant was sidelined after breaking his right foot during the fourth Test match in Manchester. In the first unofficial Test match against Australia A, Jagadeesan scored a smooth 64 off 113 balls and has the versatility to be a third specialist opener if needed. This implied that Abhimanyu Easwaran would not be able to join the team. In addition to Jagadeesan, Devdutt Padikkal rejoins the squad after Karun Nair left. The spin department will be manned by Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar and the returning Axar Patel, while Mohammed Siraj is set to spearhead the pace attack alongside Jasprit Bumrah. Axar is making a return to the team after playing a Test back during the home series against England in 2024. The opening Test will be played in Ahmedabad, with the series concluding in Delhi from October 10. It will be India's first red-ball outing since the 2-2 draw in England for the inaugural Anderson–Tendulkar Trophy. . Gill, who took over from Rohit Sharma as India's Test captain, will be having his first home assignment with the series against West Indies.

Despite Xabi Alonso's perfect start, Atletico Madrid is still furious with the penalty line



New Delhi: With Diego Simeone's team still fuming over a contentious penalty call that cost them a Champions League quarterfinal berth, Xabi Alonso's flawless start as Real Madrid manager will be put to the test when his team visits a furious Atletico Madrid on Saturday. Real Madrid is five points ahead of second-place Barcelona and nine points ahead of Atletico Madrid going into the Metropolitano stadium with a perfect record of six La Liga victories. More than just local pride, Atletico is still incensed by Julian Alvarez's disallowed penalty in the Champions League round of 16 loss last season. Beyond merely being able to brag locally, Atletico is still incensed over Julian Alvarez's rejected penalty in the Champions League round of 16 loss from the previous season. Real Madrid advanced to the round of eight thanks to the event in which VAR controversially denied Alvarez's penalty in the shootout when he slipped while trying the shot after a "double touch" call. Because of the dispute, the International Football Association Board (IFAB) eventually revised the rulebook to make it clear that the purpose of the rule was to discourage intentional double touches rather than penalize unintentional slips. The Atletico boss remains incensed over the event, which he feels cost his team the win, even after several months have passed. "We feel betrayed and incensed... It was a penalty that would have advanced us to the quarterfinals, not just another one. He recently told DAZN, "I'm angry, really angry." That defeat extended Atletico's trophy drought to four consecutive seasons and left Simeone under unprecedented pressure as he entered his 14th season as the club's manager.

Haris Rauf and Sahibzada Farhan are the targets of an ICC complaint filed by the BCCI



New Delhi: Despite Xabi Alonso's perfect start, Atletico Madrid is still furious with the penalty line.Two Pakistani players, Haris Rauf and Sahibzada Farhan, have been the subject of an official complaint from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to the International Cricket Council (ICC) for their provocative actions during Sunday's Super Four match. Richie Richardson, the ICC match referee, is scheduled to hold a hearing on the issue on Friday. Due of Pakistan's match versus Bangladesh, the hearing that was initially scheduled for Thursday was postponed. Richardson held a separate hearing into PCB's complaint against Suryakumar Yadav on Thursday, who had dedicated the victory in the September 14 league fixture to "the families of the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack" in April this year. The PCB alleged that Suryakumar's comments were "political". The India T20 captain is likely to be let off with a warning. Farhan's gun celebration with the bat after completing his half-century caused a massive controversy, while Rauf made a '6-0' gesture towards the Indian fans and even mimicked planes being shot down. PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi added fuel to the fire on Wednesday by posting a video of Cristiano Ronaldo gesturing a crashing plane, mirroring Rauf's act. Naqvi, who also heads the Asian Cricket Council, appears to be using Ronaldo's clip to endorse Rauf's controversial act.

Changes to Agarkar's rings for the West Indies Tests



New Delhi: The senior men's selection committee, headed by Ajit Agarkar, has revealed India's team for the forthcoming two-match Test series against the West Indies, which begins in Ahmedabad on October 2. The second Test will take place in Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium from October 10–14. Devdutt Padikkal and all-rounder Nitish Reddy have been called up, but Karnataka batsman Karun Nair has been dropped following a lacklustre performance against England earlier this year. Agarkar's announcement of Ravindra Jadeja as vice-captain, with Shubman Gill leading the team, was another noteworthy aspect of his press conference in Dubai. "We had higher hopes for Karun Nair. One inning isn't enough. Padikkal provides more. Agarkar took a strong stand against Nair's exclusion by saying, "We would like to give 15–20 chances to everyone, but it is not possible in these circumstances." Nair's consistency was questioned when he only made one half-century in four Test matches despite being given a chance to make a comeback after almost seven years on the England trip. In the meantime, Padikkal makes a comeback after playing in the home series against England. "Padikkal was on the team and has been playing well." "The selectors have faith in the 24-year-old left-hander," Agarkar said. Additionally, Nitish Reddy rejoins the red-ball team.

Test door not shut on Karun Nair : Coach

New Delhi: Karun Nair has encountered an obstacle in his attempts to solidify his spot in the Indian Test team. The Karnataka batsman finally returned during the difficult England trip earlier this year after an almost nine-year hiatus, but he struggled for consistency in four Test matches. Nair is now excluded from the team for the forthcoming series against the West Indies, which begins in Ahmedabad on October 2. Yet, those close to him insist that Nair remains in prime form and that this setback could be the spark he needs to come back stronger than ever. "I felt very bad for him. He was deserving one more chance, that is what I feel. But, again, it is the selectors' call. They think in a different way," Vijay Madyalkar, Nair's childhood coach, told IndiaToday.in. Karun Nair was omitted from the 15-man squad for the Test series against the West Indies, which marks the start of a brief home season for India, who will also play South Africa in a two-Test series in November. Chief selector Ajit Agarkar, who announced the India squad in Dubai on 24 September, explained the decision to drop Nair, saying the team management expected a bit more from the senior batter during the England tour, which was also his comeback run in the Test set-up after nearly a nine-year absence. Vijay said Nair deserved a chance in home conditions, particularly given his stellar domestic run over the last few years.

Suryakumar Yadav comforts Dunith Wellalage following India's victory in the Super Over



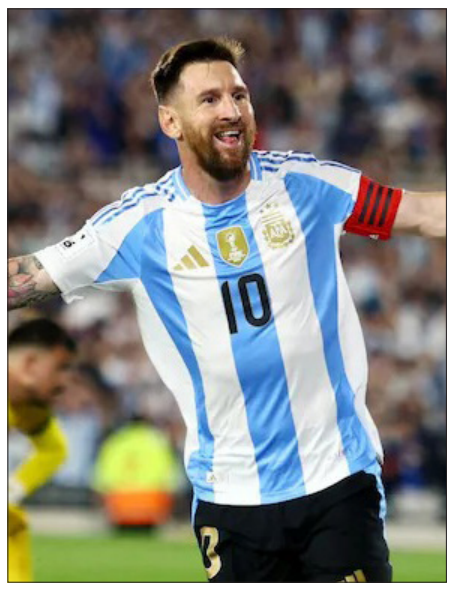
New Delhi: In an act of kindness that extended beyond the game, Indian captain Suryakumar Yadav comforted Sri Lanka's Dunith Wellalage following their Asia Cup Super 4 match on Friday, September 27 at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. Wellalage, 22, recently had a heart attack that claimed the life of his father, Suranga Wellalage. He showed incredible bravery and tenacity by returning to the Super 4 stage with the Sri Lankan team in spite of his anguish. Yadav stepped up to Wellalage on the field following the tense Super Over, which India won by a slim margin. He put a reassuring hand on Wellalage's shoulder, offered encouraging words, and gave him a tender embrace.

This act of empathy by Suryakumar underlined the true spirit of sportsmanship, reminding everyone that beyond the rivalry, players share human emotions and experiences. For Wellalage, Yadav's gesture was a meaningful reminder that compassion and understanding can bring comfort during moments of sadness. India kept their unbeaten streak alive in the 2025 Asia Cup by edging past Sri Lanka. Batting first, India posted a strong total of 202 for five.

Abhishek Sharma led the way with a blistering 61 off 31 balls, his third consecutive half-century. Tilak Varma remained unbeaten on 49, while Sanju Samson added 39 runs.Sri Lanka fought back, with Pathum Nissanka scoring the tournament's first century—107 off 58 balls. He shared a vital 127-run partnership with Kusal Perera (58), which took Sri Lanka level with India and forced a Super Over.

Lionel Messi's Argentina is expected to play Australia in a friendly in Kerala

New Delhi: According to official sources at Kerala's sports department on Tuesday, the Lionel Messi-led Argentina team would probably play Australia in the much anticipated friendly match in November. According to the sources, the game would take place in Kochi on any day between November 12 and November 18, however no specific date has been set. They went on to say that the South American giants' opponent will probably be Australia. According to a different source, an Argentine support staff member is anticipated to arrive in Kochi on Wednesday "for venue inspection." The squad's trip to Kerala was controversial; early in August of this year, there were rumors that the South American team would not be visiting the state.Later in the month, though, the defending world champions put an end to rumors by announcing that they would play a FIFA friendly in Kerala in November against an opponent who has not yet been revealed. The team's visit for the game was also confirmed by V Abdurahiman, the state's minister of sports."In the remaining months of 2025, the Argentine national team, captained by Lionel Scaloni, will play two FIFA friendlies. The Argentine Football Association posted on its official X Twitter that the first match would take place in the United States from October 6th to the 14th (the opponents and cities will be decided). "The second, FIFA friendlies in November, from the 10th to the 18th, will be played in Luanda, Angola, and Kerala, India (opponents to be determined)," the AFA statement had read. Following the Kerala visit, Messi is also expected to embark on a multi-city tour of India in December, with stopovers at Kolkata, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Delhi where a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi is planned.





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