

DAILY HOROSCOPE

Aries (March 21-April 19): Ganesha sees a wonderful time ahead for you. Today, you will meet many people who will prove reliable and trustworthy in the future. You aim to think and work perfectly. For that, says Ganesha, you will have to remain your practical and head-on-shoulders self.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): Today, you will strike a great balance between your professional and personal life, predicts Ganesha. You will save your money from being swindled by others.

You may be lagging in the race to catch up with your goals, but will not be disappointed by what you achieve. It is an auspicious day to undertake business deals and start new projects, feels Ganesha.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): Today, you will have a tendency to remain possessive about your personal belongings, says Ganesha. You are likely to join personality development courses to achieve your ultimate goals. An unpleasant occurrence is likely to throw you off guard. But remember, there is hope when there is life.

Cancer (June 21-July 22): Today, you will use money to fulfil your needs. If there is anything that according to you needs changing, you will throw some money to get it changed.

Your loved ones will celebrate your financial gains and spend some more of it in the process. If there has been any limit to the amount of money flowing in, there is certainly no limit to the money leaving your coffers.

Leo (July 23-Aug): You may not have a halo around your head, but that most certainly does not deter you from playing the spiritual card today, says Ganesha. On this auspicious day, it is through religious scriptures that you satiate your desire to attain the intangible. Spend some time meditating on the finer aspects of life; you will be amazed at the answers such contemplation can throw up.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept 22): Something you achieve in a most unexpected manner will make you very happy today. But your happiness may possibly be marred by getting agitated about the problems you are facing. You may expect new funds for new projects, says Ganesha. Your business will flourish today.

Libra (Sept 23-Oct 22): A wistful day lies ahead of you, says Ganesha. This day, just like 'on the summer day that we flew kites', may be the standard when it comes to wanting to have a better future. Ganesha expects a sea of change in your outlook, thanks to your sweetheart's noble gesture today.

Scorpio (Oct 23-Nov 21): Dear friends and soul mates will bring you much relief and calm today, says Ganesha. Spend as much time as possible with them. Romantic escapades with your beloved will be heaven in itself. Blood relations will stand true and strong in matters of importance, says Ganesha.

Sagittarius (Nov 22-Dec 21): You take the path of spirituality for the peace of mind and to stay away from the daily humdrum of life. You will not only seek love, but also spread love around you.

In a nutshell, a pleasant day in store for you, says Ganesha.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your outstanding intellectual ability will not only yield exciting results for you, but will also help your close associates who will have progressed a great deal in their career because of your valuable advice, says Ganesha. Scores of problems may come your way, but you will have nothing to worry about.

You will deal with each one of them with ease. A project approved for implementation will be successful, and will earn you the reputation of being a perfectionist.

Aquarius (Jan 20 and Feb 18): You have managed to carve a niche for yourself. Today, you may see the tangible benefits of all your past hard work.

But business rivals may poke and pinch; even your health may trouble you. However, you will manage to smile and take things in the right spirit, approves Ganesha.

Pisces (Feb 19- Mar 20): An auspicious time for starting new projects, today will see you make substantial investments in your future. Your family is the foundation of your success, and keeping that in mind will provide you with some vital insights. Your smile wins many a heart today, says Ganesha.

Dozens of passengers left hantavirus-stricken cruise ship after first fatality

THE HAGUE, MAY 7: More than two dozen passengers left a cruise ship hit by a deadly hantavirus outbreak on April 24 without contact tracing, nearly two weeks after the first passenger died on board, the ship operator and Dutch officials said Thursday.

The news raised concerns that the virus could spread as travellers returned home, although experts say the risk to the wider public is considered low.

The Dutch-based company had previously said the body of the Dutch man who died on April 11 was taken off the ship on the remote South Atlantic island of St. Helena on April 24, when his wife also disembarked. She then flew to South Africa a day later and died there. The company said Thursday, 29 passengers left the vessel at St. Helena, while the Dutch Foreign Ministry put the number at about 40. The company had not previously acknowledged that dozens more people left the ship at that time.

The people who left the ship to return to their home countries were of at least 12 different nationalities, Oceanwide Expeditions said. It said there were also two people whose nationalities were unknown.

The first confirmed case of hantavirus in a passenger on the ship was only on May 2, the World Health Organisation has previously said. That was in a British man evacuated from the ship to South Africa from Ascension Island three days after the St. Helena stop. Agencies

2 former Chinese defence ministers sentenced to death for corruption

BEIJING, MAY 7: Two former Chinese defence ministers, Wei Fenghe and Li Shangfu, were sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve over graft charges by a military court on Thursday, in an unprecedented purge at the top of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Their sentences were separately handed down by the military court.

Both Wei and Li were also former members of the powerful Central Military Commission (CMC), headed by President Xi Jinping, and former state councillors, a high-ranking designation of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC).

Wei, 72, was convicted of accepting bribes, while Li, 68, was convicted of both accepting and offering bribes, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported, citing the court rulings.

In China, death penalties with reprieve are typically commuted to life sentences.

Both Wei and Li headed the powerful Rocket (missile) Force, established in 2015 as part of Xi's military overhaul.

Gen Wei, who headed the rocket force from its inception until 2017 and later served as the defence minister from 2018 to 2023, was detained and expelled from the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) over corruption charges.

The Rocket Force operates China's most powerful long and short-range missiles and is re-

garded as significant, as it is the key military arm of the PLA.

They were stripped of their political rights for life, and all of their personal properties will be confiscated.

The court rulings said that no further commutation or parole will be allowed after their penalties are commuted to life imprisonment in



accordance with the law upon the expiration of the two-year reprieve period. Under the current political order in China, officials convicted of corruption have at times received death sentences, though these were seldom carried out because the judgments typically included a two-year reprieve.

The reprieve provision allowed the accused to confess their crimes and cooperate with investigators.

Ever since Xi took over power in 2012, he has carried out major purges of officials and the military.

Over two million officials were reported to have been punished for corruption.

The periodic purges were reportedly aimed at instilling fear and obedience in the rank and file.

In a shocking move in January, Gen Zhang Youxia, the highest ranking official of the PLA, along with senior General Liu Zhenli were placed under investigation for serious violation of discipline of the CPC and laws.

Zhang is the first Vice Chairman of the CMC - the highest-ranking uniformed officer in the Chinese military.

Liu is a member of the CMC and served as chief of staff of the Joint Staff Department of the CMC.

Besides corruption, which is the main allegation against the sacked military officials, indiscipline and disobedience of the CPC leadership were stated to be the reasons for the action against them.

Since he came to power in 2012, Xi has been insisting that the military should function under the leadership of the CPC.

Critics say that through the anti-corruption movement, he consolidated his power, emerging as the core leader of the party, next only to the party founder, Mao Zedong.

In his recent address to the military officials, Xi said all thoughts or actions driven by personal gains and corruption are completely incompatible with the Party's nature and purpose. He urged high-ranking military officials to take the lead in putting down the official airs, and remain true to the identity of revolutionary service personnel.

SUDOKU PUZZLE-469

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SUDOKU SOLUTION-468

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British PM Starmer's leadership to be stress tested by local elections

LONDON, MAY 7: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's leadership is on the line as millions turn out to vote in key local and devolved parliamentary elections across the UK on Thursday.

The biggest polls since the UK general election in 2024 are being pitched as a stress test of Starmer's hold as leader of the Labour Party, the governing party that is lagging behind smaller parties in pre-poll surveys.

Ahead of the poll outcome, the stage is being set for a potential challenge by some sections of the party to try and notch up the 81 Labour MPs needed to launch an all-out rebellion in favour of electing a new party leader.

However, Starmer is expected to come out fighting on Friday as the results begin pouring in to fight back against any moves to replace him.

In England, more than 4,500 councillors are set to be elected across 136 councils as well as some local borough mayors. In Scotland and Wales, voters will elect members of the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd respectively.

Niki Nixon of the UK's Electoral Commission reminded voters to carry identification

to be able to vote at the polling booths, which will remain open until 10 pm local time on Thursday.

"You'll need to show it to polling station



staff before they give you your ballot paper. Don't risk being turned away, check you have ID with you before heading to the polling station," said Nixon.

According to pollsters, both the governing Labour and Opposition Conservatives are unlikely to fare well as voters tend to use local elections to register their discontent with the central administration at

Westminster.

The far-right anti-immigration Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage, and far-left Green Party led by Zack Polanski are hoping to make strong gains in the councils across the country.

The Liberal Democrats, led by Ed Davey, are also hoping to pick up votes from discontented Labour and Tory voters from an electorate base of an estimated 30 million people.

In Scotland, the Scottish National Party (SNP) is hoping to hold on to a fifth term in office in the devolved Parliament referred to as Holyrood and the election in Wales is also expected to throw up a strong showing for the Welsh Plaid Cymru party.

The counting will commence soon after the polls close, with some of the key indicative results expected from around Friday afternoon and the picture nearing completion later in the evening.

However, some of the results could continue trickling in over the weekend too.

A YouGov national voting intention poll on Wednesday placed Labour on 18 per cent, ahead of the Conservatives on 17 per cent but behind Reform UK on 25 per cent.

Democratic senators press US military on Israel's evacuation zones, warning of legal risks

BEIRUT, MAY 7: A dozen US Democratic Senators have called for the US Central Command to answer questions about American coordination with Israel in declaring broad evacuation zones in Lebanon and Iran, alleging that the practice may violate international law. The letter underlines how the Democratic party both its leaders and the base has grown increasingly critical of Israel.

Since the beginning of the US-Israeli war against Iran and the latest Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon, the Israeli military has regularly issued maps covering large areas of territory along with warnings telling all residents of the zones to flee.

Balipara Foundation and community-led biodiversity survey identifies potential vulture habitat in Majuli Island

Dr. Bidyut Sarania and Dr. Subham Mondal Balipara Foundation

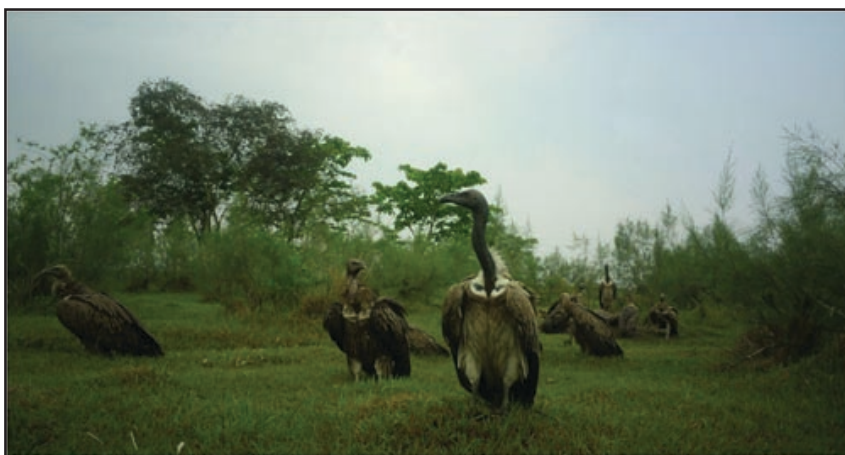
In a promising development for Assam's wildlife conservation efforts, a joint biodiversity assessment carried out by Balipara Foundation, in collaboration with the Mising community of Dhapak village in Majuli Island, has revealed a potential island habitat for critically endangered and threatened vulture species. The initiative forms part of an assisted natural regeneration project under CSR support, aiming at ecological restoration of the island ecosystem.

Conducted in March 2026, the survey enlisted active participation from local youth, who were trained by Dr. Subham Chandra Mondal, Sr. Environment Specialist at Balipara Foundation in basic wildlife survey techniques such as camera trapping and line transect methods. Covering around 200 hectares of grassland-woodland habitat, the team documented 55 bird species, 5 mammals, and 20 butterfly species, highlighting the island's rich biodiversity.

Among the avian records, two sightings stood out for their conservation value — 10 Slender-billed Vultures (*Gyps tenuirostris*), classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN, and 60 Himalayan Griffons (*Gyps himalayensis*), a Near Threatened species. The population of Slender-billed Vultures in India is estimated at around 1,000 individuals (BirdLife International, 2021). A recent report by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII, 2025) further highlights that only about 40 breeding individuals of

this species remain in Assam. The same WII (2025) report estimates the population of Himalayan Griffon in India at approximately 890 individuals, underscoring the conservation importance of these observations.

The survey also recorded the Swamp Francolin (*Ortygornis gularis*) and Oriental Darter (*Anhinga melan-*



Camera trap photograph of critically endangered Slender-billed Vultures (*Gyps tenuirostris*) and near threatened Himalayan Griffons (*Gyps himalayensis*) at the ecological restoration site of Majuli

ogaster), both listed as Near Threatened. Slender-billed Vulture, Himalayan Griffon and Swamp Francolin are protected under Schedule I species of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

"Finding such significant numbers of vultures is crucial," said Dr. Pulakeswar Basumaty, wildlife researcher and part of the assessment team, who pre-

viously reported the rare winter migratory bird Naumann's Thrush from Assam. "The population of Slender-billed Vultures has seen a drastic decline in recent decades, and their presence here underscores the ecological importance of Majuli's habitats."

The village head, Nahorijyoti Satula, remarked that the vulture sightings are closely linked to the community's traditional cattle rearing practices, where cattle carcasses serve as a key food source. He emphasized the need to promote awareness and tree plantation along village edges to aid roosting and nesting opportunities for the birds.

Dr. Bidyut Sarania, Lead (Research & Development) at Balipara Foundation, noted that biodiversity surveys of such riverine ecosystems offer insights into habitats supporting not just avifauna but also endangered mammals like the Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) and Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris*). "Our aim is to create a network of community youth for long-term conservation through ecological restoration," he said, adding that a systematic nest survey of vultures will soon be undertaken across island and riverine habitats along the Brahmaputra.

Home to diverse ecosystems, Majuli is already recognized as a Biodiversity Heritage Site, a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), and an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA). This recent survey reinforces its standing as one of Assam's most vital natural landscapes — a fortress for vulture recovery and broader ecological resilience in the Brahmaputra basin.