

Mizoram Congress Promises Governance Overhaul While Slapping Both The ZPM And MNF Rival Parties

Aizawl, Mar 31: Mizoram Congress senior vice president Lalnunmawia Chuango on Monday said that a return to power for the Congress party would signal a total transformation of governance in the state. Speaking at a party event here, the former Chief Secretary said that the Congress would eliminate the inherent practice of the government acting as a ‘business entity’ and that many functions should be transferred to the private sector. “If Congress regains power, we will change the system of governance and will not use our authority for personal gain. Our president is an upright man, and I do not believe he is someone who chases such personal benefits,” Chuango said.

He said that the Congress would give top priority to improving healthcare, particularly primary healthcare. “We will prioritise primary healthcare, which involves treatment before a disease becomes severe. If Congress comes back to power, we will focus on early detection and

treatment. We will also upgrade primary health centres with well-equipped laboratories,” the Congress leader said. Chuango also declared that the Congress would implement education reforms with a focus on primary education to strengthen the foundation of higher education. He blamed the previous Mizo National Front (MNF) government and the current Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) administration for allegedly using education for political gain. While accusing the present administration of acting like a trader, Chuango said the government should focus on development rather than acting as a business entity. The government is not a trader and should not be used to run businesses. Many tasks currently handled by the government should be managed by private businesses. This will create numerous jobs in the private sector and streamline government administration, ultimately benefiting the state and the people. We need to reform our governance style said. He said that the

Chakma groups slam Mizoram “fake news” on Russian arrest

Aizawl, Mar 31: Community leaders and NGOs in Mizoram’s Mamit district have rejected reports of the arrest of a Russian national in the area, labeling the claims as “baseless, false, and fabricated” misinformation.

In a joint statement issued following an emergency meeting on March 30, 2026, the Young Chakma Association (YCA), Chakma Mahila Samiti (CMS), and the Mizoram Chakma Student Union (MCSU), alongside local Village Councils, clarified that no such arrest took place in Rajiv Nagar I or II. The controversy follows social media reports and claims attributed to the Centre for Northeast India Security Studies (CNEISS).

These reports alleged that a Russian national, purportedly linked to the Parbatya Chatagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) of Bangladesh, had been detained in the Chakma-inhabited village of Rajiv Nagar. Local leaders conducted a detailed verification and confirmed that the story was en-



tirely unverified, suggesting it was circulated with “mala fide intention” to disrupt regional harmony. The Joint NGOs confirmed that no foreign national has been detained in the area and expressed serious concern that such fake news harms the credibility of the Rajiv Nagar community.

The statement cautioned media houses and digital platforms to verify facts before publication, warning that individuals or entities found spreading further misinformation could face social boycotts and appropriate

legal action. “The circulation of such unverified and misleading information is a matter of serious concern,” the statement read. “Such irresponsible statement and conduct will not be tolerated. We expect full cooperation from all concerned in maintaining truth, responsibility, and public order,” the statement stated. The rejection of these claims was signed by the presidents of both Rajiv Nagar-I and Rajiv Nagar-II Village Councils, as well as the heads of the Zonal YCA, MCSU, and CMS.

Imphal East emerges winner of floor curling championship

Imphal, Mar 31: The three days 1st Sub-Junior, Junior and Senior State Level Floor Curling Coaching Camp and Championship 2025-26, organised by the Amateur Curling Association of Sanaleibak concluded on Monday. The championship had begun on March 28 at the Yairipok Tulihal Multipurpose Community hall. Imphal East emerged as the overall Champion of the championship. A total of 107 male and female players from Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal, Bishnupur, Kakching, and Tengenoupal Districts competed across three categories. Imphal East secured Gold 6, Silver 7, and Bronze 10, totaling 71 points. Thoubal obtained Gold 2, Silver 5, and Bronze 6, with 37 points. Imphal West earned Gold 4, Silver 2, and Bronze 4, accumulating 34 points, thus becoming the Team Champion, Runners-up, and 2nd Runners-up respectively. At the closing ceremony of the championship, Raees Ahmed Tampak, Chairman cum Managing Director of Manipur Creative School (MCS) Dewlahland attended as Chief Guest and General Secretary of United Meitei Pangal Committee Manipur; Advocate Md Zakir Husain as president, while Kongbam Jackson, Social Worker from Andro AC; Mohammad Ajmal Hussain, Panel Advocate of Manipur State Legal Services Authority and High Court Legal Services Committee; Dr Abdul Rahaman, Asst Professor from the Department of PESS, Manipur University; and Nongsaiham Sanjit, Chairman and Managing Director of Sahil Foundation, Tulihal as guest of honours.

Easter egg painting competition to promote anti-drug message in Mizoram

Aizawl, Mar 31: In a creative initiative to spread awareness against substance abuse among children and youth, an Easter Egg Painting Competition based on the ‘Ruihhlo Do’ (Anti-Drug Campaign) theme will be organised for churches within the Lunglei Municipal Council (LMC) area on April 5 on Easter Sunday. The programme is being organised by the District Level Committee on NCORD

(Narco Coordination Committee), Lunglei district, in collaboration with the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan. All major Christian denominations within the LMC area are expected to participate in the event. As part of the competition, participants will paint Easter eggs reflecting the anti-drug theme and design placards carrying meaningful slogans promoting a drug-free society. Each church will conduct the activity according to its own schedule on Easter Sunday and submit photographs of the entries along with the names of participants for evaluation. The competition will be judged on April 6 based on the submitted photographs. Attractive prizes will be awarded to the winners, and the prize distribution ceremony will be held on April 8. The Lunglei Deputy Commissioner’s office has appealed to all eligible

participants—especially children and youth church members—to actively take part in the competition. The initiative aims not only to celebrate the spirit of Easter through creativity but also to reinforce the message of a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

Participants are encouraged to showcase their talents and contribute towards building a stronger, safer and drug-free Lunglei, an official statement said.

Awareness campaign on CMHT, AB-PMJAY conducted in Churachandpur

Imphal, Mar 31: District Implementation Unit (DIU), Churachandpur, in collaboration with State Health Agency, Manipur, today organised a one-day awareness campaign on Chief Minister’s Health Schemes—Chief Ministergi Hakselgi Tengbang (CMHT) and Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY). An outreach campaign was held at two remote locations at Mata IFCD Relief Centre and Lanva TD Block Relief Centre, in Churachandpur Sub-division, aiming to raise awareness about healthcare schemes for the benefit of the community. During the Awareness campaign, Jenny Paite, Auditor, (CMHT/AB-PMJAY), briefed the gather-

ing about Dos and Dents of using of cards, update of cards, eligible criteria, enrollment procedures, required documents for receiving CMHT card and AB-PMJAY cards. She urged the attendees to bring necessary documents like IDP and Aadhaar cards to get new cards, also to get their cards prepared before hospital admission, ensuring smooth treatment. She added that they can avail benefits and healthcare more accessible, focusing on vulnerable populations, especially internally displaced persons (IDPs). She also stressed on sensitizing about cashless coverage of Rs.5 lakhs per family per year through empanelled hospitals for eligible poor and vulnerable families. For issue, beneficia-

ries can call toll-free numbers 1800-103-2015 (state) or 14555 (national) or visit concerned district hospitals/healthcare centres. The District Implementation Unit (DIU) took several proactive initiatives under AB-PMJAY to ensure maximum coverage for eligible citizens, especially from marginalized and vulnerable groups. The awareness campaign will continue till April 7 at various sub-divisions of Churachandpur district. The programme was attended by CMO/Member Secretary, Dr. Vanlalkung (DIU); Jenny Paite, Auditor, (CMHT/AB-PMJAY), District coordinator, Thuamkhanlian Ngaihte (CMHT/AB-PMJAY), S. Thangmuanlal (PMAM) and inmates of the relief camps.

Two RPF/PLA, one KCP (PWG) cadres arrested



Imphal, Mar 31: Security forces arrested two extortionists, RPF/PLA active cadres from Yairipok Khoirom Mathak Leikai area under Yairipok Police Station in Thoubal district on Monday, said a statement of Manipur Police. The arrested cadres have been identified as Yengkokpam Premchand alias Chingsangakpa (26), and Moirangthem Naresh Singh alias Chingsang (30). From their possession, one two-wheeler (scooter), and three mobile phones were recovered. On the same day, security forces arrested an extortionist, a S/S Sergeant Major of KCP (PWG), namely Mayengbam Amitap Singh alias Mukabala alias Khaba (32) of Wabagai Thingel Leikai under Hiyanglam Police Station in Kakching district from his locality. A mobile phone was seized from him. Meanwhile, movement of 303 vehicles carrying essential items along NH-37 was ensured. Strict security measures were taken up in all vulnerable locations and security convoy was provided in sensitive stretches in order to ensure free and safe movement of the vehicles. A total of 115 Nakas/Check points were installed in different districts, both in the hills and the valley, and five persons were detained.

Governor States That Mizoram Is Emerging As A Strategic Hub In India’s Act East Policy

Aizawl, Mar 31: Mizoram is increasingly playing a strategic role in India’s Act East policy, thanks to its location at the tri-junction of India, Myanmar, and Bangladesh, Mizoram Governor VK Singh said on Friday. Addressing a delegation of journalists from Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, Singh highlighted the state’s geopolitical significance despite its small population and size. “The state is uniquely positioned, making it a key player in India’s Act East policy,” he said. He also pointed to Mizoram’s friendly re-

lations with neighboring countries, contributing to largely peaceful borders. Singh further mentioned the state’s designation as India’s “ginger capital” and outlined ongoing development initiatives across various sectors. On Friday, March 27, 2026, Mizoram Governor General (Dr.) Vijay Kumar Singh (Retd.) addressed a delegation of visiting journalists at Lok Bhavan, Aizawl, highlighting the state’s transformation into a pivotal strategic hub. He emphasized that despite its compact size and relatively small population,

Mizoram is uniquely positioned at the “tri-junction” of India, Myanmar, and Bangladesh, making it an indispensable pillar of the nation’s Act East Policy. The Governor underscored that Mizoram’s geopolitical significance has grown exponentially as India seeks to deepen its economic and cultural ties with Southeast Asian nations. He pointed out that the state maintains exceptionally friendly relations with neighboring countries, which has resulted in a largely peaceful border environment—a rarity for

a state sharing nearly 722 kilometers of international boundaries. The Mizoram Peace Accord of 1986 remains a “shining testament” to the power of dialogue. This enduring peace has allowed the state to achieve remarkable social milestones, including being declared India’s first fully literate state in May 2025, with a literacy rate of 98.20% under the ULLAS initiative. The Governor also touched upon the state’s burgeoning “green economy.” In December 2025, NITI Aayog officially,

KICA celebrates 16th foundation day with cultural fervour

Imphal, Mar 31: The 16th Foundation Day Celebration of K. Ibombi Cultural Academy (KICA), located at Charangpat Maklang in Thoubal district, was celebrated at the community hall of Charangpat Maklang Mamang Leikai. In the event, Vaishnab Pheiroijam Manibabu Singh attended as the Chief Guest, Guru of Nata Sankirtana Eshei, Lairelakpam Khomei Singh, presided, and Guru of literary composition Ahongsangbam Ghana Singh attended as the Guest of Honour. Those who spoke at today’s event praised KICA’s efforts over the past 16 years in promoting the cultural heritage of this region, particularly in N Sankirtana, and other arts such as Pung Cholom, Khubak Eshei, Kaydeva Sheishak, Holi Phangnaba, and Ta Khousarol. In the Pala, Mutum Apollo and Lairelakpam Ruhidas led the Pung, while Laitonjam Pakpi Devi, Kangamb Bisoyai Devi, Hidam Kunjamani Devi, Konsam Tombi Devi, and Sairem Asangbi Devi led the Eshei (songs). Many art lovers participated in today’s event.

Nirmala Sitharaman releases the BJP’s manifesto for Assam assembly polls

Guwahati, Mar 31: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman today released the BJP’s manifesto for Assam assembly polls, promising protection of land, heritage and dignity of indigenous people and Rs 5 lakh crore infrastructure investment.

BJP’s ‘Sankalp Patra’ comprises 31 promises, including the recovery of encroached land from Bangladeshi “Miyas”, bringing in Uniform Civil Code, and ensuring the development of the state, employment opportunities for youths.

Sitharaman said this manifesto was prepared on a decade of transformation of the state, which the Congress could not achieve in 60 years.

“This manifesto has been built on a decade of delivery. When I look at Assam from the perspec-

tive of the Union Finance Minister, the state has been transformed in the last 10 years in ways the six decades of Congress rule could never achieve,” she said.

The event was attended by Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, State BJP President Dilip Saikia, and other prominent leaders. Sitharaman highlighted that Assam’s GDP has grown 3.3 times in the last decade—from Rs 2.24 lakh crore in 2015-16 to Rs 7.41 lakh crore in 2025-26. “Assam is today among the fastest growing economy among states. The per capita income has risen from Rs 1.03 lakh in 2020-21 to Rs 1.59 lakh in 2024-25,” she added. Sitharaman also noted a dramatic increase in Assam’s share of central taxes, rising from Rs 10,000 crore under Congress



to Rs 50,000 crore today. Additionally, the state has received Rs 27,000 crore as a 50-year interest-free loan from the Centre.

“When you talk about the double-engine government, these are the reasons... We are not just creating jobs for the youth, we are building an advanced and globally competitive ecosystem that Assamese talent across the world is choosing to come back to,” Sitharaman said.

Chief Minister Sarma elaborated on the party’s promises, stating that the UCC would be imple-

mented in the state, with exceptions for the Sixth Schedule and Scheduled Tribe areas. He also mentioned that strong measures would be taken against ‘love jihad’. “We will try to make flood-free Assam, and in the first two years, we will spend Rs 18,000 crore. We will provide 2 lakh jobs in next 5 years. We want to make One District, One Medical College, One University, One Engineering College,” Sarma said.

State BJP President Dilip Saikia claimed that the party is fully prepared for the elections, adding that the BJP’s vision is to make Assam a secure and developed state. “Our ‘sankalp’ (resolve) is to make a secure Assam, a developed Assam. We received 2.45 lakh suggestions from different parts of the state to prepare the Sankalp Patra,” he said.

TYCM discusse tribal issues with nominee of Deputy CM Nemcha Kipgen

Imphal, Mar 31: TYCM in a press release said it has seen and witnessed that the Office of Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen is functioning effectively; through her Nominee, working diligently for the welfare of the tribal communities of Manipur.

Even in the absence of the Deputy Chief Minister at her office in Imphal, the TYCM expressed satisfaction with the functioning and execution of works by her office. TYCM expressed hope that Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen will surely continue to work for the larger interest of the tribal communities of Manipur and materialize long-pending tribal issues into action within a short period.

BJP field candidates in six wards for the Sikkim municipal elections

Gangtok, Mar 31: With nominations ending on Monday, the SKM is poised to sweep the Sikkim Municipal Elections 2026 with electoral contest expected only from BJP and independent candidates in around 10 wards across the State urban bodies. State BJP is the only political party that has fielded candidates with the other opposition parties SDF and CAP Sikkim having already announced to boycott the upcoming civic body polls citing various reasons. There are 63 wards in the nine urban local bodies of Sikkim – Gangtok Municipal Corporation (21), Namchi Municipal Council (7), and five wards in the Nagar Panchayats of Singtam, Rangpo, Mangan, Nayabazar-Jorethang, Soreng, Pakyong and Gyalshing. The SKM candidates have already submitted their nominations in all these 63 wards and appeared to



sweep the civic polls entirely before the State BJP entered the electoral contest on the final day of nominations with six candidates. Nominations were also made by independent candidates in few wards of urban local bodies. In Gangtok Municipal Corporation, the State BJP fielded Srijana Chettri from Diesel Power House ward and Pempo Dorjee Lepcha from Tadong ward.

One independent candidate each has also submitted nomination for Diesel Power House and Arithang-1 ward. In Singtam Nagar Panchayat, BJP candidate Rajani Singh Cintury filed her nomination from Pipal ward while BJP candidate Bhopal Barailly submitted nomination for Mandi Bazaar of Rangpo Nagar Panchayat, said the State BJP. The BJP candidate for Up-

per Ghurpisey ward under Namchi Municipal Council is Sangay Bhutia while BJP candidate Naren Subba filed from the Dara Bazar ward under Soreng Nagar Panchayat. One independent candidate each has filed nomination in before the respective Returning Officers of Namchi and Pakyong districts while there are four independent candidates in Gyalshing. “BJP Sikkim extends its warm congratulations and best wishes to all the candidates for the upcoming municipal elections. The party expresses full confidence in their victory and urges all party workers and supporters to work tirelessly for their success,” said the State BJP in a press statement. The nomination process concluded today and scrutiny of nomination papers will be held on April 1.

Battle for key north Bengal seats heats up Development vs discord

Siliguri, Mar 31: Siliguri and Dabgram-Fulbari, two constituencies in North Bengal, have turned into battlegrounds ahead of the assembly elections, where narratives of development, identity, and law and order are colliding head-on. As the assembly poll dates, April 23 and 29, approach, political tensions in this strategic gateway to the Northeast are rising, with every party preparing for a fierce contest. While the TMC is trying to reclaim ground lost to the BJP, the task has been made harder by the saffron party’s surge in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, where the BJP widened its lead significantly over the Mamata Banerjee-led party. “Is Siliguri really safe under its self-proclaimed guardian?” Ghosh asked, demanding the arrest of a private tutor, whom the BJP alleges was responsible for the girl’s death. He also criticised Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, stating that she did not address

the incident while holding public meetings in constituencies near Siliguri. Deb has attempted a counter by blending Hindutva with development messaging. The BJP has fielded its winning faces, Sankar Ghosh in Siliguri and Sikha Chatterjee in Dabgram-Fulbari, banking on continuity and a campaign that targets alleged governance lapses. The TMC, on the other hand, has reshuffled its candidates, moving Siliguri Mayor Gautam Deb from Dabgram-Fulbari to Siliguri in an effort to reclaim the urban seat. However, emotion and outrage are shaping the discourse. The death of a teenage girl, who was found hanging in her home recently, has ignited a political storm. Claiming that Deb visited the bereaved family only 36 hours after the incident, Ghosh questioned the safety of residents under Deb’s leadership and alleged administrative apathy.

UP man beheads ice-cream seller in Barabanki; arrested

Guwahati, Mar 31: A man allegedly beheaded an ice-cream seller for calling out loudly in Uttar Pradesh’s Barabanki district on Sunday. The killer allegedly slit the victim’s throat before beheading him and then carried the severed head to his house and tried to burn it in the stove, said the police sources. The accused was identified as Shankar Yadav (50), a resident of Parsawal village in the district. Sources claimed that the ice-cream seller, identified as Babloo Rajbhar also hailed from the same village. Babloo was selling ice-cream while calling out loudly. Yadav objected to it and asked him not to shout but the latter continued doing so. In an infuriated state, Yadav picked up an axe from his house and allegedly hit Babloo several times severing his head in full public view. Shocked passersby, who witnessed the incident, could not gather courage to stop him, said the local sources. The sources added that Yadav carried the severed head home and allegedly tried to burn it. Police authorities deployed a large contingent in the village following the direction of Superintendent of Police Arpit Vijayvargiya. Officers cordoned off the



area and went to Shankar Yadav’s house. When the team entered, they found the accused inside, continuing to cook, with Bablu’s severed head lying nearby. The police team immediately arrested him, seized the murder weapon and recovered the severed head from the house. Babloo was the eldest of three brothers. He had been supporting his family by selling ice

cream and doing manual labour. Babloo has left behind his wife and two young children. Sources said that Yadav was a habitual offender and had earlier been arrested in connection with a number of criminal cases. Police said that he appeared to be of an unstable mind. A police official said in Barabanki that a case was registered and investigations were on.

Evading BNSS notice can invite arrest, says Karnataka High Court

Imphal, Mar 31: The Karnataka High Court has said that an accused can be arrested if he evades the notice issued to him under Section 35(3) of BNSS and does not cooperate with the officers investigating his crime. Justice M Nagaprasanna passed this order on March 25, rejecting a petition filed by Yugadev R from Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu, questioning the arrest order issued on January 19 by the additional chief judicial magistrate in a crime registered under Section 66C of the IT Act and Section 318(4) of BNS with Adugodi police in the city. Citing a verdict of the apex court, the high court said that Section 35(3) does not empower the police to communicate an electronic copy or by WhatsApp the notice or copy of FIR. It has to be mandatorily given in person. The police searched the petitioner for 40 days to hand over the notice. This non-cooperative behaviour of the accused was enough for the police to take him into custody. Three persons, including Anki Bhauwala from Wilson Garden in the city, registered a complaint against the petitioner and his wife. The petitioner and his wife introduced themselves as yoga teachers and started running a company, Jai Bhairavi Devi Financial Solutions, and received investments through a website. The complainants are said to have

invested Rs 39.20 lakh. The complaint was registered in December 2025 for criminal breach of trust, misappropriation and causing wrongful loss. The police wanted to serve the notice under Section 35(3) and began looking for the petitioner, who dodged them for more than 40 days. They found him in Cuddalore and served the notice. As he refused to cooperate, he was taken into custody on January 17. An arrest intimation was issued to his relatives and he was produced before the local magistrate. The advocate for the accused challenged his arrest, contending that it was illegal. Later, he was produced before the jurisdictional magistrate court in the city, which passed the arrest order. Challenging this order, the petitioner’s counsel submitted that the police have failed to digitally or physically serve the notice under Section 35(3) to his client. This violated the guidelines issued by the apex court. Refuting it, additional state public prosecutor BN Jagadeesha contended that the police tried to serve the notice several times and made efforts to contact him for more than 40 days. Finally, the police found him in Cuddalore, where he refused to accept the notice. Therefore, he was arrested, Jagadeesha said, furnishing call records and geo-location of the petitioner.

Madhya Pradesh govt seeks GI certification for three traditional crops Cultivated in tribal areas

Bhopal, Mar 31: The Madhya Pradesh government has proposed for Geographical Indication (GI) certification for three traditional crops cultivated in tribal dominated districts, including two millet varieties. Proposal for GI certification have been sent for Sitahi Kutki, Nagdaman Kutki (both millet varieties) and the Purple Pigeon Pea (Baingani Arhar) have been prepared and sent to the Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai, official sources in the MP government said. Nearly 60,000 tribal farmers, especially from Dindori, Mandla, Anuppur, Chhindwara, Shahdol, Umaria, Balaghat, and parts of Jabalpur, can benefit economically by increasing production. Farmers from 54 villages in the hilly and remote areas of Dindori have already gained profits from its cultivation, particularly in areas where other rabi crops are not grown. As part of the strategy to boost production of Shree Anna (millets) during 2026, which has been declared as the Year of Farmers Welfare in MP, the state government is particularly focussed on varieties being cultivated by farmers in tribal-dominated regions. The GI tag for the crop varieties

known for their medicinal properties and high nutritional value, will guarantee their authenticity and quality, enhancing their demand in the international markets. It will also increase sales and certify that the crops meet established standards. Among the three crop varieties, the millet variety Sitahi Kutki is a short-duration (about 60 days) indigenous variety of Little Millet, suitable for rain-fed areas and late sowing conditions. It is also tolerant to drought, low moisture, and major pests such as shoot fly, as well as diseases like grain smut and brown spot, ensuring stable yields for farmers. Due to its medium height and strong stems, the crop does not get dislodged easily and can be cultivated even in hilly, uneven and low-fertility soils. It offers good income opportunities for farmers belonging to the Baiga and Gond tribes in Dindori district. In tribal dominated Dindori district, its cultivation has expanded to 10,395 hectares, with a stable yield of 10–11 quintals per hectare, contributing significantly to livelihood security, food security, and nutritional security in the region.

Assembly by poll with elaborate security arrangements Tripura gears up for TTAADC

Agartala, Mar 31: The government of Tripura is set to implement comprehensive security measures to ensure the peaceful and smooth conduct of the upcoming elections to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) and the by-election in the Dharmanagar Assembly constituency, officials said on Monday. The 30-member TTAADC, which includes 28 elected representatives and two members nominated by the state government, will go to the polls on April 12. Meanwhile, the by-election for the Dharmanagar Assembly seat in North Tripura district is scheduled for April 9. A senior police official stated that Director General of Police (DGP) Anurag chaired a high-level review meeting in hybrid mode with senior officers from the Police Headquarters. The meeting was attended by Superintendents of Police from all eight districts, Commandants of the Tripura State Rifles (TSR), and Sub-Divisional Police Officers (SDPOs), focusing on election preparedness and security arrangements. According to officials, personnel from the state police, TSR, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and Assam Rifles will be deployed to maintain law and order during the elections.

In a parallel development, a security coordination meeting was held earlier between Assam Rifles officials and the district administration of Khowai district. The meeting included the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police, who reviewed the security situation in the bordering district in view of the upcoming TTAADC elections. Officials discussed the prevailing security scenario and identified sensitive areas requiring heightened vigilance. Emphasis was placed on ensuring peaceful elections through strong coordination, timely intelligence sharing, and joint operational planning among all agencies. Mechanisms for mutual support and rapid response to any contingencies during the election period were also outlined. The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation by Assam Rifles officials, along with the district administration and police, to work in close coordination to maintain law and order and ensure a secure electoral environment. Administering nearly two-thirds of Tripura’s 10,491 sq km geographical area, the TTAADC region is home to



over 12.16 lakh people, around 84 per cent of whom belong to indigenous tribal communities. This makes the council one of the most significant constitutional bodies in the state’s political landscape. The elections have drawn participation from major political players, including the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Front, and the Congress. Regional parties such as the Tipra Motha Party (TMP) and the Indigenous People’s Front of Tripura (IPFT), along with local parties and Independent candidates, are also in the fray. Altogether, 173 candidates are contesting across 28 TTAADC seats. The BJP’s tribal allies, TMP and IPFT, are contesting separately after failing to reach an alliance for the council polls. In the Dharmanagar Assembly by-election, six candidates from major parties, including the BJP, CPI(M)-led Left Front, and Congress, are contesting. Additional candidates from the Amra Bangalee, Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist), and an Independent candidate are also in the race. The by-election was necessitated by the demise of sitting MLA and Assembly Speaker Biswa Bandhu Sen, who passed away on December 26, 2025, at a private hospital in Bengaluru after a prolonged illness. He was 72.

35 years on, can Kurmi family hold fort in Mariani constituency

■ BJP MLA Rupjyoti Kurmi is now facing a challenge from Rajjor Dal’s Gyanashree Bora, who is the consensus candidate of the Congress-led six-party Opposition.

Jorhat, Mar 31: For Assam BJP MLA Rupjyoti Kurmi (48), his true strength lies in his ability to stand by his people, rain or shine. How much he could achieve to develop his Mariani constituency on the Nagaland border in Jorhat district may be a matter of debate, but people love him because he is accessible. Invite him to a wedding or call him in times of loss – he will make it nine out of ten times. People often find him at crematorium grounds, standing with grieving families, or working alongside villagers to repair roads or carrying relief materials to those affected by a disaster. The Kurmi family has held the Mariani seat for 35 years, albeit with a two-year gap. Rupjyoti’s mother, Rupam Kurmi, a Congress leader, served as an MLA for 13 years. She was a cabinet minister in Tarun Gogoi’s first government (2001-06) when she died in 2004. The death necessitated a by-election, which Alok Kumar Ghosh of the Trinamool Congress had won, defeating his Congress rival. In the 2006 elections, the Congress had fielded Rupjyoti, and he defeated Ghosh who contested on NCP’s ticket. Rupjyoti was re-elected from the seat in 2011, 2016 and 2021 as a Congress candidate. Barely a month after winning the 2021 polls, he joined



the BJP and later, won the by-election. Kurmi, an Adivasi (Tea Tribe) leader, is now facing a challenge from Rajjor Dal’s Gyanashree Bora (34), who is the consensus candidate of the Congress-led six-party Opposition. However, he is confident that his grassroots connections would see him through. He said he had participated in the last rites of more than 2,000 people and attended over 10,000 weddings. “Not just standing by these families during their happy or difficult times, I had also helped them. This is why I have kept winning polls. I am confident that I will become an MLA for the sixth time in a row,” Rupjyoti said. He predicted the defeat of the Rajjor Dal candidate, stating that politics is a different ballgame altogether where candidates do not get success overnight. “It’s sad that her political career will be over before it even begins. People cannot defeat me because I consider my constituency as a temple. I have personal-

ly taken care of it, cleaning it with my own hands, and placing it in my heart. If someone just comes and says, ‘God, I want blessings,’ it doesn’t work like that. You will succeed in politics only if you work hard,” Rupjyoti said. Gyanashree, a PhD holder who recently resigned as an assistant lecturer of a college, is hoping to defeat the BJP MLA by taking the unresolved issues to the people. She is visiting different areas to highlight the bad condition of roads and the lack of drinking water facilities. “We want to do value-based politics with thrust on development, education, health, industrialisation etc. Mariani continues to face various problems. Most families still do not have access to clean drinking water. But he felt that Rupjyoti has an edge due to his grassroots connect. “Assam, perhaps, does not have another MLA who is so deeply connected to people. Call him if you have a problem and he will be right there with you.”

Residents warn of stir over delay in road construction

Imphal, Mar 31: Expressing strong dissatisfaction over prolonged delay in the construction of the Wabagai Lamkhai to Sugnu road, which has remained incomplete for over 13 years despite repeated assurances, the public has warned that a bandh/blockade will be imposed if work does not resume within the given deadline. In this regard, a public meeting was held on Monday at Thumkhong Lairembi Community Hall, Waikhong, in the presence of members of Meira Paibi groups, local clubs/CSOs, and a large number of residents. During the meeting, various speakers highlighted the hardships faced by the public due to the deplorable condition of the road. It was pointed out that the Wabagai Lamkhai–Sugnu State Highway, which serves a population of over two lakh people, has remained neglected for the past 13–14 years. Although construction work was formally initiated on June 2, 2024, and a road construction committee was formed by the locals—who also held more than 10 protest meetings, the government has failed to take concrete action so far. Following the announcement of a



bandh/blockade earlier, then Works Minister K. Govindas held a meeting with the committee members on August 19, 2024, and assured that the road construction would resume within 10 days and it will be completed to a satisfactory standard. However, even after a year, the work has neither progressed nor been completed. The road stretch, measuring approximately 27.74 km, was reportedly relaunched on February 2 and February 15, 2026, from both Wabagai Lamkhai and Sugnu sides in the presence of MLAs from the Sugnu and Hiyanglam constituencies, along with offi-

cials from the concerned departments. It was announced that the road would be constructed with a width of 18 feet and proper quality standards. However, after barely 20 days of work, construction has come to a halt again. During today’s meeting, participants alleged that the contractor stopped work midway without valid reasons and urged the government to take immediate action. It was also noted that during the last Assembly session held from March 9 to March 17, MLAs of the two constituencies raised questions regarding the stalled project, but no satisfactory response was provided.

After thorough deliberation, the meeting resolved that the government must resume construction of the Wabagai Lamkhai–Sugnu road from both ends with proper quality and visible progress by April 5 and that any existing imbalance in road layers and potholes must be corrected to ensure smooth transportation. If the demands are not fulfilled by April 5, a bandh/blockade will be imposed starting April 6. However, it was clarified that essential services such as fire and emergency services, water supply, medical services, and religious activities will be exempted from the proposed bandh/blockade.

JSU seeks national law to curb racial abuse against NE people

Aizawl, Mar 31: The Jaintia Students’ Union (JSU) has urged the Centre to enact a comprehensive National Anti-Discrimination Law to curb racial abuse and violence against people from Northeast India.

“We have requested that immediate steps be taken to address the growing incidents of discrimination faced by the people of Northeast India across the country, and to enact a comprehensive National Anti-Discrimination Law to ensure their safety, dignity, and protection of the people of the region,” JSU adviser A Suchiang said in a memorandum submitted to Meghalaya Governor CH Vijayashankar.

He said incidents such as the killing of Nido Tania and Angel Chakma, besides hrecent abuse of three Arunachal Pradesh women show a “systemic issue”.

“Equality is not a privilege, it is a constitutional right. Justice delayed is justice denied,” Suchiang said.

The union proposed graded punishments for racially motivated offences — up to six months for verbal abuse, three years for assault, and life or death where attacks cause fatalities — and called for urgent central action to ensure safety and dignity for Northeastern citizens nationwide.

“We proposed that a National Anti-Discrimination Law should include strong and specific provisions to deter such acts and deliver justice effectively. These include: Verbal racial abuse or the use of racial slurs should be punishable with imprisonment of up to 6 months along with a fine. Physical assault motivated by racial hatred should be punishable with imprisonment of up to 3 years along with a fine. Murder or fatal attacks driven by racial hatred should attract the gravest penalties, including life imprisonment or even the death penalty, depending on the severity of the offence,” Suchiang said.

“We firmly believe that such a law will not only act as a deterrent but will also send a strong message that discrimination and racism have no place in our diverse and democratic nation. We urge the Government of India to act decisively and uphold the constitutional promise of equality, dignity, and justice for all citizens, including those from the Northeast,” he concluded.

MNYO condoles killing of 4 four NSCN cadres in Kamjong

Imphal, Mar 31: The Manipur Naga Youth Organisation (MNYO) has expressed profound sorrow over the tragic killing of four cadres of GPRN/NSCN Eastern Flank at Hongbei village in Kamjong on March 28, saying this deeply distressing incident has pained Naga people and stands as a solemn reminder of the urgent need to preserve unity among Naga brothers. At this critical juncture, MNYO made a strong and earnest appeal to all concerned to exercise utmost restraint, wisdom, and responsible leadership. Any form of fratricidal violence among ourselves only weakens our collective strength and distances us from our shared aspirations as a people, MNYO said in a press release. It also called for a proper, impartial, and transparent approach into the incident so that reasonable explanation is revealed to the Naga public and to the family of victims for finding the peace solution to the tragic incidents and subsequent adverse public reactions thereby justice is ensured. A credible process of accountability is essential to restore trust and prevent further misunderstanding, it said.

50 displaced families return installment amount to BDO



Imphal, Mar 31: As many as 50 internally displaced families from Ekuu village, currently staying at Sajiwa and Swombung Relief Camps, on Monday, returned the first installment amount of Rs 24 lakh to the Sawombung Block Development Officer, protesting what they termed as inadequate financial assistance for house reconstruction. The families said the amount was part of the first phase instalment meant for rebuilding their homes. However, they expressed dissatisfaction over the total sanctioned assistance of Rs 3 lakh per family, stating that the amount is insufficient to construct even a basic house. The IDPs also lamented their worsening condition, stating that they are unable to return to their native village to begin construction due to the prevailing situ-

● On Monday, 50 internally displaced families from Ekuu village protested by returning a Rs 24 lakh installment to the Sawombung Block Development Officer, claiming the financial assistance for house reconstruction was inadequate.

ation, and even if they return, the sanctioned amount would not meet the actual cost of rebuilding. The protest was held at the Swombung C.D Block office around 12 noon, where the families jointly returned the instalment amount and demanded the government to revise the housing assistance package. The protesters warned that without proper financial support, reconstruction and resettlement of displaced families will remain impossible.

MP Bimol writes to Amit Shah, seeks deferment of census exercise in Manipur

Imphal, Mar 31: Congress MP Bimol Akoiyam submitted a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday urging the latter to defer the census and delimitation exercise in Manipur until the Government conducts the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise to update the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC), as mandated by the amendment to the Citizenship Act, 1955, in 2003, which was unanimously passed by the Parliament, so that a reliable citizen database is first established in the state of Manipur before any census-linked delimitation exercise is undertaken in the state. In the letter, MP Bimol stated that while conducting such an exercise, it must be ensured that mechanisms to address the limitations experienced in Assam are taken care of so that the genuine and legitimate citizens do not get victimised. Along with this, the government must also set up a Foreigners Tribunal for Manipur under the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, so that aliens/foreigners are delineated from the genuine citizens, and that the process is carried out in a lawful, fair, and time-bound manner, it stated. The MP stated that in order to do this, the law and order situation in Manipur must also be taken care of, and the illegal armed groups that are running parallel authority in the state, especially in remote

areas, must be brought under control and made accountable so that any verification exercise can be conducted peacefully, transparently, and without coercion. There is a widespread apprehension regarding the presence of illegal immigrants in the state of Manipur. This concern is understandable as the state has a porous international boundary, and the unstable situation in neighbouring Myanmar has led to a large inflow of alien subjects into the state, is a recorded fact. It must also be noted that immigrants from South East Asia, particularly erstwhile Burma (now Myanmar), into Manipur is not new. Historically, immigrants from South East Asia have been coming into the state, more perceptibly from the mid-19th century onwards, the letter stated. However, these immigrants should not be conflated with alien subjects who have crossed over during the postcolonial period, even as Manipur absorbed huge population from the erstwhile Burma following its independence in 1948 and abolition of foreign regulation permit system in 1950 by the then Chief Commissioner of the state, it stated. Moreover, the demographic impact on India’s Northeast, including Manipur, due to the developments in the erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) is also

a known fact. Furthermore, there is also a perceptible concern amongst local stakeholders and civil society groups that such illegal immigrants might have been encouraged, and later allowed to be absorbed into the local population, by politicians as their vote banks and vested interest groups to serve their sectarian agendas, often by denying the difference between citizens and non-citizens on the basis of ethnicity, the MP stated. What has deepened the public anxiety about these illegal immigrants is the concern being raised on their involvement in the present crisis in Manipur, including the menace of illicit drug business, often exemplified by the arrests and recovery of banned psychotropic substances and the massive presence of illicit plantation of poppy, extending the sphere of the “Golden Triangle” to the State of Manipur, it stated. An objective assessment is required to distinguish the citizens from the non-citizens in the state of Manipur to ensure that genuine citizens are not victimized and communities do not get demonised through false narratives. Additionally, we must also objectively resolve the anomalies of the controversial census and ensure that the faulty census data does not become the basis for any delimitation exercise, the MP stated.

ED attaches property in case related to AB-PMJAY fraud in Assam

Guwahati, Mar 31: Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Guwahati Zonal Office, has provisionally attached immovable and movable properties having a total value of Rs 29.77 lakh under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with its investigation into large-scale fraud under the Ayushman Bharat (AB-PMJAY) scheme in Assam.

ED investigation was initiated on the basis of an FIR registered at Algaipur Police Station, Hailakandi and a subsequent chargesheet filed against Dr Nozmul Islam Choudhury, proprietor of Noble Hospital and Research Centre, Algaipur, Hailakandi for commission of offences under Sections 420 (cheating) and 468 (forgery for the purpose of cheating) of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, which are scheduled offences under Part A of the Schedule to PMLA, 2002.

ED investigation revealed that Noble Hospital and Research Centre, which was empanelled under the AB-PMJAY scheme implemented in Assam through the Atal Amrit Abhiyan Society (AAAS), fraudulently raised 920 fake reimbursement claims amounting to Rs 77.83 lakh during the period from February 22, 2019 to November 5, 2022 without providing any actual medical treatment to the beneficiaries. The hospital systematically exploited the scheme by luring AB-PMJAY cardholders, photographing them lying on hospital beds to falsely depict hospitalisation, and uploading fabricated treatment records onto the Transaction Management System (TMS) portal to generate and submit reimbursement claims for treatment costs that were never incurred.

A net amount of Rs 69.42 lakh (after deduction of TDS) was disbursed

by the Atal Amrit Abhiyan Society to the hospital’s bank accounts maintained with Canara Bank, Hailakandi Branch.

Investigation has traced the money trail and established that the proceeds of crime were systematically siphoned off and laundered through cash withdrawals via ATMs, transfers to the personal bank account of the accused held with Axis Bank, UPI transactions to various individuals, and transfers to related persons, including the accused’s brother. The bank accounts were subsequently depleted and closed, demonstrating a deliberate attempt to layer and disperse the funds to obscure their criminal origin.

Investigation has further revealed that the fraudulent activities of Noble Hospital and Research Centre were detected following a beneficiary audit conducted by a team of Atal

Amrit Abhiyan Society, which found that most payment claims raised by the hospital were false and fabricated. Beneficiaries who were shown as indoor patients in the claims were found to have only visited the hospital as outpatients and were never actually admitted. Consequently, the hospital was de-empanelled from the AB-PMJAY scheme vide order dated November 21, 2022, and an FIR was lodged. The hospital has been closed in 2023.

Investigation has established that the proceeds of crime were rapidly dissipated, and the bank accounts of the hospital were depleted and closed.

In the absence of directly available proceeds of crime, the ED has attached properties representing the value of such proceeds as defined under Section 2(1)(u) of the PMLA, 2002.

First round of National Deworming Day launched in Kakching

Imphal, Mar 31: The district-level launch of National Deworming Day (1st Round 2026) for Kakching district was held today at Langmeidong Higher Secondary School, Langmeidong, organised by the District Health Society Kakching in collaboration with the Zonal Education Office, Kakching. Altogether, around 100 students were administered deworming tablets. The tablets were distributed in all schools across Kakching district with the launch of National Deworming Day today. The programme was attended by Dr. Th. Rajen Singh, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and District Mission Director, District Health Society Kakching, as Chief Guest; Mayanglambam Rakesh, Zonal Education Officer, Kakching, as President; along with Ch. Khomei Singh, Principal of Langmeidong Higher Secondary School; M. Bimola Devi, Supervisor, ICDS Kakching; and Dr. Th. Shyamananda Singh, DNO, Child Health, Kakching district, as Guests of Honour. ASHA workers, and teachers of Langmeidong Higher Secondary School also participated in today’s deworming campaign. Another round of deworming will be held on April 7, to cover those who missed today’s deworming administration. National Deworming Day is an initiative of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, with the objective of deworming all preschool and school-age children (enrolled and non-enrolled) between the ages of 1 and 19 years through schools and Anganwadi Centres, in order to improve their overall health, nutritional status, access to education, and quality of life.

RIMS achieves milestone with first successful aorto-biliac bypass surgery

Imphal, Mar 31: The Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal has achieved a significant milestone by successfully performing a complex aorto-biliac bypass surgery for a large bilateral common iliac artery aneurysm—marking the first such procedure in the state of Manipur. The surgery was performed on a 79-year-old male patient on March 15, 2026, who presented with a large bilateral common iliac artery aneurysm with impending rupture. The case was further complicated by uncontrolled hypertension and a prior history of stroke, which had resulted in weakness on the right side of the body. Following the successful procedure, the patient has made a full recovery and was discharged last week. Bilateral common iliac artery aneurysms involving both the left and right sides are rare and demand a high level of surgical expertise due to their technical complexity. The successful outcome underscores the advanced ca-

pabilities and multidisciplinary coordination at RIMS. The surgical team was led by Prof. Thokchom Chito, Head of the Department of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery (CTVS). The cardiac anaesthesia team was led by Prof. L. Pradipkumar and Dr. Ningri Sengul, while the general surgery team was led by Prof. Laitonjam Chinglensana. In addition to this achievement, RIMS has conducted 13 open heart surgeries during the month. These included procedures for Atrial Septal Defect (ASD), Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD), Tetralogy of Fallot, Double Chambered Right Ventricle, and heart valve replacements. All surgeries were carried out under the overall supervision of Dr. Shyamkumar Thingnam. The team expressed their sincere gratitude to the Director and the Medical Superintendent of RIMS for their constant support, guidance, and encouragement in successfully carrying out such complex and high-risk procedures.

MNF Expresses Confidence In AMC Poll Victory While Targeting Rival ZPM In Mizoram Elections

Aizawl, Mar 31: Senior vice president of the Mizo National Front (MNF) and MLA R. Lalthangliana on Monday expressed strong confidence in the party’s prospects for the upcoming elections to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), scheduled for April 21. Speaking at the release of the party’s manifesto at the MNF office in Aizawl, Lalthangliana said the party would contest all 19 seats in the municipal body. He asserted that candidates have been carefully select-

ed and highlighted what he described as the MNF’s role in creating “numerous permanent assets” for the city. The manifesto was formally released by party president and former Chief Minister Zoramthanga. Targeting the ruling Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM), Lalthangliana alleged that the government delayed the AMC elections, claiming it lacked the confidence to face polls before the previous council’s term ended on March 1. He also criticised recent road repair

works in Aizawl, terming them “cosmetic measures” funded through public tax revenues on fuel. The former Health Minister further alleged that the ZPM’s Mizoram Universal Health Care Scheme (MUHCS) is largely a rebranded version of a healthcare model originally conceptualised by the MNF, with minimal changes. Claiming political momentum, Lalthangliana said the MNF has performed strongly in most elections held since the ZPM came to power, adding that the ruling party secured victories only in constituencies where the MNF’s performance weakened. According to official data, a total of 68 candidates, including 28 women, are contesting the AMC polls. The MNF, ZPM, and the Indian National Congress have fielded candidates in all 19 wards, while the Bharatiya Janata Party has nominated 11 candidates. State Election Commissioner H. Lalthangliana stated that no candidate withdrew nominations by the close of the withdrawal deadline on Monday.

North East Chronicle

APRIL 01 2026 VOL 02 NO. 38

Editorial

Oil and war top financial markets worry list for an uncertain Q2

Battered financial markets enter the second quarter significantly exposed to war headlines, a backdrop that could prompt a bigger retreat for equity markets while a hefty selloff in bonds could tempt buyers back. Even if a resolution to the conflict boosts near-term sentiment, damage inflicted on Middle East energy infrastructure and higher for longer oil prices will still hurt economic growth and drive up inflation, investors expect. It's a backdrop that could prompt a bigger retreat for equity markets, while a more protracted conflict that sees growth worries outpace inflation angst could prompt a recovery in bonds. "It's difficult to look through the noise when the noise is all we have," said Seema Shah, chief global strategist at Principal Asset Management, which manages roughly \$594 billion. "We've been pushing towards international (stocks) exposure and that continues to make sense, but it doesn't mean you close off your exposure to the US." War in the Middle East tops a turbulent first quarter, with markets also whipped around by US President Donald Trump's intervention in Venezuela, threats over Greenland, and AI disruption. Oil is the clear outperformer, surging roughly 90 percent this quarter to above \$100. That's jolted bond investors, who have ramped up interest rate-hike expectations. So long as current supply disruptions are sustained, analysts polled by Reuters estimate oil prices between \$100 and \$190, with an average forecast of \$134.62. Online prediction market platform Polymarket gives a roughly 36 percent chance of the war ending by mid-May, and a 60 percent chance by the end of June. Chiming with 2022's inflation surge, Britain and Italy's short-dated borrowing costs have jumped 75 basis points each this quarter. US, German and Japanese bond moves are also significant. "In all the historical oil shocks, only two things matter: one, the duration of the shock and second, the central bank reaction, which defines the broader risk appetite," said Societe Generale multi-asset strategist Manish Kabra. US stocks ended mostly lower on Monday, with the exception of the Dow, which edged up marginally, while the S&P 500 shed about four-tenths of a percent and the Nasdaq slid more than seven-tenths of a percent. Since the Iran war started, traders have priced out US rate cuts by year-end. In the euro area, they expect three rate hikes and at least two in Britain, having previously expected easing. An emerging markets monetary easing push has been short-circuited. Kabra said one focal point for markets could be the May US Memorial Day holiday weekend, the start of a heavy travel season that could see pressure from consumers on policy-

Is calling a woman ‘auntie’ ageist harassment – or a mark of respect? It’s a trickier question than you think

It should be uncontroversial to state that what we want to be called – or do not want to be called – should be respected. This simple enough principle is what defined the grievance between NHS co-workers Ilda Esteves and her colleague Charles Oppong. Last week, an employment tribunal ruled in Esteves' favour, agreeing she was subjected to harassment from Oppong for his repeated references to her as "auntie".

The healthcare assistant was awarded £1,425 in compensation. The tribunal heard that Oppong defended his actions by claiming "auntie" was, in his Ghanaian culture, a term of respect for older women. But Esteves, 61, had asked him to stop. He did not. It went further than the unwanted name. Oppong also suggested, the tribunal heard, that an older colleague would be a "good match" for Esteves: this was clearly a case of inappropriate over-familiarity. The dispute is perhaps especially charged because the workplace sharpens the gulf between what is learned behaviour from home and what is appropriate in our shared spaces, such as school or work. Habits we have been raised to see as harmless – be that a jokey manner, the liberal use of expletives in our sen-



tences or, as in this case, the title used to address our colleagues – can be read very differently.

This is why, despite Oppong's clear transgression, the story – shared on a parent group chat and duly forwarded by me (as any self-respecting "auntie" would) to family and black and brown friends – struck a note of discomfort. For many west African, Caribbean and South Asian people, "auntie" and "uncle" are, indeed, used as honorifics. In fact, last year DKMS UK, a charity fighting against blood cancer and blood disorders,

launched the campaign Listen to your Aunties! to encourage Black and South Asian communities to join the stem cell donor register – a clear signal that this is a title conveying authority.

It is so ingrained in many of us that it can come out like a reflex: in childhood, referring to an elder person by their first name could earn you a rebuke from your parents for being disrespectful. You are older than me, those terms say, and that carries weight. In these contexts, using auntie and uncle signals good manners. It shows, too, that we are part of a culture

that values age, viewing it as imbued with the twin wealth of experience and wisdom. Of course, members of the diaspora can invert the premise of these terms to emphasise how out of touch an elder person is. Describing a person as an auntie or uncle can be used to challenge their authority or understanding. Its migration across continents means that it can impart dignity in one culture while being quietly embarrassing in another. So when auntie lands in the British workplace, in a culture where age hierarchies are flattened, it arrives laden with

implications. Rather than as a sign of respect, it can be interpreted as an attempt to undermine a colleague, or even push them out. For this is a society in which older women feel compelled to hide their age due to ageism and misogyny: our age becomes something to ignore, rather than to be celebrated. Despite this, I personally do not share this western discomfort with ageing. I am unmistakably now middle-aged, and when I relay that to colleagues or new acquaintances, it is met with a peculiar response. People behave as though being frank about your age amounts to self-deprecation. "You don't look it," they might say.

Meant kindly, without a doubt, but odd given that I do. The cultural framework goes: she is older and therefore wishes to be younger. But as my brother, who lives in Nigeria, astutely puts it: "I have earned my grey hairs." Every single one. This is what comes from belonging to multiple cultural identities: one set of assumptions is brought into sharp relief because you have been shaped by another. What is the problem with looking my age and visibly carrying signs of the years I have lived? Likewise, why must I consider it taboo or even rude

to be asked how old I am and thereby respond with hedging or the sense that I have been offended? Why should my 45 years on this planet be borne as a source of shame? What can't be denied is that a corollary of not "seeing" a person's age is the awful fact of turning them invisible.

How liberating to step beyond those limitations. To acknowledge getting old with pride rather than regret. It explains why the word "auntie" lands so differently for me. This is not to say I necessarily want to be called it in every context or by everyone, but I also recognise what the moniker is trying to do. By not denying age and instead valorising it, it makes clear its worth.

To age like a fine wine shouldn't, then, be a special compliment for those of us who are deemed to be doing it correctly – not least because at its heart sits the premise that ageing is, inherently, the process of becoming sullied. Here's to growing old proudly and disentangling ourselves from the worship of youth. Still, persisting with a title someone has rejected is not a sign of respect. Take the statement as it is intended: free (and perhaps unsolicited) advice from an ageing auntie.

Bangladesh needs to face the deadly illusion of the “game” of migration immediately

A large section of Bangladesh's youth today finds itself confronting a stark reality in which some of life's most consequential decisions are made not on the basis of rationality or safety but are driven by frustration, social pressures, and the dream of achieving rapid success. One such decision is the attempt to reach Europe through irregular sea routes, evading border guards and crossing borders illegally—a process colloquially referred to as “game.” News headlines repeatedly highlight stories of capsized boats (mostly in the Mediterranean Sea), missing young men, and victims of human trafficking intercepted at borders. Yet, the journey of undocumented migrants continues, even as the latest Middle East crisis rages on. In fact, this dangerous journey is expanding further with the emergence of new routes, evolved trafficking networks, and increasingly sophisticated methods. Why do Bangladeshis knowingly take such life-threatening risks? Sadly, there is no simple answer to this question. This is not merely a consequence of economic hardship; rather, it reflects a complex, multi-layered social reality. First, the lack of sufficient employment opportunities and income instability discourages many young people from envisioning a future within the country. At the same time, it is true that millions continue to work, run businesses, and sustain themselves in Bangladesh. Thus, the issue is not solely the absence of opportunity, but rather a profound gap between expectations and reality. Second, migration has increasingly become a marker of elevated social status. Stories such as “someone went to Italy and became successful” exert a far greater influence than the harsher realities of migration. As a result, the concept of going abroad has transformed from an economic decision into a form of social competition.

Third, the effort, skill, and patience required for legal migration, such as establishing language proficiency, passing standardised tests, maintaining strong academic records, and/or acquiring technical training, can often be avoided in the so-called “game.” This gap is precisely



what drives many towards irregular migration routes. Fourth, human trafficking syndicates actively exploit this demand. They do not merely traffic people; they advertise a dream—one in which risks are concealed and success stories are exaggerated. In many cases, these networks operate with political patronage, making effective enforcement difficult. Finally, there is a deeper psychological dimension: disillusionment and alienation from the state. Many young people believe that they must leave the country “by any means necessary,” even if it involves the risk of death. Ongoing political instability and a sense of insecurity fuel this tendency. The “dream of Europe” becomes so powerful that many are willing to step into the deadly waters of the Mediterranean to pursue it.

According to the International Organization for Migration, at least 606 migrants died or went missing along the Mediterranean route in just the first two months of this year. In a recent incident, at least 22 migrant hopefuls died

while attempting to cross the sea in a small rubber boat from Libya to Greece, and 18 of them were reportedly from Bangladesh. The boat had left a port in Libya on March 21 carrying 43 people. The passengers on board lost bearings during the journey, spending six days at sea without food and water, according to survivors rescued by a European border agency vessel. Sadly, these irregular migrations also impact the credibility of the Bangladeshi passport, whose value has effectively deteriorated. Consequently, even travellers with valid visas are now subjected to heightened scrutiny and extensive questioning at immigration checkpoints. Furthermore, several countries have tightened their visa policies and, in some cases, temporarily suspended immigrant visa processing for Bangladeshis.

To combat human trafficking, Bangladesh enacted the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012. However, despite the existence of this law, trafficking networks continued to expand, irregular migration

routes sustained, and cases of fraud remained widespread. Recognising these limitations, the interim government promulgated the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Ordinance, 2026 on January 6, which could be an important policy advancement if implemented properly. For the first time, this ordinance addresses previous gaps by formally recognising migrant smuggling as a distinct criminal offence alongside human trafficking. As a result, the so-called “game” towards Europe is no longer merely an unethical act; it is now clearly defined as a punishable offense, with provisions for long-term imprisonment, fines, and, in severe cases, life imprisonment for organised trafficking syndicates. Not only direct traffickers but also their facilitators, financiers, and intermediaries can be brought within the scope of punishment. Measures such as asset seizure, freezing of bank accounts, and travel bans have been incorporated, targeting the financial foundations of these

networks. Importantly, the law also addresses contemporary challenges. It brings online recruitment and digital exploitation, through which many young people are lured, under legal scrutiny. It further includes provisions for victim and witness protection, and explicitly recognises other forms of trafficking such as organ trafficking and forced criminality. Therefore, it is crucial that this ordinance be swiftly passed into law by the parliament and, more importantly, effectively implemented. However, the depth of this crisis means that no single solution will suffice and that a coordinated approach is essential. First, trafficking syndicates must be dismantled through strict and impartial enforcement of the law, without any political concessions. Second, mandatory pre-departure training must be introduced for aspiring migrants, focusing on language, skills, and labour rights. The government must also provide maximum support for students seeking higher education abroad. In this context, the new BNP government's initiative to provide loans of up to Tk 10 lakh as financial support for overseas education—to meet bank guarantee or solvency requirements—deserves commendation. This policy can offer a viable alternative to risky and irregular migration. Pursuing education abroad through legal means, acquiring skills, and entering the global labour market benefits not only individuals but the country as a whole. Third, widespread public awareness must be built regarding the risks of irregular migration, particularly in rural areas.

Finally, it is imperative to establish effective institutional support systems for Bangladeshis in distress abroad. Many migrants who travel without proper documentation face detention, abuse, or legal complications but fail to receive timely assistance. Strengthening embassy capacities, establishing emergency helplines, providing legal aid, and actively protecting labour rights are crucial. At the same time, safe and dignified repatriation mechanisms must be ensured for those wishing to return home.

Rupee rebounds 128 paise against US dollar in trade

Mumbai: The rupee recovered 128 paise from its all-time low to 93.57 against the US dollar in early trade on Monday, after the Reserve Bank brought down the net open position that banks can keep overnight at USD 100 million.

Forex traders said the rupee opened stronger as banks who generally have long positions, may have to cut their positions taken in onshore currency markets as per the RBI Director. Through its circular dated March 27, 2026, RBI capped the Net Open Position (NOP-INR) for banks at USD 100 million, with compliance required by April 10. Key market veteran and founder of Asksandipsabharwal.com, Sandip Sabharwal, pointed out that, “The entire hypothesis that banks are going to make huge losses in unwinding speculative INR positions as per the recent RBI guidelines is deeply flawed. USDINR today is lower than it was on Thursday. Any unwinding as of now will still be profitable

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 93.62 and then gained further ground to 93.57 against the US dollar, registering a gain of 128 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee slumped by a massive 89 paise to close at a historic low of 94.85 against the US dollar.

“As banks begin adjusting their positions, they are likely to sell dollars in the market, which can temporarily support the rupee.

This creates a phase of relief, driven by position unwinding, not by a major shift in fundamentals, but still meaningful in the near term,” CR Forex Advisors MD Amit Pabari said.However, the USD/INR pair is facing pressure from the elevated dollar index and crude oil prices. Safe-haven demand is keeping the dollar index firm above the 100 mark, limiting any meaningful recovery in the rupee, forex traders said.Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.06 per cent lower at 100.09.Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading at USD 115 per barrel, up 2.16 per cent, in futures trade.Geopolitical tensions quickly reflected in oil prices. Crude surged as fears of supply disruptions increased. “For India, this is critical. Being a major oil importer, higher oil prices increase dollar demand, which directly puts pressure on the rupee,” Pabari said.The overall picture for the rupee remains delicate, with rising oil prices, ongoing geopolitical tensions, and a strong dollar environment continuing to keep pressure on the currency, he added.On the domestic equity market front, Sensex tumbled 1,191.24 points to 72,391.98 in early trade, while the Nifty slumped 349.45 points to 22,470.15. Foreign institutional investors sold equities worth Rs 4,367.30 crore on a net basis on Friday, according to exchange data.

Why was the banking industry alarmed by the RBI’s move on vacant positions

Mumbai: The banking stocks have seen a sharp cut in trade today. Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Shriram Finance, Bajaj Finance, and State Bank of India were among the key Nifty losers. The Nifty Bank Index is down over 2.5% intra-day today. The AU Small Finance Bank has plunged over 4%.

Stocks making the biggest moves midday: HDFC Bank, Coal India, IRB Infrastructure and moreThe lender of the last resort announced these rules on Friday, March 27, to stop speculative bets against the currency.Expert take on RBI action on open positions

Key market veteran and founder of Asksandipsabharwal.com, Sandip Sabharwal, pointed out that, “The entire hypothesis that banks are going to make huge losses in unwinding speculative INR positions as per the recent RBI guidelines is deeply flawed. USDINR today is lower than it was on Thursday. Any unwinding as of now will still be profitable. Overanalysis leads to paralysis is the best that can be said for many armchair economists/strategists.”The other key banking losers include Axis Bank, down 3.9%, IndusInd Bank, which declined 3.7%, Union Bank of India dropped 3.85%, and other stocks. All the constituents of Nifty Bank were trading in the red. Nifty Bank has dropped 15% in the last one month and 7% in the past six months. Over the last three sessions, the banking stocks have been pulling down the markets since the



heaviest constituent’s interim chairman resigned, citing governance issues. These new rules hampered down the banking sector stocks. The new rules will be effective on April 10 onwards. The new regulations are likely to compel banks to unwind their large positions and curb one-sided bets against the rupee. IIFL, meanwhile have cut the estimates for FY27 bank earnings. According to their report dated March 29, “We cut FY27-28 est. by 2-5% and are 4% below consensus now. This is led by (1) Lower NIMs due to weak COF transmission – our framework shows only

10-40bps of TD re-pricing remaining, (2) Lower treasury inc. and a potential 40-60bps of net-worth impact led by spike in bond yields, and (3) Increase in loan growth thanks to rising working capital demand, corporate borrowings moving from capital market to banks and relaxed LDR focus.Pvt banks’ recovery (15% Cagr). We are still constructive on the sector, and find risk-reward very attractive for large Pvt banks, which have de-rated vs. rerating in mid-size Pvt banks and PSUs. Our top picks are ICICI, Axis and RBL.

NSE IPO: How existing shareholders can tender shares in upcoming mega issue



Mumbai: The company also flagged ongoing legal and tax-related matters, including a pending land development dispute involving receivables of around Rs 92.3 crore and an income tax search conducted during FY25, though management expects no material financial impact from these issues at this stage. India’s housing market pulled off a February comeback. After a gloomy start to calendar year 2026, residential sales by value rose 18% year-on-year last month across the top seven cities, with volumes rising 11% over the same period. New launches by value also climbed 17% year-on-year, Nuvama adds.Bengaluru is the single most dominant market in February, and the data from Nuvama Research makes that abundantly clear. Sales by value surged 42% year-on-

year in the month, the highest among all seven cities tracked. Average prices in the region actually dip 2% year-on-year in February, the only major market to record a price fall, which points to developer pressure on pricing to move inventory.

The National Capital Region also holds the highest average ticket size in the country at approximately Rs 3.3 crore per unit in February 2026, which partly explains the demand resistance. “While year-to-date calendar year 2026 demand value was up 2 to 3% year-on-year each in Pune and Hyderabad, it fell 5 to 7% year-on-year each in Kolkata and the National Capital Region,” Nuvama adds.Nuvama Research on Mumbai Metropolitan Region- Sales hold, launches fall off a cliffMumbai Metropolitan Region records a healthy

21% year-on-year rise in sales by value in February 2026, and year-to-date demand is up 14% year-on-year the third-best performance among top cities. Prices grow 10 to 13% year-on-year, in line with the broader premiumisation trend playing out nationally. The concern, however, is on the supply side. New launches by value fall 28% year-on-year in February and are up only 10% year-on-year in the year-to-date period. Unsold inventory in Mumbai Metropolitan Region sits at 22 months, one of the higher readings nationally, which suggests the market is absorbing older stock rather than replenishing with fresh supply. Nuvama Research notes that the Mumbai Metropolitan Region is among the markets where absorption increases 13 to 21% year-on-year in February,

which is a positive read on underlying demand health.

Year-to-date in calendar year 2026, Bengaluru’s demand by value is already up 34% year-on-year, outpacing every other market by a wide margin. Prices in the city rose 17% year-on-year, and average ticket sizes shot up 27% year-on-year in February a combination of both higher per-square-foot rates and bigger homes being bought. Unsold inventory in Bengaluru stands at 16 months, one of the tighter readings nationally, suggesting supply has not kept pace with demand. New launches by value, however, dipped 1% year-on-year in February and are down 7% year-on-year in the year-to-date period, which means the supply pipeline is not expanding as fast as sales momentum might warrant.

The National Capital Region throws up the most striking contrast in the entire report. New launches by value surge 154% year-on-year in February 2026 by far the sharpest supply jump of any city. Yet demand by value falls 1% year-on-year in the same month. Year-to-date in calendar year 2026, sales by value in the National Capital Region are down 5% year-on-year, even as launches are up 13% year-on-year. That mismatch between surging supply and stagnant demand is a recipe for inventory build-up. Unsold inventory in the National Capital Region currently stands at 16 months. with Friday’s all-India market capitalisation of ₹428.76 trillion.

Rupee breaches 95 per dollar, hits record low amid West Asia conflict



Mumbai: The Indian rupee fell to a record low for the third straight session on Monday, finding only fleeting relief from the central bank’s tightening of banks’ forex position caps, as the outlook for Asian currency remained weak amid the Middle East war.

The rupee weakened past the 95 per dollar mark for the first time to 95.21 per dollar, falling 0.3 per cent from the previous close.The unit is on course to log its steepest fiscal year drop since 2011-12, as the Mideast war has raised risks for India’s inflation and growth outlook, adding to the strain from global trade frictions, geopolitical flare-ups and persistent capital outflows.Worries over elevated oil prices have put the Indian stocks on course for their worst monthly drop since March 2020 and bonds on track for their worst fiscal year

since 2023 While the rupee had opened sharply higher, its gave up gains as corporates entered arbitrage trades between the onshore spot market and non-deliverable forwards. The space for such trades was opened up by the central bank’s tightening of banks’ forex positions on Friday.Analysts say that while the move to tighten FX position limits may help steady the currency in the near-term, a depreciation bias is likely to linger..

"The bottom line is that the RBI's cap does not change the underlying dynamics that fuelled pressure on the currency," Barclays analysts said in a Monday note."The INR remains particularly vulnerable to an oil supply shock, while India's balance of payments position may deteriorate further, and capital and financial account pressures are increasing."

In India, one in three electric buses has no debt and a 5.1% return

Mumbai:The result is a cash-rich balance sheet and regular dividend payouts.The ‘next Coal India’? This debt-free media gem offers a 6% dividend yieldBut the real question is not about today’s dividends. It caters to everything from personal mobility (two-wheelers and passenger cars) to commercial fleets and tractors.Its flagship products include Gulf Pride for motorcycles and Gulf Formula SUV. To get these products to consumers, it boasts a distribution network of over 90,000 touchpoints, including around 11,600 dedicated bike and car stops across IndiaWhat makes Gulf Oil’s business strategy particularly interesting is how it is future-proofing itself against the electric vehicle (EV) revolution. This is important because EV adoption directly challenges

the demand for lubricants that drives its current cash flows. Rather than seeing EVs as just a threat, they are actively building a full-stack e-mobility ecosystem. Through its subsidiary, Tirex Transmission, the company is a major player in DC fast charging, with over 3,000 units deployed across India. The company states that it charges one out of every three electric buses in the country. Gulf Oil also invests in AC home chargers through backs ElectreeFi, India’s second-largest EV software platform, which manages charging networks, fleet integration, and dynamic pricing. Gulf Oil has developed specialized coolants, transmission fluids, and brake fluids specifically to keep EV and hybrid vehicles running cool.Additionally, it is among the top-five players in the replacement two-wheeler

battery market. The company is also a leading supplier of AdBlue, an eco-friendly Diesel Exhaust Fluid that drastically reduces harmful nitrogen oxide emissions in modern diesel vehicles, a segment seeing massive growth due to stricter environmental regulations. These facilities currently hold a capacity of 140,000 kiloliters and are undergoing a 70% expansion to reach 240,000 kiloliters to meet future demand.Gulf Oil doesn’t just sell to consumers. It makes customized lubricant solutions with over 40 Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs). Such partners include industry giants like Ashok Leyland, Bajaj, Piaggio, Mahindra, Ford, and major construction equipment builders like Ammann and ACE.

Five things you need to complete before the 2025–2026 fiscal year concludes

Mumbai: As the financial year draws to a close on March 31, 2026, taxpayers should look to complete key financial and compliance-related tasks. A timely review not only ensures adherence to the provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961, but also helps minimise interest, penalties and missed deductions. Here’s a practical guide to what should be prioritised before the books are Taxpayers with a liability of ₹10,000 or more must pay advance tax in four instalments throughout the year. Although the final deadline was March 15, advance tax can still be paid by March 31 to avoid incurring interest liability for an extended duration As the financial year draws to a close on March 31, 2026, taxpayers should look to complete key financial and compliance-related tasks. A timely review not only ensures adherence to the provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961, but also helps minimise interest, penalties and missed deductions. Here’s a practical guide to what should be prioritised before the books are closed.Advance taxTaxpayers with a liability of ₹10,000 or more must pay advance tax in four instalments throughout the year. Although the final deadline was March 15, advance tax can still be paid by March 31 to avoid incurring interest liability for an extended duratiThose following the cash system of accounting must ensure expenses are actually paid



before year-end so that these can be claimed in their profit and loss account.Donations under Section 80G should be made via banking channels and realised before March 31 to remain eligible.Loan repaymentsRepaying loans, deposits or cash credit balances before the year-end can help avoid potential scrutiny, including additions under section 68 relating to unexplained credits.Updated returnsTax payers who missed filing their return forAssessment Year 2025–26 by December 31, 2025, still have an opportunity to comply. The law permits filing an updated

return under section 139(8A) within 48 months from the end of the relevant assessment year.

This route is also useful for correcting errors in previously filed returns under Sections 139(1), 139(4), or 139(5). However, tax payers should note that filing an updated return entails payment of additional tax and interest.

Form 12B complianceSalaried individuals who changed jobs during FY26 must submit Form 12B to their new employer. This ensures accurate disclosure of prior income and proper TDS deduction.

Security Council has allowed for unfettered authority ruthlessness



Afghanistan: Every breach of international law leads to the next. From Afghanistan to Iran, as well as Iraq, Libya, Syria, Ukraine, Gaza, and Venezuela, the UN Security Council’s complicit passivity has increasingly blurred the boundary between what is authorized and what is banned. Using the veto as both a shield and a weapon, its permanent members frequently act without regard for the UN charter. They manipulate the fates of millions, creating a path of death and ruin. Until recently, there was at least an attempt to legitimize operations by UN endorsement. Today, unabashed use of power no longer attempts to maintain appearances. The boundaries of international organizations are becoming too small to contain hegemonic rivalry. Without multilateralism, we risk substituting an inade-

quate system of collective security with the harsh reality of widespread insecurity. When all restrictions on the use of force are lifted, pandemonium ensues. The globe is seeing the largest number of military conflicts since the Second globe War. It’s no surprise that this is happening at a critical juncture for democracy. Extremism is the beginning and conclusion of a destructive cycle. When governments allow themselves to be led into conflict by intolerance or arrogance of authority, they sow the seeds of anger, resulting in greater hatred and bloodshed. Technological improvements in both civilian and military uses raise ethical concerns. Artificial intelligence is already selecting military targets without regard for legal or moral boundaries. The fundamentals of inter-

national humanitarian law, particularly the separation between civilians and combatants, are under severe attack. Women and children are the primary victims of this collective tragedy. We are living through an arms race that is pushing countries to devote ever larger shares of their budgets to armaments. Military spending globally, now about \$2.7tn, absorbs valuable resources that could instead be used to fight hunger and poverty, confront the climate crisis, ensure universal access to education and promote digital inclusion. Even more egregious is the recurring use of hunger as a weapon of war, and the impunity with which forced displacement is carried out. No bombs, drones or missiles can shield economies from the impact of oil conflict. Fluctuations in oil

prices mean more expensive – or even inaccessible – energy and transport for businesses and consumers. Blockades constrain trade. Fertiliser shortages push up food prices and fuel inflation. Central banks raise interest rates, increasing public and private debt. Investment opportunities and jobs are lost. Unilateral actions, arbitrary measures, violations of sovereignty and summary executions are becoming the rule. A study published in the Lancet shows that sanctions imposed without UN backing – particularly economic ones – affect mortality rates in targeted countries, and have, on average, been responsible for about half a million deaths each year since the 1970s. Excessive power and instability go hand in hand. A world without rules is an insecure world, where anyone can be the next victim. Violence cannot replace dialogue, nor can force prevail over diplomacy. The prerogatives of the permanent members of the security council are already unjustifiable in an international order grounded in the sovereign equality of nations. When exercised irresponsibly, they become intolerable. It is time to respond with resolve by restoring the capacity of a reformed United Nations to act, so that it no longer remains a mere spectator to events that affect us all.

IMF fears that Middle East unrest would lead to higher prices and weaker global growth



Iran: The International Monetary Fund has warned that “all roads lead to higher prices and slower growth worldwide” if the Middle East crisis continues to limit the quantity of oil, gas, and fertilizer that leaves the Gulf. In a stern warning to governments on all continents, the Washington-based organization stated that rising energy and food costs will hurt economic development this year and might have long-term consequences for the global economy. Coming only hours after Donald Trump threatened to destroy Iran’s energy infrastructure unless it agreed to a peace settlement, the IMF’s research

is likely to be interpreted as a warning to the White House about the war’s long-term ramifications for struggling households. According to a weblog by the IMF’s principal department heads, including the chief economist, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, countries with high levels of borrowing would have restricted access to funds that may be used to mitigate the worst consequences of the crisis. “Although the war could shape the global economy in different ways, all roads lead to higher prices and slower growth,” the statement stated. While certain oil and gas exporting nations, such as the United States, would benefit from

increased fossil fuel costs, the research concluded that increases in petrol, diesel, and food prices will affect living standards. Businesses are expected to face pressure to boost prices, perhaps compelling central banks to hike interest rates to battle inflation. “A short conflict might send oil and gas prices soaring before markets adjust, while a long one could keep energy expensive and strain countries that rely on imports,” the blogpost warned. “Or the world may settle somewhere in between – tensions linger, energy stays costly, and inflation proves hard to tame – with ongoing uncertainty and geopolitical

risk.” “Much depends on how long the conflict lasts, how far it spreads, and how much damage it inflicts on infrastructure and supply chains,” it said, adding: “Historically, sustained oil-price spikes have tended to push inflation higher and growth lower. About a third of fertiliser production travels through the strait of Hormuz, pushing up prices. UN Food and Agriculture Organisation projections indicate that global prices could average 15% to 20% higher in the first half of 2026 if the crisis persists. Natural gas prices have more than doubled in the UK since last December to about £140 a therm, while a barrel of Brent crude that cost about \$60 before the conflict hit more than \$116 on Monday before falling back to \$112. Forecasts for sharp rises in the cost of gas and electricity in Europe next winter are forcing governments to consider higher subsidies and welfare payments to the worst-affected households. The IMF added: “In Europe, the shock is reviving the spectre of the 2021–22 gas crisis, with countries such as Italy and the UK especially exposed by their reliance on gas-fired power, while France and Spain are relatively protected by their greater nuclear and renewables capacity.”

US instructs American embassies to undertake campaign against foreign ‘hostility’, with Musk’s aid



Washington: The United States has authorized all American embassies and consulates throughout the world to start coordinated efforts against foreign propaganda, and Elon Musk’s X has been endorsed as a “innovative” instrument to aid with this effort. The cable, signed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Monday and seen by the Guardian, also advises that embassies and consulates collaborate with the US military’s psychological operations section to address the issue of widespread misinformation. It outlines a comprehensive set of guidelines for how embassy workers should respond to what it defines as concerted foreign efforts to damage American interests abroad. It comes while the US is at war with Iran, whose government has long run one of the world’s most sophisticated and prolific state misinformation networks, and as Russian and Chinese influence operations continue to target American allies in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. The letter directs those embassies and consulates to achieve five main objectives: combating hostile propaganda, extending access to information, exposing adversary activity, boosting local voices who support American interests, and supporting “telling America’s story”. Embassies are instructed to recruit local influencers, scholars, and community leaders abroad to disseminate counter-propaganda messaging, a strategy intended to make American-funded narratives appear locally

spontaneous rather than centrally planned. “These campaigns seek to shift blame to the United States, sow division among allies, promote alternative world-views antithetical to America’s interests, and even undermine American economic interests and political freedoms,” the cable says. “Using digital platforms, state-controlled media, and influence operations, they pose a direct threat to US national security and fuel hostility toward American interests.” Notably, the cable tells diplomatic offices to coordinate their work with “the Department of War’s Psychological Operations” – the military unit more commonly known as Miso, or Military Information Support Operations, formerly Psyop, which is part of the Pentagon. The state department did not immediately respond to a request for comment. It is not common for the state department to openly combine public diplomacy with military psychological operations. But attempts to counter foreign disinformation are not new, although previous administrations funded it through the Global Engagement Center, which lost its funding just before Donald Trump returned to office. Last year, the FBI had its foreign influence taskforce dissolved and the state department shuttered the Counter Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference hub. The cable also endorses Elon Musk’s platform X by name – specifically its Community Notes feature – as an “innovative” and “crowd-

sourced” instrument to cull disinformation in “countering anti-American propaganda operations without compromising free speech or privacy”. That endorsement comes as the European Union has already fined X €120m (\$137.5m) under its Digital Services Act for deceptive practices – the first such fine under the law – and has opened further investigations into the platform’s AI tools and recommendation algorithms. Musk, who owns X, had an influential special advisory role in the Trump administration through the so-called department of government efficiency (Doge). The cable instructs embassy staff to ensure that US foreign assistance is visibly branded, directing consular posts to use “prominent, flag-forward branding” so that foreign audiences know when aid or programming is coming from the American government. Offices and embassies globally are also told to increase the availability of international news and independent analysis translated into local languages, in effect tasking embassies with becoming distribution hubs for foreign-language media in countries where, the cable notes, “anti-American propaganda is pervasive or where information is restricted”. More than 700 “American spaces” – the cultural centers, libraries and exchange hubs the US government funds in countries around the world – are to be repositioned under the guidance as platforms for uncensored information and promoted explicitly as free speech “zones.”

China would outlaw keeping remains of the dead in ‘bone ash dwellings’

China: China is enacting legislation to prohibit individuals from keeping the ashes of their deceased relatives in vacant high-rise apartments rather than paying exorbitant fees for increasingly rare cemetery spaces. China’s new funeral management regulations would restrict the use of “residential housing specifically for the purpose of storing cremated remains,” as well as the burial or building of tombs in “areas other than public cemeteries.” The regulation will go into effect on Tuesday, ahead of Sunday’s Qingming grave-sweeping festival, a traditional Chinese holiday in which people clean their ancestors’ graves and make ceremonial gifts. The practice of storing ashes in an apartment, known as a “guhui fang” or bone ash flats, has expanded as growing urbanization and an ageing population raise competition and expense for limited cemetery spaces in cities. The empty flat serves as a ceremonial hall, with people changing it into ancestral shrines with candles, red lights, and urns organized by generation. According to a 2020 worldwide funeral expenditure study

performed by insurer SunLife, China has the second-highest funeral expenses in the world, after Japan. In contrast, home values decreased 40% between 2021 and 2025, owing in part to Xi Jinping’s campaign - “properties are for living in, not for speculation” - to prevent excessive speculation in the real estate market. China’s cemetery plots also only come with a 20-year lease, while residential properties carry government-backed 70-year usage rights. Consequently, many Chinese citizens now view apartments as better value than cemeteries as a place to store the remains of their loved ones. A hashtag associated with the ban has been viewed more than 7m times on Weibo, China’s equivalent of X, with social media users expressing scepticism about the measure. “Who’s going to go in and check? Or are they planning to put a GPS tracker on every single urn?” said one user. “Even at 90% off, cemetery plots are still too expensive,” another wrote. China has one of the world’s fastest-growing ageing populations. It recorded 11.3m



deaths in 2025, up from 9.8m in 2015, and far more than the country’s 7.9m births the same year. Facing a rising number of burials and increasingly limited land supply, authorities in big cities such as Shanghai are subsidising

costs for those who opt for “ecological burial methods”, including “deep-ground burial or sea burial of cremated remains”. In 2025, Shanghai’s sea burials reached a record high, exceeding 10,000 cases for the first time.

Israel approves a bill granting the death sentence to Palestinians guilty of fatal assaults

Israel: Israel’s parliament has enacted legislation imposing the death sentence on Palestinians guilty of lethal assaults, a move severely condemned as unfair by European nations and rights groups. The legislation establishes the death sentence as the default punishment for Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank proven guilty of knowingly carrying out lethal actions deemed acts of terrorism by a military court. According to the bill, prisoners condemned to death would be confined in a separate facility with no visitors save from authorized professionals, and legal consultations will only be performed by video connection. Executions shall be carried out within 90 days following sentence. Israel has seldom invoked the death sentence, only in extraordinary circumstances. The last person executed was Adolf Eichmann, a Nazi war criminal, in 1962. Itamar Ben-Gvir, the national security minister and one of the bill’s greatest supporters, has often worn a noose-shaped lapel button that represents executions under the plan. He listed hanging as “one of the options,” among the electric chair or “euthanasia,” and said that several physicians had volunteered to help. A security committee made some changes to the measure, which received its initial vote last week. KAN, Israel’s state broadcaster, claimed that the executions will be carried out via hanging. The legislation will empower judges to impose the death penalty without a request from prosecutors and without requiring unanimity, instead allowing for a simple majority

ruling. Military tribunals in the occupied West Bank will also have the authority to impose death sentences, with the defense minister authorized to provide an opinion. The measure eliminates possibilities for appeal or mercy for Palestinians under occupation, whereas Israeli convicts’ sentences might be changed to life imprisonment. The measure, proposed by Ben-Gvir’s far-right Otzma Yehudit party, has sparked outrage among opponents, who fear that it will signal a substantial escalation in Israel’s punitive policies. Military authorities and ministries have stated that the measure may violate international law and subject Israeli servicemen to detention overseas. Once enacted, the law formally enters into force but it can still be reviewed – and potentially struck down – by Israel’s supreme court. Directly before voting began, Ben-Gvir made a belabored speech from the podium, describing the law as long overdue and a sign of strength and national pride. “From today, every terrorist will know, and the whole world will know, that whoever takes a life, the state of Israel will take their life,” he said. When the measure passed, the chamber erupted into cheers and Ben-Gvir brandished a bottle in celebration. The Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who had come to the chamber to vote yes in person, sat motionless. Israel’s leading rights groups decried the law as “an act of institutionalised discrimination and racist violence against Palestinians”. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel said it filed an appeal against the law with

Israel’s supreme court. The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, condemned the legislation as a breach of international law and a doomed bid meant to intimidate Palestinians. “Such laws and measures will not break the will of the Palestinian people or undermine their steadfastness,” his office said in a statement. “Nor will they deter them from continuing their legitimate struggle for freedom, independence, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.” Last month UN experts called on Israel to withdraw the bill, warning it would violate the right to life and discriminate against Palestinians in the occupied territories. They said the measure removed judicial discretion, preventing courts from weighing individual circumstances or imposing proportionate sentences. They said hanging constituted torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment under international law. The EU’s diplomatic service also condemned the proposal, saying capital punishment breached the right to life and risked violating the absolute prohibition on torture. In February, Amnesty International urged Israeli lawmakers to reject the legislation, which it said “would allow Israeli courts to expand their use of death sentences with discriminatory application against Palestinians”. On Sunday, Britain, France, Germany and Italy expressed “deep concern” over the legislation, which they said risked “undermining Israel’s commitments with regards to democratic principles.”

Six Myths That May Provide False Information to Those Seeking Cosmetic Procedures

Cosmetic procedures are more common today than they have ever been. People follow beauty trends, skincare routines and fitness habits with curiosity, but they often rely on half-baked information floating around social media. To understand what is real and what is simply fear-driven hearsay, we spoke to Dr Rajat Gupta, plastic surgeon at Excel Hospital, Delhi, who has years of experience working with modern surgical and non-surgical techniques. What became clear is this: many popular myths push young men and women away from safe, proven treatments that could genuinely help them feel better in their own skin. Below are some of the most common myths and the real science behind them.

Myth 1: Gynecomastia Surgery Leaves Big, Visible Scars
This is one of the biggest reasons young men hesitate to seek treatment. The truth is far more reassuring. Modern gynecomastia correction uses extremely fine, hidden incisions placed at the side of the chest rather than the front.

Advanced techniques such as OCCULT technology allow the gland to be removed internally, without long cuts across the chest. The result is a smooth, natural contour with almost no visible scarring. Most young men return to routine work in a few days and feel an immediate boost in comfort and confidence.

Myth 2: A Facelift Makes You Look Stiff, Pulled or “Overdone”
The overdone look is usually a result of outdated methods. Contemporary facelift techniques focus on lifting the deeper muscle layers, not just stretching the skin. This creates a youthful, rested appearance without changing the person’s natural expressions. When done well, friends notice that someone looks fresher or more energetic, but they cannot pinpoint why. That subtlety is the mark of skilled aesthetic work, not artificial tightness.

Myth 3: Liposuction is a Weight-Loss Shortcut
Liposuction is not meant for drastic weight change. It is a body-contouring procedure designed to shape areas that refuse to respond to diet and



exercise. For young people who maintain a healthy lifestyle but struggle with stubborn fat around the abdomen, flanks or thighs, liposuction can refine their silhouette and create balance in their proportions. The results are long-lasting when paired with consistent fitness habits.

Myth 4: Rhinoplasty Makes Everyone Look the Same
A common fear is that nose reshaping creates a “template nose” that wipes out individuality. Modern rhinoplasty actually does the opposite. It focuses on harmony. Surgeons assess the person’s

facial features, ethnic characteristics and proportions to create a result that feels personal and natural. The best surgeries do not erase identity; they enhance balance and boost confidence.

Myth 5: Cosmetic Procedures Are Only About Vanity

This is perhaps the most widespread misunderstanding. For many young people, cosmetic procedures address issues that affect emotional

well-being, posture, body image or day-to-day comfort. Treating gynecomastia, correcting a deviated septum during rhinoplasty, repairing abdominal muscles after weight loss, these improvements often bring physical relief along with aesthetic changes.

Myth 6: Tummy Tucks are Only for Weight Loss
A tummy tuck is often mis-



stood as a shortcut to

shedding kilos, which creates confusion and unrealistic fear among young people. The truth is that a tummy tuck is not a weight-loss surgery at all. It is a reconstructive, contour-focused procedure using the signature RG SHARP technique that tightens loose abdominal muscles, removes stretched skin and restores the core after weight changes or pregnancy. People who undergo it are not trying to “lose weight the easy way”; they are trying to repair muscle separation, improve posture and regain comfort in their own bodies. When performed with modern techniques, the results look natural and athletic, not “surgical.” Most importantly, it empowers people to return to regular fitness routines with a stronger core. With safe technology, better awareness and trained specialists, cosmetic procedures today are far from what old stereotypes suggest. When chosen thoughtfully, they can support confidence, emotional clarity and a healthier relationship with one’s appearance.

What You Eat In The First Weeks Of 2026 Can Shape Your Weight Goals For The Year

The start of a new year often feels like a clean slate, especially when it comes to health and weight goals. But while motivation runs high in early January, it’s not dramatic detoxes or restrictive meal plans that determine success. What truly matters is how the body is nourished during the first few weeks, when habits are forming, and metabolism is recalibrating after festive excess. These early choices influence energy levels, hunger hormones, insulin response, and the sustainability of weight loss for months to come. According to Dr Eileen Canday, Head of Nutrition and Dietetics at Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital, Mumbai, the first weeks of the year act as a habit accelerator. “People often begin with unrealistic goals, making strict food choices briefly before slipping back into old patterns,” she explains. Instead of aiming for perfection, she recommends focusing on small, repeatable actions – such as reading food labels, practising portion control, or choosing protein-rich meals when eating out. “These early choices help stabilize energy levels, support metabolism, and prevent crashes,” she says, making weight management feel sustainable rather than forced. One of the most common New Year’s mistakes is turning to crash diets for fast results.



Dr Canday warns that extreme restriction often leads to metabolic slowdown, increased cravings, and rebound overeating. “Such plans are unrealistic and hard to maintain,” she notes, adding that many people also unknowingly rely on healthy-sounding ultra-processed foods that are high in sugar and low in fibre – another silent setback to weight loss. Dr Aravind Badiger, Technical Director at BDR Pharmaceuticals, echoes this concern, highlighting that post-holiday eating patterns can create metabolic stress. “Excessive calorie intake, refined carbohydrates, alcohol, and irregular meals can lead to insulin resistance, inflammation, and water retention,” he says. Nutrition in early January, he adds, either corrects these imbalances or prolongs them. Experts agree that structured eating patterns early in the year are crucial. Dr Badiger points out that diets rich in protein and fibre help stabilise blood sugar and overcome insulin resistance. “Protein consumption is necessary during early weight loss because it helps maintain muscle mass, which boosts metabolism,” he explains. You May Like Eating at regular times also matters. “Eating according to the body’s rhythms is better than eating late at night,” he says, warning that irregular meals can disrupt glucose control and promote weight gain. Falguni Borkar, Head Dietitian at

HCG ICS Khubchandani Cancer Centre, Mumbai, stresses the importance of everyday consistency. “It’s often those easy, repeated habits made in the early weeks of a year that have a bigger impact when it comes to weight loss,” she says. She advocates eating wholesome, seasonal, locally sourced foods to support digestion and nutrient absorption. Avoiding skipped meals, especially breakfast, is key. “Eating breakfast helps control cravings by releasing hormones and supplies sustained energy,” she explains. Home-cooked meals also play a major role. Preparing simple comfort foods like dal khichdi with sprouts and a small amount of ghee can be both nourishing and weight-friendly. Smart snacking, such as roasted makhana, chana, yoghurt, fruits, or sprouts, helps stabilise blood sugar and curb unhealthy temptations. Weight goals are rarely achieved through short-term discipline alone. The first weeks of 2026 offer a critical opportunity to reset eating patterns, repair metabolic balance, and establish habits that last. By prioritising real food, regular meals, adequate protein, fibre, hydration, and sleep, the body naturally moves toward balance. A steady, mindful start to the year doesn’t just support weight loss. It creates a foundation for long-term health, energy, and resilience well beyond January.

Ayurveda Explains How To Protect Your Body In Winter



Winter isn’t just a change in temperature. It’s a shift in how the body behaves. According to Ayurveda, the cold season intensifies Vata dosha, the principle associated with dryness, stiffness, poor circulation and low immunity. When ignored, this imbalance can lead to joint pain, sluggish digestion, low energy and frequent infections. The good news? Ayurveda doesn’t treat winter as something to ‘survive,’ but as a season to slow down, nourish deeply and rebuild strength. With a few mindful changes in food, daily routine and self-care, your body can stay warm, resilient and balanced through the coldest months.

Eat For Warmth And Strong Digestion

Ayurveda places digestion at the centre of winter health. Cold weather naturally weakens agni (digestive fire), which is why warming, cooked foods are essential. Favour meals that are freshly prepared, well-spiced and nourishing. Think khichdi, vegetable stews, soups, lentils, and slow-cooked grains. Spices like ginger, cumin, black pepper, cinnamon and turmeric help improve circulation and prevent the buildup of toxins (ama). Avoid cold foods, raw salads and iced drinks – even if you don’t feel immediately affected. These dampen digestion and aggravate Vata, making you feel colder from within.

Warm Beverages Are Not Optional
Sipping warm liquids throughout the

day is one of Ayurveda’s simplest winter hacks. Hot water, herbal teas and spiced milk help maintain internal warmth and support detoxification. Try adding grated ginger, tulsi or a pinch of cinnamon to your tea. At night, a cup of warm milk with turmeric or nutmeg can calm the nervous system and improve sleep.

Oil Massage: Your Winter Armour
Abhyanga, or daily oil massage, is a cornerstone of Ayurvedic winter care. Applying warm sesame oil before a bath improves circulation, keeps skin supple and protects against dryness and stiffness. Even a quick five-minute massage on joints, feet and scalp can make a difference. This practice not only warms the body but also calms the mind, especially important during darker, colder days when anxiety tends to rise.

Move Gently, But Move Daily
While winter invites rest, Ayurveda doesn’t recommend complete inactivity. Gentle movement keeps circulation flowing and prevents stiffness. Opt for yoga, stretching, walking or light strength training rather than intense cardio. Sun salutations, twisting poses and pranayama like kapalbhati or bhastrika generate internal heat and boost lung health.

Protect Sleep And Daily Rhythm
Short days and long nights can disrupt the body clock. Ayurveda advises sleeping early and waking with the sun whenever possible. Consistent routines help stabilise Vata and improve immunity. Keep evenings calm. Limit screens, dim lights, and follow grounding rituals like journaling, meditation or warm baths. Winter Is For Nourishment, Not Restriction Unlike summer, winter is the season for nourishment. By aligning with nature instead of resisting it, Ayurveda teaches us that winter can be a season of strength, warmth and restoration and not discomfort.

Beauty Industry Learns The Language of Skin Longevity

In 2025, beauty stopped speaking the language of appearance and began speaking the language of longevity. Skincare, once dominated by promises of instant glow and visible correction, increasingly aligned itself with ideas borrowed from health, nutrition, and preventive science, resilience, repair, and long-term performance. This shift reflects a deeper understanding that skin is not just a surface to be perfected, but a living organ whose capabilities change with time, environment, and lifestyle. This evolution is not limited to consumer behaviour. Rachna Bahadur, founder & CEO of Flout Beauty, says, “It is being shaped at the highest levels of the global beauty industry. Major groups such as L’Oréal, Unilever, and The Estée Lauder Companies have invested heavily in skin biology research, barrier science, microbiome studies, and extended clinical testing models. The emphasis has shifted from fast trend cycles to longer scientific timelines, where products are designed and evaluated for how they support skin health over years, not weeks.” At the

heart of this shift is a more nuanced understanding of what longevity means in skincare. Longevity is often mistaken for a softer version of anti-ageing. In reality, it represents a fundamentally different approach. Traditional anti-ageing frameworks have largely been interventional, focused on correcting visible signs after they appear. Longevity, by contrast, is supportive and

sharper focus. In 2025, the barrier was no longer a niche concern reserved for sensitive skin. It became widely recognised as central to how skin ages. Barrier breakdown is now understood to play a role in inflammation, pigmentation irregularities, heightened sensitivity, and accelerated ageing. As a result, longevity-oriented routines emphasise strengthening barrier integrity while

these are still in early scientific stages, and the industry is increasingly cautious, recognising that longevity rewards evidence accumulated over time, not novelty alone. As this global movement toward longevity matures, another important realisation is gaining ground: skin does not age in a vacuum. Indian skin, in particular, operates under unique conditions – higher UV exposure, heat, humidity, pollution, and lifestyle stressors. All of which place sustained pressure on the skin barrier and inflammatory pathways. This means that longevity solutions developed



preventative. It prioritises preserving skin’s core functions so that visible ageing progresses more gradually. Its ability to repair, renew, defend, and adapt. Importantly, this perspective does not position skincare against aesthetic procedures. Instead, it reframes skincare as the long-term foundation that works alongside interventions, supporting skin before and after treatments and helping maintain results over time. This longevity lens has naturally brought skin barrier health into

delivering actives in ways skin can tolerate consistently over the long term. This does not mean abandoning performance ingredients. Proven actives such as retinoids remain foundational, but they are being re-examined through a longevity lens, not for speed or intensity alone, but for sustainability, formulation balance, and long-term compliance. Alongside these, a new generation of emerging actives is being explored for their role in cellular resilience and repair signalling. Many of

for temperate climates or different skin types do not always translate effectively. What is changing own research frameworks, testing protocols, and formulation logic. Rather than importing global ingredient trends, the focus is shifting toward understanding how skin behaves in local environments and designing solutions that reflect those realities. As the conversation around longevity carries into 2026, consumer expectations are evolving faster than industry conventions.

The Real-Life Dhurandhar Move of Rakesh Bedi: He Left IIT Entrance Halfway Through for Theater Practice

Mumbai: Dhurandhar 2, directed by Ranveer Singh, had a fantastic box office debut. Among the many character actors, seasoned actor Rakesh Bedi stood out.

According to the rumors circulating online, Rakesh Bedi was a real-life Dhurandhar. His newfound celebrity and fan base has inspired followers to go back in time and explore his journey. He was raised in Karol Bagh and finished his education at Delhi’s Kendriya Vidyalaya in Andrews Ganj. Growing up in a middle-class household, he adhered to a predetermined pattern: work well in school, pass IIT, and get a steady salary.

However, Bedi came to the realization that stability without passion was insufficient for him. He showed up for the IIT admission exam, completed seven of the 39 questions, then departed in the

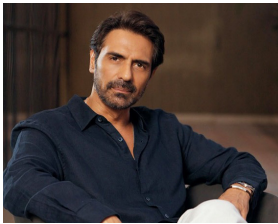


middle. He went straight to theater rehearsal after leaving the exam room. He prioritized passion over stability, but the path to success was not easy; in his early years in the field, he battled for financial security. He stated in a previous interview, “I trusted the process even when the rewards were

slow.” In order to further his skills, Bedi later enrolled in the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune. Rakesh Bedi has made a name for himself in Indian households with more than 150 films and iconic television performances. Although he was always present, the Dhurandhar franchise has made

him famous due to social media. Recently, Rakesh Bedi has taken on the role of brand ambassador. He recently participated in Anu Ranjan’s Beti Charity Walk 2026 in Mumbai by walking the ramp alongside Rakesh Roshan. Rakesh Bedi portrayed the cunning politician Jameel Jamali in Dhurandhar and Dhurandhar 2. Alongside Ranveer Singh, Jameel Jamali stole the show with clever one-liners and flawless comedic timing. Rakesh Bedi has a distinguished career in television. He had appearances in a number of television programs, including Sahib Biwi Aur Boss, Yeh Duniya Ghazab Ki, Sumit Sambhal Lega, Bhabhi Ji Ghar Par Hail, and Shrimaan Shrimati. Among his well-known movies are Bewafa Sanam, Betaaj Badshah, Anand Aur Anand, and Chashme Buddoor.

Arjun Rampal expresses gratitude to his supporters for their support over the years



Mumbai: Actor Arjun Rampal is currently experiencing a peak in his career, driven by the tremendous success of the Dhurandhar film series. His portrayal of the antagonist in Aditya Dhar’s spy thriller has resonated well with audiences, leading him to express his joy by stating he is “over the moon.” He attributes this success to years of dedication, highlighting patience, perseverance, and passion as keys to achieving dreams. Alongside the success of Dhurandhar, he thanked collaborators and acknowledged the significant contributions of the film’s music and action team. Arjun Rampal has a storied career with notable performances in films

such as Don, Om Shanti Om, Rock On, Housefull, Raajneeti, Ra One, and Sa-tyagraha, with a National Film Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role as a disillusioned musician in Rock On. In the Dhurandhar series, he plays ISI Major Iqbal, a fictional character modeled on the mastermind behind the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. In Dhurandhar The Revenge, the storyline progresses as Indian spy Ham-

za, portrayed by Ranveer Singh, seeks vengeance against Iqbal. Dhurandhar, released in December 2025, is a sequel to the original film and has grossed over ₹1300 crore worldwide. The franchise depicts the journey of an undercover Indian intelligence agent who infiltrates criminal and political structures in Karachi to dismantle a terror network threatening India. The sequel, Dhurandhar 2, has surpassed its predecessor with over ₹1350 crore in total earnings and more than ₹870 crore net in India, continuing the thrilling narrative and expanding the impressive cast that includes Sanjay Dutt, R Madhavan, Sara Arjun, and Rakesh Bedi.

Zack Snyder remembers collaborating with Huma Qureshi on Army of the Dead and commends her



Mumbai: Bollywood starlet Huma Qureshi has received nothing but appreciation from renowned director Zack Snyder. The two worked together on the 2021 film Army of the Dead, which also served as the actor’s Hollywood debut. On Tuesday, Zack posted a photo to his Instagram account and referred to Huma as “one of the most amazing actors” he had collaborated with on the movie. “one of the most amazing actors I’ve had the pleasure of working with

on Army of the Dead,” Zack commented, recalling their collaboration on the 2021 Netflix zombie heist movie. On screen, talent, presence, and unadulterated genius. In a 2021 interview with the Hindustan Times, Zack had already discussed collaborating with Huma. “She was written as an Indian character, and Huma is a really amazing actress, no two ways about it,” the director stated. “We talked about who we could get, and the casting director brought her up.” I thought, “This actress is amazing,” after seeing some of her work. Huma consented, despite Snyder’s statement that he “didn’t think that she would do” the movie. “I was ecstatic to finally have her on set, and she said, “You know, I want exclusively Indian actors in my movies from now on.”” In the zombie apocalypse depicted in Army of the Dead, the infection has only spread to Las Vegas.

In the movie, a businessman hires a squad of men and women to rescue \$200 million that is left unguarded inside the quarantine zone. Ella Purnell, Omari Hardwick, Ana de la Reguera, Theo Rossi, Matthias Schweighöfer, Nora Arnezeder, Hiroyuki Sanada, Tig Notaro, Raúl Castillo, Samantha Win, and Garrett Dillahunt are among the supporting cast members in the movie, which stars Dave Bautista.

Akshay Kumar rejects VFX and AI stunts and promises to return “real” action to Bollywood

Mumbai: Bollywood action star Akshay Kumar has expressed his desire to return to authentic action films, distancing himself from the industry’s heavy reliance on VFX and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for stunts. In a recent interview, the 58-year-old actor stressed the importance of performing his own stunts, arguing that the current trend of using computer-generated effects diminishes the excitement and realism of action sequences. Known as “Khiladi” from his early career, Akshay achieved fame through significant action hits and is now keen to revive a genuine feel in his films, akin to the difference between a real painting and a digital print. He articulated his ambition to create movies that resonate with audiences through real, physically executed stunts, empha-

sizing that viewers can perceive the effort and authenticity behind genuine action compared to AI-generated sequences. Akshay noted that despite the advancement of technology, he preferred actions that are truly performed, which maintain the thrill of genuine stunt work. Shifting from a pure action focus over the last decade, Akshay has diversified into comedy and patriotic themes, featuring in ensemble comedies and nationalistic films, often portraying heroic roles. Notable films include Airlift, Baby, and Kesari, among others. Currently, he is set to join the cast of the fifth installment of the Golmaal franchise, alongside notable co-stars, and is also looking forward to the release of Bhooth Bangla on April 10, marking a return to more traditional action performances.

Lara Dutta Remembers Nearly “Drowning” During the Andaaaz Shoot

Mumbai: During the filming of a dance routine in the sea, Lara Dutta, who debuted with Andaaaz opposite Akshay Kumar, had a terrible experience of nearly drowning. Alongside Akshay, Lara, who was unable to swim at the time, was carried into the sea by powerful waves. In an interview with Asian Television Network Canada, Lara Dutta recalled the terrifying event, saying, “I went underwater, wearing leather, didn’t know how to swim, sank like a rock.” She was taken back to the shore by Akshay Kumar himself. When Lara experienced hypothermic shock, the shoot was stopped right away, and she was taken to the hospital. Later, Akshay Kumar suggested her name to the producers of Blue, an underwater adventure movie that needed a lot of ocean scenes. Lara informed Akshay that she was unable to participate in the movie since she didn’t want to. One recommendation from Akshay was to “learn swimming.” He asked me to start diving when I was thirty. “I said, ‘Mai hi pagal mili hoon’ (Do you think I am crazy?),” Lara remembered her initial response to Kumar’s proposal. However, she succeeded. At the age of thirty, Lara learned to swim, conquered the fear Andaaaz had left behind, and boarded. Sanjay Dutt and Zayed Khan star in the 2009 film Blue, which was directed by Anthony D’Souza. Even though the movie didn’t do well at the box office, it gave Lara the confidence she needed to get over her fear of the ocean. In Ishq-e-Nadaan (2023), Lara Dutta last appeared.

Mumbai: Moments on award ceremony stages have frequently been just as exciting as the movies themselves. One such recollection is from the 2010 Screen Awards, where Rekha astonished everyone by selecting her favorite romantic actors while sharing the stage with Shah Rukh Khan and Shahid Kapoor. Shah Rukh Khan and Shahid Kapoor joined Rekha on stage for a dance as the session got off to a lighthearted start. After complimenting her on her ageless beauty and charm, the two performers turned the topic into something lighthearted. Following the compliment, Shah Rukh requested Rekha to list her favorite actors, to which Shahid



promptly replied, “romantic” actors. Many were taken aback by what transpired. Rekha start-



ed listing her favorites, but she decided to honor legends rather than modern celebrities. I’ll start

by mentioning Dilip Kumar. He is quite romantic. Then came Dev Anand, Raj Kapoor, Shammai Kapoor, Shashi Kapoor, Randhir Kapoor, Rishi Kapoor, Jeetendra, Dharmendra, Sanjeev Kumar, Rajesh Khanna, Vinod Khanna, Shatrughan Sinha, and so on. Shah Rukh jokingly nudged her as the list got longer, implying that she might have forgotten someone. Maybe she had missed someone from their generation, Shahid said. The audience laughed at Rekha’s clever response, “I must have forgotten because of the age gap.” Shah Rukh continued the joke by saying, “Par aap toh aatra baras ki hai,” alluding to Rekha’s well-known song. Then, slightly

implying that their names hadn’t appeared on the list, he jokingly reminded her that Shahid and he were both huge fans of hers. Rekha handled the situation with her usual poise and wit. “I have a lot of fans,” she said, then jokingly complied when Shah Rukh requested her to sign their hearts. She turned the occasion into a crowd-pleasing performance by miming signing on their chests. Rekha asked both actors to dance for her as the episode came to a close, completing the lighthearted conversation. Years later, the scene still serves as a reminder of Rekha’s humor and her enduring appreciation of traditional romance on television.

At a Los Angeles event, Ranbir Kapoor refers to Lord Rama as the “conscience keeper of billions”

Mumbai: Ranbir Kapoor, director Nitesh Tiwari, and producer Namit Malhotra made a special trip to Los Angeles to present Ramayana’s first pictures to a select international audience prior to the highly awaited first sight of “Rama” on April 2. Ranbir discussed playing Lord Rama at the occasion, characterizing him as the perfect guy. A number of images and videos from the event have subsequently appeared on social media, providing fans with a peek of the frenzy surrounding the debut. The legendary epic’s footage was recently released at a special screening for a crowded audience in Los Angeles. Ranbir, Nitesh, and Namit also took part in a Q&A session at the event, responding to inquiries about the characters, the future movie, and other topics. Ranbir is seen discussing his

ideas for bringing Lord Rama’s character to life on screen in a video from the session that has since appeared on social media. Ranbir referred to Lord Rama as a “conscience keeper” and said that he is still very important today. The actor continued by referring to him as “Maryada Purushottam.” For centuries and beyond, Lord Rama has served as the conscience guard for billions of people worldwide. Long after we are gone, he will always be there,” Ranbir remarked. “He enlightens us about the human spirit in terms of adversities,” he continued. He is a symbol of kindness, bravery, morality, and forgiveness. Maryada Purushottam, which translates to “ideal man,” is his name. One of the most anticipated movies of the year is Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana. On July 3, 2025, a three-minute preview of

Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana was released. Ranbir Kapoor’s calm and collected portrayal of Lord Rama contrasted sharply with Yash’s fierce and fiery appearance as Ravana. Additionally, it provides a glimpse of Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Brahma, all of which allude to the film’s broader mythological theme. Ranbir climbing a tree and brandishing a bow and arrow were among the striking images in the video. Sunny Deol plays Lord Hanuman, Ravi Dubey plays Lakshman, and Sai Pallavi plays Sita in the Nitesh Tiwari-directed movie. AR Rahman and renowned composer Hans Zimmer collaborate on the musical score. In October 2026, just before Diwali, Ramayana Part One is scheduled to be released globally. The movie’s second installment will be released in 2027.



Commonplace infractions, such as smoking in the metro or dancing in public, might no longer be illegal

New Delhi, Mar 31: Considering the changing legal landscape in India, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, seeks to reform outdated and excessive criminal penalties for minor violations. Introduced in Lok Sabha by the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, this bill aims to decriminalize at least 717 offences across 80 central laws. Instead of criminal prosecution, it proposes civil penalties, administrative adjudication, and often a preliminary warning for offenders.

The Bill highlights the inconsistency and archaic nature of existing laws; for instance, a pig spoiling a neighbour's garden or public urination can lead to criminal charges. Under current frameworks, these offences carry exceedingly low fines, some unchanged since the 19th century. The legislation revamps these frameworks by increasing penalties but categorizing them as civil misdemean-



ours instead of criminal offences. Illustrative changes proposed in the bill include modifying the New Delhi Municipal Council Act, where urination in public spaces would no longer incur a criminal record but a civil penalty of ₹500. Similarly, smoking in metro compartments shifts from a ₹250 criminal fine to an immediate civil penalty of ₹2,000, effective immediately, but still allowing for further court interventions

if necessary. The Motor Vehicles Act will align minor traffic violations with this new approach, introducing a recorded warning for first-time offenders for actions like excessive honking or violating noise pollution standards. Subsequent violations will incur civil fines only, with a structure enabling penalties to enhance on repeat violations, evading the need for criminal records. Moreover, livestock tethering and un-

licensed hawking undergo a civil penalty transformation as well. The new provisions propose a ₹1,000 civil fine for tethering in public and a flat ₹2,000 for unlicensed hawking, streamlining the process while reducing judiciary burden. In areas like road safety, driving without a third-party insurance certificate, which currently invites criminal charges, will be penalized with a civil fine based on the vehicle's insurance premium, significantly simplifying enforcement and promoting compliance. The overarching intention of the Jan Vishwas Bill is clear: to alleviate the burden on citizens, police and the judicial system from minor civic violations traditionally treated as criminal acts. By instituting civil penalties and reserving judicial action for persistent offenders, the bill strives to create a regulatory environment that is predictable, transparent, and equitable for all citizens.

Ravindra Jadeja admits to sending Shivam Dube off

New Delhi: On Monday, March 30, while playing for the Rajasthan Royals at the Barsapara Stadium in Guwahati in the third game of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season, Ravindra Jadeja, who wore the yellow jersey for the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) for 13 years, had a bittersweet moment. It wouldn't have been easy to play against a team that made him famous, but Jadeja, 37, prevailed, and his team won the match handily with eight wickets remaining and more than seven overs remaining. With the ball in hand, Jadeja was at his best, taking two wickets and dismissing Shivam Dube and Sarfaraz Khan. But Jadeja was more happy with the latter's wicket, as evidenced by the way he celebrated. The T20 World Cup 2026 winner was also given a farewell by the left-arm spinner. Given that Dube had smashed him for a six just two deliveries before being out, Jadeja's wicket meant a bit more. The batter was sent back to the hut for just six runs, but the seasoned spinner had the final laugh. A few people were taken aback by the send-off to Dube, but Jadeja addressed the pressing matter during the host broadcaster's interview. When asked why he gave the CSK all-rounder a send-off, Jadeja explained that it was because he was familiar with Dube's style of play and understood what the latter was attempting to do. "I've known him for a very long time. In the nets, I was bowling to him. I am aware of his thoughts and actions. Jadeja told the host broadcaster, "I was ready for that and tried to bowl outside off because I knew he would look to play big shots against me." Jadeja was moved by CSK to the Royals prior to the 2026 IPL season. Sanju Samson joined the five-time champions, while Jadeja and Sam Curran joined the Rajasthan team. Regarding his connection to Rajasthan, Jadeja remarked, "I think pink looks good on me." Jadeja started his IPL career with Rajasthan in 2008, and the late Shane Warne even referred to him as a "rockstar." After dismissing the Ruturaj Gaikwad-led team for just 127, the Rajasthan Royals destroyed CSK by eight wickets. After that, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi easily defeated the chase with a 52 off 17 balls. "I really enjoyed bowling because I thought the ball was turning and the wicket was a little sticky."

In the past five years, 40 student suicides have been documented in JNVs



New Delhi, Mar 31: The central government informed the Lok Sabha on Monday that 40 student suicide cases have been reported in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) over the previous five years, from 2021 to 2025 and the current year, 2026. Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh have the highest number of cases, with five each, followed by Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh with three each. Minister of State (MoS) for Education Jayant Chaudhary responded to questions from Congress MP Kodikunnil Suresh regarding suicide cases in JNVs and corrective actions to address student mental health by stating that Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) has carried out fact-finding investigations into all student suicide cases through properly constituted inquiry committees. "The main causes, according to these committees' findings, are: family-related issues; examination and academic pressure; high levels of ambition or parental high expectations; adolescent behavioral concerns; and mental health-related issues," he continued. With over 3.10

lakh students enrolled, NVS is an independent institution within the Union Ministry of Education that oversees more than 650 residential JNVs throughout India, with the exception of Tamil Nadu. Candidates chosen from rural areas based on their results in a nationwide test hold at least 75% of the seats in a district where JNVs are located. According to Choudhary's research, the number of student suicides in JNVs increased from two in 2021 to a peak of twelve in 2024 before falling to eight in 2025 and three so far in 2026.

The instances are dispersed over several states and districts, including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Choudhary outlined the central government's numerous programs and activities aimed at supporting JNV students' mental health. He said that principals of recognized JNVs where suicide instances occurred and a prominent psychologist attended a recent "high-level meeting" hosted by the Union Educa-

tion Ministry. The meeting was attended by NVS authorities and NCERT faculty "to analyze the suicide cases in JNVs." He continued, "The National Center for School Leadership of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) also occasionally conducts capacity development workshops for principals of JNVs on mental health and social emotional wellbeing of students."

According to Chaudhary, a number of initiatives have been implemented to address JNV students' mental health issues. These include hiring male and female counselors for each school, offering tele-counseling services, and giving administrators permission to consult with licensed counselors at government hospitals.

In addition to supplementary in-service programs for house masters, teachers who take on loco-parenting responsibilities receive advice and counseling training. Some are also nominated for a one-year NCERT diploma program in counseling. He continued by saying that a task group established by the ministry in 2018 to improve psychosocial assistance resulted in further efforts, such as the launch of "Happy Hours" to encourage good contact and emotional well-being and a toll-free helpline for students at 1800-180-7992. To further improve student support systems, 50-60 teachers are nominated annually for specialized counseling training.

8 people are thought to be dead after a stampede breaks out at Sheetla Temple in Nalanda, Bihar



Patna, Mar 31: Due to extreme crowding, a stampede is said to have started at the Sheetla Temple in the Maghira neighborhood of Nalanda, Bihar, trapping a number of individuals beneath the throng. There was a fear of casualties. Images from the incident showed the affected people being transported in ambulances and a large crowd gathered around the temple grounds.

Samrat Choudhary, the deputy chief minister of Bihar, called the stampede tragedy at the Mata Sheetla Temple in Nalanda "extremely heart-breaking" on X. "I offer my sympathies to the families of all the devotees who were hurt or killed in this disaster. The impacted families are receiving every available support and aid from the government. "Plans have been put in place for the injured to receive the appropriate care," he stated. This occurs one month after an event featuring spiritual

leader Aniruddhacharya in the state's East Champaran is said to have resulted in a stampede-like situation. The disturbance at the program, which was held in Raxaul, resulted in three injuries. On the fourth day of the Shrimad Bhagavat Katha, commotion reportedly broke out at the city's airport ground and escalated into a near-stampede situation at the main entrance as Aniruddhacharya entered the marquee. The crowd's pressure caused the entrance barrier to break. Two or three persons suffered minor injuries, but the police officers on the scene quickly intervened and brought the situation under control. Actor-politician Vijay's party TVK organized a political gathering on September 27 in Tamil Nadu's Karur district, which resulted in another significant stampede event that claimed 41 lives. The event, which attracted a sizable audience to the assigned location, descended

into chaos, leaving 41 people dead and numerous others injured. Later, Vijay used social media to express his sympathies. "I offer my sincere sympathies and condolences to the families of my dear brothers and sisters who lost their lives in Karur," he declared.

I hope everyone receiving treated in the hospital recovers quickly. The Indian Premier League (IPL) stampede that occurred in Bengaluru, Karnataka, last year made headlines again this month. On Saturday, March 28, the new IPL season began with a minute of silence and 11 empty seats in remembrance of the fans who were crushed to death in the terrible occurrence. When 11 fans were slain in a stampede outside M Chinnaswamy Stadium stadium during a victory rally, Team Royal Challengers Bengaluru's (RCB) first IPL victory of the previous season turned tragic.

A veteran Army brigadier was slain during a club brawl chase

Dehradun, Mar 31: A late-night altercation at a bar in the city set to a high-speed chase that resulted in the shooting death of a 70-year-old former Army Brigadier in Dehradun on Monday morning, according to police. This is the most recent of several crimes in the capital of Uttarakhand, which was formerly renowned for its peace and tranquil way of life. On Sunday night, two groups of ten men got into a fight inside the Gen-Z club on Mussoorie Road. After that, one set of six individuals waited outside for the other until the wee hours of the morning. According to senior superintendent of police (SSP) Pramendra Dobhal, the first group of four leaped into their Scorpio N and pursued the second group as it drove off in a Toyota Fortuner. According to officials with knowledge of the situation, the roughly ten-minute pursuit traveled around three kilometers and went through the city's lush, semi-urban foothill area. According to the SSP, the Scorpio's passengers allegedly opened fire on the Fortuner's tires about 6.50 am in an effort to stop the car. However, the SSP stated that retired brigadier MK Joshi, a resident of Tula's Greens near Johri village, was shot while out for a morning walk with his brother-in-law, Rakesh Kumar Upreti, and another member of the community, SP Sharma. Joshi was taken to a nearby hospital on Mussoorie Road, where he died from his wounds while receiving treatment. According to officials, the Scorpio N had a temporary number while the Fortuner was registered in Delhi. Four members of both gangs have since been taken into custody by the police for the crime. They were identified as club owner Sandeep Kumar (43), who lived in Nangloi, Delhi; Mohammad Akhlaq (23), who lived in Bihar; Aditya Chaudhary (20), who lived in Raipur, Dehradun; and Rohit Kumar (20), who lived in Uttam Nagar, Delhi. Road rage was not the cause of the tragedy, according to SSP Dobhal, who stated that the case was related to a brawl in the club. The Scorpio's passengers pursued the Fortuner after waiting outside the club until the wee hours of the morning. The brigadier, who was taking a morning stroll, was struck in the chest by a bullet during the firing, he continued. According to police, the Fortuner lost control following the gunfire and collided with a tree close to the village's government elementary school. The occupants of the Scorpio allegedly attacked the people inside the Fortuner after the collision and caused damage to the car.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi forces the former Indian star to make a U-turn

New Delhi: Batting prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi once again showcased his immense talent as he powered Rajasthan Royals to a commanding win over Chennai Super Kings in their IPL 2026 opening match in Guwahati on Monday. The 15-year-old silenced his critics in emphatic fashion, smashing 52 runs off just 17 balls, including four boundaries and five towering sixes. With eight wickets remaining and 7.5 overs remaining, Rajasthan chased down the small mark of 128 thanks to his stunning effort. The teenager's fearless display even prompted former India batter Mohammad Kaif to revise his earlier assessment of the youngster. After a few early appearances, Kaif said on X (previously Twitter) that he had initially thought Sooryavanshi was being overhyped. He claimed that the batter, who was born in Bihar, has now persuaded him that he is prepared to advance in his career. "I felt that Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was being overhyped during the previous season. As a traditional cricket player, I think that young players shouldn't be rushed. However, after a year, I believe he is prepared to advance. "The 15-year-old can play game-winning knocks and entertain," Kaif wrote. I felt that Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was being overhyped during the previous



season. As a traditional cricket player, I think young players shouldn't be rushed. However, after a year, I believe he is prepared to advance. The fifteen-year-old boy is entertaining and playful. Notably, Sooryavanshi's quick ascent in the cricket world was further highlighted by his crucial contribution to India's winning performance at the Under-19 World Cup earlier this year. The 15-year-old shared insights about his strategy when discussing the IPL, particularly after his brilliant fifty left everyone speechless. "The plan today was simply to execute well in the powerplay. Initially, the wicket felt a bit sticky, but as the ball got older, it started coming onto the bat nicely," Sooryavanshi told reporters. "I do think about defence, but today our plan was to control the game in the powerplay because in a small chase, that phase is crucial. If the bowling team does well there, the game can tilt their way, but our powerplay went really well," he stated.

After quitting CSK, Ravindra Jadeja was first upset, but he now winks at the RR move

New Delhi: In a transaction that saw the Chennai Super Kings acquire Sanju Samson and part ways with Sam Curran, veteran Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja made a high-profile return to his old team, the Rajasthan Royals. Given Jadeja's lengthy tenure with CSK, where he was instrumental in a number of noteworthy victories, including the 2023 IPL final versus Gujarat Titans, the departure represented a big change for both teams. Jadeja had an instant impact when he faced his previous squad for the first time since the transition. Sarfaraz Khan and Shivam Dube were removed at pivotal times by his two ball strikes. His ejection of Dube was notable not just for its timing but also for the fiery send-off that ensued, giving an already tense match an additional edge. Jadeja jokingly remarked, "The pink color looks good; the yellow one has become a bit old," when discussing the major move following the game. In the meantime, Jadeja shared his feelings on leaving CSK, thinking back on the change and what it meant for him to return to RR at this point in his career. "I played for CSK for 12-13 years, so it was an emotional time, so at first it was a little challenging." However, I saw it as a necessary component of the trip. Fortunately, I was joining the same team that won my first IPL championship. I carried those recollections with me forever. Jadeja told broadcasters, "I was going there to learn with a new group and share my experience with them." He said, "No, I didn't speak to him," when asked if he had a conversation with his former captain, MS Dhoni, after the schedule was released. In any case, Mahi bhai keeps his phone off. I'll discuss a lot with Mahi bhai whenever I see him," he remarked. In 2018, 2021, and 2023, Jadeja was a member of three CSK teams that won the IPL. He scored more than 2300 runs and claimed more than 150 wickets for them. The seasoned all-rounder also talked about how the Rajasthan Royals welcomed him with open arms and how the enthusiasm of the new team made his move even more memorable. "The city of kings gave me a most kind welcome. It was a genuinely regal greeting, and I had a great time. I thought the suit looked great. It feels great, both the way they welcomed me and the team's environment, which includes young players and the enthusiasm displayed throughout practice.

Bengaluru tech couple commits suicide: After discovering her husband dead, the woman leaps from the 17th floor

New Delhi, Mar 31: According to reports, a couple who were both software workers committed suicide on Monday in Bengaluru. Following complaints from the deceased's families, the police have registered two distinct cases of unnatural death. Bibi Shaziya Siraj, 31, and Bhanu Chander Reddy Kunta, 32, committed suicide on Monday. They were both Telangana-born software developers. Shaziya leaped to her death from the building's seventeenth floor, while Bhanu was discovered hanging in the bedroom. Shaziya discovered their bedroom locked from the inside, according to the report. She banged on the door several times and asked her husband to open it, but she got no answer. She eventually requested assistance from neighbors and security guards. When they forced the door open after receiving no response, they discovered Bhanu dead inside.

Shaziya also leaped from the 17th floor of the same building a short while later and perished. While awaiting post-mortem reports, investigators are looking into the circumstances behind the deaths, including potential health concerns, relationship issues, and emotional suffering, according to officials. According to an India Today story, a preliminary investigation has suggested that the couple's deaths may have been caused by longstanding marital conflict. The pair had previously lived together as a live-in couple and had been married for about nine years. According to the report, sources told the police that couple had regular arguments after getting married. Two days ago, a different event occurred in Mallenahalli village, which is located inside the boundaries of the Atibele police station in the Bengaluru Rural area. In what authorities believe was an at-



tempt to end their life due to growing debt, two women were discovered dead with their throats cut, but two other family members survived with injuries. Asha (55) and her daughter Varshita (32) were discovered dead at their house, according to the police. Both Asha's 10-year-old grandson Mayank Gowda and her 27-year-old

son Mohan were hurt. According to police, knives found at the scene indicate that Mohan may have caused the injuries prior to his purported suicide attempt. But only after the post-mortem study can the precise order and cause of the deaths be verified, the police officer continued.

Haryana Steelers Academy wins inaugural HS Cup, strengthening their grassroots pathway

Rohtak: The Haryana Steelers Academy emerged victorious at the inaugural Haryana Steelers Cup (HS Cup) by defeating Sports Centre Geong at the BRS Kabaddi Academy in Dighal on March 29. According to a release, the tournament brought together 61 teams from across Rohtak, Hisar, and Sonapat and marked a significant step in Haryana Steelers’ efforts to build a structured grassroots pathway for kabaddi in the state. The HS Cup followed a multi-stage format with zonal rounds for players aged 16-20 years old. The competition was narrowed down to six teams in the league stage, with each team playing five matches.

The top two teams then advanced to the final. The finals witnessed the presence of several dignitaries, including Kulbir Alhawat, Founder, BRS Kabaddi Academy. Mehtab Singh, fitness and youth influencer, Shakuntala Beniwal, Sports Director, MDU, and Haryana Steelers Head Coach Manpreet Singh were also present. Haryana Steelers player Vinay Tewathia, part of the PKL Season 11 winning squad, was also in attendance and interacted



With Participants. The final encounter proved highly competitive, as both teams showcased discipline and strong fundamentals. Haryana Steelers Academy emerged victorious after making a strong comeback to secure the title. The win comes following a dominant, unbeaten run in the group stage.

The match drew a strong turnout of players, coaches, and members of the local community, creating a lively atmosphere. This also reflected the growing enthusiasm for grassroots kabaddi in the state. Speaking After the final, Haryana Steelers Head Coach

Manpreet Singh said, “The level of competition we witnessed throughout the HS Cup has been extremely encouraging. There is immense talent across the state. Platforms like these are crucial in identifying and nurturing talented players early on in their careers. Through this tournament, we aim to create a structured pathway to provide exposure to young athletes and help them understand the demands of performing at the professional level.” With a prize pool of Rs 5 Lakhs, the tournament facilitated the winners, runners-up, and standout

individual performers. This included Ishant from Haryana Steelers Academy, who was the Best Raider with 49 points, while Harsh from Naultha School was awarded Best Defender with 29 tackle points. The Haryana Steelers Cup marks a significant step in strengthening the grassroots structure of kabaddi in the state.

The tournament brings together competition, talent identification, and development under a unified framework. The tournament which is being conducted under the aegis of the Power Sports Control Board (PSCB), was inaugurated by Vikas Marwah, head of project, Rampur HPS. Teams from leading central public sector enterprises, including MoP, NHPC, PowerGrid, CEA, REC, THDC, BBMB along with SJVN are participating in the tournament. The tournament will conclude on March 26. The inauguration ceremony commenced with a traditional dance, followed by nati, beautifully reflecting rich culture of Himachal Pradesh. The ceremony also featured an impressive march-past by all participating teams. Adding a unique community provided.

Parag hits back at captaincy critics

Guwahati: Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag brushed aside criticism over his leadership after guiding his side to a dominant win over Chennai Super Kings in IPL 2026. Parag said outside opinions and unnecessary noise do not affect him as he looks to lead RR with clarity and confidence. Parag began his first full season as RR captain on a strong note, leading from the front as the Royals secured an emphatic eight-wicket win in Guwahati on March 30. The victory not only marked a perfect start to their campaign but also offered Parag the opportunity to respond to questions over his captaincy. Speaking at the post-match press conference, Parag reiterated that he has learnt to block out external criticism and focus solely on his game and decision-making process. “I think if I start talking about the journey, it’s going to be a long answer. But like I said earlier, it’s a lot of things that go outside my game, a lot of opinions about me off the field, which is something I’ve learned not to let affect me. I think I’m doing that pretty well, and the same has happened this year as well.” He also highlighted how narratives in cricket tend to shift purely based on results, regardless of the thought process behind decisions. “It’s the irony with cricket. If I had done the same things today and they had scored 200 and we had lost the game, the narrative would have been that I’m a bad captain or that I made bad decisions. That’s why, even after the game ended, I went to the dressing room and spoke with my analyst about what I could have done better. He had a point that I could have given Bishnoi another over, and I explained my reasoning—why I didn’t bring him on, because Overton was batting and he might have hit him for a couple of sixes or whatever. “So I think it’s very result-based, result-oriented. If we end up on the winning side, everything looks better. But I feel if you’re saying this now, I expect you to say the same when we lose a game and analyse it properly.” Parag’s appointment as RR’s full-time captain ahead of IPL 2026 had sparked debate, especially given his limited track record as a leader at the top level. “In the year of the Asian Games, we take pride in collaborating with the Amateur.

Sourav Ganguly Reacts To Kolkata Snub Saying That Test Cricket Is Important For Other Venues Ganguly Backs Test Expansion Beyond Kolkata



Kolkata: Former India captain and Cricket Association of Bengal President Sourav Ganguly said Test cricket must reach newer venues despite Kolkata missing out on marquee fixtures in India’s 2026–27 home season. Ganguly added that while Eden Gardens holds immense value, the game’s growth requires it to be spread across different centres.

The discussion around venue allocation gained momentum after Kolkata was left out of India’s Test schedule for the 2026–27 home season. Speaking on the

sidelines of a book launch, Ganguly balanced sentiment with practicality, admitting his desire to host big matches in Kolkata while backing the broader vision. It’s always great to have big Test matches back at Eden Gardens. As the president of the CAB and being a former player, I would like to host Test matches here, but we got the Test against South Africa, then there were T20 World Cup games and the Indian Premier League fixtures,” Ganguly told Sportstar. “As much as you would like to host matches at the Eden, it is important to un-

derstand that it has to go to other venues as well,” he added. The debate emerged after the Board of Control for Cricket (BCCI) in India unveiled India’s 2026–27 home schedule, which notably excluded traditional venues like Kolkata and Mumbai from the high-profile Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia.

Instead, the five-Test series, starting January 21, 2027, will be played across Nagpur, Chennai, Guwahati, Ranchi and Ahmedabad, reflecting a deliberate shift towards a more geographically diverse hosting model. While Kolkata and Mumbai will still feature in the calendar, they have only been allotted white-ball fixtures, including ODIs against Zimbabwe. The move has sparked debate, with traditionalists arguing that iconic venues risk losing their central place in India’s Test cricket identity.

Haryana Steelers Academy Wins Inaugural HS Cup To Strengthen Local Grassroots Pathway



Rohtak: The Haryana Steelers Academy emerged victorious at the inaugural Haryana Steelers Cup (HS Cup) by defeating Sports Centre Geong at the BRS Kabaddi Academy in Dighal on March 29. According to a release, the tournament brought together 61 teams from across Rohtak, Hisar, and Sonapat and marked a significant step in .

Haryana Steelers’ efforts to build a structured grassroots pathway for kabaddi in the state. The HS Cup followed a multi-stage format with zonal rounds for players aged 16-20 years old. The competition was narrowed down to six teams in

the league stage, with each team playing five matches. The top two teams then advanced to the final. The finals witnessed the presence of several dignitaries, including Kulbir Alhawat, Founder, BRS Kabaddi Academy. Mehtab Singh, fitness and youth influencer, Shakuntala Beniwal, Sports Director, MDU, and Haryana Steelers Head Coach Manpreet Singh were also present. The final encounter proved highly competitive, as both teams showcased discipline and strong fundamentals. Haryana Steelers Academy emerged victorious after making a strong comeback to secure the title.

The final encounter proved highly competitive, as both teams showcased discipline and strong fundamentals. Haryana Steelers Academy emerged victorious after making a strong comeback to secure the title. The win comes following a dominant, unbeaten run in the group stage. The match drew a strong turnout of players, coaches, and members of the local community, creating a lively atmosphere. This also reflected the growing enthusiasm for grassroots kabaddi in the state. Speaking after the final, Haryana Steelers Head Coach Manpreet Singh said, “The level of competition

John Cena Is Set To Host Wrestlemania 42 In Las Vegas In Next Year As He Confirms It



New York: World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) icon and actor John Cena announced on Monday that he would make a return to the company to host its showcase wrestling event, Wrestlemania 42, at Las Vegas. Taking to X, the record-breaking 17-time world champion, who retired from professional wrestling last year after a memorable retirement tour, wrote, “Since retirement, my “road” has looked a little different... but now I can officially say I’m headed to WrestleMania!!!! See you in Las Vegas!” WWE also soon announced Cena’s return in a Statement, saying, “John Cena is stepping

back onto the Grandest Stage of Them All as the host of WrestleMania 42.” “The Greatest of All Time broke the news on social media that he is headed to Las Vegas. The 17-time World Champion retired from in-ring competition last December after his loss to Gunther at Saturday Night’s Main Event, but is now making his first return to WWE,” added the statement.

WrestleMania is where the iconic wrestler has delivered some of his most high-profile matches against legendary names of professional wrestling such as Big Show, Triple H, Batista, Shawn Mi-

chaels, The Miz, Dwayne ‘The Rock’ Johnson, and others. The wrestling legend has been in the main event bout of the event multiple times. In 2004, it was against Big Show at the 20th edition of Wrestlemania where Cena captured his first-ever championship in the WWE, the WWE United States Championship.

Last year, Cena had a memorable retirement year, that saw him battle some of his biggest rivals such as CM Punk, Randy Orton, AJ Styles, Brock Lesnar, etc. and current-day stars like Cody Rhodes, Dominik Mysterio etc. During his last year as an active professional wrestler, Cena made it count by winning a record-breaking 17th world title, defeating Cody at WrestleMania 41. He also completed a career grand slam in WWE, defeating Dominik in November to capture the WWE Intercontinental Championship. In the process, Cena finally won the prize that had eluded him throughout his career and achieved the Grand Slam by winning both world championships, both mid-card level titles and some tag team gold throughout his storied career since 2002. WrestleMania 42 in Las Vegas will feature CM Punk defending his WWE World Heavyweight Championship against Roman Reigns.

Naseem Shah faces a heavy twenty million rupee fine following a controversial tweet about Maryam Nawaz



Lahore: on Monday imposed a PKR 20 million (USD 72,000) fine on fast bowler Naseem Shah for a now-deleted controversial social media post that criticised Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz’s presence at the PSL opening game during an ongoing regional crisis. The post, made during the first match of the 2026 Pakistan Super League (PSL), sarcastically commented on the “queen” treatment given to Maryam, who is the daughter of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and niece of incumbent PM Shahbaz Sharif, at the Gaddafi Stadium. “Why is she being treated like the Queen at Lords?” Naseem had posted in reference to Maryam. This was after the PCB banned fans from attending the PSL matches in Lahore and Karachi to conserve fuel and adhere to gov-

ernment austerity measures in view of the Gulf war. The PCB announced that its disciplinary committee had found Naseem guilty of breaching clauses of his central contract and violating social media guidelines. Naseem was issued a show-cause notice on March 27, immediately after Maryam visited the Gaddafi Stadium as the chief guest for the opening match of PSL. The tweet was quickly deleted, and it was claimed the account was hacked, but the PCB did not accept this explanation.

The board said that Naseem had issued an unconditional apology for his behaviour. “Naseem’s reply was reviewed by the committee, and after evaluating everything, it has been determined that Naseem is found to have breached various clauses of his central

contract, and a fine of PKR 2 crore has been imposed.” Naseem’s social media adviser has already been terminated and blacklisted by the PCB. Pakistan cricketers are given central contracts with monthly retainers besides the usual match and tour fees and bonuses for winning matches in different categories. The players also get a share of the logo sponsorship deal signed by the board. Mir noted that each player. The Lahore Qalandars batter was found to have breached Article 2.14 of the PCB Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which deals with altering the condition of the ball in violation of Clause 41.3 of the PSL Playing Conditions. The charge was levelled by on-field umpires Faisal Khan Aafreedi and Sharfuddoula Saikat, disciplinary hearing.