

Mizoram Cabinet Opposes Extending Governor's Rule In The Chakma Autonomous District Council

Aizawl, Mar 21: The Mizoram state government has formally clashed with Governor (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh over the administrative future of the Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC). In a decisive move earlier this year, the Mizoram Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Pu Lalduhoma, officially registered its opposition to the extension of Governor's Rule in the troubled tribal council, asserting that a stable, popular government is ready to take charge.

The confrontation highlights a growing tension between the state's elected executive and the Raj Bhavan over the interpretation of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which grants the Governor discretionary powers over Autonomous District Councils (ADCs). Governor's Rule was first imposed on the CADC on July 7, 2025, for an initial period of six months following a total collapse of the executive machinery. As that



term expired on January 7, 2026, the Governor sought the formal opinion of the Council of Ministers on two critical The Cabinet's response was an unequivocal "No" on both counts. However, in a move that sidelined the Cabinet's advice, the Governor issued a notification extending his direct rule for another six-month term, citing "frequent shifts in political allegiance" and "administrative considerations." The Mizoram Cabinet argued that the grounds for "political instability"—the primary justification for Governor's Rule—no longer exist. Their stance is backed by the current numerical

strength within the 20-member council: The Cabinet pointed out that the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), the party currently ruling the state, now commands a clear and stable majority in the CADC with 16 out of 20 elected members.

The ministers argued that since a single party has the numbers to form a stable executive committee, continuing Governor's Rule is an unnecessary suspension of the democratic process. Adequacy of Existing Reports: On the matter of a fresh inquiry, the Cabinet noted that three detailed reports—an earlier Inquiry Commission report, a Study revision.

Ex-BJP leader Chakradhar Das to contest independently in Bongaigaon, Assam

Guwahati, Mar 21: Former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Chakradhar Das has announced his decision to contest the upcoming elections as an independent candidate from Assam's Bongaigaon constituency. Das, who recently parted ways with the BJP, cited the growing influence of family-centric politics within the party as a key reason behind his move.

In his statement, Das emphasized that his decision was driven by a commitment to uphold democratic values and provide an alternative voice to the people of Bongaigaon. He expressed concern that political opportunities were increasingly being concentrated within select families, limiting the scope for grassroots leaders to contribute meaningfully.

Das highlighted his long-standing connection with the constituency and pledged to focus on issues of local development, employment, and transparency in governance. He assured voters that his campaign would prioritize the



needs of ordinary citizens over partisan interests.

Political observers note that Das's independent candidature could alter the electoral dynamics in Bongaigaon, potentially drawing support from sections of the electorate dissatisfied with mainstream party politics. His move reflects a broader trend of leaders break-

ing away from established parties to challenge entrenched structures and assert individual political identities.

The announcement has sparked discussions within Assam's political circles, with analysts watching closely to see how Das's independent bid will influence the upcoming contest.

Aizawl civic polls set for April 21 as ZPM, MNF, Congress and BJP step up campaign

Aizawl, Mar 21: Political activity has picked up in Mizoram as the state prepares for the upcoming elections to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC). With polling scheduled for April 21, all major political parties have begun intensive preparations, including finalising candidates and reaching out to voters across the city. The AMC has 19 wards, and voting will take place from 7 am to 5 pm. Counting of votes is scheduled for April 27, while re-polling, if required, will be held on April 23. The process of filing nominations is underway and will continue till March 25, with March 30 fixed as the last date for withdrawal of candidature. The ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) has expressed confidence about retaining control of the civic body. Party leaders said candidates have been selected after consultations at the grassroots level. The party has also spoken about its plan to improve urban services and infrastructure in Aizawl, with a focus on better governance.

Himanta Biswa Sarma's Family Income Doubles to ₹35.16 Crore in 2026

● *Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Chief Minister of Assam, and his wife Riniki Bhuyan Sarma reported a combined income of ₹35.16 crore in 2026, an increase from ₹17.27 crore in 2021.*

Guwahati, Mar 21: The combined income of Himanta Biswa Sarma and his entrepreneur wife Riniki Bhuyan Sarma has nearly doubled to ₹35.16 crore in 2026 from ₹17.27 crore in 2021, according to his election affidavit filed for the Jalukbari constituency.

The 57-year-old Chief Minister, contesting as a candidate of the Bharatiya Janata Party, declared movable assets worth ₹2.36 crore in 2026, compared to ₹1.72 crore in 2021. He does not own any immovable assets.

Riniki Bhuyan Sarma,

Managing Director of Pride East Entertainment, reported total assets of ₹32.79 crore, a significant rise from ₹16.19 crore in 2021, comprising both movable and immovable properties.

As per the affidavit, the Chief Minister has ₹2.28 lakh in cash and bank deposits totalling ₹68.01 lakh, while his wife has ₹3.16 lakh in cash and deposits worth ₹74.85 lakh. Sarma has no investments in bonds, shares, or mutual funds, whereas his wife has investments amounting to ₹5.10 crore. He does not hold any life insurance, but his wife has a policy valued at ₹1.77 crore.

Sarma owns 180 grams of gold valued at ₹25.10 lakh. In comparison, Riniki Bhuyan Sarma owns 1,459.221 grams of gold worth ₹2.03 crore. The Chief Minister does not own any vehi-



cle, while his wife owns a jeep purchased in 2018 for ₹21.60 lakh.

In terms of immovable assets, neither owns agricultural land, and the Chief Minister also has no non-agricultural land. However, his wife owns three non-agricultural properties with a total market value of ₹19.25 crore, including a 12,960 sq ft property with a house

valued at ₹1.60 crore, an inherited property worth ₹1.40 crore, and another plot measuring 2,127 sq ft acquired in 2022, currently valued at ₹4.25 crore.

Sarma's total liabilities stand at ₹95.05 lakh, while his wife's liabilities amount to ₹15.91 crore. He declared his source of income as government salary, while his spouse listed her income as salary-based.

The affidavit also noted that his two children, previously listed as dependents in 2021, are no longer included as both are now adults. Sarma stated that no criminal cases are pending against him and that he has not been convicted in any court of law.

Academically, he holds a doctorate from Gauhati University and is also a law graduate.

Resignations and Rebellion in Assam BJP Ahead of Assembly Polls

Guwahati, Mar 21: In a significant political development ahead of the Assam Assembly elections, Jayanta Kumar Das has resigned from all positions, including his primary membership of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Assam Pradesh unit, citing personal reasons. In his resignation letter dated March 20, Das mentioned "personal inconveniences" as the reason for stepping down and relinquished all responsibilities with immediate effect. The move comes a day after he publicly expressed dissatisfaction over not being granted

a party ticket from the Dispur constituency, which he was reportedly expecting. The seat has instead been allotted to Pradyut Bordoloi, who recently joined the BJP after leaving the Indian National Congress. Confirming his exit, Das stated, "I hereby tender my resignation from all positions including primary membership of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Assam Pradesh, Assam." The development points to growing internal discontent within the BJP ahead of the crucial state elections.

In a related development, former BJP leader Chakradhar Das announced on March 21 that he will contest the 2026 Assam Assembly elections as an independent candidate from the Bongaigaon constituency. Addressing a press conference, he said his decision was aimed at ending what he described as "family-centric politics" associated with the camp of Phani Bhushan Choudhury. He further stated that he resigned from the BJP after receiving strong support from the people of the constituency.

In a notable shift in Assam's political landscape, Jayanta Kumar Das has resigned from his roles in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), citing personal reasons in a letter dated March 20.

"People have faith in my ability to bring development, and they want me to work for the region. Considering all these aspects, I have decided to contest as an independent candidate," he said. His announcement adds a new dimension to the electoral contest in Bongaigaon ahead of the upcoming Assam Assembly polls.

Tawang PWD denies irregularities in tender process after protests

Tawang, Mar 21: The Public Works Department (PWD) in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang division has rejected allegations of corruption and irregularities in recent tender processes, following protests and complaints from some local residents and unsuccessful bidders. The issue came to the fore after a protest rally was held earlier this week, where residents accused the PWD division of lack of transparency in awarding contracts. The protesters also demanded the transfer of Executive Engineer Tadar Nyakpu and Assistant Engineer Jume Ete, and called for cancellation of multiple tenders issued in February and March.

MTU holds cleanliness and plantation drive

Imphal, Mar 21: Manipur Technical University (MTU), through the Department of Civil Engineering and the Department of Electrical Engineering, in collaboration with NSS Unit 1 and NSS Unit 2, successfully conducted a one-day Cleanliness and Plantation Programme at Kwarok Maring Village, Yairipok. The programme was organised as part of the university's commitment to social responsibility, environmental awareness, and community engagement. Faculty members, students, and NSS volunteers actively participated in the initiative, carrying out cleanliness activities and plantation of saplings in and around the village. The programme aimed to promote the importance of maintaining cleanliness, protecting the environment, and encouraging community participation in sustainable development activities. The active involvement of the volunteers and participants reflected a strong spir-



it of service, teamwork, and environmental responsibility. During the programme, the team undertook cleaning of selected areas of the village and planted saplings to contribute towards a greener and healthier environment. The initiative also helped in creating awareness among the local residents regarding hygiene, sanitation, and the need for environmental conservation. The university expressed its sincere gratitude to the people of Kwarok Maring Village, Yairipok for their warm coop-

In Brief

Entrepreneurship development program draws to a close

Imphal: The closing ceremony of the "7-Days Entrepreneurship Development Program" organised by the Planning Department, Government of Manipur, was held at City Convention Centre, Imphal. The programme provided structured training on key entrepreneurial skills, including business development, financial planning, and digital tools, along with practical insights through startup case studies. Participants demonstrated strong engagement and potential. Manipur Technology Innovation (MTI-HUB) assured continued support through incubation, mentorship, and funding linkages, encouraging participants to apply their learning and contribute to Manipur's startup ecosystem. The programme began with an introductory remark followed by speeches from representatives of banks, All Manipur Entrepreneurs' Association, and Globiz Web Solutions Pvt. Ltd. The valedictory function commenced with the speeches from Training Centre representatives, Guests of Honour and President.

BJP nanes two candidates in second list for Assam polls

Guwahati: The BJP today released its second list containing the names of two party candidates for the upcoming Assam Assembly elections. The ruling party has fielded Sushri Krishna Saha from Dalgao constituency and Juban Gogoi from Sissiborgao seat. With this, the party has released the names of 90 candidates for the 126-member Assembly in the State. The BJP on March 19 released its first list of 88 candidates for the Assam Assembly polls, which included several key names and signalled a mix of continuity and change, with the party dropping 11 sitting MLAs and fielding only five women candidates.

Training prog on cyber crime prevention held in Aizawl

Aizawl: A daylong training programme on cyber crime prevention was organized at the conference hall of Gauhati High Court's Aizawl Bench. The programme was jointly organized by Mizoram State Legal Services Authority (MSLSA) and Mizoram Police. The inaugural session was attended by Justice Michael Zothankhuma, Justice Nelson Sailo, and Executive Chairman of MSLSA; Justice Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Sharad Agarwal, Director General of Police (DGP), Mizoram; and Helen Dawngliani, District & Sessions Judge and Chairman of DLSA, Aizawl Judicial District. Justice Michael Zothankhuma, in his address, shared that he himself had experienced cyber crime and expressed appreciation for organizing such a valuable training session.

Poll observers review strongroom arrangements in Guwahati

Guwahati: In view of the upcoming Assam Legislative Assembly Election, a team of election observers visited the Maniram Dewan Trade Centre in Guwahati, which will be used as strongroom for Kamrup Metropolitan election district. The team led by General Observers of Kamrup Metropolitan Election District Him Shekhar Gupta and Pradip Krishna Rao Dange along with Police Observer Aslam Khan and Expenditure Observers Ranjan Prakash and Rajat Sen jointly visited the Maniram Dewan Trade Centre at Betkuchi in the city.

With eye on peace, CM seeks meeting with KZC in Guwahati

Imphal, Mar 21: With the sole objective of restoring peace and bridge the trust deficit between Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities, the Office of the Chief Minister of Manipur has sought a meeting with the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC), an joint body of Kuki-Zo tribal leaders in Guwahati on Saturday. The invitation letter was addressed to KZC Chairman Henlianhang Thanglet.

The letter conveyed the request of Chief Minister Y Khemchand to have a meeting with the KZC Chairman and other members of the apex organisation. "I am directed to refer to the above subject and convey the request

of the Chief Minister of Manipur to have a meeting with you and other members of the Kuki Zo Council," the letter issued by the Secretary to the Chief Minister read. "A line of confirmation in this regard will be deeply appreciated," the letter stated. Notably, Kuki-Zo Council came into being in October 2024 after 18 months of 2023-2025 Manipur violence, in which the Kuki-Zo community felt targeted by the Manipur state government. During the previous months, the community was represented by Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) in the Churachandpur district and the Committee on Trib-



al Unity (CoTU) in the Kangpokpi district. After the formation of the Kuki-Zo Council, ITLF and CoTU came to be regarded as local organisations. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Y Khemchand chaired a high-level review meeting today at the New Civil Secretariat with the Chief Secretary, DGP, and Security Adviser

and held discussions on key aspects of administration and governance. In a social media post, Chief Minister Khemchand said, "Chaired a high-level review meeting today at the New Civil Secretariat with the Chief Secretary, DGP, and Security Adviser

"Held comprehensive discussions on key aspects of administration and governance, with a clear focus on strengthening peace, ensuring stability, and accelerating inclusive development in Manipur. Reiterated our collective commitment to responsive governance and the welfare of every citizen, the Chief Minister said.

Sikkim BJP seeks an instant FIR against The election authorities for giving a foreign individual an Indian voter ID

Sikkim, Mar 21: The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Sikkim was visited by State BJP spokesperson Sangay Gyatso Bhutia and State secretary Sangay Pulger, who asked for the prompt filing of a suo motto FIR against election officials involved in the unlawful issuance of an Indian voter ID to a foreign national, Uttam Kumar Shrestha. This allows people with dual citizenship and foreign military personnel to infiltrate Indian electoral rolls. The BJP Sikkim awaits an immediate update on the filing of the FIR and has requested certified copies of all communications sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs regarding this breach, said the spokesperson. In a letter addressed to the CEO, the Sikkim BJP has asserted that the citizenship of Uttam Kumar Shrestha is no longer a matter of ‘verification’ or ‘investigation’, but a proven fact. The party has produced certified documents from the A.C.J.M. Siliguri Court, including arrest and inspection memos from the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), FIR copies clearly identifying his permanent address as Rapti Zone, Tribhuvan Nagar, Dang District in Nepal, and seizure lists confirming the recovery of a Nepali Citizenship Card from



his possession. “The disappearance of these vital national records is not an accident; it is a deliberate nexus operandi to shield the officers who facilitated this breach. We are demanding to know exactly who was responsible for the safekeeping of these documents and why they haven’t been suspended,” said

the State BJP spokesperson. The State BJP expressed deep alarm over the Electoral Registration Officer’s (ERO) admission that the original Form 6 and supporting documents used to create the Voter ID are ‘missing’ from official custody. The party categorized this as a gross violation of

the Sikkim Government Servants Conduct Rules 1981. The BJP Sikkim called for an immediate and decisive action against the then BLO, AERO (SDM, Rangpo), and ERO (ADC, Gangtok II)

The party demanded an immediate FIR and registration of criminal cases for conspiracy and forgery of national identity documents against the involved officials. The CEO must take suo motto cognizance and act independently of the Home department’s delays to address the criminal aspect of the enrolment, demanded the State BJP. The party sought stringent proceedings under Sikkim Service Rules for the loss of official documentation. The State BJP highlighted that the illegal enrolment of foreign nationals in a sensitive border State like Sikkim is a direct threat to the demographics and sovereignty of India. The party stated that it would not tolerate administrative negligence or corruption that the individual is a trained foreign national caught at the Panitanki border by SSB jawans. For the Election department to treat this as a routine verification matter is an insult to national security, said the State BJP in a media statement on Friday.

BJP’s Bhaskar Sharma files nomination



Digboi, Mar 21: Bhaskar Sharma, the sitting MLA and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate, filed his nomination for Assam’s Margherita Assembly constituency on Friday morning at the Margherita Returning Officer’s office. The filing was preceded by a roadshow that saw supporters, party workers, and leaders in a procession through key areas of Margherita town before reaching the Returning Officer’s office. At the same time, the electoral landscape in Margherita is shaping into a multi-cornered contest, with opposition parties attempting to make inroads. Rahul Chettry, a young candidate from Jagun representing Rajior Dal, and Jarnal Minj of the Joy Bharat Party have entered the race, bringing alternative political perspectives into the contest. However, the opposition is widely seen as facing a challenge against the BJP’s established base and electoral machinery in the constituency. Addressing the media after filing his nomination, Sharma struck a confident and assertive tone, downplaying the challenge posed by rival candidates and emphasising the BJP’s development agenda. He stated that mere rhetoric cannot sub-

stitute for tangible progress and expressed firm belief that voters recognise the difference. “Victory will be a landslide in favour of the BJP. Mere talks cannot bring development. People today understand that the BJP has become a synonym for peace, progress, and innovation,” he said. The Margherita Assembly constituency, which has a total of 1,76,109 voters, remains a politically significant seat in Upper Assam. Election arrangements include administrative outreach to ensure participation even in remote areas. Notably, the smallest polling station under the constituency is located at Hanju Gaon Community Centre, catering to just 40 voters, demonstrating efforts to make the electoral process inclusive and accessible. A two-time MLA who secured victories in 2016 and 2021, Sharma is now seeking a third consecutive term, making this election a test of both his personal political standing and the BJP’s influence in the region. Meanwhile, sources indicate that more candidates are likely to file nominations before the deadline on March 23, which could further intensify the contest and introduce new dynamics to the electoral battle.

HKH glaciers melting rapidly; ice loss rates doubled since 2000: ICIMOD reports

Guwahati, Mar 21: Glaciers across the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) are melting at an accelerating rate, with ice loss rates doubling since 2000, according to two landmark reports released on Saturday by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) to mark World Glacier Day. The reports — Changing Dynamics of Glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalaya Region from 1990 to 2020 and HKH Glacier Outlook 2026: Insights from 50 Years of Himalayan Glacier Monitoring — present the most comprehensive evidence yet of glacier change in the region. They indicate a total loss of up to 27 metres of ice thickness since 1975, raising

serious concerns for nearly two billion people downstream who depend on meltwater from the “Water Towers of Asia.” The HKH region contains the largest volume of ice outside the polar regions, with more than 63,700 glaciers covering nearly 55,782 square kilometres. These glaciers feed at least ten major Asian river systems, underpinning food, water, energy, and livelihood security for billions. However, about 78% of this glacier area, located between 4,500 and 6,000 metres above sea level, is highly vulnerable to elevation-dependent warming. “This isn’t a distant problem; it’s a crisis unfolding in real time, with new disasters every summer and monsoon.

The fact that ice loss rates have doubled this century should shock us all into action,” said ICIMOD Director General Pema Gyamtsho. “The Hindu Kush Himalaya is at a crossroads. The rapidly escalating impacts, from water uncertainty to catastrophic floods, show we are in a critical decade for the cryosphere.”

The analysis shows that between 1990 and 2020, HKH glaciers lost about 12% of their total area and 9% of their estimated ice reserves. Sudan Bikash Maharjan, lead author of the glacier dynamics report, said the most immediate threat comes from smaller glaciers. “Glaciers smaller than 0.5 sq km are shrinking the fastest, posing risks of localised

water shortages and increasing hazards such as glacial lake outburst floods,” he said, noting that nearly three-quarters of the region’s glaciers fall within this vulnerable category. The HKH Glacier Outlook 2026, based on data from 38 monitored glaciers, shows that glacier wastage has doubled after 2000, suggesting that parts of the Himalayan cryosphere may be nearing irreversible tipping points. However, the reports flag a major data gap, only seven of these glaciers meet global monitoring standards set by the World Glacier Monitoring Service (WGMS), leaving vast regions such as the Karakoram, Sikkim, Zaskar, and Bhutan largely unmonitored.

Mega oil palm plantation drive launched in Chumoukedima under NMEO-OP

Dimapur, Mar 21: The Nagaland Agriculture Department launched a mega oil palm plantation drive under the National Mission on Edible Oils-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) 2025-26 at Doyapur in Chumoukedima on Friday. NMEO-OP is a centrally sponsored scheme launched in 2021, designed to achieve self-reliance in edible oils. Its primary aim is to significantly increase domestic crude palm oil production and expand oil palm cultivation areas to reduce India’s heavy reliance on expensive imports

Addressing the gathering, Dhanisiripar SDO (Civil) Vejoyo Swuro said the initiative would generate employment opportunities for the public and urged citizens to avail themselves of and benefit from such schemes.



Swuro assured that the district administration would extend all possible support to the farming community. Delivering the keynote address, Chumoukedima District Agriculture Officer Moainla Pongen said the programme marked the beginning of an

economic transformation for the region, with a focus on reducing India’s dependency on imported palm oil. She pointed out that the country currently imports nearly 60% of its domestic requirement, resulting in significant annual expenditure, and stated that

NMEO-OP seeks to address this gap by creating a self-sustaining ecosystem for production. Pongen said the initiative in Nagaland will primarily focus on foothill areas suitable for oil palm cultivation. Addressing concerns surrounding the crop, she clarified that oil palm is a viable and efficient option due to its stronger root system and comparatively lower water usage than crops like sugarcane. She further assured that oil palm cultivation would be carried out in a sustainable manner, utilizing wastelands while also promoting intercropping practices. Pongen added that the Agriculture Department has entered into MoUs with Godrej Agrovet Ltd. and Patanjali Foods to ensure assured market linkages for farmers.

Mnp CM invites Kuki Zo Council for talks to restore peace



Imphal, Mar 21: Manipur Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh has invited members of the Kuki Zo Council for a meeting to discuss steps to restore peace and normalcy in the ethnic strife-hit state, officials said on Friday. In a letter addressed to the chairman of the Kuki Zo Council, the secretary to the chief minister conveyed Singh’s request for a meeting with council members on Saturday in Guwahati to deliberate on issues

related to restoring normalcy in the state. “I am directed to refer to the above subject and convey the request of the Chief Minister of Manipur to have a meeting with you and other members of the Kuki Zo Council to discuss matters related to bringing back peace and normalcy in Manipur,” the letter stated. Whether the Kuki Zo Council would attend the meeting was yet to be confirmed, officials said.

Nagaland governor reviews state health infrastructure and key programmes

Kohima, Mar 21: Newly appointed Nagaland Governor Nand Kishore Yadav reviewed the state’s health infrastructure during a meeting with officials of the Health & Family Welfare Department at the Naga Bhavan conference hall, Lok Bhavan, Kohima, on Friday. During the meeting, the department gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation highlighting the state’s socio-demographic profile, health infrastructure, and key achievements in the health sector. Officials informed the governor that Nagaland has made notable progress in improving major health indicators. They said the infant mortality rate has declined significantly, while the maternal mortality ratio and total fertility rate have also shown considerable improvement over the years, reflecting better maternal and child healthcare services in the state. The officials also apprised the governor of the performance under the National TB Elimination Programme, including improvements in case detection and treatment outcomes. However,



they noted that certain areas, such as timely disbursement under the Ni-Kshay Poshan Yojana and patient adoption, required further attention. Appreciating the department’s efforts to strengthen healthcare delivery and improve key health indicators, Yadav emphasized the need for sustained focus

on the effective implementation of health programmes, particularly in remote and rural areas. He urged the department to continue its efforts to ensure accessible and quality healthcare for all citizens. The meeting was led by Secretary of Health & Family Welfare, S. Tainiu.

Manipur CM reviews security amid clashes in Tamenglong, Kangpokpi Yumnam Khemchand Singh

Imphal, Mar 21: Chaired a high-level review meeting with the Chief Secretary, DGP, and Security Adviser on Friday, marking the first such deliberation at the new Secretariat. The proposed meeting comes at a time when a fresh gunfight was reported from New Kaiphundai village in Tousem subdivision, under Tousem Police Station in Tamenglong district, along NH-37 on Friday morning around 8:30 AM. Sources said the gunfire, allegedly between the Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF) and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM) groups, lasted for hours, creating fear and panic among villagers. Several videos shared on social media showed them fleeing to safer areas. Another incident involving about 10 rounds of gunfire was reported in the Uyoekching hill ranges, located on the border of Kangpokpi and Imphal East districts. Suspected Kuki militants reportedly opened fire on Meitei villagers working at the Uyoekching foothills around 9 AM on Friday. Furthermore, intermittent gunfire between Kuki and Naga groups in Sinakei-thei, Ukhrul district, continued from Thursday afternoon until 3 PM on Friday. Reports indicate that Kuki militants allegedly fired five Rocket-Propelled Grenades (RPGs) during the attack on the village. Despite the fresh violence occurring at multiple locations, official reports stated that no casualties have been reported so far. In a post on X (formerly Twitter), the Chief Minister wrote, “Held comprehensive discussions on key aspects of



administration and governance, with a clear focus on strengthening peace, ensuring stability, and accelerating inclusive development in Manipur. Reiterated our collective commitment to responsive governance and the welfare of every citizen.” This follows a message sent on Friday by Nellenthang Tellen, Secretary to the Chief Minister of Manipur, to Henlianthang Thanglet, Chairman of the Kuki Zo Council. The message stated that the Chief Minister intends to hold a meeting with Thanglet and other members on January 21 in Guwahati to discuss matters related to restoring peace and normalcy in Manipur.

Dr. Lalzirmawia Chhangte Sworn In As Mizoram Information Commissioner



Aizawl, Mar 21: Mizoram Governor (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh, PVSM, AVSM, YSM (Retd), administered the oath of office today to Dr. Lalzirmawia Chhangte, IAS (Retd.), appointing him as State Information Commissioner under the Mizoram State Information Commis-

sion (MSIC) at a ceremony in Durbar Hall, Lok Bhanu. During the swearing-in ceremony, Chief Secretary Khilli Ram Meena read out the appointment notification for Dr. Lalzirmawia Chhangte as State Information Commissioner. Governor (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh

then administered the oath of office to Dr. Lalzirmawia Chhangte, formally inducting him into the role. The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Chief Minister Lalduhoma, Speaker Lalbiakzama, EF&CC Minister Pu Lalthansanga, Agriculture Minister PC Vanlalruata, IPRP&S Minister B. Lalchhanzova, and other dignitaries. Dr. Lalzirmawia Chhangte hails from Tarpho village in Hnathial District. He holds a B.A. (Hons. in Education) from NEHU (1986), LL.B from NEHU (1993), M.A. (Public Administration) from HPU Shimla (2001), B.C.S from Serampore College (2007), D.Min from Serampore College (2018), and a Ph.

Entrepreneurship development program draws to a close

Imphal, Mar 21: The closing ceremony of the “7-Days Entrepreneurship Development Program” organised by the Planning Department, Government of Manipur, was held at City Convention Centre, Imphal. The programme provided structured training on key entrepreneurial skills, including business development, financial planning, and digital tools, along with practical insights through startup case studies. Participants demonstrated strong engagement and potential. Manipur Technology Innovation (MTI-HUB) assured continued support through incubation, mentorship, and funding linkages, encouraging participants to apply their learning and contribute to Manipur’s startup ecosystem. The programme began with an introductory remark followed by speeches from representatives of banks,



All Manipur Entrepreneurs’ Association, and Globiz Web Solutions Pvt. Ltd. The valedictory function commenced with the speeches from Training Centre representatives, Guests of Honour and President. Certificates were also distributed to the participants. The Entrepreneurship Development Program aims to enhance entrepreneurial skills and promote self-employment opportunities among participants in the state. Dr. Rk Radhesana Devi, Director Planning; SK Ai-

mol, Joint Secretary, Planning; Dr. RK. Tombisana, Joint Director, Planning; H. Homendro, Joint Director, Planning; Dr. S. Yoirentomba, Deputy Director, MSME, Imphal; Guneshwor Singh, Chief Manager, SBI; Th. Joykumar, President, AMEA; Roshnikumar Yambem, Director, Globiz Web Solution Pvt. Ltd.; Upendra Kumar, Circle Head, Punjab National Bank, Imphal and W. Daniel, Chief Manager (Credit and NPA), SBI Imphal West, attended the Valedictory Function.

Rhino Poaching Attempt Averted at Biswanath Wildlife Division, Kaziranga

Guwahati, Mar 21: A rhino poaching attempt was successfully foiled at the Biswanath Wildlife Division of Kaziranga National Park following intelligence inputs.

Based on intelligence input, patrolling was intensified in the Eastern Range, Gamari.

At around 10:30 PM, forest personnel detected a suspicious individual near Gona-ti, carrying what appeared to be a packed firearm.

A joint team comprising staff from the Eastern and Crime Investigation Range, along with ACFs Gautam Timung and Upal Borah, RO Debashis Dutta, and the

DFO, launched an immediate pursuit to apprehend the suspect. However, the individual managed to flee under the cover of darkness .

After an extensive search operation, officials recovered and seized a modified rifle barrel, butt and a pair of shoes.

Later, a black color bag was recovered containing other parts of rifle, 13 rounds of ammunition, phone, other items from the nearby area.

This marks yet another successful prevention of rhino poaching in the division. The search operation is ongoing, and vital clues regarding the suspect’s identity is retrieved.

MTIFC urges timely relief distribution for hailstorm-hit families

Imphal, Mar 21: The Manipur Tribal Indigenous Farmers Committee (MTIFC) has urged Government of Manipur to ensure proper and timely distribution of relief materials to families affected by the recent hailstorm and strong winds that struck various parts of the state on March 15. According to reports, the severe storm caused extensive damage to houses across several districts, including Tengnoupal. In the district alone, a total of 117 houses were reportedly damaged, particularly in areas along the Myanmar border. Many families have been left vulnerable after their homes were either partially or completely destroyed. The press meet was also attended by MTIFC Vice President K. Modun, General Secretary (Administration) K. Modun, Women’s Wing Secretary Tocha Maku, and Women’s Wing Coordinator K. Apem.

Training prog on cyber crime prevention held in Aizawl

Aizawl, Mar 21: A day-long training programme on cyber crime prevention was organized at the conference hall of Gauhati High Court’s Aizawl Bench. The programme was jointly organized by Mizoram State Legal Services Authority (MSLSA) and Mizoram Police. The inaugural session was attended by Justice Michael Zothankhuma, Justice Nelson Sailo, and Executive Chairman of MSLSA; Justice Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Sharad Agarwal, Director General of Police(DGP), Mizoram; and Helen Dawngliani, District & Sessions Judge and Chairman of DLSA, Aizawl Judicial District.

Justice Michael Zothankhuma, in his address, shared that he himself had experienced cyber crime and expressed appreciation for organizing such a valuable training session. He stated that in today’s rapidly evolving and interconnected technological world, cyber crime has become an emerging threat

worldwide as it is a crime without borders. Hence, laws often take time to adapt which creates gaps between emerging crimes and the legal framework which is meant to prevent and punish them. To bridge this gap and effectively combat cyber crime, cooperation among law enforcement agencies, police, and the judiciary is essential. He also emphasized that Public Awareness is the first line of defense against cyber crime. He wished the participants to have a fruitful training and to be someone who contributes to educating the society further.

Justice Nelson Sailo mentioned that in 2017, the Supreme Court recognized the “Right to Privacy” as a Fundamental Right under Article 21 of the Indian Constitutionss. Following this, Parliament passed the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP Act) in 2023 to safeguard citizens’ data rights. He highlighted that cyber crime is rapidly increasing in India, with over 86,000 cases regis-

tered in 2023. In Mizoram, 361 cyber crime cases were recorded between 2022 and 2026, with 5 cases being already registered up to March this year. The most common cases include financial fraud, social media impersonation, and sexual harassment. He advised the public to use antivirus software, avoid opening or downloading unknown files, and report incidents promptly to the police.

DGP Sharad Agarwal also addressed the gathering, stating that the rapid rise in cyber crime has posed significant challenges to law enforcement agencies. He noted that modern technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) are increasingly being used in phishing and creating deepfake images and videos, as well as for stealing passwords and spreading malware. To combat cyber crime, Mizoram Police has established a Technical Support Cell and is using digital forensic tools to analyze data securely.

Helen Dawngliani, in

her speech, outlined various types of cyber crime. She said that while technological advancements have made life easier, they have also increased opportunities for crime. She emphasized that in order to preserve Rule of Law in the digital sphere, there is a need for stronger collaboration between the police and judiciary.

Following the inaugural session, technical sessions were conducted. Dr. Harold D’Costa, President of Cyber Security Corporation and International Trainer in Digital Forensics and Cyber Law, led the training. SP (Cyber Crime) Zonun-sanga and JH Lalpamawii, JMFC-cum-Civil Judge (Jr. Division), District Court Aizawl, also gave presentations on topics related to cyber crime. Meghna Yadav, IGP (Training) delivered the concluding remarks. The training was attended by officials from various departments including Home, Excise & Narcotics, Finance, and others.

Two Civilians Injured in Separate Firing Incidents Along Ukhrul–Kangpokpi Fringe

Imphal, Mar 21: Two civilians were injured in separate firing incidents reported along the Ukhrul–Kangpokpi fringe in Manipur on March 21, triggering fresh concerns over security in the region. According to statements issued by the Ihang-Bungpi Working Committee and the Kuki CSO Working Committee (Ukhrul), suspected Tangkhul militants allegedly carried out two attacks—first in the early hours at Shangkai village, and later along the Leplen–Tingpibung road. The more serious incident occurred around 9:30 a.m., when an auto-rickshaw travelling between Tingpibung and Leplen villages reportedly came under automatic gunfire from the direction of Sanakeithel. The vehicle was hit while in motion and later crashed. Two individuals were injured, including a woman who

sustained a gunshot wound to her waist. Both are said to be in critical condition, with further updates awaited from medical authorities. Earlier, at approximately 5:15 a.m., suspected militants allegedly fired three to four rounds towards Shangkai village, causing panic among residents. No casualties were reported in that incident. The Ihang-Bungpi Working Committee described the 9:30 a.m. attack as a deliberate act targeting unarmed civilians. It also raised concerns over the alleged inaction of personnel from the 4th Mahar Regiment stationed at Sinakeithel during the incident, questioning why security forces failed to intervene and calling it a serious dereliction of duty. The Committee demanded immediate counter-measures against militant elements operat-

ing from the Sinakeithel area, a formal inquiry into the alleged inaction, dismantling of unauthorised militant bunkers along civilian routes, and assurance of safe passage for commuters on the Leplen–Tingpibung road. It warned that failure to take visible action within 48 hours would be taken seriously. Meanwhile, the Kuki CSO Working Committee (Ukhrul) condemned the incidents, noting that they occurred at a time when the community was already mourning the deaths of Thenkhing Baite and Thangboimang Lunkim. The Committee stated that it had extended cooperation to authorities and lifted the shutdown on March 20 following assurances. It urged authorities to identify those responsible and take prompt legal action to prevent further escalation.

Centre Waives 5.23 Crore Dues For Vacated Assam Rifles Facilities In Mizoram, Confirms CM Lalduhoma

Aizawl, Mar 21: The Centre has waived an amount of ₹5.23 crore as depreciated cost that the Mizoram Government was required to pay for buildings and infrastructure vacated by the Assam Rifles in Aizawl,” Chief Minister Lalduhoma said In a major fiscal boost for the state of Mizoram, Chief Minister Lalduhoma officially announced that the Central Government has waived a sum of ₹5.23 crore originally payable by the state. This amount represented the “depreciated cost” of buildings and infrastructure vacated by the Assam Rifles during their historic relocation from the heart of Aizawl to their new battalion headquarters at Zokhawsang.

The announcement, made during the ongoing Budget Session of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, marks the end of a protracted financial negotiation and clears the way for a massive urban redevelopment project in the capital city. The ₹5.23 crore liability was a condition rooted in the original Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) signed between the Mizoram government and the



Assam Rifles. Under this agreement, the state was required to compensate the paramilitary force for the “depreciated value”—the remaining worth of the infrastructure after accounting for decades of

wear and tear—of the facilities they were handing over to the state. Chief Minister Lalduhoma revealed that he had proactively sought a waiver to ease the state’s financial burden. In May 2025, he sent a formal representation to the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai, requesting that the Centre “pardon” this amount, given Mizoram’s limited resources as a small hill state. ”In response to my request, the Union Minister informed me through a letter that the Mizoram government would not be required to pay the depreciated cost. It is a matter of great satisfaction and happiness for our state that our appeal has been accepted,” the Chief Minister told the Assembly. The force handed over prime real estate in areas like Zodin Square (Lammual) and Khatla, including a commandant’s bungalow, a church, a war memorial, and several administrative plots. The Assam Rifles has, however, retained its 23 Sector Headquarters and the DIG residence at Khatla for operational purposes. With the financial hurdle cleared and the land officially in the mountain city.

In pursuit of academic excellence, RIMS hosts XVI MESOCON

Imphal, Mar 21: The Medical Society of the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal, successfully hosted the XVI MESOCON 2026 at the Jubilee Hall, RIMS, Imphal, marking yet another milestone in its pursuit of academic excellence. The conference was formally inaugurated by Prof. G. Sunil Kumar Sharma, Director, RIMS, Imphal, who graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Prof. N. Sanjib Singh, Medical Superintendent, RIMS Hospital, Imphal, and Prof. L. Rajesh Singh, Dean (Academics), RIMS, Imphal, attended as Guests of Honour. The programme was presided over by Prof. S. Subhaschandra Singh, Chairman of the Medical Society, RIMS. Speaking at the event, the RIMS Director commended RIMS and the Medical Society for their academic initiatives and stressed enhancing research through high-impact publications. Highlighting critical care, he noted its role in balancing expertise, ethics, and patient care. He encouraged collaboration and research culture, mentioned the

upcoming 150-bedded ICU block, and emphasized organ transplantation efforts, expressing confidence in MESOCON 2026 outcomes. MESOCON 2026 featured a rich and comprehensive scientific programme, including Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions covering a wide range of relevant and contemporary medical topics. Eminent faculty members and distinguished speakers from within the state and beyond delivered insightful and scholarly presentations, fostering meaningful academic exchange and contributing to professional growth. The occasion was further distinguished by the formal release of the conference souvenir and the JMS Journal. The Chief Guest also felicitated outstanding scholars by distributing prizes and certificates for Postgraduate (PG) awards, recognizing their academic excellence and dedication. The successful organisation of MESOCON 2026 provided a vibrant platform for the exchange of knowledge and the dissemination of recent advancements in med-



ical science, reaffirming RIMS Imphal’s unwavering commitment to academic distinction and continuous professional development. MESOCON (Medical Society Conference) is the annual conference organized by the Medical Society of the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal, Manipur. It serves as a premier academic platform for

healthcare professionals, faculty members, researchers, and students to discuss advancements in medical science and healthcare. The objective of MESOCON is to share ideas on health-related issues, promote collaboration, update knowledge on emerging medical technologies (such as AI and robotics), and improve healthcare standards.

BJP nanes two candidates in second list for Assam polls

Guwahati, Mar 21: The BJP today released its second list containing the names of two party candidates for the upcoming Assam Assembly elections.

The ruling party has fielded Sushri Krishna Saha from Dalgao constituency and Juban Gogoi from Sissiborgao seat.

With this, the party has released the names of 90 candidates for the 126-member Assembly in the State.

The BJP on March 19 released its first

list of 88 candidates for the Assam Assembly polls, which included several key names and signalled a mix of continuity and change, with the party dropping 11 sitting MLAs and fielding only five women candidates.

BJP’s allies AGP and BPF will contest in 26 and 11 seats, respectively.

The BJP is seeking to retain power in the state, with Himanta Biswa Sarma aiming for another term as chief minister.

Poll observers review strongroom arrangements in Guwahati

Guwahati, Mar 21: In view of the upcoming Assam Legislative Assembly Election, a team of election observers visited the Maniram Dewan Trade Centre in Guwahati, which will be used as strongroom for Kamrup Metropolitan election district.

The team led by General Observers of Kamrup Metropolitan Election District Him Shekhar Gupta and Pradip Krishna Rao Dange

along with Police Observer Aslam Khan and Expenditure Observers Ranjan Prakash and Rajat Sen jointly visited the Maniram Dewan Trade Centre at Betkuchi in the city.

During the visit the Observers reviewed various aspects of poll preparedness including the strongroom arrangements.

The District Election Officer of Kamrup Metropolitan district, Swapneel Paul

was also present during the visit.

The team of observers also visited around 10 polling stations in the city including Beltola Higher Secondary School and Kendriya Vidyalaya, Khanapara to review the preparedness for the polling process.

Assistant Returning Officers, Sector Officers and BLOs were also present during the visits.

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Editorial

During Election Season, Blood Donation Is Needed — Not Bloodshed

Election season in India is a festival of democracy — a time when millions exercise their sovereign right to choose those who govern them. Yet, in tragic irony, these very seasons are often marred by political violence, clashes, and bloodshed that hollow out the very spirit of the democratic process. What elections demand is not the spilling of blood, but the giving of it. Blood donation camps during election season serve a dual purpose — they meet the perennial shortage in blood banks and remind citizens that civic participation means building life, not destroying it. Political parties that truly serve the people should replace intimidation rallies with blood donation drives. Civil society, NCC units, and youth wings have the reach and energy to mobilise thousands of donors. State Election Commissions must incentivise such peace-building initiatives. Democracy thrives when citizens nurture each other — one pint of blood donated is worth more than a thousand inflammatory slogans shouted. Let the ballot box, not bloodshed, decide India's future. Let every election season be remembered not for the lives it cost, but for the lives it saved.

Infertility: at a time when we need the right words, some are unable to find them

Some things are easy to talk about; infertility is not one of them. I speak from experience — of miscarriage and unsuccessful rounds of IVF — and I've heard some clangers along the way. I forgive you all. Well, most of you. But I also come at it as the presenter of BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour. Three decades into live talk radio, I listen for a living. I'm adept at noticing micro-expressions, the pauses, the shifts in tone, the feelings that sit between the words on and off air. And I keep wondering: why are we so bad at talking about infertility? This is even something that, until now, I haven't spoken publicly about.

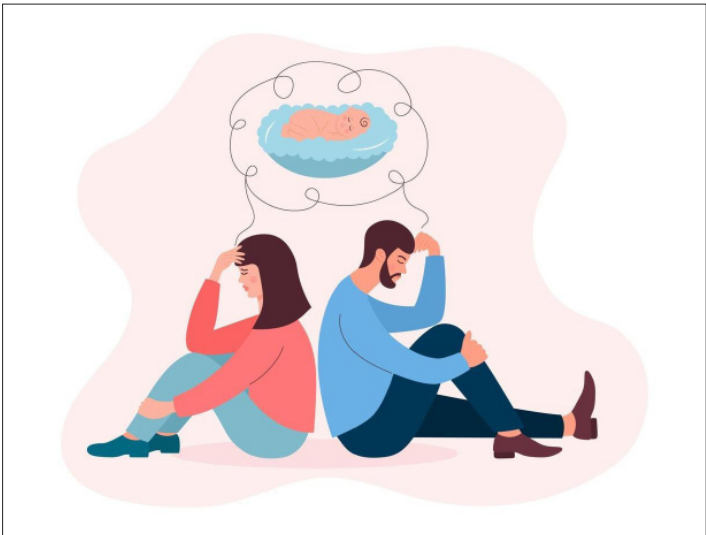
Perhaps it's because we still live in a society in which motherhood is, for many, the expected norm. When something is assumed to be inevitable, its absence can make people uncomfortable. That discomfort can spill into language that isn't appropriate, helpful or even fit for purpose. Or maybe people don't know how to broach a subject so complex.

Whatever the reason, according to the NHS, about one in seven couples could experience fertility problems. That's a lot of people who would benefit from better conversations.

When I was going through it, I wanted to be open. But rather quickly, I changed tack. The appetite other people had for the specifics I found exhausting and, at times, invasive. How many weeks when you miscarried? How many rounds of IVF? As though there were some hierarchy of effort, some scoreboard of grief.

Their timing could also be way off. Once, as we stood at a buffet, an acquaintance filling his plate said: "Sorry about your miscarriage, I'm sure it'll happen." I was caught completely off-guard. To be fair, the sentiment was well-intentioned, but the setting was less than ideal.

Moreover, at that early stage, I had told so few people. If he knew, it suggested others had also been discussing it. Human nature, perhaps. But miscarriage is a lonely place. Being discussed in absentia made it feel even lonelier. He was far from the only person to say "I'm sure it will happen". I know it comes from a place of hope, but it felt like a minimisation of pain — not only of what I was experiencing, but also of what, potentially, was in store for me. "I'm sorry" is a complete sentence. That would have been enough. Yet I really can understand



why it's difficult to know what to say. I was often torn myself. On the one hand, I craved sentiments based in reality. On the other, I longed for discernment — for people to choose their words with my tender heart in mind. After an embryo transfer, a friend casually reminded me: "You know those cells don't mean anything. They may amount to nothing." As it turned out, she was right. The embryo didn't stick. But I remember the words landing like a physical blow after months of injections, appointments and emotional

endurance. To me, they meant everything. I knew she was trying to temper my expectations. According to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), the average IVF birthrate using fresh embryo transfers is 25%. That means 75% don't result in a baby. That's the truth. But that particular night, I wasn't ready for it. As time passed without a successful pregnancy, there came the familiar "maybe it's just not meant to be". Now, I can accept that. Then, it felt like a cold, unwelcome verdict. So how could

it have gone better? For me: fewer platitudes, less certainty, more listening, greater empathy. I felt all that from one couple who chose a quiet moment, face to face, to tell me they were expecting. They said they understood their happy news might hurt. It wasn't dramatic. It wasn't sombre. It was thoughtful. Their act of consideration felt like love. And I must give a special mention to the receptionist in the IVF clinic, when we had come to the end of that particular road. She said: "I've watched you two together in and out of here over the years. I see how you are with one another ... you are enough without a baby." Her words made me smile, so soothing on a difficult day. Everything I've recounted might well have landed completely differently with someone else. That's another thing that makes it a minefield. We are not mind-readers. Infertility is common. Finding the right words, at the right time, is much less so. I'm hoping that by sharing and exploring these complicated feelings and the language around them, I can help get us to a better place. A place where we can show up for one another and find what helps, and what doesn't, when a baby isn't a given.

Behind the bombast, Trump will be worried: when he tries to stop the war on Iran, will anyone listen

What a pity Benjamin Netanyahu remains at large after an international arrest warrant for alleged war crimes committed in Gaza was issued in 2024. Had he been detained, as he certainly should have been, the peoples of Iran, Lebanon, the Gulf — and Israel itself — might have been spared much present-day pain and suffering.

The Israeli prime minister's lifelong, passionate obsession with eradicating the real and imagined threats posed by Iran was reportedly a key factor in prompting Donald Trump's abrupt, unprovoked plunge into all-out war. Netanyahu should be in jail, not committing more crimes while the powerful but ego-driven US president negligently looks on.

Netanyahu ridicules claims that he dragged the US into war. "Does anyone really think that someone can tell President Trump what to do?" he asked this week. "He didn't need any convincing." But Oman's foreign minister flatly contradicts him, saying Netanyahu's op-

position convinced Trump to abandon indirect talks with Iran, overseen by Oman in Geneva, that were close to success.

Israel's plan of campaign has rapidly taken on a life of its own since joint operations with the US began on 28 February, with the Israeli air force and army inflicting death and destruction on an ever-expanding range of military and civilian targets across Iran and Lebanon. But this week's Israeli bombing of Iran's South Pars gas field — a significant escalation that led to further spikes in global energy prices and fierce Iranian retaliatory strikes against Gulf countries' oil and gas facilities — was a step too far. It was disowned by Trump, who claimed he knew nothing about it in advance. That was contradicted by anonymous US and Israeli officials. The episode provoked a spate of reports about how US and Israeli war aims are diverging. One basic difference concerns Iran's future governance. Netanyahu is unequivocally seeking to totally collapse Iran's regime. Though his

stated aims change daily, Trump has indicated he could do a Venezuela-type deal if new leaders emerge in Tehran who are prepared to cooperate with the US.

By forcing the world to stare deep into the energy abyss, Netanyahu may have inadvertently set limits on what until now, for him, has been an open-ended war of choice. Apparently keen to placate Trump, he now says South Pars-style aerial attacks on Iran's energy infrastructure will not be repeated. But he is also talking about putting troops on the ground — another potentially huge expansion of the war — and Trump has not ruled it out.

Trump wields power as he sees fit, yet in practice, over the Gaza war and since, he has often appeared to be willing to defer to Netanyahu's aggressive policies. He repeatedly consulted the Israeli leader by phone and in person in the weeks before the Iran war. Marco Rubio, the secretary of state, suggested to Congress that the US was effectively hustled into action by Israel's deter-

mination to go ahead regardless.

The exact timing of the war's onset was dictated by the CIA's and Israeli intelligence's discovery that Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader and number one Netanyahu bogeyman, was to meet regime officials at his Tehran family compound on 28 February. Khamenei was illegally targeted by Israeli missiles. His assassination hugely upped the ante from the start.

Further evidence that a credible, workable US-Iran nuclear deal was within reach, two days before the war, emerged in an exclusive Guardian report published this week. It said Jonathan Powell, the UK national security adviser, believed that Iran had made "surprising" concessions in Geneva that could have led to an agreement. But Trump and his amateur negotiators, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner — mindful of Netanyahu's longstanding opposition, voiced during repeated visits and calls to the White House, and lacking adequate technical advice — were un-

convinced. Two days later, without warning, diplomacy was abandoned and the war was launched.

Netanyahu is one of the leading warmongers of the age, along with Russia's Vladimir Putin — although Trump, a self-nominated Nobel peace prize candidate, is catching up fast (he's now threatening Cuba, after his Venezuela coup). For years, Netanyahu has styled himself "Mr Security" and despite his personal culpability for the 7 October 2023 catastrophe — the Hamas-led attack in which 1,200 people were killed — continues to do so ahead of autumn elections. Israel is safe in his hands, he claims. Yet again and again, he has unilaterally launched into wars and conflicts in Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Iran last June, notoriously in Gaza, and now in Iran again. His bellicosity fails to improve Israel's security in any lasting sense. For example, he vowed to totally destroy Hamas in Gaza. He failed. But more than 70,000 Palestinians are dead.

As in Iran, Netanyahu

is pursuing yet another heavy-handed, futile campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon, in which hundreds of civilians have died and more than 1 million are displaced. Yet Israeli claims this will eliminate terror threats "once and for all" are risible.

On the contrary, Iran's surviving leaders may turn even more hostile and vengeful — and persuaded, which they weren't all previously, of the necessity of acquiring nuclear weapons. Past US leaders, such as Joe Biden, have typically sought to hold Israel in check for exactly such reasons. But Trump, who can calibrate the relationship according to his wishes, nevertheless gives Netanyahu free rein, mounting unprecedented joint military operations.

Netanyahu is the Middle East's foremost proponent of the "forever war" — the phenomenon Trump and his supporters loathe the most. Yet for all his public protestations, Netanyahu is largely unconstrained by such US concerns. He doesn't appear to give a fig for the global oil crisis, the war's negative

impact on Gulf allies and Europe's and Asia's consumers, or for the damage it is doing to the transatlantic alliance and Ukraine's fight for freedom. His singular, overriding aim is to destroy the Iranian threat. As for Trump, even by his execrable standards, his behaviour in the past three weeks has been abominable. He persistently misled the public about an "imminent" Iranian threat, about Tehran's imagined timeline for obtaining nukes, about nonexistent ballistic missiles threatening the US, about supposed European treachery, about who caused the Minab school massacre. He fiddles with his golf balls while oil terminals burn. He boasts about his White House ballroom as thousands are killed or injured. He publicly insults too-loyal allies such as Keir Starmer. He flirts with potentially disastrous plans to deploy ground forces to seize Iran's enriched uranium stockpile. And all the while, Trump tries to dodge blame for his shockingly incompetent failure to anticipate Iran's long-signalled

move to widen the war in the Gulf and close the strait of Hormuz.

Amid the smoke of burning oilfields, ruined homes and the cries of the injured and bereaved, a few things are clear, three weeks into this conflict. One is that Iran's regime still stands and is still fighting back; there is no sign yet of a popular uprising. Another is that the late Ayatollah Khamenei's plan to spread the cost of the war across the region is working. A third is that falling stock markets, rising energy prices, global economic disruption — and clouded midterm election prospects — are seen by Trump personally as a bigger threat than any Iranian bomb or missile. For these reasons — and not out of much-needed concern for the human, legal and moral aspects of the war — he belatedly moved this week to rein in Netanyahu. The bigger question is whether Trump can extricate himself and the US before it all gets much, much worse. If and when he calls a halt, will Iran, will Israel, actually listen?

This is a key moment in the war on Iran — and Starmer must resist the UK being dragged into it any further

Is this the turning point? A deranged US president and an Israeli prime minister facing prosecution are seeking to entice the armies of the world into the stupidest war of the 21st century. Israel's strike this week on Iran's South Pars gas field was clearly meant to provoke an Iranian retaliation so massive as to ensure a ferocious response from Donald Trump. This escalation beckons. This is how small wars become big. There is only one way of calling a halt.

It is for Trump and Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu to stop bombing Iran. Yet both leaders clearly see themselves as trapped. Trump, having already claimed to have won the war, now feels lonely. Though he has amassed the largest aggressive force of modern times, he pleads with his one-time allies to come and give him moral support. But Trump started this war. He must face the wound to his pride that may go with stopping it. He must then complete the harder task of getting Israel also to stop. Meanwhile, Britain should play no part at all. Its security is not remotely threatened. Whatever evil Iran poses to British in-

terests, war is no response. Nor is it Britain's duty to judge and replace foreign regimes, a task at which its recent record is deplorable. How to contain modern terrorism may be a longstanding challenge, but aerial bombardment offers no answer.

Yet Keir Starmer is sending senior military planners to Washington to help Trump plan how to reopen the strait of Hormuz. That assumes no agreement on Iran's part to its peaceful reopening. This is in addition to Britain having already made British bases available to US bombers, laughably for "purely defensive purposes". Such a slide into collaboration is how George W Bush ensnared Tony Blair in Afghanistan and Iraq. It might be called strategic seduction. Starmer must not stumble down the same path as led more than 400 British soldiers to their deaths in Helmand.

Trump claims that Britain owes the US a debt in return for Washington's nuclear deterrence of Soviet Russia under Nato. This shows how incoherent has become the jargon of international defence, where "national security" glibly justi-

fies any act, however disproportionate. Trump maintains that Iran had become "an imminent nuclear threat" to the US and was "weeks away from developing a nuclear weapon". This was as false as Bush's similar claim for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Trump himself had boasted that Iran's nuclear enrichment sites had been destroyed by his bombing of Iran last June. These arguments easily become lost at times like this in the military rhetoric beloved of rightwing politicians and macho commentators. It is a world of shock and awe, of existential threats, multilateral responses, military targets and collateral damage. It supposedly justifies the killing from the air of thousands of innocent people. The only winners are military establishments, defence lobbyists and populist demagogues. Theirs are the songs that have summoned nations to war down the ages. Their tunes are the best — at the time. Starmer now finds himself in exactly the predicament that should have been ruled out after Britain's Suez fiasco in 1956. Then, an assault on Egypt to assert British control of the Suez ca-



nal failed to topple the Cairo regime. It ended when Washington told the British prime minister, Anthony Eden, that he had gone mad. Britain accepted the message that its imperial outreach was at an end, but it was reluctant to completely withdraw. It could not see itself as just another European country minding its own business. The overseas bases remained, as did the yearning to intervene. Hence, 70 years later, Britain

still finds itself spending millions on its "defence" in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. Imperial memorials in Cyprus and Diego Garcia entice leaders, as Blair would say, to "punch above our weight". Britain joined the Iraq war supposedly because of an "imminent threat" merely to its base in Cyprus. As for the latest row over the sovereignty of the Chagos Islands — it is beyond absurd. And hence Downing Street still han-

kers after the White House phone call, the special relationship, the tariff deal, the intelligence swap. When the US commits an illegal act or a monumental blunder, somehow Starmer feels he cannot respond, as did other European leaders, and condemn Trump outright. He nervously equivocates. Two weeks ago, there was perhaps an argument for seeing Israel's decapitation of the Tehran regime as being in the same category as Trump's toppling of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela in January. It could be explained as an overnight operation with a planned and limited outcome. The past three weeks have seen no such outcome. War is now open-ended. As it is, in the past week I have changed my mind on whether the king's state visit to Washington should proceed. There should be no outright cancellation — it was to celebrate a bond of peoples, not governments — but it surely cannot proceed while Trump's aggression continues. Britain's monarch cannot be seen shaking hands with a man of such violence. The bombing must stop. For the time being, nothing else matters.

Record Low: Rupee breaches 93 for time



Mumbai: The escalating crisis in West Asia continued to pressure the Indian rupee, which breached the 93 mark for the first time on Friday – the worst single-day fall in four years. It fell to a record low of 93.70, down 1.16% from the previous close, as the ongoing war pushed oil prices to \$108 per barrel on Friday. After Friday’s sharp fall, the depreciation in the current financial year reached 9.65%, the worst in 12 years. The rupee has been the worst-performing currency in FY26, followed by Japanese yen and Philippine peso at 5.46% and 4.76%, respectively. The currency breached the 93 mark in the offshore forward market on Thursday as oil prices rose to \$ 119 per barrel after Iran attacked several Middle East energy facilities. The Indian currency and debt market was closed on Thursday on account of a public holiday. Sengupta added that India’s import cover stands at 9.8 months currently and it is crucial to prevent it from dropping to the six-month mark, which signals discomfort for markets, especially as the import bill rises with higher commodity prices. Sengupta projected the rupee at 94.50 by June and 95 by December.According to Anindya Banerjee, head ofommodity and currency Research at Kotak Securities, the currency will depend on functionality to the Strait of Hormuz going ahead. “If the Strait of Hormuz remains disrupted, oil prices will stay elevated, putting further pressure on the rupee. On the upside, psychological

resistance sits at 94, followed by 95. It won’t breach 93 immediately unless oil price sustains below \$100.” Currency experts said that the RBI’s intervention remains calibrated at curbing volatility rather than rigidly defending any level, thus permitting a gradual currency depreciation. Strategic Retreat Along with elevated oil prices, the equity outflows also continue to weigh on the currency. In March so far, foreign investors offloaded equities worth \$ 9.6 billion. Sodhani added that the persistent FII outflows, a broader risk-off environment, and bearish cues from the offshore NDF market have added to depreciation pressures. “Previously, the RBI had kept the rupee steady at 90.50 through interventions. It’s a smart adjustment to let it ease a bit to 93.70, as overly aggressive action in a prolonged crisis could harm macro stability—especially when every currency is depreciating against the dollar, making resistance limited,” said Guara Sengupta, chief economist at “The sharp surge in global crude amid escalating geopolitical tensions has been compounded by India’s crude basket spiking to around \$157/bbl on Thursday, significantly amplifying dollar demand from oil marketing companies. This has worsened India’s current account outlook and put structural pressure on the rupee,” said Kunal Sodhani, treasury head at Shinhan Bank.

5.4% Yield & Zero Debt: Is Maersk-backed port stock a true dividend gem

Mumbai: Welcome to the latest edition of Dividend Hunter Weekly. Previously, we examined a debt-free IT Player with a 32% ROE, offering 7% dividend yield, a Public Sector Undertaking with 6% yield, and zero debt, and a debt-free media company offering 6% dividend yield. This week, we examine India’s first private sector port company located on the South-west Coast of Gujarat. Furthermore, the dividend has been increased every year during FY22-FY25, and given its track record of paying final dividends, it is likely to be raised again in FY26. It paid a dividend of ₹8.2 in FY25, translating into a dividend yield of 5.4% as per the current price of ₹153 per share. In FY24, the dividend was ₹7.3 per share, ₹6.1 in FY23, ₹4 in FY22, and ₹4.5 in FY21. Collectively, in FY26 YTD, the company has already paid 90% of the last 5-year average dividend (₹6.0). The dividend payout has consistently been less than the 100% threshold required by our filter. Its long-term outlook hinges on renewing its current port concession agreement, which is valid until September 2028. Management notes that engagements with the Gujarat Maritime Board are moving in the right direction, with no red flags. It has also proposed a capex of ₹17,000 crore to upgrade container-handling infrastructure and ensure long-term sustainability.The ₹17,000 Crore Gambit: Growth vs. Dividend Sustainability Gujarat Pipavav’s primary objective is to maintain a steady, consistent distribution of profits to its shareholders. But it may choose to retain earnings rather than distribute them under specific circumstances. But it maintains the flexibility to retain earnings rather than pay them out. In this context, management declined to give forward-looking guidance on future payout ratios, given its proposed ₹17,000 crore investment plan. It noted that any shift in capital allocation and dividend payouts is strictly at the Board of Directors’ discretion, subject to final approval by shareholders at the Annual General Meeting.Container Recovery & Suez Canal: What Man-

agement Says About the Turnaround-Looking ahead, management is cautiously optimistic about a turnaround in the container segment, noting early green shoots with a 7% sequential volume growth. Structural initiatives with Maersk have also yielded a 15% volume growth over the January to December period.Despite these positive indicators, management prefers to wait for Q4 data for confirmation. However, note that the recent blockade of the Strait of Hormuz may slow down the probable turnaround.Scaling to 5 MMT: The Liquid Cargo Expansion and the 3X Pumping Multiplier To meet future demand in the liquid cargo and infrastructure sectors, large-scale infrastructure expansion is currently underway. The local LPG tank farm operator is commissioning new cryogenic tanks, which will improve the pumping rate by approximately 3X and free up valuable waterfront capacity.The payout ratio could be adjusted downward if funds are needed for business expansion, if the company faces weak trade growth, or if it needs to infuse equity into its joint venture, Pipavav Railway Corporation.Gujarat Pipavav Port provides crucial access to India’s North and North-West cargo belt. As a leading multi-cargo port, the company leverages its unique selling proposition (superior rail connectivity and efficient cargo evacuation) to sustain strong and consistent growth in its Liquid and RoRo (automotive) cargo volumes.This robust volume growth, combined with efficient cash generation and cost-control measures, enables the company to consistently distribute profits to its shareholders as dividends. It recently declared its highest-ever cumulative dividend payout in FY25. But will the payout sustain in the coming years? Let’s find out using our Dividend Hunter Screen Gujarat Pipavav is owned by APM Terminals (part of the A.P. Moller-Maersk group). APM Terminals operates a global network of 60 ports and terminals across 33 countries, leveraging its expertise to manage operations at Pipavav Port. The company’s market cap is ₹7,381 crore,



as of 20 March 2026. Gujarat Pipavav Port maintains a highly robust balance sheet. The company has no outstanding fund-based facilities or term loans and remains completely debt-free. The company’s liquidity position is remarkably strong, with total cash and bank balances of about ₹1,069 crore as of 31 March 2025. The company funds its activities primarily through the cash generated from its operations. Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities stood at ₹446 crore in FY25, compared to ₹485 crore in FY24. The company’s Capital Expenditure was ₹95 crore, up from ₹71 crore in FY24.This gives a Free Cash Flow generation of roughly ₹351 crore in FY25, down from ₹414 crore in FY24. This strong free cash flow and zero-debt status are the exact factors that successfully support the company’s Dividend Distribution Policy.Gujarat Pipavav’s Dividend Policy: Why Payouts Remain SustainableOn the back of such cash flow, the company has already paid an interim dividend of ₹5.4 in FY26 Year-To-Date (YTD). This translates to a dividend yield of 3.5% YTD in FY26. Historically, Gujarat Pipavav has consistently paid dividends each year over the last five financial years. Over the last 3 years, net profit has grown at a 27% CAGR. Revenue from operations stayed flat at ₹988 crore in FY25. EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation) stood at ₹577.6 crore, with a 58.5% margin. Net profit surged 13% to ₹399 crore, driven

by favourable cargo mix, cost control, and absence of exceptional items. Further, the financials also grew strongly in Q3 FY26.Revenue increased 11% year-on-year to ₹292 crore, due to increased activity in Bulk handling, RoRo, automotive cargo, and ONGC offshore supply base operations. EBITDA for the quarter grew 16% to ₹160.4 crore, with a 55% margin. Net profit surged 8% to ₹101 crore.The company’s return ratios remain robust. Return on Capital Employed (ROCE) has risen to 23.5% (up from 21% in FY24), Return on Net Worth (RONW) stands at 19% (compared to 17% in FY24), and Return on Investment has increased to 20%, up from the previous 18%.Gujarat Pipavav develops, manages, and operates the port. It operates India’s first private sector port under a 30-year Concession Agreement it is an all-weather port that serves as a principal gateway on the West Coast. It provides crucial access to international maritime trade routes and vital inland connectivity to the cargo belt in the North and North-West regions of IndiaThe Unique Selling Proposition MoatThe port’s central Unique Selling Proposition is its superior rail infrastructure and efficient cargo evacuation capabilities. This is strongly supported by its 38.8% ownership stake in Pipavav Railway Corporation, an associate company that operates the railway line connecting the port to the national railway network (Surendranagar Junction).

BHAVYA plan to construct 100 industrial increase

Mumbai: The government on Wednesday approved a scheme to develop 100 industrial parks across India that will involve Rs 33,660 crore support from the exchequer over the next six years. The approval for the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA), announced in the 2024-25 budget speech, came at the cabinet meeting. The scheme envisages setting up 100-acre to 1000-acre industrial parks near major cities with plug-and-play infrastructure. Each project will be implemented through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) with National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT). The parks will be developed in partnership with states, whose contribution will be in the form of land. Central public sector companies can develop industrial parks if they have land, Bhatia said. Private developers can also set up these parks but NICDT and the state government would be part of the SPV.Normally, For Northeast and hilly areas, the minimum size for industrial parks can be 25 acres. In the first phase.

Cases against IPO-bound Vishvaraj Environment are resolved by SEBI

Mumbai: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has disposed of cases against Vishvaraj Environment after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) confirmed that the company had regularised regulatory lapses that were not disclosed in its draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). With the markets regulator dropping the show-cause notice without any adverse direction, the company and its three merchant bankers can now go ahead with the initial public offering (IPO) process.“The department is advised to process the offer documents in regular course and carry out their due diligence as done in any other case,” Sebi Whole-Time Member Kamlesh Chandra Varshney said in an order on Thursday. In its response, the RBI noted a number of

lapses which were not specified in the draft documents. The company had shifted its registered office to Maharashtra from West Bengal and had also appointed Vandana Arun Lakhani as its director; both without getting approval from the RBI. Vishvaraj Environment had also failed to categorise itself as an NBFC-middle layer though its asset size was above ₹1,000 crore, failing to meet the RBI’s norms. The matter pertains to certain lapses which were not specified in the company’s DRHP filed in September 2025 for its ₹2,250-crore IPO. The offer comprises ₹1,250-crore fresh issue and ₹1,000-crore offer for sale by Premier Financial Services that holds 100% stake in the company. “Pursuant to the violations observed, it would not be prudent to permit

this non-compliant NBFC or its group entity to bring in an IPO. It would not be in public interest to permit them to bring out the IPO as the NBFC is a consistent violator of extant guidelines,” the RBI wrote in its response to Sebi in December 2025.Following this, the markets regulator issued a show-cause notice (SCN) to the water utility and wastewater management company for willfully concealing material information from the DRHP, violating Sebi’s Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements (ICDR) Regulations, 2018. It also said the three merchant bankers of the public issue – JM Financial, Axis Capital, and DAM Capital Advisors – failed “to exercise due diligence and discharge their obligations.”

Silver crashes 42%, gold drops 17% from the top Now what’s your plan

Mumbai: Silver is currently priced at roughly \$70, down 42% from its all-time high of \$121. Gold too has taken a hit, now trading at around \$4,666 — down 17% from its peak of \$5,602.The recent free-fall in both metals has left many investors perplexed. Those who joined the party late now find their gold and silver portfolios in the red.But how could that be? Gold, after all, was up 65% in 2025 and over 20% in each of the years since 2023. The Missing Plan If you are sitting on losses right now, it’s possible because you did not have a plan in place — a proper asset allocation plan. For retail investors, the biggest mistake is buying or selling based on emotion, or what’s popularly called the FOMO factor: the fear of missing out.Recent data shows exactly how FOMO played out in the Indian context. In December 2025, gold ETFs saw net inflows of Rs 11,646 crore, over three times the Rs 3,741 crore in November. And if that sounds large, January 2026 numbers were even more striking. Indian investors poured more money into gold ETFs than into equity funds — the first time, according to AMFI data. Two things are worth noting here. Whether it was FOMO or genuine conviction, Indians have at least started investing in gold ETFs — and that’s a good thing. Gold ETFs are a far better way to own gold than physical jewellery or coins, which come with making charges as high as 20%, wastage, and security concerns. Gold ETFs also track physical gold prices far more closely than jewellery ever can.So,



What’s the Plan? portfolio in gold, alongside equities and debt, depending on your financial goals, risk appetite, and investment horizon.When gold prices correct, your allocation naturally falls — and that’s often a good buying opportunity. When prices surge, trimming your position helps restore the original allocation. Is this, in fact, what the RBI has been doing? Data suggests so. Central banks, including the RBI, have been consistent buyers of gold every month since 2022. In 2024, the RBI purchased 72.6 tonnes. In 2025, that dropped sharply to just 4.02 tonnes.Why the pause? Possibly because the RBI hit that 10–15% allocation target. By 2025, gold’s share of India’s foreign exchange reserves had climbed from around 10% to 16% within a single year. As of December 2025, India holds 880.18 metric tonnes of gold — the 2026 figures

are yet to be released.The takeaway: start with a plan. Buy at regular intervals until you reach 10–15% of your total portfolio. A staggered approach — much like a mutual fund SIP — keeps your average purchase price in check. Gold doesn’t move on a single factor. Multiple economic data points pull it in different directions at once. Right now, oil is the anchor — shaping inflation, interest rates, and the dollar simultaneously.A strengthening dollar signals a real energy crisis, which is bad news for gold. Higher interest rates, driven by rising inflation, add further headwinds. If keeping track of all these moving parts feels overwhelming, you’re not alone. Disclaimer: This article provides factual analysis only and is not, and should not be construed as, an offer, solicitation, or recommendation to buy or sell securities. Investors must conduct their own independent due diligence and seek advice from a SEBI-registered financial advisor.But here’s the thing: if you have an asset allocation plan in place and are buying in a staggered, disciplined way, none of it — not the dips, not the crashes, not even the oil-dollar-inflation equation — will unsettle you by the time you reach your goals a few years down the road.Gold tends to shine during troubled times — when geopolitics dominates headlines, global economies weaken and currencies lose value. Today, much depends on how the Iran conflict resolves and where oil prices eventually settle.

Air India, Air India Express to operate 42

Mumbai: Air India and Air India Express will operate a combined total of 42 scheduled and non-scheduled flights to and from West Asia on March 21, while some routes in the region continue to be temporarily suspended. The airlines stated that they will continue to schedule flights to Jeddah and Muscat. Together, the two carriers will run 16 flights between India and Jeddah. These include Air India’s return services from Delhi and Mumbai, along with an Air India Express flight from Hyderabad. Air India will also operate eight scheduled flights to and from Muscat from Delhi, Kochi, Kozhikode and Mumbai. The official statement also added that these flights are being operated “with the requisite permissions from the relevant Indian and local regulatory authorities.”DGCA flags safety concerns Amid ongoing tensions in West Asia, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation has advised airlines to avoid certain airspace pockets in the Gulf. It has also asked to keep contingency measures ready as part of their safety assessments. In addition to the scheduled network, the group will provide services for 26 non-scheduled flights to and from the UAE. The airline said that these services are “subject to availability of slots and other prevailing conditions at the departure stations at the time.” The extra flights will cover Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, and Ras Al Khaimah,



whereas no services are planned for Al Ain. No flights are scheduled for Bahrain, Doha, Kuwait, Riyadh, Dammam, or Tel Aviv on March 21. Air India said that all its flights to and from North America, Australia, Europe, and other regions “continue to operate as per schedule.”Passengers who have booked where schedule flights remain suspended can rebook for a later date without extra charges or can also seek a full refund. The group said it is “proactively reaching out to impacted guests” through registered mobile numbers with rebooking options. Air India Express passengers travelling from any UAE station can shift to its additional flights to India without extra charges. They can also rebook using the airline’s AI-powered digital assistant Tia on WhatsApp.

Iran warns it would show ‘zero restraint’ if its energy infrastructure is targeted again



Iran: Iran declared on Thursday that it would show “zero restraint” if its energy infrastructure was hit again, as Qatar reported that an Iranian strike knocked down about a fifth of its liquefied natural gas export capacity, which is expected to have a long-term impact. The warning was issued by Iran’s foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, in response to Israel’s attack on Iran’s massive South Pars gasfield, which it shares with Qatar. This prompted Iranian retaliatory strikes on Qatar’s Ras Laffan gas complex and other Gulf neighbours, sending stock markets tumbling and causing sharp increases in gas prices. Ras Laffan supplies around 20% of the world’s liquefied natural gas. Israel also acknowledged on Thursday that the Bazan Group refinery in Haifa was attacked and destroyed in an alleged Iranian strike. In a post on X, Araghchi stated: “Our retaliation to Israel’s strike on our infrastructure used a fraction of our power. The only justification for restraint was respect for the proposed de-escalation. ZERO restraint if our infrastructure is assaulted again.” Amid warnings of an unprecedented energy crisis, and a growing sense of panic in global capitals, Israeli officials dismissed Donald Trump’s claim that their attack on the gasfield had not been coordinated with Washington, as Trump asked Congress for an additional \$200bn (£150bn) to pay for his war. On Thursday Trump recast his denial, saying he had told the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, not to attack Iranian gasfields again, but he appeared unable to explain the logic of how the junior partner in a wartime military alliance had felt able to act unilaterally with such internationally damaging consequences. “I told [Net-

anyahu] don’t do that, and he won’t do that,” Trump told reporters as he met Japan’s prime minister. “We get along great. It’s coordinated, but on occasion he’ll do something” that the US opposed, he said. Netanyahu, when asked if Israel had told Trump about the attack, told reporters: “Israel acted alone ... President Trump asked us to hold off on future attacks and we are.” Trump also suggested he would not send ground troops to Iran, despite the deployment of 2,000 US marines to the region. Reuters had reported he was considering deploying thousands of troops to reinforce the operation in the Middle East. Possible next stages in the campaign against Iran include ensuring safe passage for oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, which would be conducted mostly by air and naval troops, according to the sources. Securing the strait, however, may require the deployment of US soldiers to Iran’s shores. The United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Japan issued a joint statement expressing “deep concern” about the escalating conflict and calling on Iran to “cease immediately its threats, mine laying, drone and missile attacks, and other attempts to block the strait to commercial shipping,” as well as to comply with a UN Security Council resolution. They declared themselves prepared “to contribute to appropriate efforts to ensure safe passage through the strait [of Hormuz]”, a warning: “The effects of Iran’s actions will be felt by people in all parts of the world, especially the most vulnerable.” The EU also stated that it was prepared to “contribute to all diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and bring about a lasting solution” to the hostilities, that it was keeping an eye out for signs of

“migratory flows” from the Middle East into Europe, and that it would “fully mobilise” diplomatic, legal, operational, and financial tools to prevent a repeat of the 2015 migration crisis in Europe. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose as much as 10% to \$119 a barrel at one point, before slipping back to \$110 a barrel, a one-day gain of 3.3%. Crude prices have soared by 60% since the war started on 28 February. European and UK gas prices also jumped, climbing as much as 24% before easing back. They have more than doubled since before the war. Stock markets reeled under a heavy sell-off, with steep falls on Japanese, South Korean and Hong Kong markets bleeding into Europe. The UK’s FTSE 100 closed down 2.35% at 10,063 points, and there were similar falls on Germany’s Dax and France’s CAC. Airlines said the rise in fuel prices would drive up fares and urged passengers to book early. Long-haul airlines such as Air France-KLM and Lufthansa said they would be adding more flights via Asia, as Gulf carriers’ hubs are either shut or operating at a reduced level. With the war at risk of spiralling wildly out of control, Trump and his officials continued to deliver chaotic messaging, even as unnamed Israeli officials were quoted by Reuters as suggesting the gasfield attack was not likely to be repeated. Iranian strikes also hit Saudi Arabia’s Red Sea refinery, located at the end of a pipeline that bypasses the strait of Hormuz, and two Kuwaiti oil refineries. The chief executive of QatarEnergy, Saad Sherida al-Kaabi, said about \$20bn in damage had been done to its facilities and that repairs would sideline 12.8m tons per year of gas for three to five years, threatening supplies to some European

countries. “I never in my wildest dreams would have thought that Qatar would be – Qatar and the region – in such an attack, especially from a brotherly Muslim country in the month of Ramadan, attacking us in this way,” al-Kaabi said. Saudi Arabia’s foreign minister said his country had not ruled out military action in response to the attacks. However, most analysts said there was still a widespread reluctance among Gulf countries, even Saudi Arabia, to entangle themselves in Trump’s conflict. The French president, Emmanuel Macron, said in Brussels: “I hope everybody returns to reason,” noting the infrastructure attacks’ potential long-term impact on global markets and calling for a moratorium on such strikes, as well as those on civilians. Israeli authorities said that Trump had been notified of the South Pars strike, despite inconsistent messages from Washington that showed Trump was attempting to distance himself from the latest deadly Israeli escalation while threatening to destroy the area himself. The effort to create a clear message extended to top Trump officials, with the US Treasury Secretary suggesting on Fox that the US waive oil sanctions on certain Iranian cargoes currently at sea, while Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth issued his own warning to Iran in bellicose terms. “Our objectives, given directly from our America-first president, remain exactly what they were on day one,” Hegseth informed reporters. “These are not the media’s ambitions, Iran’s objectives, or new objectives. Our objectives are intact, on track, and on schedule.” He said, “The globe, the Middle East, our ungrateful allies in Europe, and even elements of our own press should be saying one thing to President Trump: thank you.” “Thank you for having the fortitude to prevent this terrorist state from using missiles to keep the world hostage while creating or attempting to manufacture a nuclear weapon. Thank you for carrying out the task of the free world. He accused the press of trying to convince the American public that the US was “spinning toward an endless abyss, or a forever war, or a quagmire”. He said: “Nothing could be further from the truth.”

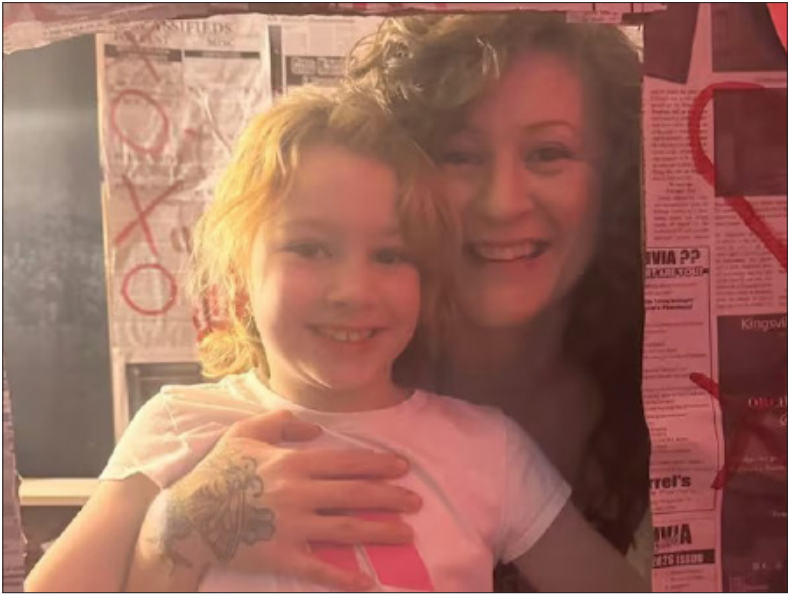
Analysts fear that big petroleum suppliers may limit exports to Australia

Australia : Major sources of Australian oil, such as Malaysia and South Korea, may reduce exports to prioritize local fuel needs, according to energy experts. The energy minister, Chris Bowen, admits that some service stations are running out of stock and that governments have “powers” to ration petrol if supplies are further disrupted. Bowen dismissed claims in the Australian Financial Review on Thursday that the Malaysian embassy stated that the country’s government will “prioritize our own needs, and only then will we look at whatever demand that we receive from overseas.” Malaysia is Australia’s main supply of crude oil. The minister stated that he was unaware of any cutbacks to Australian imports from Malaysia. “It wasn’t a particular announcement that they were taking any particular action. Malaysia produces and refines a lot more fuel than Malaysia or Malaysians would need at any given time,” he told Radio National. “At the moment, as I said, the Malaysian government has taken no action to threaten the supply of fuel to Australia and all the ships that we’ve expected to

arrive have arrived.” However, Kevin Morrison, an energy finance analyst at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, said the Malaysian official’s warnings were “really significant” given Australia’s heavy reliance on the country for petroleum products, particularly crude oil to feed two domestic refineries. Morrison stated that there is a clear danger that key suppliers in the area, notably Australia’s largest supplier, South Korea, may prioritize domestic usage above exports to Australia. “South Korea, Japan and India are all very vulnerable. They hardly produce any oil so they are all very dependent on oil imports,” he said. “If they are facing the situation where crude oil supplies are declining and there’s no sign of the conflict ending, obviously they would prioritise their domestic markets over exports.” Vinh Thai, a professor of logistics and supply chain management at RMIT University, raised similar concerns, noting reports that India and Vietnam were worried about keeping their citizens and industry supplied with enough fuel. “Of course a government of a country has to first

of all act in the interests of their own citizens; that Malaysian official is saying that for a reason,” he said of the AFR report. “If India needs to reserve energy for their own manufacturing, then they may impose some export bans or restrictions, and those would have an immediate, direct impact on imports into Australia.” The federal government has frequently denied that gasoline rationing is imminent, and Bowen said on Friday that “we’re not there yet.” However, he did acknowledge that the possibility was not completely out of the question. “That has not been seen as something we need to undertake in the short future. Of course, governments have the authority to act if supply is badly affected, but the essential message for Australians is that supply is not being disrupted at this time,” Bowen said during a news conference. “What we’re dealing with is a very big increase in demand, which is understandable with what people are watching on television, but our message to Australians remains buy as much fuel as you need - not more, not less.”

A seven-year-old Canadian child with autism and her mother were held by ICE in Texas



Washington : A Canadian woman and her seven-year-old autistic daughter have been detained by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Texas since Saturday, according to family members. Tania Warner and her daughter Ayla Lucas were wrongfully held, according to their relatives. They are unsure what problem ICE discovered with their immigration documents. Tania Warner and her daughter are both Canadians; Warner is originally from British Columbia. According to CTV News, they are being imprisoned at the infamous Rio Grande Valley Central Processing Center in McAllen, Texas. Warner, who is claimed to have come to the United States five years ago, currently resides in Kingsville, Texas, with her husband, Edward Warner, a US citizen. According to Edward Warner, the family was heading home from a baby shower in Raymondville, Texas, on March 14 when they were stopped at a border patrol station near Sarita and asked for documents. He submitted his ID, and Tania presented her Texas driver’s license, work visa, and “actual visa,” he told CTV. “After that, they took her in, saying that they

needed to fingerprint her to get more information, and she never came back out,” he told me. ICE officials then arrived and brought Ayla in for fingerprinting, he stated. She also did not return. Tania’s cousin, Amber Sinclair, told the Guardian that Tania paid for document processing services to guarantee that everything was done right. “She has a social security card. She has a functional visa. That’s good until 2030, so I don’t understand why they’re stopping her and detaining her,” she said. Sinclair, who lives in Houston and is a dual Canadian-US citizen, says there have been many ICE checkpoints set up in Kingsville as it is about 120 miles from the border with Mexico. She fears Tania and her daughter could be deported and end up separated from Edward and the rest of the family, along with her job. The family is scrambling to raise enough money to pay for legal help, she said. Documents Edward Warner gave to CTV indicate that his wife is categorised as a “Lawful Alien Allowed to Work”. He described it as “scary and really frustrating” that the pair have been detained when “they have paperwork that’s good”.

Tropical Cyclone Narelle heads west after tearing apart houses and downing trees in far north Queensland

Australia: Severe Tropical Cyclone Narelle plowed across far north Queensland on Friday, one of the state’s most powerful storms in living memory, downing trees, tearing off roofs, and swelling rivers. The system passed the Cape York peninsula about 7 a.m. on Friday as a “high-end” category 4 storm with sustained winds of 195 km/h, falling just 5 km/h shy of a category 5 storm. On Friday afternoon, Queensland Premier David Crisafulli said that Narelle had moved west, reaching the east coast between Lockhart River and Coen. “It threaded a needle through both. While there has been some damage, as well as rain and wind, this is a very positive news story,” he stated. The system is expected to cross the western part of the Cape later on this evening, and for communities in those areas – particularly Aurukun and Weipa, the intensity will continue to pick up, as well as rainfall. “It will be some time before we find out how widespread the

destruction is,” Crisafulli said. Climate experts have said global heating helped to super-charge Narelle, with high ocean temperatures helping the storm gain intensity as it approached the coast. Communities in the Northern Territory, which has been hit by consecutive flooding events in recent months, were making final preparations for Narelle’s arrival this weekend. The storm was forecast on Friday afternoon to continue west, skirting the Cape York town of Aurukun, before re-intensifying over the waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria. A second landfall was expected late on Saturday night or early Sunday near the island of Anindilyakwa on the Top End’s east coast. The storm is then forecast to keep tracking west over already-saturated areas around Katherine, south of Darwin, on Sunday. On Friday afternoon, Narelle weakened to a still-severe category 3 system with destructive wind gusts up to 185 km/h. Authorities said there were currently 11

warnings still in place from Cape York to Cape Melville, but there had been no rescues by mid-afternoon Friday. Debbie Jackson, who lives on a ranch 50 kilometres north of Coen, reported “losing roofs everywhere” when the system made landfall. “There are a lot of trees fallen. We have lost several roofs. It’s not great,” she added, adding that she and seven other individuals were hiding in a shipping container until the storm passed. In the early hours of Friday, the system was moving towards the town of Coen, which has a population of roughly 320 people, but as it approached shore, it shifted slightly north. Authorities warned of combined dangers from strong winds, heavy rain, floods from already flooded river systems, and storm surge in coastal regions as the cyclone approached high tide. Coen locals said the town had been eerily calm on Thursday, but that heavy winds began to pick up about 4am. “You can hear

a couple of things moving around outside now,” said Sara Watkins, owner of the local mechanic and bush pantry. “It was very quiet until the wind picked up. It was pouring, yet it was really still. That is not like Coen; when it rains, it pours, and the wind blows around.” According to the Bureau of Meteorology, Narelle was expected to diminish to a category 1 cyclone as it traveled into the heart of the Top End through Sunday, causing 100mm to 200mm of flooding in regions such as Katherine and Daly River. Climate scientists believe Narelle was fueled by climate change, as the system moved west across the Coral Sea, where sea surface temperatures have reached record highs in recent months. Higher ocean temperatures add fuel to cyclones, boosting their severity. Coastal inundation will be worsened by rising sea levels and the system will also be able to produce more rainfall, also due to global heating, scientists say.

Concerns raised about ex-Putin interpreter’s significant role in monitoring Hungary’s vote

Europe: Hungarian rights organizations have expressed worry about the nomination of Vladimir Putin’s former interpreter to a major post in an international election monitoring mission, citing worries of Russian involvement ahead of Hungary’s vital vote next month. Daria Boyarskaya, who worked for Russia’s foreign ministry for many years and interpreted in numerous high-level meetings, including one between Putin and Donald Trump, is now a senior adviser at the parliamentary assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE-PA) in Vienna. She is in charge of arranging the body’s mission to observe Hungary’s parliamentary election next month. The referendum might bring an end to nationalist leader Viktor Orbán’s 16-year reign. Orbán is the EU’s most pro-Russian leader, and he has used criticism of Ukraine and its president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, to fuel his election campaign, as well as obstructing EU funding to Ukraine. There have been various reports that Russia has deployed assets to help Orbán’s chances in the election. Orbán has regularly targeted civil society groups and independent media over his long tenure, and in a number of recent

speeches, he has referred to them as “bugs” that must be cleaned or eradicated. Given this chilling climate, and the close relations between Orbán and Moscow, some worry about sharing their concerns with a figure with clear links to the Kremlin. Boyarskaya invited representatives of civil society organisations to a closed-door meeting next week in Budapest to share their concerns about the Hungarian political landscape. The delegation will be led by the British Labour MP Rupa Huq and Sargis Khandanyan, an Armenian MP, and is meant to lay the groundwork for a much larger monitoring mission made up of MPs from OSCE member nations that will travel to Hungary around the time of the vote. “Such meetings often involve the exchange of highly sensitive information concerning political pressure, electoral manipulation risks and threats faced by human rights defenders and journalists,” wrote Márta Pardavi, a co-chair of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, in a letter sent earlier this month to various OSCE officials and seen by the Guardian. The Austrian weekly Falter and Bloomberg previously covered aspects of the story.

Victims of NHS maternity failings in England ‘received unacceptable care

Victims of NHS maternity failings received “unacceptable care”, leading to “tragic consequences”, the head of an investigation into maternity care in England has said.Changes within services have been too slow despite being necessary and urgent, according to a report by Valerie Amos, who is leading the national maternity and neonatal investigation (NMNI).The document shares her initial impressions after visiting seven trusts, talking with families and meeting NHS staff.Speaking to BBC Radio 4’s Today programme on Tuesday, Lady Amos said: “Given that these harms continue to be done, given that babies continue to die, given that this is happening across the country ... are there things that we should be doing to standardise the level of care across different trusts? Yes.”The report shows that the NHS has recorded 748 recommendations relating to maternity and neonatal care in the past decade. Amos described this as “staggering”.She wrote: “I expected to hear experiences from families about where they had been let down by the care they had received in maternity and neonatal units across the country, but nothing prepared me for the scale of unacceptable care that women and families have received, and continue to receive, the tragic consequences for their babies, and the impact on their mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.”She went on: “This

naturally raises an important question: with so many thorough and far-reaching reviews already completed, why are we in England still struggling to provide safe, reliable maternity and neonatal care everywhere in the country?”The report highlights a number of issues that Amos said she had “heard about consistently”. These include women not being listened to, not being given the right information to make informed choices about their care, and discrimination against women of colour, working-class women, younger parents and women with mental health problems. The investigation also heard of cases of women who had lost babies being placed on wards with newborns, and instances when concerns about reduced foetal movement were disregarded.There were reports of a lack of empathy from clinical teams when things went wrong, leading to women “feeling blamed and guilty”, the report says.Amos thanked families, some of whom have criticised the investigation and called for a statutory public inquiry and for “constructive and honest feedback” as part of the investigation. She said: “I do not understand why change has been so slow. It is clear from what I have already seen that change is not only possible but also necessary, and it is urgent.”The NMNI will focus on 12 NHS trusts and its findings are due to be published in 2026. Amos said she had full confidence

she would complete the investigation within the timelines set out and that it would result in recommendations for “fundamental improvement”.The health secretary, Wes Streeting, who ordered the investigation in June, said Amos’s update “demonstrates that too many families have been let down, with devastating consequences”.He said: “Bereaved and harmed families have shown extraordinary courage in coming forward to share their experiences. What they have described is deeply distressing, and I can’t imagine how difficult it must be for them to relive these moments.“I know that NHS staff are dedicated professionals who want the best for mothers and babies, and that the vast majority of births are safe, but the systemic failures causing preventable tragedies cannot be ignored.”Anne Kavanagh, a medical negligence lawyer at Irwin Mitchell, which represents hundreds of families across the country affected by maternity care failings, said: “High-profile maternity scandals stretching back decades from Morecambe Bay to failings at Shrewsbury and Telford hospitals and East Kent hospital trust have all pointed to widespread and deep-rooted problems nationally.“Today’s announcement by Baroness Amos that nearly 750 recommendations relating to maternity and neonatal care have been made, many of which over the last decade, is truly stagger-

ing.”Streeting is setting up a national maternity and neonatal taskforce in the new year, which he will chair. He said: “Harmed and bereaved families will remain at the heart of both the investigation and the response, to ensure no one has to suffer like this again. Because every single preventable tragedy is one too many.”Duncan Burton, the chief nursing officer for England, said: “Baroness Amos’s independent investigation is a crucial step in driving meaningful change in maternity and neonatal care and we welcome her reflections and initial impressions.“Whilst we have dedicated teams working across the country to improve services, we must do more to ensure that every woman and baby receives the safe, compassionate care they deserve. We will continue to work with colleagues across the NHS to address the issues raised.“I want to reassure women and families that staff are continuing to work hard to provide the best possible care and want to do everything they can to support them. We would encourage them talk to their midwives and maternity teams if they have any concerns.”Angela McConville, the chief executive of the National Childbirth Trust, said: “While some women do have safe, positive and supported experiences, the inconsistency of care is unacceptable. “None of this is new. As the report highlights, almost 750 recommendations have already been



made to improve maternity and neonatal care.“The question the investigation and the maternity taskforce must now answer is simple: why has change not happened?”

I tried everything to fix my incontinence. Here’s what worked

Last October, I got out of bed to use the bathroom in the middle of the night. Sleepy and seated on the toilet, I was shocked into wakefulness by a loud sound.The night before, in my latest attempt to manage incontinence, I’d been working out how to use a Kegel ball, a marble-like vaginal insert that claims to help with pelvic floor strengthening. I’d accidentally fallen asleep with it inside me, and the ball had hit the porcelain bowl. Uh-oh.I dismounted and stuck my ungloved hand deep into the toilet. Luckily, I was able to retrieve it before it entered the drain pipe, preventing the need for a mortifying 3am call to my super. This was both my first and last time using the Kegel ball.Eighteen years prior, I had experienced bladder leakage after giving birth, but it resolved within a year. Once perimenopause hit at age 47, however, the condition returned and managing it had become my part-time job.At the advice of my gynecologist, I’d tried daily self-directed Kegel exercises, tampon-like devices designed to prevent leaks by lifting the urethra, and bladder training – or gradually increasing the time between bathroom visits, which I lost interest in pretty quickly. None of these options really worked.So my bladder kept leaking, usually after laughing, coughing or sneezing. Panty liners were now an essential part of my wardrobe. The worst leaks occurred when I went on a run, and required more substantial protection. I wondered how many other middle-aged women on my Central Park loop had diaper-like devices hidden under their Lululemon leggings. Probably a lot. More than 60% of US women surveyed from 2015 to 2018 reported bladder control challenges. Incontinence often begins after childbirth, due to a combination of estrogen loss and physical trauma, says Dr Meghan Markowski, a board-certified clinical specialist in women’s health physical therapy at Brigham and Women’s hospital. “Because we have a certain reserve of estrogen, things



get better. Then, when we start to lose estrogen in peri- and post-menopause, these symptoms come back with full-fledged vengeance,” she says.I was an empty nester and recent divorcee and dating again for the first time in decades when incontinence re-reared its ugly head again. On dates, I’d often scurry away in order to beat the leak. I wondered what these men thought of all those visits to the bathroom – perhaps they suspected I was sneaking drugs or plotting my escape. Although males are also likely to lose some bladder control with age, middle-aged men do not experience the same surge in incontinence that women do. The men I met were mostly my age and their kids had probably been potty trained a decade ago, or more. Did they really want a partner who was going through the reverse? If you can’t beat it, talk about it, I decided. And as I started to share, I noticed two things. First, men are usually OK with discussing your vaginal region, no matter the reason. And second, when I revealed my problem to female friends, I learned that I was in good company.“There’s no reason why this should be taboo,” said Dr Larissa Rodríguez, urologist-in-chief and director of the Center for Female Pelvic Health at NewYork-Presbyterian hospital and Weill Cornell Medicine. “For anything that affects women’s

quality of life, they should seek care because there are ways to treat it.” What causes incontinence in womenThere are two main types of incontinence: stress and urge. Both occur because of a decline in estrogen, which weakens the pelvic floor and thins the lining of the urethra.Stress incontinence is caused by physical pressure – such as coughing or running – putting stress on the bladder, leading to urine leakage. This is common when the pelvic muscles, which support the urethra, are weak. This is the type I had: unpleasant and inconvenient, but manageable with pads. Urge incontinence occurs when the bladder contracts more than it should, and can be much harder to live with. “It’s characterized by the sudden compelling desire to pass urine that is either difficult or impossible to defer,” said Markowski. “You could be out shopping, everything’s great, and you go to check out and all of a sudden ... Clear the path! I have to get there immediately!”How to treat incontinence“For stress incontinence, the gold standard is sling surgery,” said Rodríguez. The sling is “material put under the urethra, like a hammock, so the urethra has something to close against when there’s an increase in abdominal pressure”. Traditionally, mesh is used but it’s also possible for doctors to harvest tissue from the

patient, like the lining of the abdomen or the fascia of the thigh muscle.Alternatively, stress incontinence can be relieved by injecting bulking agents to increase resistance and thickness in the urethral wall. “These are similar to the fillers people use for wrinkles,” said Rodríguez. “They are mostly water-based and close the urethra up a bit.” This is a good option for those who want to avoid surgery. It’s a shorter-term fix, but can last several years.Urge incontinence can be improved with two types of medication, both of which reduce bladder contractions. The first type, anticholinergics, accomplish this by blocking the chemical messenger acetylcholine, while the second type, beta-3 agonists, relax the bladder’s detrusor muscle, thereby increasing bladder capacity.If medication fails, Rodríguez said nerve modulation – changing nerve activity via stimulation – is the next step. Inserting a pacemaker near the sacral nerves, which manage the bladder, can result in improved brain-to-bladder communication and control. Acupuncture can stimulate nerves at the ankle, blocking abnormal signals from the bladder and preventing spasms. Another option is injecting botulinum toxin, the same one people use for cosmetic purposes. It relaxes the bladder muscles so you don’t have spasms.Stress and urge

incontinence are both caused by midlife estrogen decline, so ongoing vaginal estrogen supplementation may help, like what’s prescribed for vaginal dryness at menopause, according to Dr Rajita Patil, assistant clinical professor of OB-GYN at UCLA and director of UCLA Health’s comprehensive menopause care program. “It takes a few months to see a difference, and the risks are really low,” said Patil. Another highly effective and clinically proven way to prevent and treat incontinence is pelvic physical therapy, which, according to Markowski, is not as simple as doing Kegel exercises. “Without individually assessing someone’s pelvic floor, you have no idea what they’re actually doing. Are the muscles so weak you can’t activate them? Or are they so tense you can’t activate them? The starting function of the pelvic floor muscles will determine the plan of care,” Markowski said. But a training program takes time; Markowski recommends at least three months. If this seems daunting, she suggests at least one pelvic physical therapy session to be properly evaluated and advised.No matter which treatment you choose, behavior modification is also essential. “Alcohol, caffeine, carbonated beverages and artificial sweeteners irritate the bladder,” said Patil, who also encourages adequate hydration and maintaining a “healthy” body weight. “The more fat there is on the bladder and the urethral sphincter, the greater the pressure exerted on these structures, weakening their ability to maintain closure and increasing the likelihood of urinary leakage.”Another behavioral strategy is bladder retraining – gradually increasing the time intervals between bathroom visits, improving your ability to hold urine – which my gynecologist had recommended. My experience with sling surgeryA friend mentioned someone who had undergone a sling surgery, which I’d never heard of. It seemed like a great option, and I could hardly contain my excitement.

I hate the way sneakers look on me – is there another comfortable shoe I can wear

I’ve had a torn meniscus in my right knee for eight years. My knee was OK for 47 years, and then I went on the easiest hike in recorded history and stepped up on a not-very-high ledge. That was it.It’s not ideal. I can walk, but I can’t run or sit cross legged. But whenever I’m about to bite the bullet on surgery, it seems like the wrong time to be sitting around for six weeks or longer. Or someone says: “That surgery didn’t work for me.”The time I got closest, I suddenly needed shoulder surgery, which seemed more pressing because reaching over your head is kind of important in day-to-day life. In middle age, it’s hard to know which physical problem to deal with first.In the meantime, I’m having a massive style crisis about what shoes to wear. I’ve never been a serious heels person, but I do like wedges and I really love boots – especially the Frye harness boots I’ve had for 15 years. But every time I’ve asked a health professional which shoes are least hard on the knees, they say sneakers. I absolutely hate the way sneakers look on me. I feel instantly un-hot the moment I even look at a pair.There were more than 700,000 knee replacements last year in the US, at least the same number of meniscus repairs and about 400,000 ACL repairs. So I can only imagine others are struggling with the knowledge that they need sensible footwear.I texted my friend Lauren Sherman, a fashion journalist at Puck. Was there a shoe that was comfortable but not hideous?I whispered to myself, Please don’t say sneakers.“I assume just sneakers?” she responded. God, millennials really love sneakers. It’s a sickness!What if I didn’t want to wear sneakers everywhere? They look so bad with jeans (on me). And with dresses and skirts – sob. I would rather just not go anywhere ever again. The professionals were no help. “You should aim for well-fitted, comfortable shoes so as to not affect your gait, how you walk, stand, move,” says Dr Cassandra Lee, professor of orthopaedic surgery at UC Davis School of Medicine. She cited a Stanford study where women wore a flat athletic shoe, a low heel and a higher heel. Guess which was the worst for your knees and which was the best?“As much as we like the look of heels, there is a lot of evidence they do not love us back,” Lee said. The higher the heel, the more weight is pitched forward, the more your gait is changed, and your knee affected.She did not say “sneakers”. But Theresa Marko, founder and owner of Marko Physical Therapy in Manhattan, did: “I recommend a supportive sneaker, such as a running sneaker. These provide cushion and arch support, which help support the knee in a neutral alignment. They also help soften the forces that the foot trans-

mits when it strikes the ground, which travel up towards the knee.”She added that every body is unique – if someone is experiencing pain, they should see a physical therapist to address their issues, develop a personalized treatment program and review what footwear might work best.I did not think running shoes worked best for me. They made me feel weird and wobbly. To my surprise, Marko acknowledged that running shoes can feel unstable. This is because of something called the heel drop, or how much lower the toes are than the heels in a given pair of shoes. I was glad to know this, even if the heel drop situation didn’t seem to be my Waterloo. The reason I hate running shoes is they make me feel like I’m walking on stilts, or on stage. When my foot is separated from the earth by a thick piece of rubber and molded plastic, I feel like I’m perched above the earth, floating in the ether. Then my gait is off because I feel unmoored, and an off-gait is precisely what you’re not supposed to have.“The wrong shoes and [their effect on gait] can cause a slight torque in the knee, which could cause rubbing on the cartilage or improper tracking,” said Carrie Collins, founder of Stretch Chi, a stretching and movement studio in Chicago. This resonated with me! My boots felt comfortable, but they were definitely not snug around my foot like a sneaker or another less rigid shoe would be.I could not ignore that all the experts were suggesting sneakers. Well, fine. But if I had to wear sneakers, they could not have laces. Otherwise, I’d be too lazy to put them on. After Googling “most supportive slip-on shoes for women”, I settled on a gray sneaker by a brand called Ryka. They are not sexy or cool at all, but there is something subtle and under-the-radar about them. The shape is also slightly aerodynamic, space-agey – at least they have some personality. I don’t love them, but I don’t hate them. I will admit that they are nice and snug around the top of my foot, and the entire bottom of my foot is supported. Yesterday, I had to walk thirty blocks and I wore them with a sundress and no one died.I have to say that wearing sneakers, despite being sad, is just the right thing to do. But what about when I absolutely cannot bring myself to wear them? Like a job interview or dinner anywhere other than Chipotle?“If someone must wear a heeled shoe, I advise rubber bottoms and a very low heel – one to two inches,” said Marko. A round toe is better than a pointed one (more room in the shoe for your foot) and a block heel is better than, say, a stiletto, because there’s more surface area to support your weight and distribute it more evenly over the bed of the shoe.She mentioned some brands. Unfortunately, I would not be caught dead in any of them.



Aditya Dhar is motivating young people, according to Kangana Ranaut



Mumbai: The highly anticipated film Dhurandhar: The Revenge, directed by Aditya Dhar, debuted in theaters on March 19 and immediately broke box office records. Both viewers and industry insiders like S. S. Rajamouli, Rakesh Roshan, and others have praised the movie. Aditya Dhar is the greatest aspect of Dhurandhar 2’s success, according to a note sent by Kangana Ranaut.

Kangana posted a message on Instagram on Saturday, expressing her joy over the movie’s success. “The best thing about Dhurandhar’s success is that Aditya Dhar, @adityadharfilms, a superstar director, is established,” she added. Superstar directors in Hollywood are always much more important than superstar actors. Spielberg, Tarantino, and Nolan, for example. We seldom give our filmmakers

enough credit or respect.” ”They are over-worked, underpaid, and bullied by super-stars,” she continued, discussing the lack of credit Indian filmmakers receive. Because of this, I never come across any young person, internal or external, who aspires to work as a director of photography, filmmaker, or other technician. Everyone says they’re gifted, yet all they want is to be actors. This famous director is more brilliant than any hero. His tale is being watched by a lot of young people today who want to follow in his footsteps and advance the film business! Greetings, Sir Adityadharfilms. In addition to her, Aditya was hailed by Rakesh Roshan for “starting a new era of filmmaking” with his most recent movie, and S. S. Rajamouli for “hitting it out of the park” with Dhurandhar 2. Stars like Allu Arjun, Mahesh Babu, and Ram Charan applauded the director as well.

The spy action thriller is the follow-up to the 2025 hit film Dhurandhar and stars Ranveer Singh, Arjun Rampal, R. Madhavan, Sanjay Dutt, Sara Arjun, and others in significant parts. The movie explores Ranveer’s past and provides insight into why he chose to become a spy. It also depicts his ascent to prominence in Lyari while carrying out his objective to destroy Pakistan’s terror network. The movie broke box office records and received excellent reviews from both reviewers and viewers. With ₹146 crore in India and ₹240 crore globally, it had a spectacular debut. The movie has now made over ₹370 crore worldwide, exceeding War 2’s lifetime earnings. The movie is still doing quite well at the box office.

For Ranveer Singh’s Dhurandhar 2, enter the world of Lyari



Mumbai: Rupin Suchak, a well-known production designer and interior architect, recently shared a preview of the universe he designed for Dhurandhar 2 on Instagram. The delicate details used to create the film’s unique aesthetics are just one of the numerous aspects for which

Dhurandhar: The Revenge has received credit. Suchak was universally praised for creating powerful sets that, like the sound design, did justice to the story of Dhurandhar. Saini S. Johray, the principal production designer, worked with Rupin Suchak on Dhurandhar: The Revenge. Suchak

supplied further design. The most praised of them all was the 6-acre Bangkok set they constructed, which in one of the movie’s most important combat scenes changed into Pakistan’s Lyari Town. Suchak posted a glimpse of the set design on Instagram, writing, “A story must

first exist in space before it can unfold.” What you see here is purpose rather than decoration. “Dhurandhar: The Revenge: A world built to hold silence, tension, and consequence.” In the meantime, the cast and business insiders attended a special screening that the producers held in Mumbai on March 18 in advance of Dhurandhar: The Revenge’s March 19 premiere. Actress Saumya Tandon, who portrays Rehman Dakait’s wife, posted pictures from the occasion, such as a happy selfie with Ranveer Singh.

She also appeared with actress Yami Gautam and director Aditya Dhar. Additionally, the carousel featured Saumya interacting with child actress Sara Arjun, casting director Mukesh Chhabra, and Shararat girls Krystle D’Souza and Ayesha Khan. Saumya shared a humorous scene from the evening

when posting the photos, revealing that Ranveer affectionately referred to her as a “slapping queen.” Actor and comedian Gaurav Gera, who portrayed Mohammad Alam in the movie, also gave audiences a behind-the-scenes peek at the success party.

He shared selfies with Aditya Dhar, Sara Arjun, and other members of the cast and crew. The ascension of Ranveer Singh’s Hamza Ali Mazari as Sher-e-Baloch and the unchallenged king of Lyari is followed in the Dhurandhar sequel. It also follows his transformation from Jaskirat Singh Rangti to Hamza, the spy who infiltrates Pakistan to exact revenge for the country’s terrorist acts. The gifted supporting cast, which includes Arjun Rampal, R Madhavan, Sanjay Dutt, Rakesh Bedi, Danish Pandor, and Sara Arjun, returns for the spy-action thriller.

Regarding rumors of a Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham sequel, Karan Johar speaks up



Mumbai: Filmmaker Karan Johar has discussed rumors about a follow-up to his 2001 hit film Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham. In an interview with Sonal Kalra for The Right Angle, Karan emphasized that neither K3G 2 nor any reworkings of his epic historical play Takht are planned. Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham, starring Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol, Amitabh Bachchan, and Hrithik Roshan, was released in 2001 and is now regarded as one of Bollywood’s most famous family dramas. Johar pointed out that the film’s

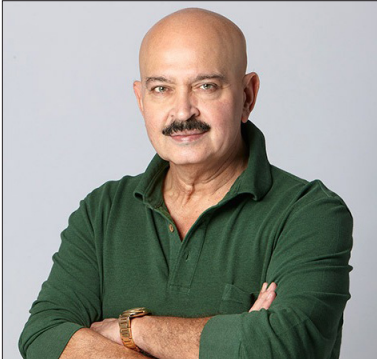
ongoing appeal stems from the nostalgia it continues to arouse in viewers of all ages. Karan emphasized that he would not want to disrupt the film’s emotional legacy, even if he acknowledged that K3G was not without problems. “I’m happy that I have this platform and that I’m talking to you to make it clear that neither K3G2 nor Takht derivatives are being produced. Not because K3G was the greatest movie ever produced, but I would never do K3G 2. Every movie has its shortcomings, but K3G offers a lot of memories. Generations have grown up watching that movie, and they still adore it despite the things they have loved, hated, and sobbed over. I’m incredibly appreciative to the universe for giving me the opportunity to make a movie that has endured, and I’m thrilled and proud of it. However, he stated, “I would never tamper with that nostalgia or the love the film has because you’re setting yourself up for disaster when you make something like

K3G 2.” Karan also stated that although he is still dedicated to the idea, Takht is not currently being revived. Sumit Roy wrote one of the best screenplays of his career, and the director expressed his desire to make it a reality in the future. “So yes, the truth—the absolute truth—is that there is no K3G 2, and there is currently no revival of Takht on the cards,” he stated. However, I shall undoubtedly make Takht while I’m still breathing and able to stand. It was written by Sumit Roy, and I think it’s among the best screenplays ever. I think it’s the best-written work I’ve ever done, and I want to create that movie someday. Takht, which starred Ranveer Singh, Alia Bhatt, Anil Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor, Vicky Kaushal, Janhvi Kapoor, and Bhumi Pednekar, was announced in 2021 but has yet to be published because of COVID-19. Karan’s position on K3G is unambiguous: the movie will stay unaltered, maintained in the nostalgia that made it a cultural icon.

Rakesh Roshan claims that Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar marks the beginning of a new era in cinema

New Delhi: Dhurandhar The Revenge by Aditya Dhar has gained popularity. The Dhurandhar sequel, which debuted in December of last year, has received a lot of positive reviews from viewers and has had a great start at the box office. After seeing the movie, director Rakesh Roshan commented that Aditya Dhar has “delivered beyond expectations.” “I just watched Aditya Dhar’s historic Dhurandhar, and it is a reminder to all of us filmmakers to pause and reset the fabric of cinema with the vision, passion, and audacity with which Aditya has made Dhurandhar,” Rakesh Roshan wrote on his X account. The phenomenon of this movie shouldn’t be viewed as a danger, he continued. “This should not be viewed as a threat, but rather as a healthy and much needed revolution in storytelling and entertainment,” he continued. Aditya Dhar has exceeded expectations, and it was about time! Aditya, may God bless you and grant you greater strength! Aditya Dhar gave a special message to the

cast during a special screening that the film’s maker organized for the cast and crew. “Thanks to those who believed in me, starting with Jyoti Deshpande, and of course, my HODs, my cast members, actors, and everyone who has given their heart and soul to the film,” he said. All of the replies and even the memes are overwhelming me. However, I sincerely appreciate everyone’s presence, encouragement, and participation in this adventure. Without you, this would not have been feasible. I really appreciate it. Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar 2 was released globally on Thursday, March 19. With ₹43 crore net domestically and ₹75 crore gross worldwide from paid previews alone, the Ranveer Singh film got off to a strong start on Wednesday. Early on Thursday, the movie crossed the ₹100 crore gross threshold. The setting of Dhurandhar was Lyari, Karachi, a neighborhood notorious for its deadly turf fights and gang conflicts. It focused on clandestine intelligence operations against the



backdrop of terror and geopolitical events such as the 26/11 Mumbai assaults, the 2001 Parliament Attack, and the hijacking of the Kandahar airliner. The follow-up chronicles the ascent of Ranveer’s character, Hamza Ali Mazari, in the underworld of Karachi and explores his beginnings as Jaskirat Singh Rangti, following the path of the young man who ultimately turns into a clandestine agent. Arjun Rampal, Sara Arjun, R Madhavan, and Rakesh Bedi are also featured.

Akshay Kumar honors Chuck Norris, who “shaped a part” of him



Mumbai: In honor of actor and martial arts hero Chuck Norris, who passed away at the age of 86, actor Akshay Kumar wrote a note. On Friday night, Akshay revealed on X (formerly Twitter) that he was influenced by Chuck Norris. Chuck’s old photo was shared by Akshay. “Growing up as a martial artist, watching Chuck Norris in Way of the Dragon, Missing in Action, and many more wasn’t just entertainment...it was education,” he wrote as the description for the photo. I was reminded of his power, discipline, and seamless command on screen. I’m thankful for the inspiration that helped mold a piece of me (folded

hands emoji). Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap reposted a post from The Guardian US on his Instagram Stories. He just used emojis of a broken heart.

The action hero and martial arts maestro became well-known as a tough guy because to his roles in Walker, Texas Ranger, and other TV series and films. In what his family called a “sudden passing,” he passed away on Thursday. The family made a message on social media, saying, “Please know that he was surrounded by his family and was at peace, even though we would like to keep the circumstances private.” Norris was incredibly successful

in competitive martial arts before he became a movie and television star. In the 1968 picture The Wrecking Crew, which featured a brawl with Dean Martin, he made his screen debut as an uncredited bodyguard. In martial arts circles, he had also met Bruce Lee. Their friendship—sometimes as sparring partners—led to a famous confrontation in the 1972 film Return of the Dragon, where Bruce battles and murders Chuck’s character in the Colosseum in Rome. He later appeared in over 20 films, including Sidekicks, The Delta Force, and Missing in Action. In the last match of the 2004 film Dodgeball, Chuck also made an unexpected and humorous appearance as a decisive judge. In recent years, he had only sometimes accepted acting parts, such as in 2012’s The Expendables 2 and Agent Recon, a science fiction action film from 2024. He will make an appearance in Zombie Plane.

Five children survive Chuck: twins Dakota and Danilee with his wife Gena Norris, stunt performers Mike and Eric with his late ex-wife Dianne Holechek, and Dina, the product of an early 1960s “one-night stand” that he disclosed in his autobiography. Just over a week before he passed away, he shared a sparring video on Instagram to commemorate his birthday. “I don’t get older. He wrote, “I level up.”

According to the film’s director, Rishi Kapoor and Ratna Pathak Shah accepted Kapoor & Sons right away



Mumbai: Actors Rishi Kapoor, Ratna Pathak, and Rajat Kapoor “instantly agreed” to star in Kapoor & Sons, according to director Shakun Batra. Shakun disclosed that he “arrived at these actors after being

rejected by many other actors” in an interview with Variety India. Shakun Batra remarked, “Now that you think of these things, it feels big,” in reference to the casting process. However, the actors plainly need-

ed some time at that time. Because many other actors rejected us before we found these actors. However, Rajat Kapoor, Ratna Pathak, and Rishi (Kapoor) sir immediately approved. It feels unthinkable now, as I

mentioned. However, those events occurred back then. He was questioned about taking artistic chances with the movie exclusively for theatergoers. “To be honest, I didn’t care if it was at the time,” he remarked. We basically spoke about how I wanted to accomplish it. And making these movies was still feasible. These kinds of discussions weren’t common. These kinds of poignant tales were still being told. I believe it was simply easier to make it back then than it is now. I suppose it helped that I didn’t have a lot of questions at the time. because box office, week-ends, and theaters weren’t as important to me. Under Dharma Productions, Hiroo Yash Johar, Karan Johar, and Apoorva Mehta produced the 2016 family comedy drama film, which was directed

by Shakun. Rishi Kapoor, Sidharth Malhotra, Fawad Khan, Alia Bhatt, Ratna Pathak Shah, and Rajat Kapoor are among the actors in the movie. The movie won praise from critics and was a box office success. In 2008, he directed his first film, Ek Main Aur Ekk Tu.

Additionally, Shakun directed Searching for Sheela (2021) and Strangers in the Night (2011). Additionally, he acted in the 2008 movie Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na.

The 2022 movie Gehraiyaan is his most recent work. Dharma Productions, Viacom18 Studios, and Jouska Films produced the romantic drama movie. Deepika Padukone, Siddhant Chaturvedi, Ananya Panday, Dhairya Karwa, Rajat Kapoor, and Naseeruddin Shah are among the actors in the movie.

Deepika Padukone goes to see sitarist Rishab Rikhiram Sharma perform

Mumbai: In Mumbai, actor Deepika Padukone went to see sitarist Rishab Rikhiram Sharma perform. On social media, a number of images and videos of the actor at the event surfaced. Deepika was seen sitting at the concert with other people in a video. Her mother-in-law, Anju Bhavnani, and sister-in-law, Ritika Bhavnani. She was observed enjoying the music while grinning and tapping her foot. In another video, Deepika was seen sitting next to her family members and conversing with someone. Deepika chose a black, gold, and red suit for the occasion. Her hair was pulled back into a bun. Actor Ranveer Singh, Deepika’s spouse, did not accompany her to the occasion. The performance is a part of the 2026 Rishab’s Sitar for Mental Health India Tour. He will play in Pune, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Kolkata, and Delhi after Mumbai. One viewer commented on the footage, saying, “Deepika looks ethereal in that outfit.” “She and her family are having a good time. Someone wrote, “So sweet.” “With Ranveer Singh, isn’t she celebrating the success of Dhurandhar 2? Another fan said, “Maybe she’s celebrating with this show.” “She is keeping Ranveer’s family company,” an Instagram user commented. She loves her family. The last time we saw Deepika was in Singham Again. Her next film appearance is in Shah Rukh Khan’s King, which is slated for release in December 2026. Alongside Shah Rukh and Deepika, the action thriller, which is directed by Sid-



National Productivity Council to improve systems for environmental compliance



New Delhi, Mar 21: According to the ministry of commerce and industry, the National Productivity Council (NPC) has been tasked with overseeing environmental audits and capacity building to support sustainable industrial growth and bolster environmental governance, thereby enhancing India’s integration into global value chains. According to a ministry official on Saturday, “NPC has signed an agreement with the ministry of environment, forest, and

climate change (MoEF&CC) to act as the Environment Audit Designated Agency (EADA).” The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) oversees the independent NPC. NPC’s president is Piyush Goyal, the Union’s minister of trade and industry. In light of India’s recent trade deals, the move is important for boosting manufacturing competitiveness and encouraging sustained industrialization in the nation, he said. He stated

that NPC will support India’s entry into global value chains and promote sustainable industrial growth. According to him, the deal gives NPC complete control over the environmental audit framework, including creating eligibility requirements, administering certification exams, registering auditors, keeping track of their performance, and developing their capacity. According to him, NPC will improve adherence to important environmental laws, including the Wild Life (Protection) Act, the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, and the Environment (Protection) Act. He stated, “The initiative aims to strengthen environmental compliance mechanisms, enhance transparency, and institutionalize standardized

environmental auditing practices across the country.” NPC will carry out important tasks as a designated agency, such as certifying and registering registered environmental auditors (REA) and certified environmental auditors (CEA). According to him, it will also aid in the creation and administration of digital systems for environmental audit procedures. According to the official, NPC would support the successful implementation of the audit framework by facilitating capacity building through training programs, workshops, and awareness campaigns. Establishing minimum eligibility requirements for certified environmental auditors, creating screening procedures, and certifying environmental auditors—including renewing, suspending, withdrawing, or canceling their certificates—are among the duties of the design-

ated authority. If necessary, it can even take disciplinary action against registered and qualified environmental auditors, he said.

The Government of India’s dedication to bolstering environmental regulation and encouraging sustainable industrial growth is reflected in this partnership.

According to the spokesman, the creation of a specialized organization for environmental audits is anticipated to enhance monitoring, reporting precision, and regulatory compliance, all of which will lead to improved environmental results. The Environment Audit Rules, 2025 will govern NPC’s operations, guaranteeing compliance with established guidelines, deadlines, and reporting obligations. He stated that it has 13 offices around India, including its headquarters in New Delhi.

Yash Dayal’s Absence from RCB Training Leads to Rumors

New Delhi: Yash Dayal, a pacer, was not present at the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) training camp on Friday at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium. Dayal, who was a member of the RCB team that won the championship the previous year, has gained controversy. In two different Indian states, the Uttar Pradesh cricket player is accused of two serious bodily assault offenses, one of which involves a juvenile. Pictures of RCB’s IPL 2026 team bus, which included the faces of every player save Dayal, who concluded the 2025 season with 13 wickets, recently went viral on social media. There has been a lot of conjecture about Dayal’s absence from the training camp. Some supporters believe the pacer was cut by the team because of his ongoing legal troubles. Despite keeping the player ahead of the IPL 2026 super auction in November of last year, RCB has not yet commented on the matter. Dayal has participated in court cases pertaining to accusations brought against him. After a lower court rejected his prior request, the Rajasthan High Court granted him anticipatory bail in one of the cases in January of this year. The legal process is still ongoing. Dayal wed content creator Shweta Pundir in a private ceremony last month, accord-



ing to Sunday’s media sources. Only close family members and relatives attended the February 4 nuptials.

Although Pundir posted a little video reel of her time with Dayal on her Instagram account, the couple has not formally announced their union on social media. Pundir, Dayal’s wife, is a Delhi-based YouTuber and social media influencer with more than 587,000 Instagram followers. She has amassed a sizable fan base while working as an announcer for the Intercontinental Legends League. A video of Dayal training by himself was recently uploaded by Pundir.

Pace of glacier melting in the Hindu Kush Himalayas has increased

New Delhi, Mar 21: According to a recent report by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the rate at which glaciers are melting throughout the Hindu Kush Himalayas has doubled since 2000. The last ten years have seen an increase in the frequency of extreme melt years, as well as growing risks of catastrophic floods and long-term water insecurity for a region that is home to billions of people. The results follow obvious repercussions. A glacieret was dislodged in the Chamoli disaster in the higher reaches of the Garhwal Himalayas in 2021, which probably killed over 200 people. In October 2023, a devastating glacial lake outburst flood affected South Lhonak Lake in Sikkim, resulting in deadly floods that killed over 50 people. Last year, the Dharali disaster occurred on August 5 in Uttarakhand, where the Kheer Ganga, fed by a glaciated zone, swept away an entire market. Outside of the poles, the Hindu Kush Himalayas contain the most ice. A recent ICIMOD paper titled “Changing Dynamics of Glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region from 1990 to 2020” mapped 63,761 glaciers over an area of approximately 55,782 square kilometers. At least 10 significant Asian river systems originate from these glaciers, providing billions of people with food, water, energy, and a stable means of subsistence. Approximately 78% of this glacier region, which is located between 4,500 and 6,000 meters above sea level, is extremely vulnerable to elevation-dependent warming, a process in which temperatures rise more quickly at higher elevations than at lower ones. 50 years of field data provide the most recent understanding of melt acceleration. HKH Glacier Outlook 2026: Insights from 50 Years of Himalayan Glacier Monitoring, the inaugural ICIMOD publication, is based on 302 yearly measurements from 38 sample glaciers that have been documented since September 1974. Of those, 270 years, or 89%, had a negative mass balance, which means the glaciers lost more material than they acquired. A net mass gain was seen in 11% of the observations.

oil companies raise the price of premium gasoline by rs. 2 and industrial diesel by 25%

New Delhi, Mar 21: Due to pressure on retail margins from rising global crude prices caused by the conflict in West Asia, state-run oil marketing corporations (OMCs) increased the price of premium gasoline and industrial diesel on Friday. Friday’s increase was the first significant increase in retail fuel prices of any kind since March 2024, even though pump prices for regular gasoline and diesel consumers have remained constant. The price of industrial diesel, which is supplied in large quantities directly to businesses, was raised by ₹21.92 per litre, or 25%, from ₹87.67 to ₹109.59 per litre in Delhi. In the capital, premium gasoline went from ₹99.89 to ₹101.89 a litre, an increase of ₹2. When opposed to regular petrol and diesel, which make up the vast majority of daily sales, premium petrol often has a higher octane number and various additives. The latter fuels have been locked since March 2024 at ₹94.77 and ₹87.67 per litre, respectively, in Delhi. An executive at one of the oil companies, who wished to remain anonymous, stated, “The hike is done because of surging international crude oil prices.” At an interministerial conference on Friday, Sujata Sharma, joint secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum, acknowledged the move, pointing out that vehicle fuels are deregulated goods whose pricing are determined



by the OMCs. “The cost of regular gasoline has not increased. A premium category has seen some growth, although it only makes up 2, 3, or 4% of the total amount of gasoline sold each day. The average individual has not seen a rise in the cost of gasoline, she stated. Through its three state-run OMCs, which collectively control nearly 90% of the nation’s fuel retail business, the government maintains tacit control over pump prices despite the formal deregulation of gasoline and diesel. This effectively protects consumers from fluctuations in international oil prices at

the expense of OMC margins. These margins are currently under a lot of strain. Speaking on the condition of anonymity, at least four gas pump sellers verified the premium price rise and stated that OMCs had stopped providing dealers with any kind of credit. “OMCs have already taken away a variety of credits from us. It’s now cash and carry. To lift the fuels, pay immediately. However, there is no lack of gasoline or diesel, which is a good thing, according to a dealer in Delhi. Indeed, during the nine-month period of 2025–2026, the three OMCs earned ₹57,810.37 crores in

net profits, reporting an annualized increase of nearly 192% when global crude oil prices fell below what they were when retain prices were last changed. On March 9, benchmark Brent crude hit \$119.5 per barrel, a 45-month high and a 64% increase from \$72.87 per barrel before the start of US-Israeli assaults on Iran ten days ago.

Following a recovery from that peak, prices stayed above \$100 per barrel before rising once more to \$108.65 on Thursday following Iran’s attack on the energy infrastructure of Qatar’s Ras Laffan industrial city in response for an Israeli attack on Iran’s South Pars gas complex. Brent crude oil traded at \$108.06, reflecting a slight decline of 0.5% from the previous day. India, which relies on imports for 88% of its crude oil and 50% of its natural gas, has maintained supplies through diversification, with refineries operating at peak capacity and sufficient crude and LPG stocks. Approximately 93% of LPG bookings are online, prioritizing hospitals and educational institutions. However, commercial LPG allocations are being limited to protect domestic supplies, causing some concern. About 47% of India’s LPG imports come from Qatar, emphasizing the need for urgent supply diversification amid recent energy infrastructure disruptions.

Virat Kohli unleashes breathtaking aerial hits at the RCB camp

New Delhi, Mar 20: Batsman Virat Kohli of India and star Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) began training in preparation for the Indian Premier League (IPL) title defense, which begins in a week. On March 28, RCB will begin their IPL championship defense with a thrilling match against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, their home stadium. RCB’s success will be greatly dependent on Virat, who has scored 600 or more runs in three consecutive seasons. This will be another season for the man with the number 18 on his chasing and batting records. RCB shared a



quick clip of Virat’s net practice on X, when he showcased his excellent ball-striking with an emphasis on aerial shots. After winning the illusive trophy last season by defeating Punjab Kings (PBKS) in a hard-fought title match at Ahmedabad, the top run scorer in the IPL will play with greater freedom and bravery. Virat, who currently has 8,661 runs in 267 games with eight hundreds and 63 fifties, will also try to become the first player in IPL history to score 9,000 runs. Virat is one incredible season away from becoming the first player to achieve 10,000 runs for a single IPL team in all of T20 cricket, having amassed

9,085 runs in 282 games for RCB in the IPL and the now-defunct Champions League T20. Virat, who has amassed 13,543 runs in 414 Twenty20 Internationals, including nine hundreds and 105 fifties, is also hoping to become the fifth member of the 14,000-run club in T20 cricket, behind West Indies giants Chris Gayle (14,562), Kieron Pollard (14,482), Alex Hales (14,449), and Australian great David Warner (14,028). Virat finished as the team’s top run scorer and third overall last season, scoring 657 runs in 15 innings at an average of 54.75 and a strike rate of 144.71, including eight fifties.

India’s two-match Twenty20 International Series against Ireland has been announced by the BCCI



New Delhi: The BCCI announced on Saturday that reigning world champions India will play two Twenty20 Internationals in Ireland on June 26 and June 28, respectively, in preparation for their white-ball assignment in England. The Indian squad will play in Belfast for the first time since 2007. “In June 2026, Team India (Senior Men) will visit Ireland for a two-match Twenty20 International series, having made three trips to Ireland in the last eight years (2018, 2022, and 2023). India will

visit Belfast for the first time since 2007 during this tour, according to a statement from BCCI secretary Jay Shah. The BCCI statement was released two days after Graham West, Ireland’s director of high performance, announced Paul Stirling’s resignation as their T20I captain and confirmed the series. India will go to England for five Twenty20 Internationals and three One-Day Internationals (ODIs) from July 1–19 after hosting Afghanistan for a single Test and a three-match ODI series that ends on June 20. In the last seven years, India has made three trips to Ireland, each time drawing sizable crowds to Malahide on the outskirts of Dublin. West stated on Thursday that their summertime plans include the India series. “With qualification secured for the T20 World Cup in 2028, Paul’s (Stirling) decision to stand down as T20 captain provides the opportunity for the new captain to begin implementing their style and methodology, starting with the India series in June,” West had stated.

Before IPL 2026, Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag issued a warning to Vaibhav Sooryavanshi



New Delhi: When the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 starts on March 28, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi will be the center of attention. Despite being only 14 years old, the southpaw’s incredible batting skill has won over everyone. Sooryavanshi is a unique asset in T20 cricket since he can hit huge sixes for fun at such a young age. The footballer gained notoriety after the Rajasthan Royals (RR) paid an incredible Rs 1.1

crore to purchase him at auction prior to the 2025 season. With 252 runs at an average of 36.00 and a strike rate of 206.56 in seven games, he returned the favor. After replacing the injured Sanju Samson in the RR starting lineup, Vaibhav never looked back. Sooryavanshi became the youngest player to record an IPL century and the fastest Indian to do it in just his second game, batting against Gujarat Titans. In just 35 balls, he shattered the record ton. Vaibhav continued to play brilliantly for India in Under-19 cricket, even though he was at the top of his game during his maiden IPL season. He was crucial to the nation’s 2026 U19 World Cup winning campaign. In the final match against England, the southpaw scored 175 runs off 80 balls as India triumphed by 100 runs. RR skipper Riyan

Parag has warned the growing star of the difficulties ahead because the adolescent will receive a lot of attention during IPL 2026. Naturally, there will be pressure and excitement this year. However, I’ll advise him to let Yashasvi Jaiswal handle that pressure in my capacity as captain. He’s more than capable of managing it,” Parag stated on Thursday. He continued, “The role is very straightforward for him; just go out there, hit, and don’t worry about anything else.” Parag wishes to keep Vaibhav out of the spotlight and let the young talent to simply enjoy playing cricket. “As captain, I’ll make an effort to keep him out of the spotlight. The RR captain said, “I’ll tell him not to do many press conferences or interact too much, just enjoy the game and play naturally.”

NHAI will implement AI-powered dashcam surveillance for upkeep and road safety

New Delhi, Mar 21: In order to enhance road maintenance and safety, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) said on Friday that AI-based dashcam systems will be installed on almost 40,000 km of the country’s highway network. According to officials with knowledge of the situation, the project will install specialized dashboard cameras on route patrol vehicles (RPVs), which will conduct weekly inspections of highway segments. The state of the pavement, including the identification of potholes, cracks, and surface damage, as well as problems like faded lane markings, broken crash barriers, and broken lamps, will be the main focus, they added. Other safety issues, such as unauthorized signboards, encroachments, unlawful parking, and illegal median openings, will also be flagged by the system. According to a statement from NHAI, “at least one survey will be conducted at night every month to check the visibility and performance of signage, road markings, reflectors, and lighting.” According to the officials, the system would also monitor other maintenance concerns like



vegetation growth, waterlogging, missing drainage covers, and the state of bus bays. The whole highway network has been split up into five zones for efficient report monitoring. In order to help authorities identify issues and address them more quickly, a specialized platform will be used to gather, analyze, and track road conditions over time, according to NHAI.

Virat Kohli Urges Defending Champions RCB To Stay Switched On Ahead Of Title Defence



Bengaluru: As the defending champions Royal Challengers (RCB) prepare to defend their Indian Premier League (IPL), the Indian batting superstar Virat Kohli gave his team a motivational pep talk, urging his team to stay switched on and not waste their days while training as it is only going to get tougher for them during the title defence. RCB will kick off their title defence against Sunrisers Hyderabad on March 28 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. After the man in number 18 secured his first IPL title during his 18th season as a

loyal RCBian, Virat will be eyeing another fiery season with the bat that would keep the crowds happy and statisticians busy. RCB has resumed their training as they returned to their home turf with renewed focus and intensity to kick off preparations. Addressing the team during the first practice session of the season, Virat said, as quoted by RCB's press release, "We worked really hard over the last two to three seasons to achieve what we did last year, and it is only going to get tougher because other teams are going to come hard at us."

Emphasising the need to maintain high standards from the outset, he added, "We do not waste these days. We stay ahead. So switch on now. Let us not waste even a minute of any session that we are a part of. We must give our 120 per cent for these two and a half months." The session also marked the coming together of a reinforced squad, with Head Coach Andy Flower welcoming new additions including Indian all-rounder Venkatesh Iyer, Mangesh Yadav, Jordan Cox, Vicky Ostwal and Satvik Deswal, while also extending a special mention to Under-19 World Cup winners Kanishk

Chouhan and Vihaan Malhotra. "We had an interesting auction, and I think we have improved our squad, to be quite frank. We have brought in some great new additions. Integrating them into the RCB way alongside established players led by Virat and Rajat (Patidar) is an exciting part of building this team," said Flower. There is one difference this year, we have got a star on our shirt. That is a very proud feeling for all RCB fans. But that season is gone. Now we have a new challenge ahead, and it's an exciting one. We are here to win this year's IPL," he continued. Reflecting the energy within the group, wicketkeeper Jitesh Sharma shared his excitement about joining the setup. "Everyone was very excited to meet each other. I was excited to get more batting time. I got a chance to meet all the coaches and train again," he said. Head Coach Flower also spoke about the advantage of starting the season at home. "Our first game is here at Chinnaswamy, which is a fantastic opportunity for us to build momentum early and be welcomed by our home fans. The outfield is looking superb, lush, green and beautiful," said Flower.

Sabalenka, Rybakina, And Gauff Secure Victories To Advance At The Miami Open Twenty Twenty-Six

Miami: The 2026 Miami Open saw several notable results in the women's singles Round of 64 on Saturday, with top names moving into the second round and a major upset shaking up the draw. Top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka began her campaign with a hard-fought 7-6(5), 6-4 win over Ann Li at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami. Sabalenka's victory sets her up for a second-round clash against Caty McNally as she aims to make a deep run in the WTA 1000 event. World No. 3 Elena Rybakina registered a comfortable straight-sets victory over Yulia Putintseva 6-3, 6-3 to move into the next round of the ongoing Miami Open. Rising Canadian tennis star Victoria Mboko thrashed Anna Blinkova, 6-2, 6-0, as she rolled through her second-round match in the ongoing tournament. She will now face Anastasia Zakharova in the women's singles round of 32 clash. World No. 4 Coco Gauff defeated Italy's Elisabetta Cocciaretto in a hard-fought game which lasted two hours and 15 minutes. Gauff clinched the match 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 to move into the next round. In other women's singles fixtures, Elina Svitolina, who is ranked World No. 9, qualified for the round of 32 after defeating Emerson Jones in straight sets 6-2, 6-4. Meanwhile, World No. 1 and Spain sensation Carlos Alcaraz had a fine start to his men's singles Miami Open campaign, with a win over 19-year-old Joao Fonseca in the first round on Friday night. Alcaraz and Fonseca, both of them at their aggressive best, produced a booming sound when the



Ball connected with Their racquets and enthralled the fans in Miami in their well-contested first-ever ATP Head-to-Head meeting. It was Alcaraz who came out on top by 6-4, 6-4. Fonseca got some strong support from the Brazilians in the crowd as he put in a spirited fight against the world number one. Alcaraz's experience, class and maturity ultimately came out on top against Fonseca's ferocity. Following the match, Alcaraz said as quoted by ATP's official website, "I think I was really good in crucial moments. I was really good since the beginning until the last ball. I know how good Joao is, and that is why I was really focused, every point, every shot. "I am just happy to stay calm, to stay positive in those moments. Most of the games, I just served pretty well, which

was a really great weapon today for Me," he added. Fonseca has lost to both world number one Alcaraz and world number two Jannik Sinner at successive ATP Masters 1000 competitions. During the Indian Wells competition, Fonseca gave Sinner a scare by forcing two tie-breaks, but the four-time Grand Slam champion grinded out a win. In both matches, Fonseca's fighting spirit, raw power and ferocious game-play were evident. Sinner produced an impressive display throughout the tournament, not dropping a single set en route to the title. With his victory against Daniil Medvedev in the BNP Paribas Open final Sunday, Sinner has now won all 'Big Titles' at hard-court events: six ATP Masters 1000 events, the Nitto ATP Finals, the Australian Open and the US Open. Only.

Irfan Pathan Urges KKR Finisher Rinku Singh To Maximise Every Opportunity

New Delhi: Former Indian cricketer Irfan Pathan said that batter Rinku Singh's form would be one of the problems for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) to fix in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season, noting a dip in his performances after the breakthrough 2023 season. KKR will start their season with a clash against five-time champions Mumbai Indians (MI) at Mumbai on March 29. Rinku's form will be a big concern for the Knight Riders, as he had a sub-par T20 World Cup, scoring just 24 runs in five innings. Also in the IPL, his performances have witnessed a decline since his breakout season in 2023, in which five successive sixes against Yash Dayal in a 200-plus run-chase against the Gujarat Titans (GT) launched him into stardom. Speaking on his YouTube Channel, Pathan spoke of the decline in Rinku's IPL performances after the breakout 2023 season and his failure to capitalise on the chances given to him during the recent T20 World Cup. "We will have to see how much opportunity he gets to play. His 2023 season was outstanding. He scored 400-450 runs with a strike rate of 150. But after that, his performance dipped, and many times he did not



get enough opportunities. He will have to maintain his standard and maximise the opportunities he gets. Even in the World Cup, he played five matches, but he could not fully capitalise on the chances he got. This is another problem that Kolkata needs to rectify, and Rinku Singh is one of them," he said. Rinku's 2023 season saw him score 474 runs in 14 innings at an average of 59.25 and a strike rate of 149.52, with four fifties. However, since then, he has scored just 374 runs in 22 innings at an average of 23.37, with a best score of 38*. Pathan also said that the challenge would be how to give

spinner Varun Chakravarthy the confidence he needs after a dip in form during the T20 World Cup. Starting off the tournament well, he took nine wickets in four group stage matches at an economy rate of just over 5. But after that, it was a massive decline as he managed just five wickets in five matches from Super Eight opener to the final, with his economy rate doubling. The all-rounder backed Varun to overcome his slump and "perform even better" while playing in a "slightly different atmosphere" in Kolkata. The challenge is how to bring Varun back with confidence given his current dip in form.

He will play 14 matches, some of which will be at Kolkata's ground, and he has definitely performed well in this league before. With the good memories he has in Kolkata, perhaps in a slightly different atmosphere, he might perform even better. I believe he will manage it, so although this is a challenge, Varun Chakravarthy will overcome it," said Pathan. Last season, Varun was the seventh-highest wicket-taker with 17 scalps at an average of 22.52 and an economy rate of 7.66, with best figures of 3/22. In 83 matches for KKR, Varun has taken 99 wickets at an average of 23.74, with two four-wicket hauls and best figures of 5/20. Speaking during the presser, as quoted by ESPNcricinfo, Nayar said that one tends to go through such lean patches in T20 cricket and there are a lot of factors in play, such as the amount of matches played, the conditions being suitable/unsuitable for his bowling and the phases where he bowls for his team. Varun has played a lot of T20 cricket over the past year, so a lot of factors come into play. Sometimes the conditions are not conducive to his style of bowling." "There is nothing wrong. I just feel that at that point in the tournament, whatever potential.

Sivaramakrishnan Denies BCCI or Jay Shah Linked Commentary Exit

New Delhi: Former India spinner Laxman Sivaramakrishnan has denied that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and current ICC chairman Jay Shah have anything to do with his retirement from commentary duties. Sivaramakrishnan said that his issue was with an employee at BCCI. The former Indian spinner grabbed the headlines when he stepped down from his commentary role with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), citing issues of racism and limited opportunities over his 23-year association. The 60-year-old shared the news through a series of posts on X, which quickly gained traction online. In his posts, Sivaramakrishnan claimed he was repeatedly overlooked for prominent on-air responsibilities such as toss coverage and post-match presentations, despite being part of the panel for more than two decades. Replying to a user who suggested racial bias might be involved, Sivaramakrishnan agreed to it. Sivaramakrishnan also noted that he missed out on such roles even during phases when senior figures like Ravi Shastri were involved in the setup, hinting at a pattern that stretched over the years. He added that his exit was not merely a retirement decision, but an attempt to question how responsibilities are assigned and how production decisions are made. Following his announcement, fans started to target BCCI and Shah for their role in the matter. The 60-year-old has now stepped in to deny that the BCCI administration had nothing to do with his exit and he was



just taking control of his own life. "Don't bring the BCCI Administration into the picture. It's a one on one with an employee of the BCCI. Jay Shah and Co. have nothing to do with this issue. I am taking control of my said Sivaramakrishnan. outings came in 1984 against England, where he claimed 12 wickets in a match. Sivaramakrishnan was also part of India's 1985 World Championship-winning squad in Australia, finishing as the tournament's leading wicket-taker. After his playing career, he transitioned into commentary, becoming a respected voice bowling.

After his playing career, he transitioned into commentary, becoming a respected voice bowling.

Injury-Prone Speedster Mayank Yadav Targets High-Pace IPL 2026 Comeback Mayank Yadav Eyes IPL Redemption

New Delhi: The sharp thud of the ball into the wicketkeeper's gloves during a recent Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) net session carried a familiar intensity. For Mayank Yadav, the young fast-bowling sensation who made headlines in 2024 with 156.7 kmph deliveries, it marked the return of a rare pace talent. After a gruelling nine-month lay-off, which included specialised back surgery in New Zealand and a carefully managed rehabilitation programme at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, the 23-year-old is once again building rhythm. For a bowler whose rapid rise was repeatedly disrupted by injury setbacks, the journey back has been as much a mental challenge as



a physical one. In the last 10 months, Mayank has played only two competitive matches – both in the lead-up to India's T20 World Cup campaign in February when he turned up for India A. But, working his way back to full fitness and confidence in the Lucknow Super Giants camp, the young fast bowler exudes a quiet, measured confidence that suggests the "scary" pace is returning. "I

am completely fine. I am on track. I don't have any issue," Mayank says, dismissing any lingering concerns. "Let's see, how fast I can bowl." Mayank's journey since his explosive debut has been defined by a frustrating cycle of stop-start momentum. After earning back-to-back Player of the Match awards in his first two IPL games in 2024.

Maguire Laments "Soft" Red Card as United Drop Points Against Bournemouth in 2026

New Delhi: Manchester United defender Harry Maguire slammed the referees after his controversial red card during Manchester United's 2-2 draw with Bournemouth in the Premier League on Friday, March 20. Maguire was given his marching orders in the 79th minute for a foul on Evanilson inside the penalty box as he was deemed to have stopped a clear goalscoring opportunity. United were leading 2-1 at this point and Eli Junior Kroupi stepped to convert from the spot to give the home side a point at the Vitality stadium. However, fans and pundits were left fuming as United were denied a spotkick similarly during the 67th minute when they were leading 1-0 in the contest. Amad Diallo was brought down inside the box



By Adrien Truffert, and Then The Cherries went on to score at the other end as the Bournemouth defender escaped without a card. Taking to Ins-

Tagram after the game, Maguire said that the decision Was A soft one but claimed that it was state of the Game At this Point in time, despite the

Presence of VAR. The United defender said that he expected that both decisions should Have ideally been the same. "So soft but that's where

football is at atm and I should know better. You would think both Decisions would Reach the same outcome. We will be back after the break. Safe travel home reds , your support has been unbelievable," said Maguire. Manchester United's interim coach Michael Carrick was fuming after the game and slammed the call from referee Stuart Attwell. The release said that Diamond Harbour gaffer Kibu Vicuna also made two changes, handing starts to Sunday Kolawole Afolabi and R Ramdinthara at the expense of Jobby Justin and Hugo Diaz Rodriguez. The deadlock was finally broken shortly after the restart in the 47th minute. Capitalising on a poor clearance from Aizawl defender Rohmingthanga, Moyano picked up the loose ball and produced a precise finish. The Spanish midfielder calmly.