

Mizoram Health Minister Lalrinpuii Honoured with Women Icon Award 2026

Aizawl, Feb 12: Mizoram’s Health and Social Welfare Minister, Lalrinpuii, has been conferred the prestigious Women Icon Award 2026 at the National Summit in New Delhi, jointly organised by Achievers’ World and the Indian Achiever Forum. The recognition highlights her leadership in strengthening Mizoram’s healthcare system and her broader contributions to social welfare initiatives.

The summit, themed “Viksit Bharat 2047 through Comprehensive Socio-Economic Development”, brought together policymakers, corporate leaders, and social activists from across the country. Lalrinpuii’s award was presented in ac-

knowledge of her efforts to improve healthcare delivery in Mizoram, particularly in rural and underserved areas. She has been instrumental in promoting maternal and child health programmes, expanding access to essential medicines, and advocating for community-based health initiatives.

In her acceptance speech, Lalrinpuii emphasized that the honour was not solely a personal achievement but a reflection of the collective dedication of her department officials. “This award belongs to the people of Mizoram and to the hardworking teams who strive daily to improve our health and social welfare systems,” she said.

She also drew attention to a



pressing challenge: Mizoram receives among the lowest Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds in India. Lalrinpuii urged corporate leaders to extend greater support to the

state, particularly in healthcare infrastructure, digital health initiatives, and preventive care

programmes. She stressed that enhanced CSR partnerships could help bridge critical gaps in resources and accelerate Mizoram’s progress toward national development goals.

The recognition is being seen as a major boost to Mizoram’s image at the national level. Political observers note that the award underscores the state’s commitment to inclusive governance and highlights the role of women leaders in shaping India’s developmental journey. Civil society groups in Mizoram have welcomed the honour, describing it as a source of pride for the state and an inspiration for young women aspiring to leadership roles.

In Brief

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Child Wellness & Autism Clinic inaugurated at RIMS

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Assam CM defamation case

Guwahati: Senior Congress leaders Gaurav Gogoi, Bhupesh Baghel and Jitendra Singh have been directed to appear before the court on March 9 in connection with a Rs 500 crore defamation suit filed by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Sharing the development with the media, Assam Advocate General Devajit Saikia stated that the Chief Minister had challenged the three leaders to substantiate their allegations against him of illegal ownership of 12000 bighas of land, and sought damages of Rs 500 crore if they failed to provide evidence. The Chief Minister had on Tuesday said he has initiated defamation proceedings against the Congress leaders, accusing them of making “false, malicious and defamatory” allegations against him during a media conference.

The allegations were reported in a news publication on February 5, accusing the Chief Minister of possessing illegal land.

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five days a week and provide early screening, diagnosis, therapy, parental counselling, training, research, and advocacy to ensure inclusive and comprehensive child care. The clinic will offer under-one-roof management and referral services for children aged 0–18 years, with a focus on screening for 4D conditions—Defects at birth, Diseases, Deficiencies, and Developmental delays. Special attention will be given to conditions such as Congenital Heart Disease (CHD), vision, dental, and skin problems. Services will also cover common neurodevelopmental disorders including ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, learning disorders, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, and Rett syndrome etc. The clinic will operate Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This initiative represents a major step forward in strengthening child mental health and developmental services in Manipur through coordinated efforts between medical institutions and public health programmes.

Farmers find saviour in school principal

Imphal, Feb 12: Farmers of Loukhongpat agricultural area under Khangabok Assembly Constituency in Thoubal District have received assistance to continue double cropping of paddy over nearly 100 hectares of farmland affected by water scarcity. Due to inadequate irrigation water, farmers were unable to cultivate their fields for the second crop. As a temporary solution, a small earthen dam was constructed to store and divert water to the paddy fields, enabling farmers to proceed with double cropping. Dr. Mangang expressed hope that Khangabok constituency would continue to set an example in agricultural productivity across Manipur. The initiative has been welcomed by the local farming community, who believe it will significantly support agricultural activities and improve crop yield in the region.

CM inaugurates Micro & Small Entrepreneurs Excellence Project in Mizoram



Aizawl, Feb 12: Chief Minister Lalduhoma today inaugurated the Micro and Small Entrepreneurs Excellence Project in Mizoram and the Mizoram Entrepreneurs Development Forum at the I&PR Conference Hall. The initiatives are jointly organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry – Centre for Excellence on Employment & Livelihood (CII CEL) and the Government of Mizoram, and are aimed at strengthening MSME owners in the state and supporting those seeking to expand their enterprises. In his address, the Chief Minister noted that Mizos have long been recognized as a community rich in skills and craftsmanship, with

significant potential in the MSME sector. He highlighted that several Mizo youths secured awards at last year’s IndiaSkills Competition, while this year Mizoram participants emerged as Overall Champions at the IndiaSkills North East Championship. As the state continues to develop and employment opportunities grow, he emphasized the government’s commitment to nurturing skilled youth. He added that entrepreneurs should be empowered to stand on their own, and that the government’s flagship Handholding Scheme is designed to create opportunities for them. He further observed that Mizoram’s MSME owners are capable

and self-driven, having built their livelihoods through determination and initiative. The newly launched project is intended to help them scale greater heights from their present level. In a rapidly evolving global economy shaped by modern business practices, he stressed that MSMEs must continually upgrade their capabilities to remain competitive. The Chief Minister underscored the unmatched expertise of organizations such as CII, noting that CII CEL has successfully implemented similar initiatives in other states, often on a paid participation basis. Mizoram, he said, is fortunate that the Volvo Group has agreed to support the programme through

its CSR initiative, enabling local MSME owners to participate free of cost. He expressed appreciation to both CII CEL and the Volvo Group for their partnership.

The projects aim to equip MSME owners and aspiring entrepreneurs in Mizoram with contemporary skills and knowledge, while also establishing a forum for engagement with industry experts. The program will initially run for one year, with 70 participants selected for training. The inaugural function was chaired by Shalina Thapa, Executive Director, CII. GV Rao, Director (CSR), Volvo Group Trust, and Shivek Gurubaran, Director, CII CEL, also addressed the gathering.

Bharat bandh affects public transport services in Assam

Guwahati, Feb 12: The nationwide Bharat bandh called by trade unions impacted public transport services in Guwahati and other places in Assam, causing inconvenience to commuters.

In Guwahati, the bus service of state-run Assam State Transport Corporation (ASTC) proved inadequate to met the rush hour passenger demand as private buses and app-based cabs remained off the road.

In the morning, trade union activists were seen enforcing the bandh at the Khanapara area of the city.

Normal functioning of public sector undertakings, including banks and oil installations, were also hit in the state.

Hundreds of workers of the Digboi Refinery staged a demonstration outside the refinery premises. Protesters warned of intensified agitation if their demands were not addressed.

“This protest is to make it clear that we will not remain silent. The labour codes the government wants to im-

plement will deprive workers of their rights. Today, workers have stopped their work to show their support,” said Nagen Chutia, General Secretary of the Petroleum and Gas Workers Federation of India in Digboi.

He added that the agitation could intensify in the coming days if the government does not reconsider the labour reforms.

“This BJP government has always harassed the common people. They are now trying to turn the industries into private industries,” Chutia said.

Normal life was also disrupted in Dhubri district due to the bandh, which brought transport services and banking operations to a halt.

The Bharat Band is called by more than 10 central trade unions and supported by farmers’ organisations. The unions say the protest is against the Centre’s new labour codes and what they describe as “anti-worker, anti-farmer and pro-corporate policies.” The 12-hour bandh will end at 6 pm.

Residents warn against obstruction in road construction

Imphal, Feb 12: As the long-awaited construction of the Indo–Burma Sugnu Road has officially begun, Meira Paibis of Pangantabi and local clubs have strongly cautioned against any form of obstruction or interference in the road development work. The State Highway stretch from Wabagai Lamkhai to Sugnu, which had remained neglected for many years despite repeated demands for renovation, has now been taken up for construction. In this connection, the Pangantabi Meira Paibis and the South Eastern Manipur Development Organisation (SEMDO), Pangantabi, jointly held a public meeting and expressed their stance against any activities that may hinder the ongoing work. The public has warmly welcomed the commencement of the construction work. She warned that if any group attempts to halt the project by making monetary demands or creating disturbances, the womenfolk will strongly oppose such actions and will not allow any disruption to the development work.

CM Khemchand launches Manipur Heli Service Portal

Imphal, Feb 12: Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh launched the Manipur Heli Service Portal, today during the Grand Finale of National Road Safety Month Observation, 2026 at the City Convention Centre, Imphal. The Manipur Heli Service Portal is a forward-looking digital initiative enhancing connectivity and accessibility. Addressing the gathering briefly, the Chief Minister announced that the government is committed and will strive to repair neglected roads to enhance road safety and reduce accidents.

Yumnam Khemchand Singh also flagged off two interceptor vehicles of the Transport Department during the event. These interceptor vehicles will enhance road safety by detecting traffic violations, such as speeding, lane cutting, and not wearing helmets, in real-time. Equipped with high-definition cameras, 4D radar/LiDAR, and breath analyzers, these units automate e-challan generation to curb road accidents and fatalities. These vehicles represent enhanced enforcement capability and a technological step forward in ensuring compliance, monitoring speed regulations, and promoting responsible driving across Manipur. A joint effort of both the government and the public is needed to prevent road accidents, Minister Konthoujam Govindas Singh said, highlighting that around 1.8 lakhs of deaths due to road accidents are reported in India annually. The minister also reiterated the need to strictly follow traffic rules to minimise casualty due to road accidents.



North Garo Hills leader demands probe into 400 ‘outside’ labourers

Shillong, Feb 12: Timjim Momin, a public figure from Meghalaya’s North Garo Hills District, has formally approached the Deputy Commissioner, seeking an enquiry into the engagement of more than 400 outside-State labourers for rake loading work at the Mendipathar railway station on December 28, 2025. The leader has highlighted the implications for local employment and broader social concerns, bringing the issue to the attention of local authorities and state representatives. Momin expressed concern that despite the availability of local tribal labourers, workers from outside Meghalaya were reportedly brought in for the work, allegedly depriving local youth and daily wage earners of employment opportunities. The matter was flagged as an immediate threat to the livelihoods of residents in the area. He emphasized that such practices could undermine the morale of the local workforce and create a sense of alienation among the indigenous population. He urged the district administration to identify the contractors or agencies responsible and take action as per law. This request underscores the call for accountability



ty and adherence to local employment norms. Momin also highlighted the need for transparency in the recruitment process, suggesting that all agencies involved in labour hiring should be mandated to disclose their hiring practices and ensure compliance with regional guidelines. Citing the constitutional safeguards under the Sixth Schedule, Momin further demanded that rake loading work at the railway station should ensure full engagement of eligible local tribal labourers. The invocation of constitutional provisions aims to reinforce the rights of indigenous communities.

Massive exam scam unravels at SJN Homeopathic College; two HODs suspended, probe underway

Agartala, Feb 12: In a significant boost to Tripura’s growing startup ecosystem, Sanjiv Singh, IRS, Joint Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India, interacted with emerging entrepreneurs during his visit to the Directorate of Information Technology (DIT), Government of Tripura on Wednesday. The interaction session witnessed extensive discussions on innovation, entrepreneurship and institutional support mechanisms aimed at strengthening startups in the State. Around ten Tripura-based startups showcased their products and innovations through stalls arranged by DIT, engaging directly with senior policymakers and industry representatives. Addressing the gathering, Sanjiv Singh informed that DPIIT would extend “extensive support” for organizing a North East Startup Conclave in Agartala. He further stated that the Government of India has earmarked a substantial seed fund for startups in the North Eastern region and would deploy dedicated additional manpower to support startups in Tripura. Kiran Gitte, IAS, Secretary, Information Technology, Government of Tripura, elaborated on the initiatives undertaken by DIT to nurture the State’s startup ecosystem. Shri Jeya Ragul Geshan B, IFS, Director, IT, presented a detailed overview of Startup Tripura, highlighting its journey, milestones and future roadmap under the Tripura Startup Policy 2025. On the occasion, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were exchanged between DIT and the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU), Tripura Campus, and the National Law University (NLU), Tripura, to onboard them under the New Generation Innovation Network (NGIN) initiative. Prof. Dr. H.K. Pratihari, Campus Director, NFSU, and Prof. Dr. Yogesh Pratap Singh, Vice-Chancellor, NLU Tripura, were present during the signing ceremony. The collaboration aims to promote innovation-led research, entrepreneurship and incubation support within higher educational institutions. The Sector-Agnostic Tripura Startup Policy, launched by Chief Minister Prof. (Dr.) Manik Saha, has already approved over 100 startups



and recognized 48, with several receiving Proof-of-Concept and fiscal incentives. A Rs 50 crore Startup Venture Fund, including Rs 15 crore from the State Government, has been envisaged to support scalable ventures. The State has also onboarded ten institutions, including Tripura University and NIT Agartala, under the NGIN scheme. The inclusion of NFSU and NLU Tripura marks another step toward expanding the innovation network and fostering knowledge-driven entrepreneurship in the State.

In an extortion sweep, security agents in Imphal West detain two KCP (MFL) members and confiscate evidence

Imphal, Feb 12: Security forces arrested two active members of the banned KCP (MFL) group from Imphal West district of Manipur, on February 11, 2026. The cadres were reportedly involved in extortion activities in the region, drawing attention from local authorities. The operation was part of a broader campaign by law enforcement to curb the influence of proscribed groups and ensure the safety of residents. The arrests were conducted following intelligence inputs, and authorities acted swiftly to apprehend the suspects before they could evade capture or dispose of evidence. The arrested individuals have been identified as Thangjam Goutam Singh, aged 19, and Diamond Chingshubam, aged 24. Both are residents of Khabi Mamang Leikai in Imphal West. The arrests took place at their respective homes during an operation conducted by security forces. The coordinated raids were carried out in the early hours, minimizing the risk of confrontation and ensuring safety. Family members of the accused were present during the search.

During the operation, a Royal Enfield Meteor motorcycle bearing registration number MN04G-2108 was seized

from the suspects. In addition, two mobile phones and an Aadhaar card were also confiscated as part of the evidence collected by security personnel. The mobile phones are believed to contain vital information regarding the extortion network, and forensic analysis is expected to aid investigators in tracing communications with other members of the banned outfit. The arrests and subsequent seizure of items form part of ongoing efforts to address the presence of proscribed outfits in the area. No details regarding resistance during the operation or prior incidents involving the two apprehended individuals have been disclosed by officials. Sources indicate that the operation was executed without incident, reflecting the preparedness of the security personnel involved. Authorities have emphasized the need for continued vigilance to prevent the resurgence of unlawful activities in the region. Security forces have indicated that further enquiry is underway. No additional information regarding the ongoing investigation or possible future actions has been provided to the public. Authorities have appealed to the public to cooperate and share any information that could assist in dismantling extortion



rackets operating in the district. The operation occurred in Imphal West, a district that has witnessed periodic law

enforcement actions against banned organisations. The seizure of communication devices and identification documents is expected to assist officers in pursuing further leads relating to extortion activities. These efforts are part of a sustained campaign to restore peace and security in the district, which has historically faced challenges from various underground groups. Officials have yet to announce any progress in the case or schedule further public disclosures.

The investigation remains active as authorities continue to examine the evidence collected during the arrests. Updates are anticipated as the inquiry progresses and more details emerge from the ongoing probe. Both individuals remain under the custody of security forces as part of the initial phase of the investigation. Authorities have not released statements regarding the broader implications of the arrests or links to other suspected members of the organisation. It is expected that the interrogation of the accused will yield more information about the structure and operations of the KCP (MFL) in Imphal West and possibly lead to further arrests.

Rs 10 Lakh Crore to Be Spent on Rural Development Under VB-G RAM G Scheme: Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Agartala, Feb 12: Union Minister for Agriculture, Farmers’ Welfare and Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday announced that a massive outlay of Rs 10 lakh crore will be spent over the next 10 years under the Vikshi Bharat–Guarantee for Employment and Livelihood Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) scheme for the overall development of rural India. Addressing a conference on the VB-G RAM G scheme at Swami Vivekananda Maidan here, Chouhan described the initiative as “a comprehensive roadmap for rural India” that will play a crucial role in building a Vikshi Bharat. Dismissing criticism of the VB-G RAM G project as “a false campaign,” Chouhan said tribals, backward classes and other economically weaker sections would be the primary beneficiaries. During the programme, the Union Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of 179 rural development projects in Tripura involving a total investment of Rs 546.79 crore. “This scheme has been designed with the participation of people from all sections of society. It will further strengthen the rural economy



and ensure sustainable livelihood opportunities,” he said. Highlighting a key feature of the scheme, the Union Minister said it guarantees 125 days of employment per year to every worker, significantly higher than the previous 100-day work guarantee. “If any worker is not provided employment

despite seeking work, there is a provision for unemployment allowance. Moreover, in case of delay in wage payments, workers will receive their dues along with interest,” he asserted. Chouhan informed that Rs 1,51,282 crore has already been allocated for rural development programmes, and an

additional Rs 55,000 crore will be provided through the Finance Commission, taking the total allocation to over Rs 2 lakh crore in the next five years. He added that during this period, each gram panchayat will receive an average of Rs 1.50 crore to Rs 2.75 crore. Drawing a comparison with the previous UPA regime, Chouhan said, “During the UPA government, Rs 2.13 lakh crore was spent on rural employment in ten years, whereas the NDA government has spent Rs 8.54 lakh crore in the last decade.” To improve implementation, the administrative cost under the scheme has been increased from 6 percent to 9 percent. “This will ensure that Panchayat Secretaries, Employment Assistants, Clerks and Technical Staff do not face salary-related issues,” he said. Referring to Tripura, the Minister alleged that rural areas did not witness significant development under previous Left and Congress governments. “The present government is ensuring that no poor family has to live in a mud house by constructing pucca houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana,” he stated.

Ex Manipur CM Biren Singh urges Rajnath Singh to halt ‘destruction’ of WWII-era



Imphal, Feb 12: Former Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has appealed to Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to intervene and protect the historic Koirengei airfield, describing it as a priceless World War II heritage site whose continued alteration has caused public unease. In a statement posted on social media, Singh said that between 2017 and 2025, during his tenure as Chief Minister, he had written multiple times to successive Defence Ministers seeking preservation of the airfield, one of the key Allied bases during World War II. He noted that several rounds of discussions were also held between officials of the Defence Ministry and the Manipur government on the issue. Expressing concern, Singh said it “pains” him to witness ongoing destruction and new construction at the site despite years of appeals

and consultations. He added that the developments have led to significant discomfort among civilians. Highlighting land allocations in the area, Singh stated that more than 300 acres had already been donated to the Assam Rifles and are currently occupied by IGAR (South), while over 100 acres have been allotted to the Border Security Force in close proximity to the Koirengei airfield. Former Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has appealed to Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to intervene and protect the historic Koirengei airfield, describing it as a priceless World War II heritage site whose continued alteration has caused public unease. Calling the site part of the nation’s shared heritage, Singh urged the Defence Minister to step in to safeguard it in the larger interest of both Manipur and the country.

Agriculture set for boost with Rashtriya Dalhan Aatmanirbharta Mission, says Minister Bora

Guwahati, Feb 12: Assam is set to see significant gains for its agricultural sector with the implementation of the Rashtriya Dalhan Aatmanirbharta Mission, as highlighted by recent discussions between state and union leaders. Assam Minister Atul Bora expressed optimism about the mission’s potential to benefit farmers, following the visit of Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to Guwahati. The mission, inaugurated last year by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is a central part of efforts to strengthen agriculture in Assam and the wider Northeast. During the recent visit, Bora stated that the mission will bring tangible improvements to farmers’ lives. Assam Minister Atul Bora on February 11, said that the Rashtriya Dalhan Aatmanirbharta Mission will significantly benefit farmers in the state, following a visit by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to Assam. Bora reiterated that the mission’s implementation was discussed in detail with the Union Minister and that further steps would be taken to strengthen the sector. Bora elaborated on the discussions: Speaking to the media, Bora said that detailed discussions were held during the Union Minister’s visit regarding the implementation of the mission. He expressed confidence that the initiative would strengthen the agricultural sector and improve farmers’ livelihoods. He noted that the mission is expected to be a catalyst for positive change in the region’s agricultural landscape.

Addressing the practical impact, Bora remarked: “He visited here today, and we had a discussion. There is the Rashtriya Dalhan Aatmanirbharta Mission. This will benefit the farmers. We will be able to provide mills to farmers. Under the able guidance of Prime Minister Modi, we are doing a lot of work for farmers,” Bora said. The focus is on empowering

farmers through infrastructure and support measures. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Dalhan Aatmanirbharta Mission on October 11, 2025, allocating a total of Rs 11,440 crore. The mission’s central goal is to enhance domestic pulse production, thereby reducing the country’s reliance on imports and ensuring better market returns for farmers. This aligns with national objectives to strengthen self-reliance in key agricultural sectors. A day before Bora’s comments, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan stated, “A day earlier, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that Assam and the entire Northeast are scripting a ‘new chapter of development’, asserting that the recently presented Union Budget lays a strong foundation for building a fully developed India, with special emphasis on the northeastern states.” His remarks underline the government’s intention to prioritise development in the region. Addressing a public gathering in Guwahati, Chouhan said, “Addressing a gathering in Guwahati, Chouhan said the Union Budget should not be viewed merely as a financial document but as a comprehensive roadmap for the aspirations of 140 crore Indians.” He further emphasised that the budget represents opportunities for every state and section of society. Chouhan continued, “This budget is not just a document of figures. It opens the sky high for the dreams of 140 crore Indians to take a new flight,” he said.” He added that “Chouhan added that the Budget provides a blueprint for strengthening every state, particularly the Northeast, and has been designed to benefit every section of society. He said the government has prepared a strong roadmap for the future to achieve the vision of a fully developed India.” The ongoing governmental efforts are seen as crucial steps towards self-sufficiency and inclusive growth.

Lalduhoma Inaugurates Micro & Small Entrepreneurs Excellence Project In Mizoram

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In his address, the Chief Minister noted that Mizos have long been recognized as a community rich in skills and craftsmanship, with significant potential in the MSME sector. He highlighted that several Mizo youths secured awards at last year’s IndiaSkills Competition, while this year Mizoram participants emerged as Overall Cham-



pions at the IndiaSkills North East Championship. As the state continues to develop and employment opportunities grow, he emphasized the government’s commitment to nurturing skilled youth. He added that entrepreneurs should be empowered to stand on their own, and that the government’s flagship

Handholding Scheme is designed to create opportunities for them.

He further observed that Mizoram’s MSME owners are capable and self-driven, having built their livelihoods through determination and initiative. The newly launched project is intended to help them scale greater

heights from their present level. In a rapidly evolving global economy shaped by modern business practices, he stressed that MSMEs must continually upgrade their capabilities to remain competitive.

The Chief Minister underscored the unmatched expertise of organizations such as CII, noting that CII CEL has successfully implemented similar initiatives in other states, often on a paid participation basis. Mizoram, he said, is fortunate that the Volvo Group has agreed to support the program through its CSR initiative, enabling local MSME owners to participate free of cost. He expressed appreciation to both CII CEL and the Volvo Group for their partnership. The projects aim to equip MSME owners and aspiring entrepreneurs in Mizoram with contemporary skills and knowledge, while also establishing a forum for engagement with industry experts.

Mizoram MP urges Centre to expedite border road projects

Aizawl, Feb 12: Rajya Sabha member from Mizoram K Vanlalvena today urged the Centre to expedite three key road projects, two of them along the Indo-Myanmar border, to strengthen national security and boost regional trade. According to an official statement, during a discussion in the ongoing Budget session, the MP highlighted two primary infrastructure gaps -- the lack of high-capacity connectivity to the Myanmar border and increasing congestion between Aizawl and Sairang railway station. Vanlalvena urged the Centre to designate two strategic routes connecting Hnaathial to Saisihchhuah in Lawngtlai district as national highways. The two vital routes pass through several key villages, including Tarpho, Cherhlun, Thingsai, Sangau, South Vanlaiphai, and Pangkhua, terminating at the Myanmar border. Highlighting significant infrastructure disparity at the border, the MP claimed that the Myanmar government had completed a double-lane highway from

Hakha in Chin state to Saisihchhuah on the Indo-Myanmar border in 2020. Even as the ministry of commerce and industry has designated Saisihchhuah as an official border haat, proper road connectivity was lacking on the Indian side to facilitate large-scale trade, he said. “Upgrading these routes to national highways is essential to fulfil the goals of the country’s Act East Policy, strengthen national security, and boost the economic development of Mizoram’s tribal population,” Vanlalvena was quoted as saying in the statement. In addition to border connectivity, the MP raised concerns regarding the 21-km Aizawl-Sairang corridor. He noted that the recent opening of Sairang railway station has led to a massive surge in vehicular traffic. Citing that the existing National Highway-6 (formerly NH-54) is no longer sufficient to handle the increased traffic volume, the MP urged the Centre to upgrade the stretch to a four-lane highway to prevent bottlenecks and support the state’s growing logistics needs.

NITI Aayog workshop on enhancing SDG outcomes at district level in NE region

Guwahati, Feb 12: NITI Aayog in collaboration with state transformation and development department on Thursday organised a Northeastern Region workshop on enhancing SDG (sustainable development goals) outcomes at the district-level under State Support Mission (SSM) here.

Addressing the inaugural programme as chief guest at the workshop held in Guwahati, Assam transport and Bodoland welfare department minister Charan Boro in his keynote address said that the sustainable development goals are global goals whose real success are measured locally.

“They must be felt in villages, towns, schools and homes,” Boro said while speaking at length about how Assam had moved from an aspirant to a front-runner in the SDG India index under the able guidance of chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

V.K Paul, member (Health), NITI Aayog, delivering a special address, acknowledged the role of UNDP and said India would shine if the SDGs remain a priority. He emphasised the need to identify gaps and develop a clear action plan.

Narayan Chandra Borkataky, vice-chairman of SITA (State Innovation and Transformation Aayog), Assam, in his special address, com-



mended NITI Aayog for its continued commitment to strengthening cooperative federalism and supporting states in achieving the SDGs.

Assam chief secretary Ravi Kota, in his inaugural address, spoke at length about the initiatives undertaken since 2016, during his tenure in the finance department, which were closely aligned with the objectives of SDGs.

Kota highlighted how these measures laid the foundation for inclusive and sustainable development.

Emphasising collective responsibility, the chief secretary called upon all the Northeastern states to reflect on where they currently stand in terms

of SDG achievements, identify gaps and work together to move forward in a focused and coordinated manner.

This workshop served as a collaborative platform bringing together the leadership of the Northeastern states, including chief secretaries, planning secretaries and district collectors, alongside representatives from the NITI Aayog, Ministry of DoNER, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, UNDP and GIZ with the goal to institutionalise a rejuvenated administrative culture through the technical support of the State Support Mission (SSM) and the SDG Coordination and Action Centres (SDGCAC).

Daniel Langthasa Joins NPP; Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma Welcomes Him In Dima Hasao

Shillong, Feb 12: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Thursday inducted Daniel Langthasa into the National People’s Party (NPP) during a large public convention in Dima Hasao. Sangma welcomed Langthasa and his supporters to the NPP, saying the move reflects growing confidence in the party’s vision of development that respects tribal identity, in-



digenous rights, and local aspirations. He added that the strong support from the people of Dima Hasao

reinforces NPP’s presence in the region and highlights the party’s commitment to identity, dignity, unity, and development. Sangma also emphasized the party’s focus on empowering indigenous communities, creating opportunities for youth, and fostering a more connected “One North East.” The Chief Minister expressed his gratitude to the people of Dima Hasao for their continued support.

Assam CM defamation case: Cong leaders asked to appear before court on March 9

Guwahati, Feb 12: Senior Congress leaders Gaurav Gogoi, Bhupesh Baghel and Jitendra Singh have been directed to appear before the court on March 9 in connection with a Rs 500 crore defamation suit filed by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Sharing the development with the media, Assam Advocate General Devajit Saikia stated that the Chief Minister had challenged the three leaders to substantiate their allegations against him of illegal ownership of 12000 bighas of land, and sought damages of Rs 500 crore if they failed to provide evidence.

The Chief Minister had on Tuesday said he has initiated defamation proceedings against the Congress leaders, accusing them of making “false, malicious and defamatory” allegations against him during a media conference.

The allegations were reported in a news publication on February 5, accusing the Chief Minister of possessing illegal land.

After reviewing and verifying the documents placed on record, Justice Nayan Jyoti Sarma granted an ad interim stay order in favour of the Chief Minister.

The court further restrained the three Congress leaders from making further statements or allegations concerning Sarma and his property until further orders.

According to reports, notices have also been served to the proprietor of the newspaper that carried the report, along with the publisher and the staff reporter concerned. They too have been directed to appear before the court on March 9 and present evidence supporting the published allegations.

Need for dedicated policy framework for disability sports highlighted



Imphal, Feb 12: A one-day consultative meeting on the topic, “The Inclusion of Disability Sports in the Manipur State Sports Policy” was held today at Hotel Imphal (Sangai Hall). The meeting was organised by the Office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Manipur in collaboration with dedicated NGOs working in the field in consultation with the Department of Youth Affairs & Sports. N. Praveen Singh, IAS, Secretary (YAS), W. Bira-hari Singh, State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Ng. Uttam Singh, MCS, Joint Secretary (TA & Hills), Dr. M. Akshay Kumar, President, Special Olympic Association; Dr. Mayengbam Veto Singh, MCS, Director (YAS) and C. Dhandapani, Regional Director, SAI- NERC, Imphal, graced the function as chief guest, president and guests of honour respectively. N. Praveen Singh stated that sports must be inclusive,

accessible and embedded in everyday life if Manipur has to sustain its identity as a sports powerhouse. Emphasising equitable growth, the State Government underlined the importance of disability sports, supported by adequate funding, institutional coordination and active community engagement, he added. Highlighting sports as a vital component of education, the Chief Guest stressed the need to introduce structured sports training from an early age to nurture talent and revive Manipur’s rich sporting legacy. Praveen also called for a comprehensive sports policy aligned with national frameworks while addressing Manipur’s unique requirements. Greater convergence among key Departments, including Education, Social Welfare, and Youth Affairs & Sports, was emphasised to ensure effective implementation of sports programmes, he stated.

IIT-Guwahati ties up with skyroot aerospace to promote space research, innovation

Guwahati, Feb 12: Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati has partnered Skyroot Aerospace, a leading Indian space launch service provider, with an aim to promote space technology research and innovation.

The partnership will open new avenues for the students in the field of advanced aerospace innovation focused on satellite launch collaboration, internships, joint projects, academic course development, facility sharing, and industry-focused training programmes.

To formalise the collaboration, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Prof. Sumana Dutta, Dean, Alumni and External Relations, IIT Guwahati, and Ashwin Mahavadi, Senior Vice President, Skyroot Aerospace.

The event took place in the presence of Prof. Devendra Jali-hal, Director, IIT Guwahati and other dignitaries.

Effective for an initial period of five years, the MoU will enable both the organisations to explore on funded research and development projects aligned with India’s strategic priorities in space technology. This will include development of advanced space-grade components using additive manufacturing techniques.

Speaking about IIT Guwahati’s MoU with Skyroot Aerospace Pvt. Ltd., Prof. Devendra Jali-hal, Director, IIT Guwahati, said, “IIT Guwahati sees strong value in engaging with young and innovation-driven companies like Skyroot Aerospace that are shaping India’s space eco-



system. Through this MoU, we aim to support advanced research, student training, and technology development aligned with national priorities. Such partnerships reflect IIT Guwahati’s vision of enabling translational research and nurturing indigenous high-technology ventures in India.”

Speaking about the partnership, Ashwin Mahavadi, Senior Vice President, Skyroot Aerospace, said, “IIT Guwahati has been a strong supporter of our metal additive manufacturing research, especially in Wire Arc DED and Laser Powder DED, as we devel-

op world-class space solutions in India.

This partnership will help us translate research into production-ready solutions at scale, while nurturing the next generation of space engineers through hands-on mission experience and advanced research programs — further strengthening India’s position in the global space economy.”

The collaboration will also explore subsidised research payloads on Skyroot’s Vikram-series launch vehicles to enable IIT Guwahati students to gain hands-on experience in space missions. It will also

facilitate thesis projects, research engagements, and internship opportunities for the students at Skyroot’s research and development ecosystem.

Keeping in mind the growing importance of research and development in the space sector, the collaboration further aims to develop joint undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programs in space and aerospace technologies.

The collaboration will also enable Skyroot employees to pursue higher education programs at IIT Guwahati in accordance with institute norms.

Ex-CM Biren urges Rajnath to protect Koirengei airfield

Imphal, Feb 12: Former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has requested Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to intervene and protect the historic Koirengei airfield, one of the key Allied airfields of World War II. Biren who represented Heingang Assembly Constituency said during his tenure as Chief Minister of Manipur from 2017 to 2025, he had written on multiple occasions to the Defence Ministers urging preservation of the historic Koirengei airfield. In a post on X and Facebook, the former Chief Minister said, “From 2017 to 2025, during my tenure as Chief Minister of Manipur, I wrote on multiple occasions to our Hon’ble Defence Ministers urging preservation of the historic Koirengei airfield, one of the key Allied airfields of World War II and a priceless part of our shared heritage. Several rounds of talks were also held between officials of the Defence Ministry and the State Government”. “It pains me deeply to see destruction and new construction continuing despite years of appeals and discussions. This has created significant uneasiness among civilians. I earnestly request Hon’ble Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh Ji to intervene and protect this site in the larger interest of the people of Manipur and the Nation.

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Editorial

Necessity of Uniform Education Policy in India for the Greater Interest of Students

India’s diverse educational landscape, marked by variations across states and boards, often perpetuates inequalities in learning outcomes. A uniform education policy is essential to address these disparities and foster national integration. Such a policy would standardize curriculum, assessment methods, and teacher training, ensuring that every student, regardless of their geographical location, receives quality education. Moreover, a cohesive framework would alleviate the burden on students who migrate between states or seek admission to prestigious institutions. A uniform approach can enhance the system’s transparency, making it easier to benchmark educational performance nationally. This will encourage healthy competition among schools and elevate overall standards. Additionally, in an era where global competencies are a prerequisite for success, a standardized curriculum aligned with international norms will equip students with the skills necessary to thrive in a dynamic world. Ultimately, adopting a uniform education policy aligns with the foundational principle of the Right to Education, ensuring that every child in India has an equal opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed. This is not merely an administrative necessity but a moral imperative for the future of our nation. (DB)

Tax-GDP ratio: Parties make lofty promises



After many years, Bangladesh’s 13th Parliamentary Election has injected a rare festive mood into public life. Political parties have unveiled their manifestos with unusual care, and voters appear genuinely engaged, scrutinising promises rather than merely consuming slogans.

Among the lofty pledges on social spending, one commitment stands out for both its ambition and ubiquity: raising the tax-to-GDP ratio. Almost every major party has set a numerical target, ranging from 12 percent to 15 percent. This is no small feat in a country whose tax effort has long been one of its gravest structural weaknesses. At 6.8 percent, Bangladesh’s tax-to-GDP ratio ranks among the world’s lowest, well below that of peer economies.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) pledges to raise it to 15 percent by 2035; Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami proposes 14 percent, without specifying a timeline; the National Citizen Party (NCP) commits to 12 percent within five years; and Islamic Andolon Bangladesh sets a target range of 14-15 percent. These pronouncements arrive just as the

National Board of Revenue (NBR) has formulated its own ten-year strategy, aiming for 10.5 percent by fiscal year 2034-35 under its new 10-year plan integrated into the Medium- and Long-Term Revenue strategy.

The plan seeks to bolster domestic resource mobilisation, strengthen fiscal foundations and support sustainable growth, while also preparing Bangladesh for graduation from the list of least-developed countries (LDCs) and helping meet its Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The revenue board’s strategy comes amid pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), reflecting conditions attached

to the multilateral lender’s ongoing \$4.7 billion loan programme. According to Md Deen Islam, research director at Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID), the NBR’s 10.5 percent target is “actually quite conservative”.

“Even without raising tax or VAT rates, simply controlling tax evasion could push the tax-to-GDP ratio to 12-13 percent,” he argues.

Achieving 15 percent or more within the next decade, however, would be extremely challenging without strong and sustained commitment to reform.

“What political parties are saying is technically

possible,” Islam observes, “but it would require serious work.”

The key, according to him, lies in strengthening the NBR’s capacity, particularly through accelerated automation. “Going beyond 10.5 percent is achievable,” he says, “but reaching 15 percent will prove difficult without introducing property or wealth taxes.”

The RAPID research director noted that while the tax base is expanding, many individuals still file zero-income returns. A property tax, stronger enforcement and automation could boost revenue and curb evasion, though VAT will remain constrained by the informal sector, he opines.

Islam points out another challenge. Nearly 30 percent of Bangladesh’s revenue still derives from tariffs, which are set to decline owing to recent trade concessions and tariff rationalisation following LDC graduation. “Without sincere income-tax reform,” he warns, “even achieving the 10.5 percent target will be difficult.”

The recent bifurcation of the NBR has become mired in bureaucratic wrangles, as the interim government failed to complete the process during its tenure.

This lack of completion has created frustration among revenue officials, who argue that delays and administrative hurdles are hampering efficiency and disrupting reform efforts.

Many fear that prolonged uncertainty may slow policy execution, weaken institutional capacity and undermine improvements in revenue collection.

Towfiqul Islam Khan, additional research director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), argues that the NBR’s reforms were largely instrumental, driven by IMF conditionalities.

“Political parties had no involvement in the process,” he notes. “They now have their own ambitions

and will act accordingly. But the interim government pushed the entire economic reform agenda without engaging political actors, and this is not an isolated case.”

Khan adds that the interim government took major economic reform decisions while completely ignoring political parties.

“As a result, the fate of these reform targets is now in question. Either the reform commission’s reports and the efforts undertaken so far will lose relevance, or the political commitments being made will prove futile,” he fears.

Even in terms of implementation, it remains unclear whether the existing NBR structure can absorb or sustain these reforms, he warns.

Stating that there has also been significant wastage of taxpayers’ money in producing reform documents, Khan notes that the unfortunate reality is that no one from the interim government will remain to answer for it.

“If the reform agenda now has to be reworked to align with the priorities of the winning political party, there will be no accountability for the public money already spent,” he says.

An almost covert transaction

The economist says the agreement, signed on February 9 just days before a national election, was negotiated with limited public engagement. The interim government did hold meetings with economists, civil-society representatives and business leaders on ways to reduce bilateral trade deficit, but Fahmida, who attended one of the sessions, describes them as “just mere formalities.” In an interview with The Daily Star, she said that those discussions were limited in scope and substance. When economists began raising questions, there was little clarity about the topics under consideration. Meanwhile, negotiations with US authorities continued under a non-disclosure agreement, with no public information available, she said.

“Overall, the process resembled a box-ticking exercise rather than a genuine national consultation,” added the CPD executive director. “The deal may help exporters in the short-term, but its financial costs, geopolitical conditions and policy limits could affect Bangladesh’s economy for years. She emphasised that the agreement is “not only an economic agreement but also geopolitical and security-related,” which makes transparency essential. For a pact that will shape trade, diplomacy and fiscal priorities for years, the lack of broader engagement has raised concerns about legitimacy and preparedness. According to Fahmida, a far-reaching agreement covering tariffs, defence and energy purchases, technology use and geopolitical alignment has been signed without a strong public debate. Implementation will not fall on those who negotiated it but on the next elected government. “The interim government will leave without responsibility, while the next government will bear both the positives and negatives,” she observes. Under the deal, the reciprocal tariff on Bangladeshi exports to the United States, previously set at 20 percent, has been reduced to 19 percent. In the fiercely competitive ready-made garment sector, the difference matters as much psychologically as financially. “Even though it is only a 1 percentage-point reduction, it still provides some relief,” said the CPD executive director. Competing exporters face broadly similar tariff levels. Vietnam continues to face around 20 percent, while India, which previously had the same rate, has recently secured a reduction to 18 percent, putting Bangladesh closer to its competitors. The agreement also provides duty benefits in the US market for garments made with American cotton, though the advantage is limited. “Bangladesh also exports to other countries, so this is only partially beneficial,” she commented. “It may help Bangladesh remain competitive in its largest export sector, but it does not fundamentally alter the structure of trade.” For the next government, the larger economic effects lie in financial obligations. The deal includes commitments to purchase US goods, notably Boeing aircraft, and to expand cooperation in agriculture and energy. The agreement enforces a form of managed trade with specific targets. Bangladesh has committed to purchasing \$15 billion worth of US energy commodities, including liquefied natural gas (LNG), over 15 years. LNG may conflict with Bangladesh’s long-term energy goals. “Bangladesh aims to increase renewable energy, but LNG is expensive and not clean,” Fahmida said. “Ideally, the country should gradually reduce LNG dependence and invest in domestic energy

exploration. Instead, the agreement may lock Bangladesh into costly energy imports.” In agriculture, Dhaka will import at least \$3.5 billion of US farm products, including wheat and soybeans. Bangladesh is already coping with rising domestic and external debt. “The fiscal space of the government is very narrow. We have relatively high debt, and repayment has already started,” said the economist. The CPD executive director said that funding the purchases of 14 aircraft will require “proactive efforts” and could further strain debt sustainability. The country’s debt-to-GDP ratio rose to 38.61 percent in the first quarter of this fiscal year from 36.30 percent a year earlier, reflecting sustained borrowing amid tightening fiscal space. Though framed as a trade deal, Fahmida said the agreement carries clear geopolitical overtones. Certain clauses limit Bangladesh’s engagement with “non-market countries,” widely interpreted to include China and Russia. “There are clauses binding Bangladesh not to engage in certain dealings with so-called ‘non-market countries,’” Fahmida said. “This clearly introduces a geopolitical and security dimension.” For a country that has traditionally balanced relations among major powers, this could complicate foreign policy. “Bangladesh’s foreign policy is to maintain a balanced relationship with its partners. How the government will implement this while maintaining balance is going to be another challenge,” she said. The timing of the agreement has amplified controversy. Signed three days before a national election, it was concluded by an interim administration that will not oversee its implementation. Fahmida believes the timing of the agreement is crucial. “This is a major national decision. Ideally, the elected government should have taken this decision.” The urgency is difficult to explain. Negotiations had been ongoing for months, and while exporters, particularly garment manufacturers, probably benefited from clarity on tariffs, broader national interests suffered. “She said, ‘Closing the deal may have been necessary for exporters, but not necessarily for all sectors. The deal could have waited.’ The next government will inherit the consequences of a deal it did not negotiate. Renegotiation may be difficult. “Once an agreement is signed, flexibility is limited,” Fahmida said. The agreement intersects with wider structural changes. Bangladesh is preparing to graduate from least developed country status in November, a shift that will reduce preferential market access and concessional financing. According to her, to sustain growth, Bangladesh must diversify trade partnerships, improve governance and strengthen institutions. The competitive landscape is also shifting. India has secured more favourable trade terms with major partners, including the European Union. “Bangladesh must remain mindful of competition,” she warned. In the longer term, she suggested exploring a full free-trade agreement with the United States, though such negotiations would be complex and constrained. “Trade agreements must be a win-win situation,” she said. Given Bangladesh’s limitations in technology and finance, the benefits must be carefully assessed. “How this trade deal will benefit Bangladesh, something we have to see,” she said. “The next government will have to examine it very closely and, if possible, renegotiate aspects of it.”

The Epstein scandal has punctured all the age-old myths about the French elite

In 2016, the French luxury fashion house Hermès decided to pull an item it had donated to a charity auction after it appeared to have been bought by Jeffrey Epstein. In an email made public in this month’s tranche of Epstein files, Epstein’s assistant says someone at the auction platform had relayed to them that Hermès was “not comfortable” with Epstein as a donor and that he would be refunded. It’s a reminder that institutions – and the people at their helms – can, when they wish, still recognise a line they will not cross. No sermon, no press release: just a quiet act of moral house-keeping that now reads like a lesson in basic civic hygiene.

France is discovering how rare that reflex proved to be at home. The latest cache of Epstein files – emails, memos and legal documents released by the US Department of Justice – does not reveal a hidden French paedophile ring. So far, the only confirmed French sexual connection to Epstein remains Jean-Luc Brunel, the modelling agent who died in police custody in 2022 while being investigated on suspicion of trafficking women to Epstein. Instead, the new files trace how Epstein ingratiated himself into parts of the country’s political and cultural elite, providing private jets, introductions and offshore structures to people long accustomed to thinking of themselves as beyond reproach.

At the centre of the French storm stands Jack Lang, now 86: former socialist culture minister under François Mitterrand, architect of the Fête de la musique, and until this week president of the government-funded Institut du monde arabe. His name appears hundreds of times in the documents: dinners, messages, film projects, birthday parties and, above all, favours. In one 2017 message, Lang thanks Epstein for his “infinite generosity” and then asks if he



might once again “abuse” him by borrowing a chauffeur-driven car to attend a birthday dinner hosted by the Aga Khan, 60km from Paris. It is the language of the court, not that of the Republic.

Confronted with the correspondence, Lang has pleaded good faith. He says he met Epstein “about 15 years ago” at a dinner hosted by Woody Allen, that he does not usually ask friends for their criminal record, and that he “knew nothing” of the financier’s past, even though Epstein had already served a sentence in Florida for offences involving minors. On Friday evening, however, pressed by the Élysée Palace, he “proposed” his resignation from the Institut du monde arabe, after France’s National Financial Prosecutor’s Office (PNF) opened a preliminary investigation into suspected tax-fraud laundering targeting him and his daughter Caroline.

It is Caroline Lang who gives the affair its most contemporary dimension. A seasoned film producer and former executive

at Warner Bros in France, she co-founded a US Virgin Islands company with Epstein in 2016, financed entirely by him and ostensibly intended to trade works by young French artists. The structure was not declared to the French tax authorities. Two days before Epstein’s death in 2019, he named her in his will as the beneficiary of \$5m – a sum she insists she did not know about and has never seen.

On French television, Caroline Lang described herself as “staggeringly naive”, spoke of a “generous sponsor” and “a friend, not an intimate”, and stressed she faces no criminal charges. The file against her is fiscal and ethical, not sexual. That distinction matters – and it also sharpens the unease. What’s troubling is the comfort with material dependence on a man whose fortune was already inseparable from documented abuse. A familiar feature of French public life emerges: a politico-cultural caste that outsources the cost of its lifestyle to “friends”.

For decades, Jack Lang embodied the grandeur of the cultural left. The Epstein papers also depict him as a habitual user of private jets and chauffeured cars, the expense of which was paid for by a “courteous, charming, generous” American acquaintance. Lang’s daughter updates the pattern for the age of limited-liability companies and tax havens.

Epstein’s imprint on French democracy lies less in sexual exploitation than in money and political influence. In 2018 and 2019, Steve Bannon, Donald Trump’s former strategist, corresponded with Epstein about how to shore up the debt-ridden finances of Marine Le Pen’s National Rally party, then reliant on loans from a Russian bank (there is no evidence Epstein ever provided funding). The correspondence situates France’s main far-right party within a transatlantic ecosystem in which private finance and ideological alignment blur democratic boundaries.

As if to underline the point, the Kremlin has

now added a more overtly hostile layer. This week, French authorities exposed a Russian-linked disinformation campaign seeking to forge a connection between Emmanuel Macron and Epstein, using a fake news website, doctored screenshots and mass amplification on social media. The episode shows how Epstein has become a kind of narrative solvent: a name easily attached to anyone a hostile state wishes to discredit. France is hardly alone. Embarrassing correspondence is surfacing in London, Rome and Washington too. But in France the affair punctures an old self-image: that of a republic held together by culture, grand institutions and venerable figures of the left, presumed immune to sordid compromise. The Langs could not decline a free flight, an offshore vehicle or a promised legacy. Hermès managed it with a short email and a refunded credit card. Moral courage is not guaranteed by office, status or culture – it is chosen, one email, one decision at a time.

3 reasons tech stocks Nifty IT Index cracks 4%; Infosys, Wipro, Coforge plunge

Mumbai: The technology stocks continue to be under pressure. The Nifty IT Index is down 2.5%. TCS and Wipro have hit fresh 52-week lows in early trade. The top 5 large cap losers are the IT stocks. The Infosys and Wipro ADRs had also plunged over 4% in overnight trade. The Indian IT stocks have seen significant losses. Top counters like Infosys, TCS are down 10% so far this year. The cut for Wipro is even deeper, down over 15% so far this year. The Nifty IT Index is down 10% in 2026 so far.

Dr VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments pointed out that, “Tech stocks, reeling under the Anthropic shock, are unlikely to recover soon. The sharp dip in the ADRs of top Indian IT companies in US yesterday, indicates that Indian IT will continue to struggle. Even with occa-

sional profit booking, the undertone of the market will remain resilient mainly because there is a trend of FIIs turning buyers. One of the biggest concerns for the IT sector is the disruption that AI is set to bring forth for the IT sector. opportunities by unlocking incremental addressable spend. According to Kotal Institutional Equities, the application of AI to legacy technologies in the enterprise tech stack requires contextual awareness to integrate legacy deterministic software with the probabilistic nature of recent technology, which involves significant heavy lifting.” One of the biggest concerns for the IT sector is the disruption that AI is set to bring forth for the IT sector. US Financial services stocks JPMorgan, Bank of America, and Charles Schwab fell by more than 2% amid concerns.

Ceigall India bags NHAI project worth Rs 2,160 crore in Bihar

Mumbai: Ceigall India’s wholly owned subsidiary, Ceigall Infra Projects, has received an order worth Rs Rs. 2,160 crores from the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) for a highway construction project in Bihar.The company in its regulatory filing said that it has received a Letter of Award (LoA) for the construction of a four-lane highway stretch on NH-139W, covering the Sahebganj–Aeraj–Bettiah corridor in Bihar.Project to cover 78.94 km on NH-139W in BiharThe total length of the project is 78.942 km comprising two sections. Section one covers Sahebganj to Areraj, spanning 38.362 km, Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM), which involves partial government funding during the construction phase, with the remaining investment recovered through annuity payments.The construction period for the project is 730 days. After completion, the company will operate and maintain the highway for a period of 15 years.Ramneek Sehgal, Chairman & Managing Director, Ceigall India said



that the project will strengthening national highway networks. “This project is closely aligned with the Government of India’s PM Gati Shakti vision of integrated and multimodal infrastructure develop-

ment. Strengthening national highway networks is critical to improving logistics efficiency, enhancing regional connectivity, and accelerating economic growth,” Sehgal added

HUL Q3FY26: Profit more than doubles to Rs 6,603 crorea

Mumbai: Hindustan Unilever (HUL) reported a 120% year-on-year (YoY) jump in its Q3FY26 net profit at Rs 6,603 crore from Rs 2,989 crore reported in its Q3FY25. This includes the profit from the Hindustan Unilever’s ice cream business which has been treated as a discontinued operation after it was demerged into Kwality Wall’s (India).Excluding the profit from discontinued operation the FMCG firm saw a decline of 30% YoY in its net profit at Rs 2,118 crore.The FMCG firm reported revenue from the operations at Rs 16,197 crore, up 5.71% YoY from Rs 15,322 crore reported in Q3FY25.Key highlights from Q3FY26

On the sequential basis the company saw a jump of 145.10% from Rs 2,694 crore reported in Q2FY26. Revenue also increased 3.07% quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) from Rs 15,715 crore reported in Q2FY26 The company reported an exceptional item (loss) of Rs 576 crore in Q3 including Rs 113 crore due to the implementation of new labour codes led to an increase in gratuity and compensated absences liability as of December 31, 2025. HUL said it expects FY27 to be better than FY26, driven by the benefits of portfolio reshaping and continued transformation across channels. It expects a supportive consumption environment going ahead, backed by macroeconomic stability and favourable policy measures. HUL said it will focus on “driving competitive, volume-led revenue growth, anchored around its four key strategic priorities.” HUL also gave an update on its acquisitions, said it will acquire the remaining 49% stake in Zywie Ventures Private for a cash consideration of Rs 824 crores. With this acquisition, Zywie Ventures and its wholly owned subsidiary Zenherb Labs will become 100% wholly owned subsidiaries of HUL. HUL’s board also approved the sale



of its entire 19.8% stake in Nutritionalab Private Limited to USV Private for Rs 307 crores, subject to customary closing adjustments.During the quarter, HUL delivered a 4% Underlying Volume Growth (UVG). Its total expenses istood at Rs 13,078 crore, up 6.37%.EBITDA grew 3% YoY at Rs. 3,788 crores while EBITDA margin at 23.3% remained within the guided range.“During the quarter, demand trends reflected early signs of recovery, underpinned by supportive policy measures,” CEO and Managing Director Priya Nair said.Nair further said, “Against this backdrop, we delivered a competitive performance, with 6 per cent revenue growth and 4 per cent Underlying Volume Growth.” “We continued to build desirability at scale with our brands, accelerate market development in high-growth demand spaces and strengthen our capabilities to scale Channels of the Future with a dedicated organisation for Quick commerce,” she said.

USV to acquire 79% stake in Wellbeing Nutrition ₹1,583

Mumbai: USV, a pharmaceutical and biotechnology company, will acquire a 79 per cent stake in Wellbeing Nutrition at a valuation of ₹1,583 crore.USV has signed a definitive agreement to acquire a 79 per cent equity stake in Nutritionalab Pvt Ltd, which owns “Wellbeing Nutrition”, according to a joint statement.This includes 35 per cent from the founder Avnish Chhabria and 44 per cent from existing shareholders. Its investors -- Early backers Fireside Ventures and Hindustan Unilever -- will divest their collective 40 per cent stake.This ₹1,583 crores all-cash transaction represents the largest exit in India’s health and wellness startup space to date, it added. ”The addition of Wellbeing Nutrition reinforces USV’s evolution into a comprehensive healthcare powerhouse spanning both therapeutic excellence and consumer wellbeing,” it said.“We look forward to unlocking the next phase of growth by leveraging USV’s global capabilities while preserving Wellbeing Nutrition’s core mission of transparent, sustainable, and high-quality nutrition,” USV Managing Director Prashant Tewari said.Wellbeing Nutrition has built a good presence supported by its om-



nichannel presence. The company has witnessed 120 per cent growth in the last 2 years and is poised to cross ₹450 crores in revenue by FY’27, the statement claimed. This strategic expansion of USV, a leading player in diabetes and cardiac care, into consumer wellness is aligned with its expansion across the healthcare continuum. Wellbeing Nutrition founder Avnish Chhabria said: “Together, we are committed to shaping a new benchmark

for health and wellness, while preserving the integrity, culture, and purpose with which Wellbeing Nutrition was founded.”The current management with Saurabh Kapoor (Co-Founder) will continue to operate the business under the oversight of the Board. Founded in 2019, Wellbeing Nutrition has a retail presence in over 6,000 outlets. The brand also has a presence in international markets such as the UAE and Europe.

India’s Bullet Train dreams stretch: Decoding rise of Indigenous tech in the MAHSR Project

Mumbai: India’s first bullet train corridor between Mumbai and Ahmedabad is steadily moving ahead, with significant civil works completed across Gujarat and progress gathering pace in Maharashtra, the government informed the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. The 508-km Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) Project is being developed with technical and financial assistance from Japan and is currently the only high-speed rail (HSR) project under execution in the country. The corridor, which will run through Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli, will have 12 stations — Mumbai, Thane, Virar, Boisar, Vapi, Billimora, Surat, Bharuch, Vadodara, Anand, Ahmedabad and Sabarmati. According to the government, the entire 1,389.5 hectares of land required for the project has been acquired, all statutory clearances obtained, and 1,651 utilities shifted. The Centre said the MAHSR project is not only about building a bullet train corridor but also about developing domestic expertise in advanced rail technologies. Long-span steel truss girders are being fabricated in Indian workshops, while heavy construction machinery for full-span launching is now being manufactured domestically. Several components of slab track systems and specialised track machines are being produced by Indian manufacturers. Indian agencies, in collaboration with IITs, are also handling dynamic analysis and design refinements to build long-term high-speed rail capability. The project has introduced innovations such as the full-span launching method for 40-metre prestressed



box girders, indigenous noise barriers along elevated sections, and an indigenously developed Rail Turnover Prevention Device (RTPD) to enhance safety during derailments. Advanced simulation tools for overhead equipment (OHE) interaction and traction power supply systems have also been developed with IIT Delhi. Around 1,000 Indian engineers and skilled workers have been trained in Japanese methodologies, and a dedicated track training facility has been set up in Surat. Construction progress is significantly advanced in Gujarat. Foundation and pier works have been completed over 352 km, girder casting over 342 km and girder launching over 331 km. Track bed construction has reached 152 km, while erection of OHE masts has covered 121 km. In Maharashtra, foundation work

has been completed over 74 km and piers over 65 km, though girder casting and launching are still in early stages. Of the 12 planned stations, foundation works have been completed at eight stations in Gujarat. In Maharashtra, work is ongoing at Thane, Virar and Boisar, while excavation at the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) underground station is nearing completion. Concreting works have progressed substantially, with the Level-4 basement slab fully completed.Seventeen river bridges have already been completed. Work is at an advanced stage on major bridges over the Narmada, Mahi, Tapti and Sabarmati rivers in Gujarat, and ongoing on four river bridges in Maharashtra. Depot construction at Thane, Surat and Sabarmati is also in full swing.The 21-km under-sea tunnel section has

commenced, with 4.8 km already completed between Ghansoli and Shilphata in Maharashtra.

Safety measures have been a major focus, with structures designed to withstand seismic forces. Viaducts and bridges include steel and damper stoppers to prevent dislodgement during earthquakes, and an Earthquake Early Warning System (EQEWS) is being installed. Stations are being designed with controlled entry points, baggage scanners, Door Frame Metal Detectors (DFMDs) and CCTV surveillance, along with anti-vibration and wind-pressure management features. Sustainability standards aligned with IGBC Platinum norms are also being incorporated. The government said ₹86,939 crore has been spent on the project till December 31, 2025.

Ticket pricing is proposed to remain competitive with existing rail and air travel options, and long-term viability assessments factor in projected passenger demand, economic benefits and regional development. In a related update, the Railways Ministry said the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) from Ludhiana to Sonnagar has been fully commissioned, while 1,404 route kilometres of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC) from JNPT to Dadri have been completed. Currently, an average of 406 freight trains run daily on these corridors, easing congestion on the conventional rail network.

This information was provided by the Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw, in a reply to questions in Lok Sabha.

Nifty below 25,900, Sensex slides 500 points, sell-off in tech stocks

Mumbai: The markets are under significant selling pressure in afternoon trade. Both the benchmark indices extended their losses. At the time of writing, the Sensex was trading at 83,712, down 520 points or 0.62%. Similarly, the Nifty slipped 142 points or 0.55% to 25,811. The broader mood was cautious as selling intensified across key sectors, especially information technology stocks.So what exactly is dragging the market lower today?Let’s take a look at the three main factors behind the decline.Sharp selling in IT stocksOne of the biggest drag on the market is the sharp plunge in technology sector shares.The Nifty IT index tumbled nearly 5% during the session. Moreover, every constituent trading in the red. Losses across the pack ranged between 4-6%Among the worst hit were Coforge, which dropped around 6%, and LTIMindtree, which fell about 5%.Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services each declined roughly 5%, while Wipro and Persistent Systems also lost around 5%. Tech Mahindra, Mphasis and HCLTech fell between 4-5%. Many investor fear that the rapid adoption of AI tools could disrupt existing revenue streams, especially in software services and consulting.Globally, US financial services stocks such as JPMorgan, Bank of America and Charles Schwab fell more than 2%. Software companies like Salesforce and Intuit also declined over 4%.Weak cues from global markets and ADR fall

Another factor weighing on sentiment is the sharp dip in American Depositary Receipts (ADRs) of Indian IT companies in the US overnight. The fall in ADRs signalled weak global investor appetite for the sector.Concerns about US interest rates are also playing a role. Adding to the discussion, Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, said, “The latest US jobs data indicating addition of 1,30,000 jobs last month and unemployment falling to 4.3% points to the possibility of no rate cuts by the Fed in the near-term. In India, too, it appears that



the rate cutting cycle is over since growth is good and inflation is expected to inch back to the RBI’s long-term target by the end of FY 27. Support to the market has to come from earnings growth, and there are sectors like automobiles, jewellery, hotels, segments of capital goods, telecom and financials that are doing well on the earnings front and have the potential to continue to do well. Tech stocks, reeling under the Anthropic shock, are unlikely to recover soon. “The sharp dip in the ADRs of top Indian IT companies in US yesterday, indicates that Indian IT will continue to struggle. The switch from IT to other segments will help performing stocks in performing sectors. The sharp rise in stocks like Eicher, Titan and Apollo Hospital in response to results indicate that the market will reward better-than-expected results. Even with occasional profit booking, the undertone of the market will remain resilient mainly because there is a trend of FIIs turning buyers. The fact that FIIs were buyers in six of the last seven trading sessions, indicate that at least the trend of sustained selling is over. In the near-term the market is likely to consolidate around the current levels with an upward bias,” he added.

INTERNATIONAL

Sri Lankan court sentences 12 men to death over lawmaker killing during 2022 protests

Colombo: A Sri Lankan court on Wednesday sentenced 12 men to death for the killing of a lawmaker and his bodyguard in May 2022 during violence that erupted at the height of the island nation’s economic crisis.The Gampaha High Court convicted the men for unlawful assembly, assault and the deaths of Amarakeerthi Athukorale and his bodyguard, who was a police officer, said senior state counsel Oswald Perera.Athukorale, who was a ruling party lawmaker, and his guard were attacked and killed in Nittambuwa, about 30 kilometres (18.6 miles) north of the capital, Colombo, after the car they were travelling in was intercepted by a crowd.Police at the time said Athukorale or his bodyguard had fired gunshots at the protestors who later chased them and trapped them inside a building where their battered bodies were later recovered by police.

The court also convicted another four people for unlawful assembly and imposed six-month prison terms suspended for five years, Perera said. Another 23 people were acquitted. Violence erupted in May 2022 after ruling party supporters attacked a peaceful anti-government demonstration which was calling for the resignations of the then ruling party leaders over the economic crisis. Dozens of lawmakers and their supporters were assaulted during widespread violence, while several houses were attacked and set on fire.Sri Lanka’s economic crisis brought severe shortages that led to the ouster of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. The country declared bankruptcy in April 2022 with more than \$83 billion in debt. Senior opposition lawmaker Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as president by parliament in July 2022 and led an economic

recovery. Under his leadership, inflation fell, the local currency strengthened and foreign reserves increased. But he faced a public backlash over his government’s stringent austerity measures.President Anura Kumara Dissanayake was elected in 2024 on an anti-corruption platform. While courts have the legal power to impose the death penalty, Sri Lanka has nothanged a prisoner since 1976. A Sri Lankan court on Wednesday sentenced 12 men to death for the killing of a lawmaker and his bodyguard in May 2022 during violence that erupted at the height of the island nation’s economic crisis.The Gampaha High Court convicted the men for unlawful assembly, assault and the deaths of Amarakeerthi Athukorale and his bodyguard, who was a police officer, said senior state counsel Oswald Perera.

Sergei Lavrov accuses US of pressuring India to stop buying Russian oil



London: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov took a dig at the United States in an interview with TV BRICS and said that there are efforts to ban India and other partners from purchasing Russian oil, Sputnik reported on Monday.The Russian Foreign Minister also spoke about several areas such as the peace talks in Alaska last year, and how Washington has set itself the objective of achieving economic domination while they use “coercive” measures like tariffs, sanctions and direct prohibitions. Lavrov said, “They (US) tell us that the Ukraine

problem should be resolved. In Anchorage, we accepted the US Proposal... The US position was important to us. By accepting their proposal, we seem to have completed the task of resolving the Ukrainian issue and moving on to a dull-scale, broad-based and mutually beneficial cooperation. So far, the reality is quite the opposite. New sanctions are imposed, a ‘war’ against tankers in the open sea is being waged in violation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. They are trying to ban India and our other partners from buying

cheap, affordable Russian energy resources (Europe has long been banned), and are forcing them to buy US LNG at exorbitant prices.” He said that the US has set itself the objective of ‘achieving economic domination’, adding further to it that Americans want to control the routes to leading countries to provide its energy sources to them.Calling the measures coercive and incompatible with fair competition, Lavrov said that the use of tariffs, sanctions, direct prohibitions and forbidding some from engaging with others are the steps being taken to meet their objectives. “We have to take all of this into account while remaining open just like India, China, Indonesia and Brazil to cooperation with all countries, including major powers such as the United States. We are in a situation where the Americans themselves are creating artificial obstacles along the way,” he said.His statement comes as Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Monday said that “national interest” would continue to guide India’s energy-related decisions, underlining that the key drivers of the country’s energy policy are “adequate availability, fair pricing and reliability of supply”, amid reports suggesting New Delhi is cutting its oil imports from Russia.Misri noted India is a net importer in the oil and gas sector and, as a developing economy, must remain conscious of its resource availability and the impact of import dependence on inflation. He added that safeguarding the interests of Indian consumers remains a top priority for the government.

Cuban peso hits record low against US dollar in informal markets

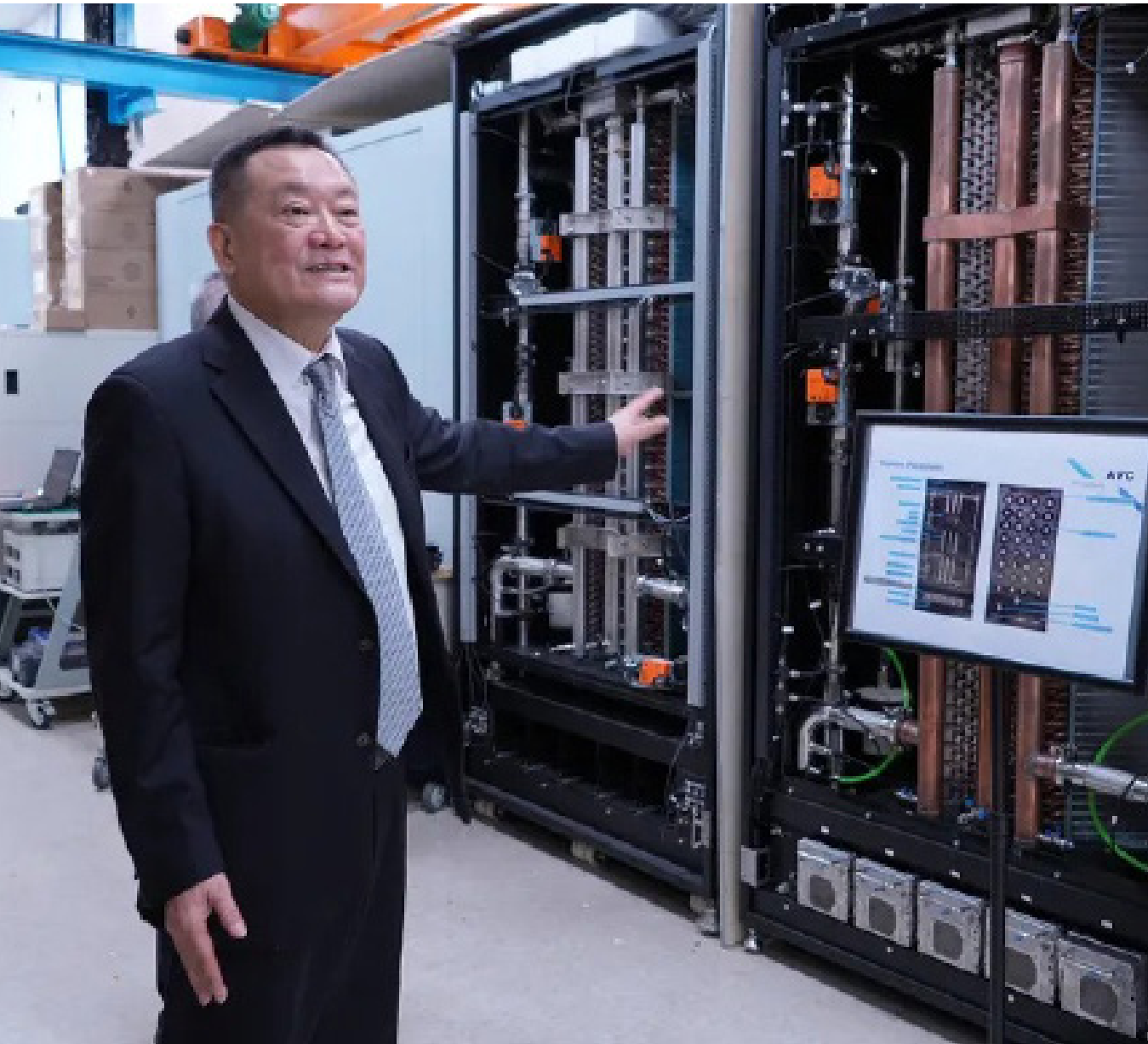


Taipei: The Cuban peso hit an all-time low Wednesday against the U.S. dollar in Cuba’s widely used informal market, reflecting a deepening crisis as the Trump administration’s restrictions on oil imports further choke the island’s economy.The currency hit 500 pesos to the dollar in informal channels, according to the independent news website El Toque, which provides regular updates on Cuba’s peso. That compares with about 400 last summer.The informal rate — often negotiated on WhatsApp groups and between neighbors who bring cash from the U.S. or Europe — is used far more than the official exchange rates. Despite the government’s attempts to exert strict economic control, experts have long used the informal exchange rate as a gauge of the health of the Cuban economy.As the country has spiraled deeper into an economic and energy crisis over the past five years, caused in large part by decades of U.S. sanctions on Cuba, the peso has dropped with it. At the same time, the Caribbean nation’s economy has become increasingly dollarized.“It’s not good news, obviously,” said Cuban economist Ricardo Torres of American University in Washington. “Many things are already being sold directly in dollars even though most Cubans do not have stable income in dollars.”The Cuban peso’s plunge in the informal market deals a blow to residents already struggling to scrape by. The average state salary is around 7,000 Cuban pesos — now about \$14 on the informal market — and a carton of eggs costs 3,000 Cuban pesos. Cuba has three official exchange rates in a complex system that many residents struggle to understand, ranging from 24 pesos to the dollar for certain business transactions to a new 455 pesos rate implemented in December in an effort to compete with the informal rate. Yet, most people still use the informal market. The peso began to dip further after a U.S. military operation on Jan. 3 in Venezuela deposed former President Nicolás Maduro, and U.S. President Donald Trump announced that no more Venezuelan oil would go to Cuba, cutting the country off from its key ally. The day of the operation, the Cuban peso was at around 438 pesos to the dollar.Then at the end of January Trump threatened to slap tariffs on any nation providing Cuba with fuel, prompting Mexico to cut off shipments to the island, though Mexico has continued to deliver other aid to Cuba.What came next was a gradual descent into turmoil in just a span of days.Last week, Cuba’s government announced it would only sell limited amounts of gasoline in dollars and other foreign currency. Cuba announced it no longer had enough oil to refuel airplanes, prompting flight cancellations from across the world and cutting the island off from its key economic engine: tourism. Public transport in Havana has largely been slashed. Endemic blackouts have become longer and grown more frequent. Banks have cut operating hours. Cultural events have been cancelled and many classes have gone remote.

Taiwan’s AI-powered economy soars in the shadow of bubble fears and China threats

Taipei: real estate agent Jason Sung is betting that home prices around a high-tech industrial park in the northern part of Taiwan’s capital will soon take flight – because of computer chip maker Nvidia.The area is where Nvidia plans to build its new Taiwan headquarters as it rapidly expands on the island, set to surpass Apple to become the biggest customer of Taiwan semiconductor maker TSMC, the biggest contract manufacturer of the advanced chips needed for artificial intelligence. Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang describes Taiwan as the “center of the world’s computer ecosystem.” It’s riding high on the global AI frenzy. Its economy grew at an 8.6% annual pace last year, and it’s hoping to maintain that momentum after it recently sealed a trade deal with U.S. President Donald Trump that cut U.S. tariffs on Taiwan to 15% from 20%.“We have been lucky,” said Wu Tsong-min, an emeritus economics professor at National Taiwan University and a former board member of Taiwan’s central bank.But Taiwan’s heavy reliance on computer chip makers and other technology companies carries the growing risk of the AI craze turning out to be a bubble.“What if the AI bubble is real, and what if its rapid growth pace slows, what’s next for Taiwan? That’s the question many have been asking,” Wu said.Escalating tensions with Beijing, which claims independently governed Taiwan as mainland China’s territory, are another abiding threat, despite the island’s vital role in global chip and AI supply chains.An island of about 23 million people, Taiwan depends heavily on exports. They jumped nearly 35% year-on-year in 2025, as shipments to the U.S. surged 78% due to ballooning AI demand.That’s thanks largely to TSMC, or Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp., and electronics giant Foxconn, which makes AI servers for Nvidia and is a major supplier to Apple.Taiwan has undergone massive economic changes while shifting from mainly labor-intensive industries such as plastics and textiles to advanced manufacturing like semiconductor fabrication.The AI frenzy has made TSMC one of the world’s top 10 most valuable companies. Its profit jumped 46% last year to \$1.7 trillion Taiwan dollars (\$54 billion).

The chipmaker is investing heavily both in Taiwan and in new factories in Arizona in the U.S. It produces more than 90% of the world’s most advanced chips.Foxconn, formally known as Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., has doubled its value since 2023. The maker of Apple’s iPhone and iPads now produces AI servers and racks and has a partnership with OpenAI to supply AI data center equipment.Taiwan’s heavy reliance on its technology industry means its biggest risk is that growth will be “very highly contingent on the AI boom and tech race continuing,” said Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at ING Bank.Worries that the AI craze may prove to be a bubble prone to a bust similar to the dot.com crash in 2000 that swept through markets, alarming many in Taiwan.“I’m also very nervous about it,” C.C. Wei, TSMC’s chairman said when asked about a potential AI bubble during an earnings call in January. “Because we have to invest about \$52-\$56 billion (this year).”“If we did not do it care-



fully, that will be a big disaster to TSMC for sure,” he said. “I want to make sure that my customers’ demands are real.” In a recent report, analysts from Fitch Ratings argued that AI demand will remain strong at least in the near term. In the longer term, however, the risks “will depend on the evolution of AI, as well as trade and investment policies and the adaptability of Taiwanese firms,” they wrote.Taiwanese electronics company Asia Vital Components, a key supplier of liquid cooling systems for Nvidia, is investing heavily in research and development. Its chairman, Spencer Shen, said he saw no signs of a slowdown in AI-related demand so far. The company is already designing thermal solutions for 2028 AI servers, he said.“We do not believe this is a bubble,” Shen told The Associated Press in an interview. “AI is driven by companies with real products and massive cash flows, like Amazon, Microsoft, Google and Meta.”“In fact, AI infrastructure is still in short supply,” Shen added. “I expect AI to trickle through to our everyday level and change the way that things will work fundamentally.”Some in Taiwan believe that its pivotal role in the technology sector, especially as a maker of computer chips whose main material is silicon, helps to protect the island from attack by communist-ruled Beijing, whose leaders have vowed to reunite the island with the

Chinese mainland, by force if necessary.The two governments split in 1949 during a civil war. Beijing has been stepping up pressure, conducting military drills nearby. Exercises in late December included live rounds landing closer to the island than before, Taiwan officials said.Such geopolitical factors cloud the economic outlook, though many in Taiwan including its former President Tsai Ing-wen believe its importance to global chipmaking would deter China from attacking.The risk of an invasion is unclear. Both global tech companies and Chinese industries would suffer from massive disruptions of the chip supply chain, said Wu of National Taiwan University. Still, some companies have been identifying contingency scenarios in recent years on how to respond in case of military action by China, said Chen Shin-hong, vice president of the semi-official Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research.“We need to understand the potential risk, potential damages to Taiwan,” said Chen.While many of its core research and development activities are in Taiwan, TSMC already has plants in China, Japan and the U.S., and it’s expanding its offshore production in the U.S., Germany and Japan. Roughly 65% of Foxconn’s manufacturing is in China, and the company has factories in other parts of the world such as India, Mexico and the U.S. AVC has been expanding its production capacity in Vietnam.While some have

called for Taiwan to diversify its economy away from technology to reduce risks, others argue that doubling down on its world-leading technology is the way forward. “It is our greatest strength,” said Shen of AVC .The AI boom has done wonders for Taiwan’s stock exchange, where the benchmark Taiex has climbed nearly 250% over the past decade, making many investors rich. Economists have significantly upgraded forecasts for Taiwan’s economic growth for 2026 based on its robust AI-related exports. But as is true elsewhere, the wealth is not evenly spread. Many Taiwan residents feel they have been left behind.Taiwan’s wealth gap, according to official data, has roughly quadrupled over the past three decades.The pay of tech workers already earning high wages, especially chip engineers and managers, has skyrocketed. For other traditional industries, such as plastics and machine toolmakers, growth has lagged.Economists say that gap might widen as the AI frenzy continues.“It can be tough to make a living,” said Jean Lin, a 30-something manager of a takeaway outlet selling bento meals in a Taipei neighborhood where Foxconn’s office is located.“Many of the younger generation still can’t afford to buy an apartment,” Lin, who wishes to start her own business one day, added. “A lot of young people still feel they don’t have much money.”

‘Nothing fell in my lap’: how Law Roach redefined celebrity styling

He is the man behind some of the most memorable moments in fashion – but you have probably never heard of him. Law Roach is the 46-year-old stylist who put Céline Dion in a pink frothy millefeuille-esque coat on the cover of Vogue France, dressed the actor Hunter Schafer in little more than a feather at a 2023 Oscars party, and convinced the model Bella Hadid to wear solely vintage on the Cannes red carpet. But it’s his work with Zendaya, whom he first met when she was 14, that helped turn the actor into a household name and led to Roach transcending the world of styling. Most recently he masterminded her Challengers and Dune press tour looks, cementing tenniscore as the biggest trend of the summer and making a suit of metal armour front page news. While a celebrity’s stylist usually remains behind the scenes, Roach has broken all norms

and catapulted himself into the spotlight as an “image architect”. J’Nae Phillips, a senior trend analyst and creator of the Fashion Tingz newsletter, says Roach has redefined the role of a stylist by “shaping not just the look of his celebrity clients but crafting moments and momentum through fashion”. She says: “He has brought styling from behind the scenes out into the open, which has shifted how fashion is consumed, admired and understood by the public.” When she was a Disney starlet, brands would not lend their clothes to Zendaya, so instead Roach dressed her in vintage pieces from a secondhand store he was running in Chicago. He has since embraced “method dressing”, putting Zendaya in a webbed embroidered gown for a Spider-Man premiere and a wet sand-inspired dress for the Venice premiere of Dune. Zendaya describes him as her “fashion soulmate,



historian and constant inspiration”. Roach, who now also walks the red carpet, is invited to sit in the front row at fashion week shows and has garnered his own

legion of fans – more than 1 million followers on Instagram – who chase him down the street for selfies. Next month, he is releasing a book titled

How to Build a Fashion Icon. It acts as a sort of DIY guide to becoming confident, peppered with personal anecdotes and inspirational quotes from

women including Oprah Winfrey. Reflecting on his success in the book, he writes: “Nothing fell in my lap, and certainly nothing came easy. Even though

I didn’t see anyone who looked like me that had achieved what I wanted, I kept my eyes on the prize with determination and belief in myself that I could do it.” But you will not find the term stylist inside. Instead, Roach has described himself as “the world’s only image architect”, a job title he has trademarked. “I could never be just a ‘stylist,’” he writes. “I’m always doing things my own way, with my own spin ... To me, an ‘image architect’ delivers a moment – the boldness and drama of a look complemented by a woman (or anyone, to be honest) who knows their worth.” He’s also “the world’s only image architect” that is technically retired. Last March in a now deleted Instagram post he announced he was quitting the industry. “The politics, the lies, and false narratives finally got me!” he wrote. “You win ... I’m out.” Eighteen months later and Roach is busier than ever. “I’m the most

unretired retired person,” he told the New York Times in May. At times this type of behaviour has earned him a reputation as being a diva. But as a gay, black man who grew up in one of the poorest areas of Chicago, one of four siblings raised by a single mother, industry where it is notoriously difficult to succeed – a world in which a people-pleaser is unlikely to triumph. Roach describes himself as “the example of an unlikely Cinderella story, of someone who grew up with the cards stacked against them but did it anyway”. “He knows his worth,” says Daniel Rogers, a fashion writer at British Vogue. “He has fought hard to maintain that position: refusing to speak to journalists unless they use his name within a headline, and refusing to be a background figure to someone else’s success. He brings real fashion capital – and entertainment – to an often staid celebrity landscape.”

Why Milk Tea Made With Jaggery Curdles, But Stays Fine With Sugar



It has happened in countless kitchens. Someone adds jaggery to boiling milk tea and instantly, the tea curdles. Even when jaggery is added before or after boiling, the result is often the same. But when sugar is used, the tea turns out perfectly fine. Why does this happen? This isn’t kitchen magic gone wrong; it’s pure chemistry. The main reason milk curdles when jaggery is added is acidity. Jaggery is a natural, minimally processed sweetener that contains malic acid and other organic acids. Milk, on the other hand, contains a protein called casein. When jaggery is added to hot milk tea, its acids react with the milk proteins. Combined with heat, this reaction causes the casein proteins to clump together, leading to curdling. Sugar doesn’t cause this

problem because it is highly refined and contains no acids, so it doesn’t disturb the milk’s structure. **How To Add Jaggery Without Curdling Your Tea** If you prefer jaggery tea, a few careful steps can help: Prepare the tea fully and add the milk first Turn off the flame before adding jaggery Grate or powder the jaggery so it dissolves quickly Avoid boiling the tea after adding jaggery Use older or dry jaggery, as fresh jaggery has higher acidity Prolonged boiling increases the chances of curdling. **Other Common Reasons Milk Tea Curds Suddenly** Jaggery isn’t the only culprit. Several everyday ingredients can also spoil milk tea if used incorrectly. **Ginger:** Ginger contains proteolytic enzymes that break down milk proteins.

If ginger is added after milk and boiled for too long, the milk can curdle. Always boil ginger well in water before adding milk. **Basil (Tulsi):** Excessive boiling of basil can curdle milk due to its mild acidity. **Cardamom and Cinnamon:** Old, damp, or stale cardamom and cinnamon can affect the milk’s texture and cause curdling. **Milk Quality:** Milk that appears normal may already contain bacteria producing lactic acid, lowering its pH. When this milk meets hot tea, curdling happens instantly. **Milk Tea Around The World** Milk tea is enjoyed in 40 to 50 countries, though preparation styles vary widely. **India & Pakistan:** Masala chai is world-famous, and tea usually means milk tea **Bangladesh & Nepal:** Strong milk tea similar to India

Taiwan: Birthplace of bubble tea **Hong Kong:** Famous for ‘Hong Kong-style milk tea’ **Thailand:** Known for orange-coloured Thai milk tea with condensed milk **Malaysia & Singapore:** ‘Teh tarik’, poured theatrically to create froth **Mongolia:** ‘Suute tsai’ made with milk, salt, and sometimes butter **Britain:** Milk added to black tea is the norm **Ireland:** Highest per-capita tea consumption, prefers milk tea **Yemen:** ‘Adeni tea’ made with milk and spices **Turkey:** One of the largest tea-drinking nations, but tea is consumed without milk **India’s Most Unique Milk Tea: Kashmir’s Noon Chai** Kashmir stands out with its royal and unusual Noon chai, also called pink tea. Unlike regular brown tea, this tea is pink in colour and salty, not sweet.

Known as pink tea in Kashmir and desi tea in Jammu Made by boiling dried green tea leaves until water reduces by half Milk, sugar, and salt are then added Some add a pinch of baking soda Often stored and consumed like kahwa Locals say it keeps the body warm and doesn’t cause gas Sometimes topped with crushed dry fruits **Hyderabadi Irani Tea: A Class Apart** Hyderabadi Irani tea is prepared differently. Tea and milk are cooked separately. The milk is boiled until thick, almost like rabri, and then mixed with the tea decoction, giving it a rich, creamy texture. From jaggery chemistry to global tea traditions, that one curdled cup of chai has a lot more science and culture behind it than we realise.

The rise of the analogue bag: fashion’s answer to doomscrolling

There’s a new “it” bag – but this time it is not about a designer label or splashy logo. Instead, it’s what is inside that counts. So-called analogue bags, filled with activities such as crosswords, knitting, novels and journals, have become the unexpected accessory of the season. They are being championed by millennials and gen Z as a way to reduce screen time. Similar to a prep bag, the idea is that the bag or basket should contain the essentials needed to remain offline for as long as possible. One user describes it as a “toy box for your attention span”. David Sax, the author of The Revenge of Analog, approves of the trend. “The idea that we can all just get into a lotus pose and fall into a state of meditative bliss is wildly unrealistic for the vast majority of us,” he says. “Our phones have everything you could ever ask for, so you need an alternative to hand in order to fill that void.” The term was coined by Sierra Campbell, a 31-year-old content creator based in California. “My biggest fear is that I’ll lie on my deathbed and regret how much time I spent on phone,” she says in a TikTok video in which she first suggests the concept. The idea has – somewhat paradoxically – become hugely popular on social media, with users posting videos talking through the contents of their analogue bags and sharing tips on what to fill them with. Some refer to them as their “stop scrolling” bags.

There are analogue wicker baskets for evenings on the sofa, bags for long journeys and even some for romantic weekends away. Suggestions include doing a joint wordsearch rather than playing Wordle individually. Campbell’s January analogue bag video – featuring a subscription to the New Yorker magazine, gel pens and a sketchbook – has been viewed more than 200,000 times in five days. The trend forms part of a wider backlash against a culture of doomscrolling and the pressure to always be online. According to Ofcom, the UK telecoms regulator, the

average adult in Great Britain checks their phone every 12 minutes. A 2022 survey by USwitch found that the average daily time among UK adults averaged five hours, in addition to screen-related work tasks. Analogue bags sit alongside a resurgence in analogue technologies such as vinyl records, physical magazines and point-and-shoot cameras. Offline, in-person activities – including “cosy hobbies” such as pottery classes, crochet circles and even dinner parties – are also on the rise. Campbell says the catalyst for the analogue bag, which has reduced her screen time from seven hours a day to three, came from reading Charles Duhigg’s The Power of Habit. In the book, Duhigg outlines three components of a habit: cue, routine and reward. Rather than trying to eliminate a bad habit, he argues that it is more effective to keep the cue and reward while changing the routine. For Campbell, this meant reaching for a bag of screen-free activities instead of her phone. “If you go to your phone for news, put a newspaper in your bag,” Campbell says. “If it’s for entertainment, try a good book. For creative inspiration, sketching tools or knitting. It’s just like physical fitness – whatever activity you’ll actually do is the best one to include.” Rather than a brief digital detox, the analogue bag trend suggests people are attempting to change their relationship with screens for the long term. Pete Etchells, a professor of psychology and science communication at Bath Spa University and author of Unlocked: The Real Science of Screen Time, argues that rather than being addicted to our phones, we have simply formed habits around their use. He hopes the rise of analogue bags is “a shift in how people understand their relationship with technology”. “We do have agency and control over what we do with our time,” Etchells says. “And if you are not happy with how you use your phone and how you use social media, it’s great that people are starting to think about what the [options] look like – and how we can make access easier to those.”



Dangal, a Rs 1,300-crore blockbuster, was made in China. Is Japan Able To Do This For Animals?

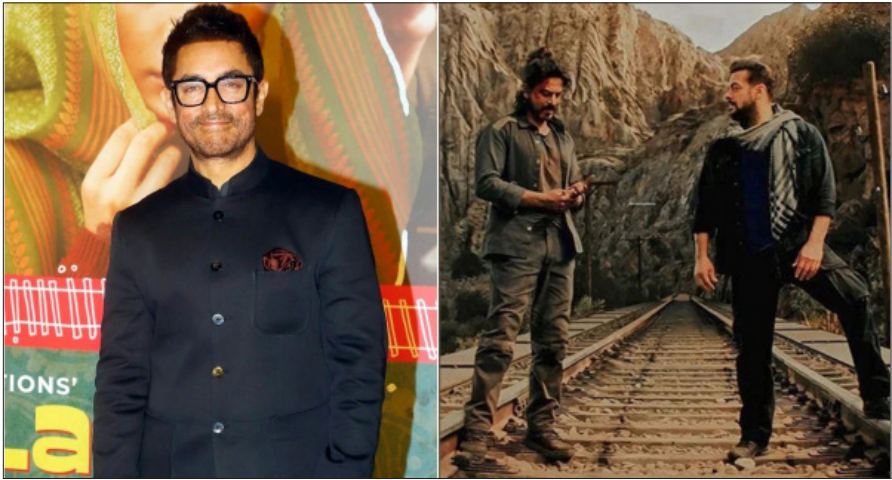


Mumbai: For almost ten years, China was the ultimate destination for a few Indian films, where a Bollywood social drama or an extravagant show might suddenly earn hundreds of crores. However, that run was abruptly stopped by geopolitics, quotas, and opaque censorship. Producers and distributors are now questioning whether Japan can develop into the next dependable international engine or if it will continue to be an episodic, event-driven market that only lights up for a specific film at a particular moment, given that it has emerged as a surprisingly receptive and expanding window for Indian cinema. The demand for a specific type of Indian film in China led to disproportionate profits. The most notable example is Dangal, which made approximately Rs 1,305 crore in China and was by far the highest-grossing Indian film there. Secret Superstar, Sultan, and Bajrangi Bhaijaan were among the films that found great resonance and generated very healthy revenues by fusing societal concerns with emotive family dramas. These films also contributed significantly to the total. Eight Indian films made a total of about Rs 2,784 crore in

China between 2015 and 2018, which many in Bollywood still refer to as the market's pinnacle era. It was a tenuous golden run. Political tensions and stricter cultural constraints essentially shut down mainstream Bollywood for a number of years following the Galwan Valley clashes in the middle of 2020. The sector found it challenging to depend on China as a steady source of income due to import limitations, censorship laws, and the opaque licensing procedure that goes via state-owned entities. When permissions did come in after 2022, they were few and selective: South Indian films like Maharaja experienced pockets of success (Maharaja nearly reached the Rs 100 crore mark in China), while Drishyam, Kanaa, and later 12th Fail had tiny or targeted releases. Overall, however, the pipeline became thinner because China became a high-risk, high-entry-barrier market due to political unrest and an import constraint that essentially restricts international films. Although China temporarily became a Bollywood mass market, Japan has never been, but a series of events in recent years have raised the possibility that the nation is more than just a fringe curiosity. Sight

was the key to the modern era's breakthrough: RRR and other big-budget South Indian films showed that Japanese viewers are open to dynamic, emotionally charged cinema, especially when it is supported by a robust marketing campaign and a theater. Some Indian films have made significant box office receipts in Japan. Rajinikanth's 1995 hit film Muthu, for example, became a cult hit in Japan after its 1998 release, earning approximately ¥400 million (roughly \$3 million at the time) and drawing over a million viewers—a remarkable accomplishment for a mostly Japanese, non-NRI audience. Film exhibitor Akshaye Rathi mentions RRR as the contemporary spark that "blew the lid" off Japan as a market once more during a conversation. Curiosities like Pushpa and Salaar then sparked curiosity and persuaded Japanese exhibitors to try new things. As a result, Japan is no longer a completely closed or uninterested market; rather, it is a market whose preferences can be developed, although methodically and carefully. Distributor Akshaye Rathi highlights the contrasting dynamics of the Chinese and Japanese film markets. He notes that while China has a history of being open to foreign films, the number of successful releases is limited, with only 20-25% of the revenue returning to producers. In contrast, Japan has shown potential, particularly after the success of the film 'RRR', which has encouraged interest in Indian content. Rathi emphasizes that market relevance takes time to cultivate, requiring consistent distribution and marketing efforts. Trade analyst Taran Adarsh agrees that both markets are comparatively significant, underscoring the importance of content quality over genre. He expresses cautious optimism regarding Japan's growth, suggesting that successful films can encourage further exploration of the market. Overall, while China's box office remains a powerful player, Japan is emerging as a promising territory for Indian films.

Regarding SRK-Salman Khan's viral Pathaan scene, Aamir Khan



Mumbai: With the success of Pathaan (2023), Shah Rukh Khan entered the spy world of Yash Raj Films. A special cameo by Salman Khan was also included in the Siddharth Anand-directed film. Tiger (Salman Khan) and Pathaan (Shah Rukh Khan) are heard discussing how they are irreplaceable stars in one particular footage. Aamir Khan recently responded to the same, as well as the ongoing discussion about the "Khans" being the last of the stars on a broader scale. "You know, there was a very funny scene in Pathaan," Aamir Khan said in a chat. Since I don't see many movies, I'm not even sure if I should mention this, but I haven't seen the film. However, I viewed the scene on YouTube and was told about it. At the end of the movie, Salman and Shah Rukh are sitting and

talking about who is going to... It was a tongue-in-cheek exchange. In addition to being about the movie, it was also about the outside world. People also laughed. "Usme masti, mazaak tha." "A lot of people guessed what they were trying to say without taking names," he continued. However, those same young actors—Chhaava with Vicky Kaushal, Animal with Ranbir Kapoor, and Dhurandhar with Ranveer—have demonstrated to us today that they are not only present but also capable of competing with us. They are present. They have a great chance of replacing us. They may even be more talented than us as performers, in my opinion. They are claiming a position that is rightfully theirs. Therefore, they responded with their job rather than by speaking. which

is wonderful. Thank you so much for it. That's fantastic to see." Salman Khan's Ek Tha Tiger (2012), starring Katrina Kaif, launched YRF's spy world. In the movie, Salman Khan portrayed Avinash Singh Rathore, code-named Tiger, a RAW agent. Later, he played the same part in Tiger 3 (2023) and Tiger Zinda Hai (2017).In 2023, Shah Rukh Khan's popular film Pathaan brought him into the spy world.This particular moment from Pathaan is a cross between Shah Rukh Khan's Pathaan and Salman Khan's Tiger. Pathaan is rescued by Tiger from a moving train that is on the verge of collapsing off the bridge. In the midst of the new generation of celebrities, the two later sit and discuss their enduring legacy and the prospects for their action-packed careers.

Priyanka Chopra described starting again in Hollywood at the age of thirty as "terrifying"

Mumbai: Although Priyanka Chopra has a sizable body of work in Hollywood and is one of the few Indian celebrities who are well-known throughout the world today, her path was not an easy one. At her height, when she was a tremendously popular and well-known movie star back home, the actress made the decision to leave Indian cinema. The actor discussed the choice and how difficult it was for her at first in the West in a recent interview. Priyanka remembered her first appearance in the West, first as a singer. It's daunting to start a new career in your 30s. I was safe. My financial situation was good. I had been established. "I decided to blow it up," she added. Around 2015, following the release and popularity of movies like Mary Kom, Bajirao Mastani, and Dil Dhadakne Do, Priyanka relocated



to the United States. At the time, she was one of the highest-paid Indian actresses. Priyanka claimed that when she first started her journey in the West, she encountered preconceptions and misconceptions. "Oh, you speak English well," people would say. Every time I entered a room for a meeting, someone had an idea of who I was before I even entered," recounted Priyanka. The performer, however, stated that she preferred to be a part of "borderless entertainment," where she could "cross-pollinate with actors from different countries," rather than succumbing to novelty casting. Prior to starring in supporting parts in major motion pictures like Baywatch and The Matrix 4, Priyanka made her acting debut in the West as the lead in the television series Quantico. She has risen to the position of director of major Hollywood productions, including Citadel, Heads of State, and her next pirate adventure movie, The Bluff, which she is co-starring in alongside Karl Urban. In 2027, Priyanka will return to Indian film with Varanasi, directed by SS Rajamouli. With her most recent Hindi film, The Sky Is Pink, coming out before to the epidemic, Priyanka's return to Indian cinema after nearly eight years is marked by the pan-Indian film. Alongside Priyanka, Varanasi stars Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Sukumaran. In April 2027, the movie—which is billed as a time-traveling adventure with roots in Indian history—will be released in theaters.

Juhi Chawla Rejected Jhankaar Beats by Sujoy Ghosh

Mumbai:The ensemble cast of Sujoy Ghosh's 2003 musical comedy Jhankaar Beats included newcomer Shayan Munshi, Rinke Khanna, Riya Sen, Rahul Bose, Sanjay Suri, and Juhi Chawla. However, did you know that after reading the premise, Juhi Chawla turned down the movie? In a recent interview, the director revealed how he persuaded Juhi to reconsider. "She read the script and was shocked," he said. 'I'm not doing this,' she said," Sujoy Ghosh remarked to Screen. When asked why Juhi was turned down, Sujoy Ghosh replied that she was hesitant about a specific sequence. "In this scene, Deep (played by Sanjay Suri) is having a rough day. He can't understand the commercial they're working on, and there's a lot of stress at work. The new baby is on the way, and his mother-in-law is also staying with him. In his dream, the baby has arrived after Shanti (Juhi Chawla) gave birth. However, the infant has his mother-in-



law's visage when he lifts it up. Abruptly, he notices that something dazzling is behind him. "Had you used me?" he asks as he turns to see this enormous fluorescent condom dancing. "You shouldn't have to see this day," says Aaj yeh din dekhna nahi padta. Juhi responded, "I'm not there if this scene is." Thus, we eliminated the scenario," Ghosh explained.During the same discussion, Ghosh also discussed how Juhi was an essential component of the movie. "Juhi was most likely the movie's saving grace. We needed her as the star to bring the movie to life. We

wouldn't have had the movie without her. And I wouldn't have made the movie if it weren't for her character Shanti. "Because Shanti was, once more, you know, my early Vidya Bagchi," Ghosh said, alluding to the Kahaani character Vidya Balan. Before entering the realm of mystery writing, Ghosh had his first experience with sophisticated comedies in Jhankaar Beats. The film's soundtrack, which revived the iconic R. D. Burman's earlier hits, was exceptional. Following the movie, Vishal-Shekhar, who wrote the music, also received a lot of praise.

After six years, the actor Sreeleela earned an MBBS degree

Mumbai: Videos and images of Sreeleela's graduation from Mumbai's DY Patil University have been going viral. The actress, 24, has been juggling acting endeavors with her medical studies. She now formally has an MBBS degree after six years.Sreeleela is seen at her convocation ceremony wearing maroon robes in one of the photos that went viral. As she obtains her degree, she is beaming. She is shown waiting for her moment on stage when her name is called out in another clip. She gives her family a hug as soon as she exits the stage. Sreeleela was raised in Bengaluru after being born in 2001 to a Telugu family in Detroit, USA. Swarnalatha, her mother, works as a gynecologist in Bengaluru.Following the success of her viral dance number Kissik in Pushpa 2, Sreeleela became well-known.Regarding her cinematic career, Sreeleela had her screen debut in the 2017 Telugu film Chitranagada, where she portrayed



a younger version of Sindhu Tolani's character. However, her first feature film as a lead was Kiss, which was released in Kannada in 2019. In the same year, she appeared in Bharaate as well. The actor has a full schedule ahead of him, including Telugu roles with Ustaad Bhagat Singh and Pawan Kalyan, as well as a Bollywood debut with Kartik Aaryan. On January 10, 2026, Sudha Kongara's Tamil film Parashakthi was released in theaters. Sivakarthekeyan costarred with her.

Mika Singh Requests Support From the Film Industry for Rajpal Yadav

Mumbai: Many people in the Hindi film business have come forward to help actor Rajpal Yadav as a result of his financial and legal issues, which have garnered a lot of attention. Singer Mika Singh has most recently called for transparency and collaborative assistance as Rajpal Yadav continues to suffer from cases of cheque bounce that have been lingering for around Rs 9 crore.In a video message, the singer called on producers, directors, and actors who have previously collaborated with Rajpal Yadav to make a significant contribution. "I'm really happy and proud after my post," Mika added, thanking everyone for responding to his appeal. It's wonderful to see everyone coming together; this is the solidarity that defines our industry. Though many people are asking where to send the money, I have a modest request: please don't just post announcements. Instead, let's make sure we actually contribute and make it happen. Let's organize this properly and transparently so everything goes to the right place. Support is more than just words; it's action. Let's stand together and do this the right way." Within the film community, support for Rajpal Yadav has been gradually increasing. Goldie Jain, his longtime manager, said that a number of well-known actors, producers, and filmmakers had volunteered their assistance.Ajay Devgn, Var-



un Dhawan, Salman Khan, and director David Dhawan have also contributed financially. One of the first people to come out was actor Sonu Sood.Radha Yadav, Rajpal Yadav's wife, acknowledged the support from coworkers, saying, "Everyone has stood by him." The business community has been helpful. Many thanks to everyone stepping up to provide a hand. Several debt defaults connected to Rajpal Yadav's production company are the root of his problems. He sent the lender multiple checks in an attempt to pay his debts, but they were later returned.

Criminal proceedings under the Negotiable Instruments Act resulted from this.Rajpal Yadav and his spouse were found guilty in multiple check bounce instances by a magistrate court in April 2018 and given a six-month jail sentence. In 2019, a sessions court affirmed the ruling, and he then petitioned the Delhi High Court. The High Court took a strong stand because of Rajpal Yadav's persistent noncompliance with payment obligations, even though loan disputes are typically handled as civil cases. He was given several extensions to pay back the money in installments, but he never fulfilled them. Later, the court ordered the release of deposited funds to the complainant and ordered him to pay Rs 1.35 crore in each of the seven cases. In October 2025, he submitted two demand drafts totaling Rs 75 lakh, but about Rs 9 crore was still outstanding.The court advised him to take "sincere and genuine measures" towards resolution, and in June 2024, his conviction was temporarily suspended. But there was no notable advancement after it. The judge told him to turn himself up by February 4th, 2026. When he didn't comply on time, his lawyer's request for mercy was denied. Rajpal Yadav turned himself in at Tihar Jail after his new repayment plan was rejected when he appeared in court on February 5.

Day 1 advance booking for O'Romeo



Mumbai: O'Romeo, directed by Vishal Bhardwaj, has started steadily ahead of its theatrical premiere since advance sales commenced on February 10. The movie, which stars Triptii Dimri and Shahid Kapoor, is slated for release on February 13. According to figures from industry tracker Sacnilk, the Vishal Bhardwaj film made Rs 38.96 lakh gross on the first day of advance sales, with 16,846 seats sold nationwide. The total amount of advance bookings for the movie, including block tickets, is Rs 1.44 crore. Inspired by real-life incidents, O'Romeo is supported by Sajid Nadiadwala's Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment. In addition to Vishal

Bhardwaj's characteristic poetic storytelling, the picture promises an emotionally packed drama based on unrequited love.Avinash Tiwary, Nana Patekar, Farida Jalal, Disha Patani, and Tamannaah Bhatia are among the ensemble cast members, and Triptii Dimri plays a significant role in the movie in addition to Shahid Kapoor. Vikrant Massey joins the film's stellar cast with a special cameo as well. Major movie theater chains and internet ticketing sites are now accepting advance reservations, and preliminary indications suggest that interest in the movie is rising. The movie O'Romeo will be released in theaters on February 13, 2026.

How Will Today’s Bharat Bandh Affect Banks, Buses, and Educational Institutions

New Delhi, Feb 12: Major labor unions and farmers’ organizations have called for a statewide strike known as Bharat Bandh, which is now in progress. The Center’s labor and economic policies are being protested by more than ten unions and protest organizations. The walkout, one of the biggest in recent memory, is predicted to cause disruptions to public banking, transportation, schools, colleges, and other services nationwide. The government’s recent policies have been characterized by the unions as “anti-worker, anti-farmer, and pro-corporate.” In a news conference, AITUC General Secretary Amarjeet Kaur stated that around 30 crore workers are anticipated to participate in the February 12 Bharat Bandh, compared to about 25 crore workers who participated in the protest on July 9, 2025. The walkout will affect operations in more than 600 districts nationwide, the unions say. Several important sectors are anticipated to be impacted by the bandh. Numerous public banks and insurance providers might continue to close or run with fewer employees. There may be delays in cash withdrawals and check clearing. There may be disruptions to buses, autorickshaws, and other public transportation systems, particularly in places where participation is high. Some administrative services and government agencies may close



entirely or in part. In locations affected by protests, a large number of educational institutions can stay closed. In areas where there is a lot of strike activity, markets and small businesses could stay closed or operate erratically. Businesses and factories might slow operations. Essential services will continue to operate, authorities have promised: Water, electricity, ambulance, fire and rescue services, pharmacies, medical stores, hospitals, and other utility services will all continue to operate. Even when bank branches are closed, ATMs and online banking systems will continue to function. It is anticipated that private offices that

are not taking part in the strike would operate as usual. Railways and metro services are still operating as usual. Four labor codes have been created by the center by combining 29 previous labor regulations. The four labor codes and regulations must be repealed, the Draft Seed Bill must be withdrawn, MGNREGA must be reinstated, the Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar, and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025 must be repealed, the Electricity Amendment Bill must be repealed, and the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act must be repealed.

Rohit Sharma’s “desperation” to win the 2027 World Cup is evident

New Delhi: Maybe they’ve already alluded to it. Their shape might have made a strong statement. However, there has been ongoing conjecture regarding the inclusion of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli in the 2027 ODI World Cup due to the selectors’ and team management’s lack of a definitive announcement. Rohit didn’t leave much room for uncertainty on Wednesday. He stated that he is determined to win the upcoming 50-over World Cup in addition to confirming his intention to participate. In order to concentrate only on ODIs, Rohit and Kohli have both decided to quit from T20Is and Test matches. Given their limited playing time, it was questioned if they would be able to keep their form and fitness until 2027. However, the senior hitters provided a forceful response to such worries last year. Following

a seven-month hiatus, Kohli and Rohit returned to international cricket in October and dominated the One-Day International format. Three hundreds and three fifties were among the 616 runs that Kohli scored in nine innings at an average of 88 throughout three series against Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand. In nine innings, Rohit amassed 409 runs at 51.12, including three fifties and a century. Both participated in the Vijay Hazare Trophy and scored hundreds in their first games to demonstrate their dedication. Speaking at an ICC event, Rohit acknowledged that he is “desperate” to win the trophy that eluded him in 2023 when India lost to Australia in the Ahmedabad final and that he is not satisfied with simply competing in the 2027 World Cup. “I’ve always admired winning the World Cup for my nation, so I



really want to go out there and do it. This 50-over World Cup is something I grew up watching. When cricket reached its zenith, which used to occur every four years, there was no T20 World Cup or IPL. There was urgency because that one prize carried a lot of weight. And sure, I’m going to try my hardest to work hard and earn that trophy because I truly want it,” Rohit remarked. When India tours England in July, Rohit and Kohli will play their next international match. They will play in the IPL 2026 prior to then.

For the first time since 2020, Bayern Munich defeats RB Leipzig to advance to the German Cup semifinals

New Delhi: Bayern Munich defeated RB Leipzig 2-0 on Wednesday to go to the German Cup semi-finals for the first time since 2020 thanks to goals from Harry Kane and Luis Diaz.

Leipzig, who had already lost to Bayern twice this season, looked considerably better, but the home team took control of the game with two goals in four minutes of the second half. In the competition’s final four, Bayern joins defending champions Stuttgart, Bayer Leverkusen, and Freiburg.

Diaz’s goal was his sixth in his last three games, while Kane’s penalty was his 39th goal for Bayern this season across all competitions. “He has skill and has worked hard to develop it; I’m not sure if that’s how he was born. Regarding Kane, Bayern coach Vincent Kompany remarked, “And we’re enjoying these moments with Harry.” Bayern, who have won this tournament a record 20 times—14 more than any other team—had not advanced past the



quarterfinals since 2020. Leipzig captain David Raum told ARD, “To win here, you need a little bit of the game’s luck and maybe a referee’s call or two, but that luck wasn’t on our side today.” I believe there was more for us, but we gave up two stupid goals. Bayern has dominated

the visitors this season, winning both of their Bundesliga meetings by a total score of 11-1, but Leipzig have won two German Cups since the Bavarians’ last final appearance.

After just four minutes, Leipzig had already put pressure on the hosts and were celebrating a score

still in effect. It is still illegal to divulge sensitive or private information. According to military sources, all government workers, including those in the armed forces, are subject to the Official Secrets Act, and adherence to it is required even after retirement. Access to a significant amount of information is available to officers in senior positions.

They must have the required approval before writing about anything that is directly relevant to their service. A book must first be approved by the Ministry of Defence if it includes information about sensitive subjects, military operations, or private affairs. Only once the item has been reviewed by the appropriate department does the Ministry provide authorization. For active military personnel, the regulations are already more stringent. For any book, article, or similar action, they must get written consent.

This authorization is sent to the Ministry of Defense or Army Headquarters via the chain of command. It is strictly forbidden to publish anything that could have an impact on foreign policy or national security, including intelligence inputs, military operations details, weapons capabilities, and secret information. If they include real military or operational information, even fictitious stories may be restricted. Similar expectations for retired personnel would be formalized and clarified under the new framework that has been proposed.

Abhishek Sharma is replaced by Sanju Samson against Namibia

New Delhi: India has gone from surviving a near-shock against the USA in Mumbai to struggling with injuries and illness in the six days since the T20 World Cup 2026 began at home. After missing time due to a rib ailment, Washington Sundar has rejoined the team. During India’s first training session in Delhi on Tuesday, Jasprit Bumrah bowled at full capacity despite missing the opener match due to illness. But there was no sign of Abhishek Sharma. Despite having a high temperature, Abhishek played the opening match in Mumbai, according to reports on Wednesday. He did not play in the second inning and did not shake hands after the game. It has been stated that once the team reached Delhi, his condition deteriorated. Abhishek left early even though he briefly attended a team dinner that head coach Gautam Gambhir had organized. He missed both of the Arun Jaitley Stadium’s practice sessions prior to the match against Namibia and was later hospitalized to a private hospital in Delhi. Abhishek has since been released, according to Tilak Varma’s confirmation on Wednesday. But with a crucial match against Pakistan in Colombo approaching, will India take the chance of sending him home too soon? The management would be wise to rest the left-hander and give a reserve player a chance

instead. The front-runner to open with Ishan Kishan is Sanju Samson. Sundar might be a more unusual choice, even though he only started training again this week. Before getting hit on the left arm, Samson was scratchy against Arshdeep Singh and Bumrah despite being the first player at the nets on Tuesday. On the eve of the game, he had a lengthy session and faced Bumrah once again. For Samson, who has fallen in the rankings following a subpar home series against New Zealand, the Namibia match might be crucial. He has only amassed 268 runs at 16.75 in 16 T20I innings since 2025. Management decided to support the highly effective Ishan for the World Cup start as a result of those figures. Samson, however, continues to have the team set-up’s support. Assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate stated, “You need honesty and transparency at this level.” Sanju’s received every imaginable bit of assistance. Selection becomes clear when a performer like Ishan steps on stage. However, we still have a number of games to win, and everyone of the 15 players is essential to our goals. Mohammed Siraj is anticipated to be replaced by Bumrah. In order to provide Kuldeep Yadav playing time before the spin-friendly conditions anticipated in Colombo, India may potentially decide to bring him in.

UK Universities Open in India in Response to Domestic Pressures

New Delhi, Feb 12: Southampton University has launched its first Business Management class in Delhi, marking the beginning of several UK universities establishing campuses in India to tap into its rapidly growing student market. This initiative aligns with a 2025 educational partnership between Britain and India, aimed at addressing India’s projected requirement for 70 million student placements by 2035. Following new regulations



allowing reputable international colleges to open,

Southampton has already enrolled 120 students and plans to expand to 5,500 over ten years. With education being a key export for Britain, worth £32 billion annually, UK universities are adapting to stricter immigration policies by focusing on overseas expansion rather than purely recruiting international students. The University of Surrey also plans a new campus in Gujarat’s GIFT City, emphasizing India’s significant talent pool.

380 Unauthorized Banners Are Removed by the Delhi Civic Body Before the AI Impact Summit

New Delhi, Feb 12: As part of its continuous effort to rid public areas of unlawful advertising, the MCD has taken down about 380 unauthorized banners, hoardings, and pole kiosks from various sites in advance of the India AI-Impact Summit 2026, according to official documents. The drive took place from January 1 to the beginning of February. A total of 379 unauthorized structures, including commercial banners, hoardings, religious and political boards, and sunpact sheets, were taken down during that time, officials stated in an action taken report. According to the officials, Karol Bagh experienced the

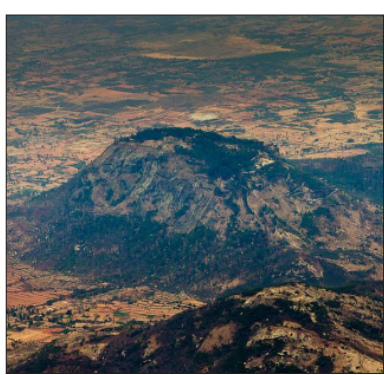
most removals, with four drives on January 5, 12, 20, and February 9 resulting in the removal of 87 unauthorized installations. With 38 removals, including 31 on January 10, the Central zone came next. According to MCD officials, 45 unauthorized structures were taken down in two phases at Rohini, one of the other areas where enforcement action was conducted. “Over the course of two days, Keshav Puram had 41 removals while Narela had 36 removals. 53 structures were removed from the West zone over the course of three consecutive operations, while 41 structures were removed from Shahdara South and

Shahdara North combined, according to officials. According to officials, there were 20 and 18 removals of unapproved flags and pole kiosks, respectively, in the City SP and Civil Line zones. In addition to improving road safety, reducing visual clutter, and ensuring compliance with municipal rules, officials said the drives were part of a beautifying effort for the impending AI summit.

They said that these enforcement actions are conducted on a regular basis in all zones, especially in places where it is discovered that unlawful advertisements are frequently occurring.

Due to law and order concerns, Nandi Hills in Karnataka closed on Valentine’s Day

New Delhi, Feb 12: The Chikkaballapura District Administration has banned all vehicles and tourists from entering Nandi Hills on February 14, Valentine’s Day, due to public safety concerns and law and order issues. The renowned tourist spot will be closed for the full day due to the restriction, which will be in effect from 6 am to 6 pm. After receiving a request from the district police, Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate Prabhu issued the order in accordance with Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarika Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023. According to officials, Nandi Hills, which is close to Bengaluru, experiences a huge surge on weekends and special events, which frequently results in traffic jams and crowding. On such days, the hill station usually attracts between 16,000 and 18,000 tourists and about 5,000 automobiles, according to



the administration. Authorities expect an even bigger turnout of 15,000 to 20,000 people because Valentine’s Day falls on a Saturday this year, which might lead to serious traffic congestion. It would be quite challenging to manage such a large number of vehicles on the small and twisting ghat route that leads to Nandi Hills, according to officials. The district

administration was concerned about the potential for intoxicated behavior, indecent actions, public disturbance, and unsafe activities in restricted and dangerous zones at the hilltop, in addition to traffic difficulties. Authorities cautioned that controlling people on high hills may make accidents more likely and pose significant problems for law and order. According to authorities, the action was required to protect tourists and avoid unpleasant situations. The prohibitory order will be aggressively enforced, and police will take legal action against anybody who break it. To stop tourists from moving toward the hill, security guards will be stationed at strategic points of entrance. Attracting thousands of tourists from Bengaluru and the surrounding areas, Nandi Hills continues to be one of Karnataka’s most well-liked tourism and sunrise sites.

Afghan all-rounder Mohammad Nabi fined for disobeying umpire’s call against South Africa

Nabi handed demerit point, first offence recorded

Ahmedabad: Afghan all-rounder Mohammad Nabi has been fined 15 percent of his match fees for disobeying the umpire’s decision during his team’s loss to South Africa. The incident occurred at the start of the 14th over of Afghanistan’s innings, when Nabi engaged in a prolonged argument with the umpires over bowler Lungi Ngidi’s wrist-band. ”Nabi was found to have breached Article 2.4 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to ”Disobeying an Umpire’s instruction during an International Match,” an ICC statement read.

In addition to the fine, Nabi has also been handed a demerit point, and it was his first offence in a 24-month period. ”Nabi admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by David Gilbert of the ICC International Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for a formal hearing,” the statement added. On-field umpires Jayaraman Madanagopal and Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid, third umpire Nitin



Menon and fourth umpire K.N. Ananthapadmanabhan had levelled the charge. In one of the greatest T20 games, South Africa pipped a plucky Afghanistan after two Super Overs here on Wednesday. Afghanistan’s veteran all-rounder Mohammad Nabi has been fined 15 percent of his match fee for disobeying the umpire’s instruction during the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026 group stage clash against South Africa in Ahmedabad. The incident occurred at the start of the 14th over of Afghanistan’s innings, when Nabi engaged in a prolonged argument with the officials over South African bowler Lungi Ngidi’s wristband.

Match referees ruled that Nabi had breached Article 2.4 of the ICC Code of Conduct, which relates to “disobeying an umpire’s instruction during an international match.”

Alongside the fine, Nabi was also handed one demerit point, marking his first offence in a 24-month period. He admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by David Gilbert of the ICC International Panel of Match Referees, meaning no formal hearing was required. The heated contest itself ended dramatically, with South Africa edging Afghanistan after two Super Overs, securing crucial points in the group stage. Afghani-

stan’s seasoned all-rounder Mohammad Nabi has been fined 15 percent of his match fee and handed one demerit point for breaching the ICC Code of Conduct during his team’s ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026 Group D clash against South Africa at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. The sanction was announced by the International Cricket Council (ICC) following an incident in the 14th over of Afghanistan’s innings. The controversy unfolded when Nabi engaged in a heated argument with the on-field umpires regarding South African pacer Lungi Ngidi’s wristband. Nabi took objection to the accessory, insisting it was against regulations, but the umpires ruled otherwise. His refusal to accept the decision and prolonged confrontation was deemed a violation of Article 2.4 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which pertains to “disobeying an umpire’s instruction during an international match. tour like the T20 World Cup.

Aishwary leads dominant Indian clean sweep in 50m Rifle 3 Positions shooting competition triumphantly



New Delhi: Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar showed his experience in the finals, hitting a 10.7 in the final shot to edge past team mate Niraj Kumar to clinch gold in 50m Rifle 3 Positions as

Indian completed a clean sweep with Akhil Sheoran winning bronze in the Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship, New Delhi 2026, which is being held here at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range,

a release said. Niraj Kumar, for whom this is the first individual international medal, went into the 35th and final shot with a 0.2-point lead over Aishwary, according to a release. He fired first to hit a 10.3, giving Aishwary a target of 10.6 to win the gold. The World Championship silver medallist held his nerve and hit a superb 10.7 to leap over Niraj and secure the gold. He finished with a total of 362.0, while Niraj finished at 361.8. Akhil Sheoran won bronze with a final score of 343.5, it said. In the junior men’s finals ,Adriyan Karmakar secured his second gold medal of the championship with a comfortable victory, shooting a score of 353.2, which was 4.7 more than silver medallist Dmitriy Kim of Kazakhstan. India’s Manvendra Singh Shekhawat won bronze with a final score of 338.6 Earlier in the qualification, Niraj Kumar. Nikhil Tanwar, who was also shooting for Ranking Points, scored 587-29x. The trio of Aishwary, Niraj and Akhil.

Shai Hope praises Rutherford’s heroics as West Indies clinch second straight T20 win

Mumbai: West Indies captain Shai Hope lauded Sherfane Rutherford after the latter’s match-defining contributions with the bat for his team against England in both teams’ second group-stage match of the ongoing T20 World Cup 2026, on Wednesday at Mumbai’s Wankhede Stadium. With West Indies batting first and having lost three wickets for 55 in 5.5 overs, Sherfane Rutherford scored 72 runs off 46 balls and powered his side to 196/6 in 20 overs, a target England eventually fell short by 30 runs. Rutherford earned the Player of the Match award for his contributions. After the match, Shai Hope praised Rutherford for his hard work and dedication to batting, saying his consistent preparation and effort in practice have paid off, as shown by his impactful performance in the match against England. Speaking of Sherf (Sherfane Rutherford), he’s been always a hard worker, especially when it comes to his batting. He’s always very diligent with the way he goes about his preparation. And he would bat from the start of the session all the way through to the end if he’s really working on something. And I don’t think that



has changed from the time he came into the team all the way till now. And so it’s just nice to see when guys are putting in that hard work in the nets and that preparation that the success follows. So it’s very good to see Sherf coming in and making an impact once again today,” Shai Hope said in the post-match press conference, as quoted by the ICC website. Hope highlighted Rutherford’s natural talent and the pressure he puts on bowlers, saying his impact goes beyond statistics. He praised Rutherford’s hard work and expressed confidence that consistent success will follow. ”You can just watch him and see how special he is. But sometimes we got to throw stats out the window every now and again. You know, you can just look at a player and see what impact

he has on a team. If you ask any bowler in world cricket, if they see Sherfane Rutherford at the next end, they’re going to always feel as though they’re under pressure. So that in itself speaks for itself. So I don’t think we necessarily need to focus too much on the stats. I’m sure that they’ll improve over the next few years because he’s a quality player. Like I said before, I’m just happy to see him getting the success that he truly deserves because he’s been playing really well, he’s been training hard and it’s only a matter of time before the consistency comes. So happy for him,” Hope added further, while praising his teammate. Coming to the match, England captain Harry Brook won the toss and elected to field first. After West Indies openers Shai Hope and Brandon

King were dismissed inside the first two overs, West Indies batting line-up contributed with crucial scores to take the team to 196/6 in 20 overs. Shimron Hetmyer (23) and Roston Chase (34) gave the two-time T20 World Cup champions some momentum with a 47-run stand in 28 balls, taking them to 55/3 in the powerplay. Sherfane Rutherford slammed five sixes and two fours for a timely half-century. He struck seven sixes and two fours during an unbeaten 76, and stitched important partnerships with Powell (51 for the fifth wicket) and Jason Holder mark. Anything short was hammered into the stands while Salt mostly met the ball with the middle of the bat. Holder’s medium pace, like Curran’s earlier in the first half, failed to make any impression on the batters and it was against the run of play when England lost their first wicket. Going for one shot too many, Salt was cramped for room when he danced down, playing it straight to Rutherford at cover off Romario Shepherd in the form of Jos Buttler. recognised in this way by the sport and by my peers is deeply humbling,” Federer Ment shared by the ITHF.

Center Zone Men crowned champions, Sham clinch U-18 crown as Spiti Cup Season 3 concludes triumphantly

Kaza: Center Zone Men sealed the Senior Men’s title with a commanding 12-2 victory over Lahaul on the final day of the Spiti Cup 2026 at the Kaza Ice Hockey Rink on Wednesday, according to a release. The win ensured Center completed the league stage unbeaten with four victories from four matches, while Sham Zone denied Center Zone a clean sweep across categories by clinching the U-18 Boys title in a close contest. Center Zone Women had already sealed their title yesterday.

Among the Individual honours, Tod Zone received the Fair Play Award. Rigzin Angrup of Sham Zone was named Player of the Tournament in the Senior Men and U-18 Boys categories for his 18 goals, and also finished as the U-18 top scorer with 10 goals. Sonam Angmo of Center Zone was adjudged Women’s Player of the Tournament for her overall performance, including eight goals. Chhimed Namdol of Center Zone emerged as Senior Men’s top scorer with 20 goals, while Kunga Yangchen of Sham Zone topped the women’s scoring charts with nine goals. Lahaul’s young goalkeeper Tanzin Norbu was recognised as the Emerging Player of the Tournament. Senior Men’s Category: Center Zone def. Lahaul 12-2 Lahaul struck first through Ramesh, who converted a beautiful drag flick in the fifth minute to take an early lead. Center responded swiftly as Chhimed Namdol equalised in the eighth minute before scoring again two minutes later to make it 2-1.

Namdol continued his dominance in the second period, adding two more goals to stretch the lead to 4-1. Despite Center creating numerous chances, Lahaul’s young goalkeeper Tanzin Norbu produced several outstanding saves to keep his side in the contest. The third period saw Center completely take control as Namdol scored five consecutive goals in a relentless



spell to push the scoreline to 9-1. Ramesh pulled one back for Lahaul in the ninth minute, but Namdol netted his tenth of the match soon after. Captain Sonam Kalzang and Prashant Thakur added the final two goals as Center wrapped up a 12-2 victory to secure the title. Pin Zone finished second in the standings, while Lahaul ended their campaign in fifth place. Women’s Category: Tod Zone def. Pin Zone 7-0 After a slow start in chilly conditions, Tod Zone Women found momentum in the

second period. Tanzin Dekyong opened the scoring in the sixth minute before Nawang Lamo struck twice in the 12th minute, assisted by Tanzin Dekyong and Kesang Lamo, to make it 3-0. In the third period, Tanzin added her second goal early on and Nawang completed her hat-trick a minute later. Kesang Lamo scored Tod’s sixth in the ninth minute before Tanzin Dekyong completed her hat-trick to seal a commanding 7-0 win. Tod finished third in the women’s competition, while Pin concluded their campaign without a win. On the final day, Center Zone Men produced a commanding performance to defeat Lahaul by 12–2, completing the league stage unbeaten with four wins from four matches. Their dominance was evident throughout the campaign, with a balanced mix of attacking flair and defensive solidity.

Chhimed Namdol emerged as the top scorer in the Senior Men’s category with 20 goals, while Rigzin Angrup of Sham Zone was named Player of the Tournament for his overall impact across both Senior Men and U-18 Boys categories. Center Zone’s triumph capped off a flawless run, ensuring they lifted the trophy in front of a packed crowd braving the icy winds of Kaza. Sham Zone Deny Center Zone a Clean Sweep While Center Zone had already secured the Women’s title a day earlier, their hopes of sweeping all categories were dashed by Sham Zone.

Belgium beat India 3-1 in FIH Pro League

Rourkela: Belgium defeated India 3-1 during the Rourkela leg of the FIH Men’s Pro League 2025-26 at the Birsamunda Hockey Stadium on Wednesday. Nelson Onana (23’), Thomas Crols (53’) and Arno Van Dessel (57’) scored the goals for Belgium, while Shilannand Lakra (29’) was the goalscorer for India, as per a press release from Hockey India. It was an extremely competitive first quarter with both sides hardly making any mistakes at the back. Belgium earned an early penalty corner in the 4th minute; however, Alexander Hendrickx’s dragflick was heroically stopped by India’s first rusher, Vivek Sagar Prasad.

Premier League’s Nottingham Forest sack head coach Sean Dyche today

Nottingham: Nottingham Forest has fired Sean Dyche and the Premier League team is looking for its fourth head coach of the season. Dyche was relieved of his duties late Wednesday following a goalless draw with the last-place Wolves, having been in charge for just 114 days. Forest’s failure to convert any of their numerous chances against Wolves left them three points clear of the relegation zone. Nottingham Forest Football Club can confirm that Sean Dyche has been relieved of his duties as head coach,” the club said in a statement early Thursday.

We would like to thank Sean and his staff for their efforts during their time at the club and we wish them the best of luck for the future.



We will be making no further comment at this time.” Forest finished seventh in the Premier League under Nuno Espirito Santo last season, missing out on a Champions League spot after a poor end to the campaign. Nuno signed a new three-year deal at the City Ground in June 2025, but was fired in Sep-

tember after a breakdown in His relationship with owner Evangelos Marinakis. Former Tottenham boss Ange Postecoglou was swiftly brought in as the Portuguese coach’s replacement, but lasted only 40 days in the job with Marinakis ending his tenure within minutes of a 3-0 defeat to Chelsea.

Roger Federer remains box office GOAT As Hall of Fame tickets sell out fast

Federer’s Hall of Fame tickets sell out instantly

New Delhi: Roger Federer has once again proved why he might be the most marketable tennis player of all time. Federer, who is set to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame, saw tickets for his induction event sell out in just 120 seconds — two minutes. The organisation took to X on Wednesday to reveal the staggering demand, stating that despite increasing the seating capacity for the event, tickets were snapped up at an unprecedented pace. The ceremony is set to take place on August 29. “As a small but historic venue, our capacity is limited,” the Hall posted on social media. The Hall said it anticipated immense excitement around the induction of the first man to win 20 Grand Slam singles titles, who will be enshrined at the Newport-based Hall of Fame alongside renowned broadcaster Mary Carillo. In addition to the 900 tickets originally available for the induction ceremony, the Hall also opened its 3,600-seat stadium for a watch party. Even so, all 4,500 tickets were gone within two minutes, Hall spokeswoman



Megan Erbes confirmed. The Tennis Hall of Fame, housed in the 19th-century Newport Casino, recently underwent a USD 3 million renovation to prepare for upcoming induction ceremonies honouring Federer and Serena Williams, who will be eligible next year unless she makes a competitive comeback. Federer’s Grand Slam journey began at Wimbledon in 2003, where he lifted his maiden major trophy. Six years later, at the same venue, he surpassed Pete Sampras’ long-standing men’s record of 14 Grand Slam titles by edging Andy Roddick in an epic 2009 final that stretched to 16–14 in the deciding set. His major tally eventually reached 20 when he captured the Australian Open crown in 2018. Rafael Nadal later moved

past Federer’s tally, finishing his career with 22 Grand Slam titles before retiring at the age of 38, while Novak Djokovic — the same age and still active — has raised the benchmark further to 24. Federer’s legacy extends far beyond Grand Slam success. Renowned for his effortless footwork, aggressive all-court game, fluid serve and devastating forehand, he amassed 103 tour-level titles and 1,251 match wins — figures surpassed in the Open era only by Jimmy Connors. He ruled the ATP rankings for 310 weeks in total, including a record 237 consecutive weeks at world No. 1. His honours also include Switzerland’s historic Davis Cup triumph in 2014 and an Olympic doubles gold medal alongside Stan Wawrinka at the 2008 Beijing

Games. Federer officially announced his retirement in 2022 and fittingly signed off by partnering Rafael Nadal in doubles at the Laver Cup, the event created by his own management team. Across his career, Federer became a template for future generations, including current world No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz, the 22-year-old who has already amassed six Grand Slam titles. Federer is one of eight men to complete a career Grand Slam, winning eight Wimbledon titles, six Australian Opens, five US Opens and one French Open. Roger Federer’s place in tennis history gained yet another formal stamp on Wednesday, as the Swiss legend was confirmed as part of the International Tennis Hall of Fame’s Class of 2026 in his very first year on the ballot. The Hall, based in Rhode Island, announced that Federer was the sole player-category nominee to clear the required voting threshold, though it never discloses the exact numbers. Roger Federer’s place in tennis history gained yet another formal stamp on Wednesday, as the Swiss legend.