

In Brief

CM Khemchand assures support for student welfare

Imphal: A delegation of of the DMU Students’ Union and AMSU HQTRS met Chief Minister Y Khemchand at the Secretariat and apprised him of key matters concerning student welfare. In a social media post, Chief Minister Khemchand said, “Called on by the representatives of the DMU Students’ Union, accompanied by the AMSU HQTRS President, at the Secretariat office. I was honoured with a traditional Lengyan Fi and warm courtesies from the delegation”. The Chief Minister said, “During the interaction, they apprised me of several important matters concerning student welfare, including issues related to scholarships, the posting of security guards, and the need for further improvement in the overall academic environment”.

Row Erupts Over Himanta Biswa Sarma’s ‘Conditions’

Guwahati: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has triggered a fresh political controversy after stating that his government has “no enmity” with Miya Muslims if they accept certain conditions, a remark that has sparked intense debate ahead of the upcoming elections. Speaking to the media, Sarma said that the government had no problem with people who respect and love the country. He added that if Miya Muslims follow certain conditions, there would be no conflict with them. Although he mentioned that there are ten conditions in total, the chief minister publicly referred to six of them. He said that if people raise slogans such as “Bharat Mata Ki Jai” and sing the entire “Vande Mataram,” there would be no objection. He also said there would be no issue if practices such as “love jihad,” “land jihad,” and “fertilizer jihad” were stopped, and if activities like illegal land encroachment, child marriage and polygamy were brought to an end.

CM Khemchand chairs cabinet meeting on administration, governance

Imphal: Chief Minister Y Khemchand chaired a cabinet meeting at the Secretariat to deliberate on key matters of administration and governance. The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho, Ministers Govindas Konhoujam and Kh Loken, Chief Secretary Pk Goel and several officials. Taking to his X and Facebook accounts, Chief Minister Khemchand said, “Chaired the Cabinet Meeting at the Secretariat, where we held comprehensive deliberations on key matters of administration and governance with a firm commitment to delivering a more citizen-centric system founded on transparency and accountability”.

Senapati gears up for International Women’s Day

Imphal, Mar 06: In alignment with global celebrations for International Women’s Day on March 8, a press conference was held by Mera Yuva Bharat (MYB) Senapati in co-ordination with District Youth Affairs and Sports Office at MYB, Senapati Office, Senapati. Addressing the media, P.S. John Longkhaye, Youth Officer, DYASO Senapati stated that series of competitive sporting events have been announced to inspire and empower women through action.

Two pilots killed in Su-30 crash In Assam

Guwahati, Mar 06: Two Indian Air Force (IAF) pilots were killed after a Sukhoi Su-30 MKI fighter jet crashed in Assam’s Karbi Anglong district last night. The Air Force said the pilots were identified as Squadron Leader Anuj and Flight Lieutenant Purvash Duragkar. “IAF acknowledges the loss of Sqn Ldr Anuj and Flt Lt Purvash Duragkar, who sustained fatal injuries in the Su-30 crash. All personnel of the IAF express sincere condolences, and stand firmly with the bereaved family in this time of grief,” the Air Force posted on X. The Su-30MKI, which was on a training mission, crashed near Chokihola in Karbi Anglong district after taking off from the Jorhat airbase in Assam.



MZP commemorates 1966 bombing during 19th Zoram Ni event, honoring Mizoram’s resilience

Aizawl, Mar 06: The General Headquarters of the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) observed the 19th “Zoram Ni” on March 5 at the MZP Conference Hall in Aizawl. The programme, held under the theme “I ram leh hnam humhalh la, khawvelin a dem lovang che” (Protect your land and nation, and the world will not condemn you), featured a talk show and commemorative session. News subscription service During the programme, MZP General Secretary C.

Lalhmsinganga presented a report on the observance of Zoram Ni over the years, while the event was chaired by MZP Vice President Sanghmingthanga. Speaking at the event, MZP President Dr C. Lalremruata said the organisation has been observing March 5 since 2008 to remember the bombing of Mizoram by the Indian Air Force using jet fighters in 1966. He said the observance is not intended to promote hatred against India or incite rebellion, but rather to honour those who sacrificed their lives and those who were injured during



the incident. He said the day is meant to remember the past with unity and respect, while also serving as an opportunity for healing and moving forward together as

a people. The MZP president also referred to remarks made by the Prime Minister of India in Parliament on August 10, 2023, during a discussion on a no-confidence

motion, when the Prime Minister mentioned the Indian Air Force’s bombing of Mizoram on March 5, 1966. However, he said the reference was made in the context

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arships, the posting of security guards, and the need for further improvement in the overall academic environment”. “I appreciated their constructive engagement and assured them that the State Government remains committed to supporting the aspirations of our students. We will extend all possible efforts to address these concerns and continue working towards strengthening a safe, supportive, and progressive academic atmosphere for our youth,” he said. “Our students are the future of Manipur, and their voices and concerns will always receive due attention and priority,” the Chief Minister added.

Champhai Deputy Commissioner felicitates successful MCS (Combined) exam candidates

Aizawl, Mar 06: The Deputy Commissioner of Champhai, Pu Mohammad Aaqib felicitated two candidates from Champhai district who successfully cleared the Mizoram Civil Service (Combined) Examination. The felicitation programme was held at the DC Conference Hall in Champhai at around 2 pm. The two successful candidates honoured during the programme were Lalhmingshanga, who qualified for the Mizoram Information Service (MIS), and Zarzolianna, who cleared the examination for the Mizoram Police Service (MPS). During the programme, the Deputy Commissioner congratulated both candidates for their success in one of the most competitive examinations in the state. He said that clearing such a difficult examination and entering important government services is a proud achievement not only for the candidates but also for the peo-



ple of Champhai district. Pu Mohammad Aaqib expressed hope that the two successful candidates would serve the government and the people with dedication and sincerity. He encouraged them to work honestly and responsibly so that they become reliable and respected officers who will contribute positively to the development of Champhai district and the state of Mizoram. As part of the felicitation, the Deputy Commissioner

presented mementos and plaques to the two candidates as a mark of appreciation and encouragement. Following the felicitation programme, the successful candidates also interacted with students who are currently preparing for various government examinations. These students are undergoing coaching under the EAST Champs initiative, which provides guidance and training to aspirants preparing for competitive examinations.

Indigenous Muslim Community Donated ₹11,000 to BJP Election Fund: Assam CM

Guwahati, Mar 06: Himanta Biswa Sarma on March 6 said that members of the indigenous Muslim community in Assam have extended their support to the Bharatiya Janata Party and even contributed to the party’s election fund.

Addressing a gathering at Rangoli Pathar in Naharkatia under Dibrugarh district, the Chief Minister said that members of the indigenous Muslim community had donated ₹11,000 as a gesture of support for the BJP.

He stated that the indigenous Muslim community in the state stands with the BJP and that their support was visible during the programme. Sarma thanked the community members for their contribution and said he was grateful for the gesture.

The Chief Minister also pointed out that the contribution came during the holy month of Ramadan, when Muslims observe fasting and prayers. He expressed hope that members of the community would continue to pray and bless the party.

Sarma made the remarks while visiting the Naharkatia area as political activities intensify in Assam ahead of the upcoming elections.

CM Khemchand chairs cabinet meeting on administration, governance

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Row Erupts Over Himanta Biswa Sarma’s ‘Conditions’ for Miya Muslims as AIUDF MLAs Back NDA in Rajya Sabha Poll

Guwahati, Mar 06: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has triggered a fresh political controversy after stating that his government has “no enmity” with Miya Muslims if they accept certain conditions, a remark that has sparked intense debate ahead of the upcoming elections.

Speaking to the media, Sarma said that the government had no problem with people who respect and love the country. He added that if Miya Muslims follow certain conditions, there would be no conflict with them. Although he mentioned that there are ten conditions in total, the chief minister publicly referred to six of them. He said that if people raise slogans such as “Bharat Mata Ki Jai” and sing the entire “Vande Mataram,” there would be no objection. He also said there would be no issue if practices such as “love jihad,” “land jihad,” and “fertilizer jihad” were stopped, and if activities like illegal land encroachment, child marriage and polygamy were brought to

an end.

Sarma maintained that his opposition was not directed at any community but at certain practices. However, his sudden conciliatory tone toward Miya Muslims has become a major talking point in Assam politics, particularly because of his earlier statements in which he had sharply criticised the community. In the past, he had referred to Miya Muslims as “outsiders” and made several controversial remarks that drew criticism both within the country and internationally.

Observers believe the chief minister’s change in tone has come at a time when political competition is intensifying ahead of the Assembly elections. Analysts say that while earlier rhetoric appeared aimed at consolidating support among sections of Assamese voters, the present political situation may be pushing the ruling party to seek broader electoral backing.

The debate intensified further after three legisla-

tors of the All India United Democratic Front publicly supported the NDA candidate in the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections scheduled for March 16. The MLAs—Karim Uddin Barbhuiya from Sonai, Nizam Uddin Choudhury from Algapur and Zakir Hussain Laskar from Hailakandi—signed the nomination papers of NDA candidate Pramod Boro, who is also the president of the United People’s Party Liberal.

The development has revived allegations from opposition parties that the BJP and AIUDF maintain a tacit understanding despite projecting themselves as political rivals. The BJP has often criticised AIUDF leader Badruddin Ajmal and accused him of representing Miya interests, while also warning in previous elections that Ajmal could become chief minister if the BJP was not voted to power.

The Congress has repeatedly alleged that some AIUDF legislators function as “agents” of the ruling party. Similar accusations had

surfaced during the 2022 Rajya Sabha elections when certain AIUDF MLAs were suspected of backing BJP candidates.

Meanwhile, Sarma indicated that the three AIUDF legislators who supported the NDA candidate may soon join the Asom Gana Parishad, an ally of the BJP in Assam. According to the chief minister, the MLAs are likely to formally join the party within the next few days.

In response, AIUDF leaders said the three legislators had already been suspended from the party and that their future political decisions would be their personal matter. On the same day, NDA candidates Yogendra Mohan and Birendra Prasad Baishya also filed their nominations for the Rajya Sabha elections.

The developments have intensified political debate in Assam, with critics questioning whether the changing rhetoric reflects electoral calculations ahead of the next round of political contests in the state.

NE/EAST

In Mizoram, 45 villages are still without electricity: Minister

Aizawl, Mar 06: Forty-five villages in Mizoram have remained classified as un-electrified or de-electrified, Power and Electricity minister F Rodingliana informed the state Assembly on Thursday. In a written reply to queries from opposition BJP member Prova Chakma, the minister said that efforts are on to provide electricity to households in these villages under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS). He said that sanctions have been secured and three contractors, including two from outside, have been finalised for the electrification of these remote villages. "The Guaranteed Technical Particulars (GTP) drawings for supply of materials have already been approved, and initial supplies have already begun reaching some of the designated sites," Rodingliana said. He said that there are reports of many transformer damage across the state, and 71 are awaiting allotment for repair. While several villages and neighbourhoods still house unrepared units, the minister maintained that power supply in most of these areas has not been completely cut off. In most cases, many affected areas are being back-fed from nearby functioning transformers to maintain a continuous supply for residents, he said. Addressing the frequent delays in transformer maintenance, Rodingliana detailed a multi-step repair process that relies heavily on logistics. Distribution Transformers (DT) must undergo a formal survey and receive Head Office approval before being trans-



ported to a specialised contractor's workshop in Assam's Silchar town, he said.

He said that manpower shortage has slowed the preparation of Survey Estimate Reports and the poor condition of the Aizawl-Silchar road over the past year significantly delayed the transport of DT. However, he noted that when road conditions are stable and staff are available, a backup stock of repaired units is typically maintained to speed up the process. Re-

sponding to public concern regarding safety, Rodingliana confirmed plans to replace severely corroded electric poles that pose a collapse risk.

He said that Rs 2.70 crore has been sanctioned in the 2025-26 financial year for replacement of such rusted poles. The minister further said that the demand for Low Tension (LT) line extension is high, and work is being prioritised based on the availability of additional funds from the government.

Assam's first river lighthouses are launched by Sonowal

Guwahati, Mar 06: Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Thursday laid foundation stones for four river lighthouses on the banks of the Brahmaputra, the first such infrastructure on an inland waterway in the country. The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways kick-started the process to construct the lighthouses at Bogibeel in Dibrugarh district, Pandu in Kamrup Metropolitan, and Silghat in Nagaon district in the south bank of the river, and Biswanath Ghat in Biswanath in the north bank. Laying the foundation stone at a function here, Sonowal said these four lighthouses are located at strategic points along the Brahmaputra, which is the National Waterway-2 and one of India's most important inland cargo and passenger corridors. The combined project outlay for all the four structures will be Rs 84 crore. Each lighthouse will rise up to 20 metres with a geographical range of 14 nautical miles and a luminous range of 8-10 nautical miles, powered entirely by solar energy. Alongside navigation infrastructure, every site will feature a museum, amphitheatre, cafeteria, children's play area, souvenir shop and landscaped public spaces, positioning each lighthouse as a tourist landmark as well as a functional maritime asset, the minister said. "A tonne of freight moved by water costs a fraction of what road transport demands, generates a fraction of the carbon and frees our highways for passengers and time-sensitive goods. These lighthouses on the Brahmaputra are a statement of intent that India's rivers are open for business, round the clock," he added. Sonowal said that waterways offer a decisive cost advantage, as moving a tonne of cargo by inland waterway costs roughly one-third of road transport and half of rail. "For a region like Northeast India, where road infrastructure is perpetually under pressure from both traffic and terrain, activating the Brahmaputra as a full-scale freight corridor is not a choice but a necessity," he added. The commissioning of river lighthouses on NW-2 is a direct response to a 53 per cent surge in cargo movement on the Brahmaputra waterway in the financial year 2024-25, as recorded by Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), a senior official



said. "Cargo traffic on NW-2 has been growing consistently, and the Brahmaputra corridor is now integral to supply chains serving Assam's tea, coal and fertiliser industries, in addition to carrying passenger and tourism traffic." The new lighthouses will enable 24x7 safe navigation, accommodate weather observation sensors and provide the navigational infrastructure necessary for the sustained growth of both freight and passenger movement on the river," he added. Each lighthouse is scheduled for completion within 24 months of the award of contract, following geotechnical investigation, topographic survey and detailed design. A Memorandum of Understanding between IWAI and Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL) was signed in April 2025, covering all four sites. The sites were formally transferred to DGLL under Right of Use agreements executed in June 2025, after a technical proposal placed before the Central Advisory Committee for Aids to Navigation. The DGLL, under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, is the statutory authority responsible for providing aids to navigation across India's 11,098 kilometre coastline and now its inland waterways.

Conrad distributes appointment letters to nearly 3K recruited police personnel

Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Thursday said law and order is fundamental for development while distributing appointment letters to nearly 3,000 newly recruited personnel of the Meghalaya Police at the 2nd MLP Battalion. Addressing the programme, Sangma described the occasion as a historic and memorable moment for the state, noting it could be the largest distribution of appointment letters in recent years, if not in the state's history. "This must be the largest distribution of appointment letters that I have seen in the recent past and perhaps even in the history of the state. Therefore, for us as a government, this is a moment of great pride," he said. The chief minister said the recruitment exercise was a major undertaking, with more than 1.7 lakh candidates applying for the posts. "Over 1,70,000 people had applied for these posts, and today close to 3,000 individuals will receive appointment letters and join the force. That in itself must bring a deep sense of satisfaction and happiness to the police department," he said. The recruitment drive covers 2,968 vacancies across various technical and service-oriented posts in the police department, officials said. Of the total posts, 1,494 are for Armed Branch Constables and associated roles, followed by 720 Unarmed Branch Constables, 205 MPRO Operators and 195 Firemen. The remaining vacancies include posts such as UBSI, Driver Fireman,



Driver Constable and several operator and mechanic positions.

Emphasising the role of the police in governance and development, Sangma said maintaining law and order was essential for progress. "For any society and for any government, development is extremely important. But without law and order, development cannot survive. Without law and order, nothing can move forward," he said.

He also urged the recruits to uphold discipline, fairness and integrity once they don the police uniform. "Very soon you will wear the uniform. But remember, this uniform is not just clothing. When

people see that uniform, they should feel respect, confidence and trust," he said. The chief minister also said the present government would complete eight years in office on Friday, during which nearly 11,000 appointments and recruitments have been made. Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong congratulated the recruits and emphasised that the selection process was conducted in a transparent and merit-based manner. "You have emerged as the best performers in this recruitment process. You represent the hopes and aspirations of the state of Meghalaya," he said, urging them to serve the people

with sincerity and humility. Earlier, Director General of Police Idashisha Nongrang welcomed the dignitaries and the newly recruited personnel along with their families. Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Thursday said law and order is fundamental for development while distributing appointment letters to nearly 3,000 newly recruited personnel of the Meghalaya Police at the 2nd MLP Battalion. The programme began with a ceremonial salami and felicitation of dignitaries, after which appointment letters were distributed to the recruits in the presence of senior government and police officials.

3 Assam Cong MLAs join BJP ahead of assembly polls

Guwahati, Mar 06: Three Congress MLAs – Kamalakhyia De Purakayastha, Sashikanta Das and Basanta Das – on Thursday joined the ruling BJP in Assam, along with two others, ahead of the assembly polls. All of them were inducted into the party by state BJP president Dilip Saikia in the presence of Union minister Pabitra Margherita at a function here. The two others who joined the BJP are former Congress joint secretary Parsha Bob Kalita and former Trinamool Congress general secretary Kangan Nath. The development comes close on the heels of former Assam Congress president Bhupen Borah joining the saffron party. Elections to the 126-member assam assembly are likely to be held in April. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that for the last two years, the MLAs were supporting his government in the legislative assembly, and "today, they have formally joined the party and I welcome them to the BJP". Asked whether they will be given tickets in the upcoming assembly elections, Sarma said the matter had not been discussed yet, but the party's state election committee "would now consider it". "Their names will be in the panel, but the Central Parliamentary Board will take the final decision regarding ticket allotment," he said. Sarma said it has already been discussed with them that nobody joins the BJP for election tickets, but at the same time "there is no hurdle in seeking the same and it will be given on the basis of their prospects". "They have joined the BJP unconditionally, and there is nothing like new or old members... we are all the same within the party," the chief minister said.

He also said that the three MLAs had openly supported the BJP during the last Lok Sabha elections. Purakayastha represents Karimganj (North), while Sashi-

kanta and Basanta are sitting MLAs from the Raha and Mangaldoi (SC) constituencies, respectively. The Congress had suffered a jolt, with Borah joining the BJP on February 22, while two other MLAs Abdul Rashid Mondal and Sherman Ali Ahmed switching over to the Rajior Dal last month. Both Mondal and Ahmed are three-time legislators from Goalpara (West) and Baghar, respectively. The opposition Congress has announced its first list of 42 seats, while the ruling BJP along with its allies – the AGP, BPF and UPPL – are yet to finalise seat-sharing arrangements.



ments. The Congress is leading a part of the unified opposition alliance known as the 'Asom Sonmilito Morcha' to challenge the ruling BJP, and has entered into seat-sharing arrangements with the Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) and the Left parties, but is yet to finalise it with the Rajior Dal. In the 126-member Assam assembly, the opposition Congress has 26 members, AIUDF 15, while there is one from the CPI(M) and an independent MLA. The ruling NDA has 64 from the BJP, while its allies AGP has nine members, UPPL seven and the Bodo Peoples' Front (BPF) three MLAs.

Tripura government signs agreement with GNRC for super-speciality hospital: Saha

Agartala, Mar 06: Chief Minister Manik Saha on Thursday said the state government has signed an agreement with the Guwahati Neurological Research Centre to set up a superspecialty hospital at Hapania in West Tripura district. Earlier, the government had signed a pact with Srija Hospitals and Research Institute, an Imphal-based medical institution, to set up a super-specialty hospital and medical college at RK Nagar in the same district. "We have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with GNRC, a Guwahati-based medical institution, to set up a superspecialty hospital at Tripura Jute Mills Ltd's vacant land. A team from our department has already visited Guwahati to check the infrastructure and facilities available at GNRC," he told reporters. However, the chief minister, who also holds the health portfolio, declined to elaborate further on the MoU with GNRC.

Saha also said initiatives were taken to



strengthen healthcare infrastructure and manpower at the government-run Govind Ballabh

Pant Hospital and Agartala Government Medical College. "We have already signed a MoU

with AIIMS, New Delhi, to streamline the healthcare services at GBP hospital. According to their recommendation, we have decided to increase ICU beds from 156 to 326. Besides, the GBP hospital is directly connected with AIIMS, New Delhi, through telemedicine to provide better medical facilities to patients of the state", he said.

Saha said a 16-bed dedicated ICU for patients with severe respiratory problems and a well-equipped ICU in the trauma centre were made operational at the GBP hospital on Thursday. "The state Cabinet has already discussed setting up a medical university to regulate medical colleges and other medical institutions in the state", he said, adding that the government wants to reduce referral cases by utilising and revamping existing medical facilities in the state. Currently, the northeastern state has three medical colleges which offer as many as 450 MBBS seats and 119 PG courses.

IAF Sukhoi fighter jet crashes

Guwahati, Mar 06: A Sukhoi Su-30MKI of the Indian Air Force reportedly crashed in Karbi Anglong on Thursday evening. According to reports, the fighter jet crashed around 7.45 pm at Rangkhelan village near Nilip block of Chakihola. The aircraft had taken off from Rowrah Air Force Station in Jorhat. A statement issued by the Defence PRO in Guwahati said the jet went missing after radar contact was lost. Air Force teams were immediately launched to ascertain the facts and locate the aircraft. In a post on X, the Indian Air Force said.

IAF Su-30MKI aircraft was reported overdue after taking off from Jorhat and was last in contact at 7.42 pm. Two Indian Air Force (IAF) pilots succumbed to fatal injuries after a Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jet crashed in Karbi Anglong district on Thursday evening (March 5). "Further details are being ascertained. Search and Rescue mission has been initiated," the statement said. Residents of the area said they saw the fighter jet crashing on a hilltop in the evening. According to eyewitnesses, the aircraft exploded on impact and a massive fireball was seen rising from the crash site. Local reports said the crash site is located on the peak of a tall hill, making access difficult for rescue teams. There was no immediate report of the pilots ejecting from the aircraft.

Mizoram power minister says electrification work underway as 45 villages remain without electricity

Aizawl, Mar 06 : Despite ongoing infrastructure pushes, 45 villages in several districts across Mizoram remain classified as un-electrified or de-electrified, state Power and Electricity Minister F. Rodingliana informed the state Assembly on Thursday. In a written reply to queries from opposition BJP member Prova Chakma, the minister said that efforts are underway to provide electricity to households in these villages under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS). He said that sanctions have been secured and three contractors, including two from outside the state, have been finalized to spearhead the electrification of these remote villages. “The Guaranteed Technical Particulars (GTP) drawings for the supply of materials have already been approved, and initial supplies have already begun reaching some of the designated sites,” Rodingliana said. He said that there are reports of many transformer damages across the state, and 71 units are awaiting allotment for repair. While several villages and neighbourhoods still have unrepared units, the minister maintained that power supply in most of these areas has not been



completely cut off. In many cases, affected areas are being back-fed from nearby functioning transformers to maintain a continuous power supply for residents, he said. Addressing frequent delays in transformer maintenance, Rodingliana detailed a multi-step repair process that relies heavily on logistics. Distribution Transformers (DTs) must undergo a formal survey and receive Head Office approval before being transported to a specialized contractor’s workshop in Assam’s Silchar town, he said. He said that manpower shortages have slowed the

preparation of Survey Estimate Reports, and the poor condition of the Aizawl–Silchar road over the past year has significantly delayed the transport of DTs. However, he noted that when road conditions are stable and staff are available, a backup stock of repaired units is typically maintained to speed up the process. Responding to public concern regarding safety, Rodingliana confirmed plans to replace severely corroded electric poles that pose a risk of collapse. He said that Rs 2.70 crore has been sanctioned in the 2025–26 financial year for the replacement of such rusted

poles. The minister further said that demand for Low Tension (LT) line extension is high, and work is being prioritized based on the availability of additional funds from the government. Introducing the Bill, Higher and Technical Education Minister Vanlalhlana said the decision was intended to address regional development imbalances and promote equitable growth across the state. The proposed university will function in a “cluster mode”, bringing various existing colleges under a unified administrative framework. Although the government had initiated the creation of staff posts and begun the process of identifying a Vice-Chancellor and Registrar, the Minister clarified that the amendment represents a change of site rather than a physical relocation. The headquarters had not been fully established in Aizawl; only the site had been surveyed. The centre is not being shifted but changed,” he said, adding that the decision followed sustained representations from residents of Lunglei, Champhai and Mamit districts. While extending support to the Bill, Opposition members raised questions over the timing of the reversal.

RIMS conducts dental check-up camp for children



Imphal, Mar 06: A dental health check-up and treatment camp for children was successfully conducted at Kakwa Namoirakpam Leikai and Naorem Leikai. The camp was organised by the Department of Paediatric and Preventive Dentistry, Dental College, RIMS, Imphal, in collaboration with Kangleicha Yaipha Lamjing Lup (KYL). The programme was conducted under ISPD NEST – Nurture, Educate, Serve and Treat, a flagship initiative of the Indian Society of Pedodontics and Preventive Dentistry (ISPPD) aimed at improving children’s oral health in the North-eastern region. During the camp, 60 children along with their parents benefited from oral health screening, dental caries detection, and assessment of gum and oral hygiene conditions. Educational demonstrations on proper brushing

techniques, healthy dietary habits, and the importance of regular dental visits were also provided to both children and parents. Minor restorative treatments and tooth extractions were performed for children requiring immediate care. Pamphlets, IEC materials, toothbrushes, toothpaste, oral hygiene kits, and necessary medicines were distributed. The camp was conducted under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Wairokpam Bhoomika Devi, Associate Professor and Head of the Department, Department of Paediatric and Preventive Dentistry, Dental College, RIMS, Imphal. The programme was an enriching experience for both the children and the dental team. Special appreciation was extended to the parents and children for their active participation.

Senapati gears up for International Women’s Day



Imphal, Mar 06: In alignment with global celebrations for International Women’s Day on March 8, a press conference was held by Mera Yuva Bharat (MYB) Senapati in co-ordination with District Youth Affairs and Sports Office at MYB, Senapati Office, Senapati. Addressing the media, P.S. John Longkhaye, Youth Officer, DYASO Senapati stated that series of competitive sporting events have been announced to inspire and empower women through action. He also stated that the National flagship initiative- ASMITA (Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women through Action) is a collaborative effort to encourage mass participation among women and girls to explore their potential in the field of athletics. The Youth Officers informed that International Women’s Day in Senapati district will observed on 8th March, 2026 at Astro Turf, Senapati. He continued that the ASMITA event fea-

tures varieties of track event and a football match highlighting female talent in the district. He also informed that participation is open to all women and girls residing in Senapati district. To compete, athletes must generate a National Sports Repository System (NSRS) ID with Aadhaar Card or visit My Bharat Office located at Old DC Office, he added. The organisers invited all residents to support and participate in this celebration of female athletic, fostering a community of empowerment a community of empowerment and sportmanship. The press conference was also attended by Paulina Monsang, Deputy Director, MYB Senapati, Pforkrehrii, Khelo India Badminton Mentor, Senapati, P.S. Khopuh, Khelo India Indigenous Wrestling Mentor, all of whom expressed their commitment to the success of the observation of International Women’s Day 2026.

7th session of 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly to resume on March 9

Imphal, Mar 06: The Seventh Session of the Twelfth Manipur Legislative Assembly will resume on March 9 in the Assembly Hall, informed an official notification. Officials conveyed that the state budget is likely to be presented during the proceedings. According to a notification issued by Chief Secretary Puneet Kumar Goel, “The forthcoming Assembly Session will begin on March 9, 2026. All departments are required to submit the Annual Administrative Report for 2025-26 for placing the same before the House.” The seventh session of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly had begun on February 5, with

the Governor’s address. The session was adjourned by the Speaker on the same day. This one-day session followed the swearing-in of Yumnam Khemchand Singh as the 13th Chief Minister of the state on February 4, marking the end of the assembly’s suspension, which had been in place since February 13, 2025. The previous one-day session was held just a day after a popular government was formed in the state. Yumnam Khemchand Singh was sworn in as Chief Minister after President’s Rule was revoked in Manipur, a state that has been affected by ethnic violence since 2023.

During the February 5 session, Home Minister Govindas Konhoujam moved the motion of thanks to the Governor’s address, which was seconded by Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho. Thereafter, the Report of the Business Advisory Committee, 2026, was tabled on the floor of the House. Chief Minister and Leader of the House Yumnam Khemchand Singh moved the Motion of Confidence. This motion, which was later passed, saw participation from the Leader of the Opposition Okram Ibobi and MLAs K. Ranjit, Kh. Meghachandra, Th. Lokeshore, and Surjakumar Okram.

Former CM Radhabinod flags off PMBJK awareness rally

Imphal, Mar 06: To promote the accessibility of affordable healthcare, the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra (PMBJK), Chingmeirong, organised a mass awareness rally today as a part of week long celebrations to highlight the benefits of high-quality generic medicines. The rally was officially flagged off by former Chief Minister Radhabinod Kojiam, from the Chingmeirong Khongnang Ani Karak junction. Participants marched through a route extending toward the Kangla Fort and returning via the Assembly Road, concluding back at the starting point. Addressing the gathering upon the rally’s return, Radhabinod Kojiam emphasized the pivotal role Jan Aushadhi Kendras play in reducing the financial burden of healthcare on the public. “These centers ensure that no citizen is deprived of essential treatment due to high costs. The medicines



provided here undergo rigorous testing to ensure they match the quality of expensive branded alternatives,” the Former CM stated. He further noted the growing network of these centers across the state and urged the public to utilize these

facilities to ensure “Health for All.” The event featured a moving address by Mrs. Thoithoi, popularly known as Mombi in Manipuri cinema, and a regular beneficiary of the Jan Aushadhi scheme. She shared her personal experience, detailing

how the availability of low-cost, effective medication at the Kendra has significantly improved her family’s well-being and financial stability. Her testimony served as a powerful reminder of the real-world impact of the PMBJK initiative.

‘Basanta Bilas’ cultural soirée to celebrate spring and womanhood in Guwahati on March 8

Guwahati, Mar 06: A vibrant cultural evening celebrating the spirit of spring and womanhood will be organised at Atal Udyan in Adabari on Sunday, March 8, 2026. Titled Basanta Bilas, the event is being organised by the Kalasamanvay Group and is expected to bring together art, literature, music and dance in a colourful celebration inspired by the season of spring. Inspired by the poetic sentiment, “Let the flowers bloom or not, today it is spring,” the programme aims to welcome the arrival of spring through a rich blend of cultural expression. The event will begin at 3:45 PM and will feature a variety of performances and discussions reflecting the emotions, creativity and vitality associated with the season. The occasion also holds special significance as it coincides with International Women’s Day and marks the second Foundation Day of the Kalasamanvay Group, which was formed under the initiative of the Society of Indian Performing Arts and Culture (K-SIPAC). To mark the day, a panel discussion dedicated to women’s empowerment and achievements will be held as part of the programme. The discussion will feature eminent gynaecologist Dr. Rita Bhuiya, noted Sanskrit scholar Dr. Sudeshna Bhattacharjee, and distinguished litterateur Manikuntala Bhat-

tacharjya. The session will be moderated by Madan Gopal Goswami. Renowned physician Dr. Sadhan Das will attend the programme as the chief guest. The event will also be graced by several prominent personalities including Padma Shri awardee and social worker Ajay Dutta, Inspector General of Police (In-Charge), Border Branch of Assam Police, Debajit Mukhopadhyay (IPS), writer and social activist Sanjay Gupta, poet Sanjay Chakraborty, social worker Rajesh Batra, educationist Manoranjan Kalita, Professor Amlendu Chakraborty, and noted litterateur Udayan Biswas, among others. The second half of the programme will present a special cultural evening showcasing music, dance, recitation and classical performances inspired by the many shades of spring. Folk songs invoking the rhythm of the season, recitations reflecting the feminine voice, Nazrul Geeti, Rabindra Sangeet, classical music, Kathak dance and other performances will portray themes of love, devotion, renewal and creative energy associated with the arrival of spring. The organisers said the event seeks to bring together artists, scholars and cultural enthusiasts to celebrate the beauty of spring while honouring the contributions of women in society.

45 villages in Mizoram sill await electricity, Minister informs Assembly

Aizawl, Mar 06: Around 45 villages in Mizoram are still without electricity or have lost their power supply, the state’s Power and Electricity Minister F. Rodingliana informed the Mizoram Legislative Assembly. The minister said the government has already started taking steps to restore electricity and connect the remaining villages under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS). The information was shared in a written reply to a question raised by BJP legislator Prova Chakma during the Assembly session. According to the minister, necessary sanctions for the electrification work have already been secured. Three contractors have also been finalised to carry out the project. Out of them, two contractors are from outside Mizoram. They will work on providing electricity to villages that are either still un-electrified or have become de-electrified over time. Rodingliana said the required tech-

nical drawings for the supply of materials have already been approved. He added that the initial supply of materials has also started reaching some of the designated project sites. The department hopes that the work will gradually move forward as materials continue to arrive and contractors begin operations in the remote areas. The minister also informed the Assembly that several transformers across the state have been damaged. At present, 71 transformers are waiting to be allotted for repair. Despite these damages, the electricity department has managed to maintain supply in many areas by using a system known as back-feeding, where power is supplied from nearby working transformers to keep electricity flowing. However, repairing the damaged transformers has taken time due to several challenges. Rodingliana explained that before any transformer can be repaired, the department must first conduct a

detailed survey. After that, the survey estimate report must be approved by the department’s head office. Only then can the damaged transformer be transported to specialised workshops for repair. Most of these transformers are sent to Silchar in neighbouring Assam, where the repair work is carried out. The minister said that a shortage of manpower has slowed the process of preparing survey estimate reports. In addition, the poor condition of the Aizawl–Silchar road during the past year has also delayed the transportation of transformers to the repair centres. Despite these difficulties, the department tries to maintain a reserve stock of repaired transformers whenever road conditions are stable and manpower is available. This helps the department replace damaged units more quickly when breakdowns occur. The minister also spoke about safety concerns related to ageing infrastructure. He said several electric

poles in the state have become badly corroded and pose a risk of collapse. To address this issue, the government has planned a large-scale replacement of such poles. For this purpose, Rs 2.70 crore has been sanctioned for the financial year 2025–26 to replace rusted and damaged electric poles across Mizoram. The department hopes that this measure will improve safety and strengthen the electricity distribution network. Rodingliana further said that many areas in the state continue to demand the extension of Low Tension (LT) power lines. These requests are being considered by the department, but the work will depend on the availability of additional government funds.

Approximately 45 villages in Mizoram are currently without electricity or have lost power supply, as reported by Power and Electricity Minister F. Rodingliana during an assembly session.

North East Chronicle

MARCH 07 2026 VOL 02 NO. 13



Editorial

The Wealth of Wisdom: Why the Elderly are Assets, Not Burdens

In a world obsessed with the velocity of youth and the metrics of immediate productivity, we often make the mistake of viewing our aging population through the lens of “dependence.” To label the elderly as a “burden” is not just a moral failure—it is a profound misunderstanding of social value. The elderly are the living repositories of our collective history and wisdom. Beyond their past economic contributions, they provide the emotional scaffolding of our families and communities. They are the mentors, the keepers of tradition, and the steady hands that offer perspective in turbulent times. Furthermore, the “burden” narrative ignores the invisible economy fueled by seniors. Millions of elderly individuals provide essential childcare for grandchildren, engage in extensive volunteer work, and offer guidance that prevents younger generations from repeating costly historical mistakes. True societal progress isn’t measured by how fast we move, but by how we honor those who paved the road. We must shift our focus from the “cost of care” to the value of connection. A society that marginalizes its elders eventually loses its own soul.

In a world of lies, we need the BBC more than ever. This week could be our last chance to save it

The BBC may have a over one and a half years before its charter expires in December 2027, but the public consultation on its renewal closes next week. All those who care about the BBC’s future should hurry and send in their response before 10 March. Despite strong public support for the national broadcaster, you can bet battalions of enemies driven by the right will be out in force to undermine it.The timing turns out to be accidentally apt. As chaos is unleashed across the Middle East, the BBC and its array of experienced correspondents has never been more visibly needed. Nightly reports from Jeremy Bowen, Sarah Smith, Lyse Doucet, Orla Guerin, Clive Myrie and all the rest give the country – and the world – trusted updates, as few others can do. The secretary of state for culture, media and sport, Lisa Nandy, a strong defender of the BBC, called its World Service “the light on the hill” in a world of flexible fictitious facts.Truth is not the first casualty of the US and Israel’s war on Iran, since there was none to start with. The contradictory reasons for Washington launching attacks against Iran mid-negotiation were never honest. The digital infrastructure where so many now access their information is owned and controlled by the world’s six richest men, barons gathering clicks not truth. The BBC, however, is where people can turn in the global information war waged by authoritarian states against open democracies.Mercifully, charter renewal comes at a rare time of Labour in office. The BBC should be able

to escape a radical dismantling or even the abolition that the Tories, Reform and the media that backs them push for. The right’s peculiar patriotism seeks to demolish British achievements the country is most proud of: our public broadcasting and our NHS. But in lobbying attack after attack for any relatively minor error in its considerable output, it terrorises the BBC, crowing at the resignation of its director general, Tim Davie, over an editing blunder in a Panorama segment that made little difference to the perception of the intent of a Donald Trump speech. That edition of Panorama was never shown in the US – but rightists, planted on the BBC board by the Tory government, stirred up faux indignation, prompting Trump to sue the BBC for \$5bn (£3.7bn).As part of the charter consultation, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has put out a lengthy and often confusing questionnaire for the public to respond to. Although not intentionally malevolent, it feels as if it has been put together and thoroughly mangled through many a departmental committee, its authors looking fearfully over their shoulders at the BBC’s Daily Mail, Murdoch and Telegraph foes. It has produced some contorted questions that are very difficult for pro-BBC supporters to know how to answer. Here are some tricky ones.“How, if at all, does the amount those working for the BBC are paid impact your view of the BBC?” That reflects repeated attacks on BBC top salaries, when pay is low compared with the industry standard

and exceptionally low and insecure in junior ranks; but this question encourages people to suggest pay should be cut.

“Would you be willing to pay for a BBC top-up subscription service focused on premium and entertainment content?” This is a difficult one. Some of us would be willing to volunteer more than the current £3.36 a week for the wealth of BBC programmes on offer, its archive and iPlayer. (One latte from Pret a Manger costs more than £4 alone, while on average UK households are now spending between £25 and £50 a month on streaming services, far more for far less than the BBC. You can get Netflix for £5.99 a month, but with endless ads and, of course, no news.) But topping up voluntarily or raising the licence fee is not what this suggests. This two-tier plan would be a wreck, breaking the great universal contract that every licence payer gets everything.“To what extent do you agree or disagree that new concessions for households facing significant financial pressures should be introduced?” This is dangerous territory. Many would like a tiered payment according to means. But when over-75s were previously exempted (later limited to those on pension credit), the government ended up foisting the bill on the BBC. The answer here must be that concessions should only be introduced if the government pays for them by increasing benefits to include some extra to cover part of the licence fee: everyone should pay something.“To what extent do you agree or disagree that BBC content

or services should carry advertising?” This often tempts reluctant licence fee payers, but going right back to Thatcher’s Peacock committee, which seriously considered introducing ads, it is always ruled out: it would kill off ITV, Channel 4 and commercial radio, as there isn’t enough advertising to go round. Besides, the joy of the BBC is no interruptions.The DCMS consultation will be used to help decide the BBC’s future. For those who want to have their say, they can find the questionnaire here. For good advice on complicated and technical questions, British Broadcasting Challenge, the pro-public service campaign, has excellent suggested replies. Encouragingly, Nandy’s introduction to the consultation is a powerful encomium for the BBC: “Our vision is for a BBC that is trusted, loved and belongs to us all, providing those shared spaces and places that have become so rare and so precious in recent decades.”The problem is, as ever, the money. The BBC lost 30% of its funding in the Tory years and urgently needs more to keep up, let alone to add good new services and fulfil its potential, as suggested in this paper, by fostering growth within the creative industries. Stirring resentment against the licence fee with crocodile tears for the poor has been the right’s best weapon, but the BBC’s funding system remains better than anything else anyone has come up with. Shouldn’t this be the last time we are pulled into this debate? Let this be the last charter renewal: why dig it up every 10 years?

Cold War reversed: How Russia’s superweapons are challenging Nato

Moscow has inverted the Cold War playbook. Where once Nato wielded nuclear weapons as a first-use possibility to counter the Soviet Union’s overwhelming conventional superiority in Europe, Russia now deploys them for precisely the same reason: to offset the West’s current conventional advantage. The recent tests of the Poseidon nuclear-powered torpedo and the Burevestnik cruise missile are not just acts of military innovation— they are sabres to be rattled to control the doomsday escalation metrics. During the Cold War, the arithmetic was straightforward. The Soviet Union maintained a commanding edge in conventional forces—superior numbers, tank strength, and force concentration across Eastern Europe.

Nato, lacking comparable conventional capacity, relied on nuclear weapons as a first-use deterrent to offset this imbalance. The threat of nuclear escalation was the great equaliser, the psychological cudgel that prevented Soviet conventional dominance from translating into territorial conquest. That dynamic has been inverted. Today, Russia confronts a far more technologically advanced adversary with superior conventional capabilities. The US and Nato possess precision weaponry, force projection, advanced surveillance, and integrated air defence that dwarf Russian conventional strength. The Poseidon and Burevestnik address that imbalance and compensate for the widening gap between Russia’s conventional forces and those of the West. The Poseidon, a submarine-launched nuclear-powered underwater drone, is 25 metres long with a diameter of 1.5 to 2 metres. According to Russian claims, it travels at depths exceeding 1,000 metres, beyond the reach of most anti-submarine weapons. The warhead reportedly yields around 2 megatons, and the weapon’s nuclear propulsion grants it practically unlimited range.

In theory, it could traverse the Atlantic undetected and strike American or British coastal cities. The Kremlin presents this as invincible. The Burevestnik tells a similar story. This nuclear-powered cruise missile, which flew 14,000 kilometres in a nearly 15- hour test in October 2025, operates at low altitudes and can theoretically remain airborne for days, circling the globe before striking its target. Its nuclear reactor overcomes the fuel constraints of conventional engines, giving

it an unlimited operational radius and the ability to take unpredictable flight paths that confound traditional air defence systems. Russia has acknowledged first- and short-notice nuclear options implicitly through its revised nuclear doctrine, formally lowering the threshold for nuclear weapons use in November 2024.

Use of nuclear weapons by Russia is no longer restricted to existential threats to the state but now encompasses aggression against Russian territory or Belarus with conventional weapons that create a “critical threat” to sovereignty or territorial integrity. This is the language of a state preparing to brandish nuclear weapons not as a last resort, but as an active response, mirroring Nato’s Cold War posture. Yet there exists a crucial asymmetry that Moscow conveniently ignores. While Russia retains numerical superiority in warheads, the United States and its Nato allies possess far superior missile defence capabilities. American systems, including the Aegis platform equipped with SM-3 interceptors, demonstrated their efficacy in April 2024 when U.S. Navy ships successfully intercepted Iranian ballistic missiles. Nato’s integrated missile defence system, designed

to coordinate sensors, radars, satellites, and interceptors across allied nations, steadily improves. The Poseidon’s much-vaunted stealth and the Burevestnik’s low-altitude evasion tactics operate in a strategic environment fundamentally altered by precision strike technology, real-time intelligence sharing, and networked air defence that Russia cannot easily match. The true audience for these weapons, however, is not the Pentagon or Nato’s headquarters. It is the ordinary citizen of America, Britain, and the European Union. Moscow’s nuclear threats serve a political purpose: to convince Western publics that their governments cannot afford to support Ukraine or maintain Nato commitments without risking nuclear annihilation.

The message is seductive in its simplicity. Why sacrifice your cities, your children, your civilisation itself for Poland or Ukraine? Why risk the unthinkable for a country thousands of miles away? This is the psychological warfare that Russian nuclear signalling has always sought to achieve—not just military victory. And here lies Russia’s calculation: these weapons will achieve their intended effect. The strategy relies on the rational actor the-

orem beloved by Western planners—the assumption that no rational state would exchange the destruction of its own civilisation for marginal geopolitical gains in foreign lands. It is a sound assumption.

The United States will not sacrifice New York or London for Kyiv or Warsaw. Britain will not irradiate Birmingham to defend the Baltics. The European Union will not incinerate Brussels to maintain Nato’s eastern flank. The weapons work, not just because they are strategically superior, but because they exploit a fundamental truth about liberal democracies: they value the lives of their own citizens above abstract principles of international order. Russia’s current nuclear posture, premised on conventional inferiority and the hope that Western publics will flinch, contains within it a profound danger.

Miscalculation of intent could lead to a catastrophic misjudgement from Nato or a preemptive Russian strike.

The Poseidon and Burevestnik represent not Russian strength but its only alternative in the face of conventional limitations. They are symptoms of a conventional military that cannot compete, a defence budget dwarfed by Nato’s combined spending, and armed forces

that have struggled against a far less well-equipped adversary in Ukraine. These weapons signal that Moscow’s only remaining tool is the thermonuclear bomb—and that it intends to use the threat of it to reshape geopolitics. This trajectory reveals an uncomfortable truth that Western strategists have largely avoided confronting. The risk of nuclear escalation has become structurally embedded in the Ukraine conflict. Continued Nato expansion and sustained Western military support steadily compress Russia’s strategic space and raise the probability of sudden nuclear use.

Moscow has signalled repeatedly that it views such expansion as an existential threat. Yet without formal arms control agreements or negotiated buffer zones, this danger does not diminish—it accumulates with each deployment, each artillery shipment, each rattling commitment. The absence of agreed-upon red lines transforms nuclear weapons from instruments of deterrence into instruments of desperation. More troubling still is the paradox that should concern Western defence planners above all others: Russia’s conventional weakness in Ukraine increases rather than decreases the nucle-

ar menace. A military bleeding from sustained losses becomes less calculable, not more. Cornered powers make dangerous calculations. The Kremlin’s revised nuclear doctrine reflects this logic with chilling clarity: as conventional options narrow, nuclear options broaden. Western strategy must account for this dynamic or risk sleepwalking toward catastrophe. The path to stability, therefore, lies not in Nato revisionism but in the preservation of the strategic status quo.

Nuclear stability requires accepting existing Russian gains, not revising them through eastward expansion. The Cold War remained “cold” not because one side possessed overwhelming superiority, but because both recognised the boundaries of acceptable competition. Revisiting Russia’s sphere of influence through missile defence, forward deployment, and Ukrainian Nato membership does not advance Western security; it makes nuclear miscalculation more probable. Another Ukraine-like standoff—frozen, unresolved, and perpetually prone to escalation—could lead to consequences that no rational actor should willingly contemplate. Prudence dictates negotiation before desperation dictates annihilation.A

This is a life and death story for the UK – so why is it being brushed under the carpet

My guess is you keep across the news. You know Andy Mountbatten-Windsor has just had the worst birthday ever; that tall hotels in Dubai don’t make for a great holiday right now; and that Keir Starmer’s engagements diary for 2027 will be remarkably clear.Still, there is one headline I’ll bet you haven’t seen, even though it directly affects your life. It’s about your life, and mine, and those of our families and friends and neighbours. I didn’t spot it either, until a few days ago when the Guardian ran a reader’s letter.

It came from Alan Walker, a retired professor at the University of Sheffield. Why, he asked, hadn’t this newspaper made more of the latest “shocking” figures on healthy life expectancy? I looked up the report from the Office for National Statistics, and he’s absolutely right: the findings

are indeed “momentous”, and they should be on the front pages, because they expose a serious truth about the state we’re in.The figures show this: a child born this morning in Britain can expect to be in good health only until they are 61. The last 20 years of their life will be blighted by illness: dodgy hearts, painful joints, an inability to get about. Our healthy life expectancy has been dropping for years; it is now the lowest since 2011, when records began.

For most of the past 100 years, the UK and other rich countries have made outstanding progress on life expectancy. Year after year, decade after decade, the outlook has just kept getting better. Whereas a century ago the average life expectancy was about 50, today you can hope to live into your 80s. And now in Britain one of the great success stories in human

history is going into reverse. Over the past 15 years, improvements in life expectancy have essentially stalled, while our allotment of healthy life is getting shorter.How important is this? “It’s huge,” I was told by the epidemiologist Michael Marmot. “If our health and life expectancy is in decline, it’s about as clear a sign as you can get that our society is in decline.” In the 1980s, Marmot studied the Soviet bloc and saw illness increase. That’s one way you could tell those societies were on the verge of collapse.Now it’s starting to happen in hypercapitalist countries. Scientists increasingly worry about “midlife mortality” in Britain: people in the prime of their lives dropping dead. In Donald Trump’s America, where life expectancy is plunging, more women are dying between the ages of 25 and 44 than did in 1990. Sick lives

are the product of sick societies. It doesn’t have to be like this. While our healthy life expectancy has been dropping, in Sweden it has been rising. That’s real progress. Not GDP going up 0.1% or Rachel Reeves forecasting an extra couple of billion in fiscal headroom – but whether you live or die, are well or sick. Yet in a society as unequal as the UK, how well or sick you are depends on how rich you are. The NHS provides free healthcare, but it can’t pay your bills, free your flat of mould or keep your kids fed.A little while ago, I interviewed the chief executive of the hospital where I was born, North Middlesex in London. On an office wall hung a map of her patch, marked with life expectancies for each part. The working-class suburb where I was raised, Edmonton, ranks among the most deprived in the country; the middle-class

suburb where I currently live is among the least deprived. I could see them on her map, along with figures suggesting my two small daughters can expect almost a decade more of good health than girls living in my old home, just three miles away.That is justice. It could be improved, but British governments have made choices that mean poorer children get old sooner and die earlier than richer children. The fact our healthy lives are now getting shorter is also a political choice. Much of the choosing was done by George Osborne and David Cameron, by Nick Clegg and Danny Alexander, who imposed year after year of spending cuts. In their book Social Murder? Austerity and Life Expectancy in the UK, the public health experts David Walsh and Gerry McCartney point out how Tory and Lib Dem policies effectively killed or-

dinary Britons. According to their modelling, those service cuts, benefit caps and welfare freezes put an end to the lives of 345,000 British people. And it left the UK disastrously placed for Covid. Walsh and McCartney write about Moira, a nurse whose partner inflicted violent abuse, leaving her with the kind of injuries that no hospital can fix. She refused all state support and kept nursing, until her injuries caught up with her. Austerity robbed her of the basic dignities of life. Too ill to attend an interview for social security, she was sanctioned off benefits. A few years afterwards, she died of cancer. “I am absolutely certain that the stress she endured caused her to give up her fight against her illnesses,” her daughter, Nichole, says. “Without the stress we would have had a little more precious time.”

But it wasn’t bad news for

everyone. Cameron went on to a finance job with a reported £7m payout, Nick Clegg got to work in Silicon Valley for Mark Zuckerberg, while George Osborne appears regularly on a podcast, pockets millions from investment banking and enjoys the status of chairing the British Museum.Meanwhile, austerity politics continues to blight this country, with so many of those welfare cuts still in place and swathes of our public services close to falling over.Few news stories matter to you more than how long you and your children live and how healthy you’ll be. Yet most newspapers buried this report. Some didn’t even mention it. When I rang Walker, I asked why he thought that was. He talked about the power of the pharmaceutical and junk-food industries, how the NHS fretted about waiting lists rather than healthy lives. Personally,

I wonder if the answer isn’t more political. Starmer could have made the centrepiece of his manifesto living longer, healthier and better lives. He could have introduced policies designed to make that so, just as the Swedes did 20 years ago. Then the press would have had no choice but to cover it, with the ears of hostile papers pricked at all times for the sound of missed targets.He didn’t do that. His team talked about growth being the centre of everything, the core of every department’s mission. They went for wealth, not health. They chose to tolerate inequality. They opted for more of the same as we’ve had since 2010. That choice says much about Westminster’s priorities. People in power don’t look at life expectancy because, politicians and voters alike, we’ve all got used to expecting less from our lives.

Ends a four-day downward trend; the Nifty hits 24,600; RIL and Bajaj Finance increase

Mumbai: Stock market today: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty snapped a four-day losing run on Thursday, tracking an overnight rally on Wall Street and as investors judged the recent sell-off as excessive. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent saying the US will make ‘series of announcements’ to support oil trade in the Gulf improved sentiment, even as Brent futures for May delivery were hovering around \$84 a barrel level. At 9.18 am, the BSE Sensex was trading at 79,566.98, up 450.79 points or 0.57 per cent. The index was up over 500 points in trade earlier. Nifty was quoting at 24,618.40, up 137.90 points or 0.56 per cent. Adani Ports led Sensex gainers, rising 2.09 per cent to Rs 1,464.20. Reliance Industries and Bajaj Finance gained 2 per cent each. Larsen & Toubro and NTPC were up 1-2 per cent. Analysts noted that Asian markets, which did well this year, such as South Korea, are facing huge volatility triggered by profit booking. India, on the other hand, has not performed well during the phase. “Going forward, high volatility in response to news/events will keep the market volatile. This will give opportunities to investors to slowly accumulate high quality stocks and wait with lots of patience. Perhaps emotional intelligence is more important now than financial acumen,” said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments.



“Despite pockets of global strength, domestic sentiment remains fragile and highly sensitive to geopolitical developments. Volatility is there-

fore expected to remain elevated, with markets likely to trade cautiously and within a defined range until clearer macro signals or any easing in geopolitical tensions emerges,” said Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money.

L&T shares fall 12% in week amid concerns

Mumbai: Amid the rising geopolitical concerns, brokerage firms continue to remain positive on Larsen & Toubro Ltd (L&T), despite its significant order book exposure in the Middle East (ME). Analysts are expecting the capital goods major to rise up 26 per cent from its recent lows as they believe that the reconstruction of infrastructure may add to its order book in the long-term. To recall, shares of L&T have tumbled 12.5 per cent from their 52-week high at Rs 4,440 hit just a week ago. However, the stock made a swift rebound, rising nearly 5 per cent to Rs 4,072 on Thursday, with its market capitalization hitting at Rs 5.5 lakh crore mark. The stock has zoomed nearly 175 per cent in the last five years. Phillip Capital is also positive on L&T shares as it sees capital goods stocks are projected to see 15 per cent/12 per cent order book growth in FY 27/28 after a robust 22 per cent in FY26. “Strong growth is expected for stocks including L&T and others across both years,” it added with a ‘buy’ tag and a target price of Rs 4,900. According to the market participants, international exposure in the Middle East has emerged as a key growth factor for several EPC companies. West Asia players being impacted by delay in/cancellation of fresh awarding and execution delay in ongoing projects with the ongoing conflict involving the US and Israel-Iran. “L&T is turning into a ‘moving parts’ thesis from a ‘sum-of-the-parts’ thesis. We see limited clarity on how things will unfold in the Middle East over the medium term, but it can impact execution as well as margins for certain projects. We adjust our core business valuations to 25 times to bake in the current volatile scenario for now and arrive

at a revised two-year forward target price Rs 4,400,” it said with a ‘buy’ tag. Within the ME, L&T has the largest exposure in Saudi Arabia, where hydrocarbon sites are under execution, while renewable and Power T&D operations are spread across the region. With the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, we see potential risk in terms of execution delay and deferral of fresh awarding in the near term, it said. Given the ongoing hostilities, we see 10 per cent impact on the FY26 order inflow, basis the order prospect pipeline. For L&T, 12,000-15,000 workers are presently working in the ME region. While it is difficult to assess the current situation, we estimate that L&T’s core earnings will be negatively impacted by 11-12 per cent for FY27E/28E,” Emkay added with a ‘buy’ and a target price of Rs 4,800. L&T has been underperforming with a sharp decline over last 3-4 trading sessions due to tensions in gulf countries as it has a major exposure to Gulf countries. The street is broadly concerned about the execution of projects and margins since the contracts are broadly fixed price contracts, said Ankit Soni, L&T’s overseas share in the order book fell to 47 per cent in FY25, and further strengthened to 49 per cent of the total Rs 7.3 lakh crore as of 9MFY26. Key geographies that L&T caters to in overseas markets are the Middle East (76 per cent of the M9FY26 overseas orderbook, at Rs 3.6 lakh crore), USA, Europe, and others, said Emkay Global. Motilal Oswal Financial Services is positive about L&T’s growth outlook based on its strong order book and prospects of healthy core PAT earnings over FY25-28E.

Five reasons why the markets cease strong relief surge Sensex surged 1,000 points

Mumbai: After several days of sharp declines triggered by rising tension in West Asia, Indian equity markets finally found some relief today, March 5. Benchmark indices bounced back strongly during the session. The rebound came even as global concerns around the ongoing US, Israel-Iran conflict continued to remain in focus. Similarly, the Nifty opened at 24,615.95 and traded between an intraday high of 24,854.20 and a low of 24,529.40, a movement of nearly 325 points during the session before closing firmly in positive territory. Today’s recovery was largely a technical rebound after the sharp fall seen in the previous sessions. Another factor that helped sentiment was the easing of market volatility. The India VIX, often referred to as the market’s fear gauge, cooled off from elevated levels. Sectoral indices trade mostly higher

On the sectoral front, most indices ended the session with gains

The Nifty Auto index gained around 2%, while the Nifty Metal index also rose more than 2% during the session. Other sectors such as realty, pharmaceuticals, media, healthcare, consumer durables, and oil and gas also ended higher with gains of over 1%. Key gainers in today’s trade Shares of Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies and Tata Consultancy Services saw declines during the day. Among financial stocks, ICICI Bank and State Bank of India were also among the stocks that ended the session in negative territory. Buying interest was visible in several large-cap stocks. Among the Nifty stocks, Adani Ports emerged as the top gainer with gains of around 4%. Other major stocks such as Larsen & Toubro, Hindalco Industries, Reliance Industries and Coal India also witnessed strong buying interest and gained over 3% during the session. Key laggards in today’s trade

While many stocks moved higher, some sec-



tors continued to face selling pressure. Technology and select banking stocks remained among the key laggards in today’s session.

By the end of the trading session, markets managed to hold firmly in the green. The Sensex closed at 80,015.90, gaining about 899 points or 1.14%, while the Nifty settled at 24,765, up 285 points or 1.17%. The Nifty Bank index also ended higher at 59,055, rising around 0.51%.

“Amid supportive global cues, domestic equities ended higher, with mid- and small-cap stocks outperforming large caps. Investor sentiment improved after comments from the US deputy secretary suggested that an India-US trade deal may be nearing completion. Value

buying also emerged in sectors such as metals, consumer durables, realty, and auto following recent corrections, while IT stocks resumed their decline partly due to the strengthening of the Indian rupee. Market momentum strengthened toward the close after reports that Iran had conditionally offered to abandon its nuclear program, raising hopes of de-escalation in the ongoing US/Israel-Iran tensions,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investment. The day began on a green note today. The Sensex opened at 79,530.48 and moved between an intraday high of 80,303.83 and a low of 79,201.69, an intraday movement of more than 1,100 points.

Despite JM Financial’s “Reduce” rating, this Tata Group giant aims for 18% margins

Mumbai: Among the wide list of companies under the Tata Group umbrella, one stock that has recently caught the attention of analysts is Tata Technologies. The brokerage firm JM Financial, in its latest report, has maintained a ‘Reduce’ rating to Tata Technologies, indicating a cautious stance. Another area highlighted by the company is its partnership with global automobile manufacturers. The report noted that “Tata Technologies expects EBITDA margin to improve to 16% in Q4FY26.” Over the longer term, the company aims to exit FY27 with margins of around 18%. The brokerage pointed out that “valuations are at 29x FY27 consensus EPS.” What investors need to watch The Tata Technologies management has outlined a growth roadmap supported by new deals, improving demand conditions and margin recovery plans, but the brokerage believes the execution of these plans will be crucial. The brokerage’s cautious stance stems from a combination of factors, including past delays in deal ramp-ups, uneven global demand trends and relatively high valuation levels. One example is the joint venture with German automaker BMW. According to the brokerage report, “Tata Tech BMW JV continues to deliver and is tracking ahead of expectations.”



and lower concentration risks over time. However, demand trends vary by region. The Europe and Asia currently dominate the deal pipeline, while North America remains relatively soft.

JM Financial on Tata Technologies: Margin recovery expected but key challenges remain As per the brokerage house, the profit margins have faced pressure recently due to operational disruptions and supply chain issues. The report noted that the major factor affecting performance was a cybersecurity incident involving a key client. According to the brokerage report, margins were temporarily affected due

to these operational challenges. However, the company expects improvement in the coming quarters. Let’s take a detailed look at the JM Financial view on this Tata group stock. According to the brokerage report, the company is targeting better performance in the coming years. However, some operational and market challenges remain that could influence the pace of growth. Despite this outlook, JM Financial has chosen to maintain a cautious stance. It stated that “execution needs to be monitored. There have been delays in deal ramp-up and, hence, growth has been soft in the past.”

JM Financial on Tata Technologies: Demand conditions are improving but uneven One positive development highlighted by the company is the improving demand environment, especially in the automotive engineering research and development sector. According to the brokerage report, “the automotive ER&D market has experienced delays rather than cancellation of key projects.” This suggests that while projects may have been postponed due to global uncertainties, they are still expected to move forward eventually. The company has also secured several new deals recently. Tata Technologies has won three full vehicle development deals in recent quarters. In addition to automotive projects, the aerospace segment continues to perform relatively well. The company currently has an annual revenue run rate of around 40 million United States dollars from this vertical. JM Financial on Tata Technologies: Management targets stronger growth ahead As per the brokerage house report, management is aiming for double-digit organic revenue growth in FY27, along with improved profitability. The company expects its earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) margin to reach 18% by the Q4FY27. The brokerage report noted that “management indicated confidence in a healthy growth trajectory, targeting double-digit organic revenue growth in FY27 with an 18% EBITDA margin exit rate by Q4FY27.”

IEX volumes surge 30% volumes

Mumbai: Energy Exchange (IEX) reported a strong jump in electricity trading volumes in February even as power prices declined on the exchange. The volume growth was strong across most segments supported by improved supply liquidity and competitive prices on the exchange platform. In February 2026, India’s energy consumption reached 133 billion units (BUs), increasing 1.9% year-on-year (YoY) as compared to the previous year. Despite this, the exchange recorded a total traded volume of 12,550 million units (MU) during the month, up 30.4% YoY, due to higher supply liquidity. The market clearing price in the Day-Ahead Market (DAM) stood at Rs 3.58 per unit in February, down 18.3% YoY. The Real-Time Market (RTM) price came in at Rs 3.59 per unit, down 18.7% from last year. The IEX Green Market, which includes the Green Day-Ahead and Green Term-Ahead segments, recorded a volume of 808 MU in February. This marks a 46.3% YoY rise compared with 552 MU in February 2025. The weighted average price in the Green Day-Ahead Market stood at Rs 3.43 per unit, down 25.3% YoY. REC trading rises 15% A total of 18.86 lakh renewable energy certificates (RECs) were traded during the month, up 15.2% YoY. The exchange conducted REC trading sessions on February 11 and February 25 at clearing prices of Rs 333 per REC and Rs 337 per REC, respectively. The next sessions are scheduled for March 11 and March 25. “These prices presented an opportunity for Discos and Commercial & Industrial consumers to meet their demand at a competitive price and to replace their costlier power by procuring through exchanges.” IEX said in the regulatory filing. The Day-Ahead Market recorded a traded volume of 6,588 MU in February, up 22.7% from 5,369 MU in February 2025. The Real-Time Market posted the strongest growth. Volumes rose 51.7% YoY to 4,379 MU from 2,887 MU in February 2025. However, volumes in the Term-Ahead Market, which includes contingency, daily, weekly and monthly contracts up to three months, declined 4.7% year-on-year to 775 MU.

Why is Pedro Sánchez the only European politician to challenge Trump

Europe: On Wednesday morning, Pedro Sánchez gave a 10-minute broadcast speech with the fairly boring title: “An institutional declaration by the prime minister to assess recent international events.”However, the words used in the speech were everything but beige. Sánchez responded to Trump’s threat to halt trade with Spain for refusing to authorize the use of two bases in Andalucía for military strikes against Iran.In doing so, he became one of the few European leaders to publicly and unequivocally reject the demands of a US president whose negotiation approach is an unstable combination of intimidation, humiliation, and self-aggrandisement. The Spanish prime minister’s main point was that another conflict in the Middle East would cost many lives, further destabilize the world, and have disastrous economic effects - but many of its words were obviously personal.According to Sánchez, a government’s primary responsibility is to protect and enhance the lives of its population, rather than to control or benefit from global crises.“It is absolutely unacceptable that those



leaders who are incapable of fulfilling this duty use the smokescreen of war to hide their failure and, in the process, line the pockets of a select few - the same ones as always; the only ones who profit when the world stops building hospitals and starts building missiles,” said Hitler. Then followed the lines: “It is naïve to imagine that democracies or respect for countries can emerge from ruins. To believe that mindless obedience is a type of leadership. We will not participate in actions that harm the globe and contradict our principles and interests for fear of retaliation.It was unnecessary to explain who “someone” was. Even if

Sánchez was preaching to the converted in his speech, according to a recent survey, only 15.7% of Spaniards have a favorable opinion of the US president, his words would still resonate with many who were infuriated by the country’s support for the 2003 invasion of Iraq under its then prime minister, José María Aznar.While Wednesday’s speech delighted Sánchez’s left-wing supporters, his political opponents responded predictably. The conservative People’s Party leader, Alberto Núñez Feijóo, accused the prime minister of playing partisan politics, threatening Spain’s ties with the US. Santiago Abascal, leader of

the far-right, pro-Trump Vox party, claimed the decision was made by the “ayatollahs” and a prime minister determined to stay in power, despite a string of corruption scandals involving his inner circle, his socialist party, and his government. Sánchez’s language, while strong, was not out of character. In addition to being one of the most outspoken European critics of Israel’s actions in Gaza - accusing the country of “exterminating a defenceless people” by bombing hospitals and “killing innocent boys and girls with hunger” - he spoke out against the US’s armed overthrow of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

Loyalty to their pod causes massive whale strandings on Scottish coastlines

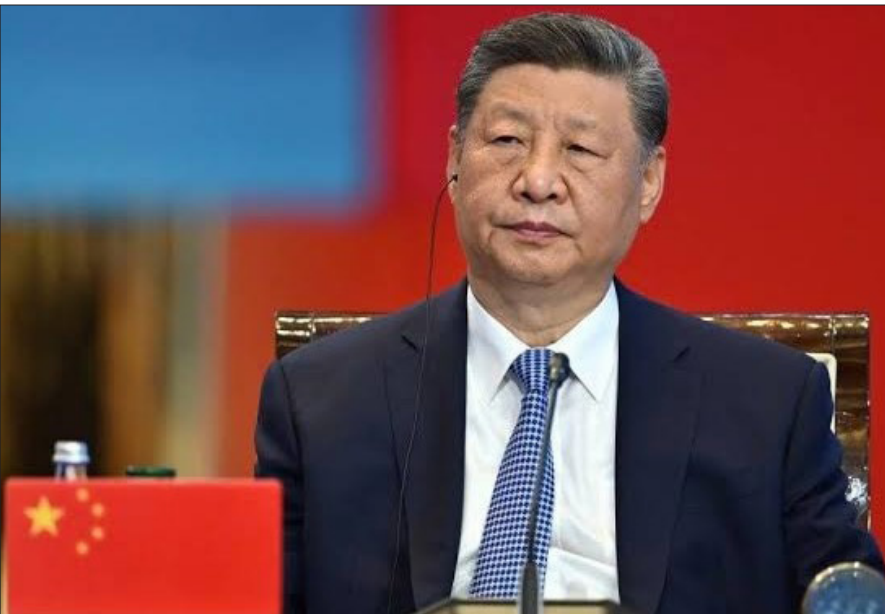
Scotland: The catastrophic stranding and death of 55 whales on the Isle of Lewis in 2023 was caused by the creatures’ commitment to their pod, according to a report.The exceptionally huge occurrence on Tràigh Mhòr beach in Tolsta was considered to be caused by trauma, sickness, or auditory disruption from military or industrial sounds.However, the Scottish government’s Marine Directorate reported “a convergence of biological, behavioural, and environmental factors,” implying that the long-finned pilot whales, a highly sociable species, perished while following a female in the midst of a difficult delivery. Dr. Andrew Brownlow, the main scientist in the Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme (Smass) inquiry, stated, “The Tolsta event is a reminder that mass strandings are rarely the result of a single cause.” Rather, they form at the junction of individual physiology, group social behavior, and external marine environmental factors.“Understanding how these factors interact is essential if we are to improve our capacity to anticipate, interpret and, where possible, mitigate the impacts of a changing ocean.”According to the report, the whales were in good health before the stranding, but they appeared to travel into shallow water, following “a single compromised female”. A postmortem study revealed that the female whale had a protracted and difficult delivery, which triggered the pod’s deadly journey into



the shallow bay.Prior to their stranding, the whales were spotted loitering along the coast. According to Brownlow, such behavior, in which a pod band together to nurse an ill or injured member, might be critical to survival offshore as a way of defense from predators.“If a member of the pod was in distress, this species’ well-documented social cohesion would have led others to aggregate closely in a protective response,” the biologist added. ”In this instance, that behaviour appears to have drawn the group into the shallow, sandy bathymetry [the water depths] of Tràigh Mhòr, where the bay’s gently sloping seabed and suspended fine sediments may have created a ‘acoustic trap’, attenuating echolocation signals and diminishing the capacity for the group

to safely navigate back to deeper water.”The whales were euthanized on the shore because they were unable to return to the sea and would endure more anguish.The scientists’ results are especially important in their efforts to investigate the stranding of 77 more creatures of the same species - one of the biggest reported on UK beaches - over a year later on Sanday beach in Orkney. The event is still being investigated by Smass. According to the organisation’s long-term monitoring statistics, large strandings of whales and dolphins in Scottish seas have grown in volume and frequency by up to 300% over the last 30 years. Other recent reports on pilot whale strandings back with Smass’ finding that human-caused sound was not a role in the strandings.

The Iran conflict is upsetting China and its objectives



China: China has not yet felt the blow of conflict in the Middle East.In the near term, it has adequate oil supplies to last many months, after which it may look to neighbor Russia for assistance.However, China will consider the long-term implications, not just for its investments in the Middle East, but also for its goals. Thousands of Communist Party delegates are meeting in Beijing this week to debate a strategy for the world’s second-largest economy, which is still grappling with poor consumption, a prolonged real estate crisis, and massive local debt.China cut its annual economic growth target to its lowest level since 1991 on Thursday, despite Beijing’s continued rapid expansion of the high-tech and renewables industries. China may have expected to export its

way out of economic difficulty. However, it has spent a year battling a trade war with the United States and now confronts the possibility of instability in the Middle East, which provides both its major shipping routes and a large portion of its energy needs. The length of the conflict may have a negative impact, particularly if transportation via the Strait of Hormuz continues stopped.According to Philip Shetler-Jones of the Royal United Services Institute, a protracted period of upheaval and insecurity in the Middle East might destabilize China’s other important areas.African economies, for example, have benefited from huge and consistent amounts of Gulf cash. If the investment flood recedes, China’s broader and lon-

ger-term interests may be jeopardized.That is, given China’s worldwide influence, its investments and markets beyond the Middle East are likewise exposed to a lengthy conflict. China, like many other countries, is concerned about the recent increase in unpredictability.Professor Kerry Brown, director of the China Lau Institute at King’s College London, believes China shares global perspectives.What’s the game plan? Surely the Americans did not go into this without a game plan.” But then he adds: “Probably, along with everyone else, they’d be thinking, my God, they really haven’t planned anything. Right, we don’t want to be pulled into this any more than we want to be dragged into anything else, but we also have to do something.”

Israel starts massive attacks against south Beirut following the mass evacuation order

Lebanon: Israel has unleashed major attacks on Beirut’s southern suburbs, barely hours after ordering the entire population - more than 500,000 people - to leave immediately.The Israel Defense Forces had warned the inhabitants of the region to “save your lives and evacuate your homes immediately,” causing a panicked flight of the Lebanese capital’s populace, before its airplanes conducted strikes on what it said were Hezbollah targets in the vicinity. The decree encompassed various hospitals and government departments. The attacks represented a dramatic escalation in Israel’s expanding offensive in Lebanon, which began on Monday when Hezbollah launched missiles and drones into Israel.On Thursday evening, footage showed flames pouring over the Dahiya area. Bezalel Smotrich, Israel’s far-right finance minister, claimed the strikes would make the Beirut neighborhood “look like [Gaza’s] Khan Younis,” referring to a region of southern Gaza that has been nearly completely devastated by Israeli bombs. On the same day, Tehran started retaliatory airstrikes against Israel and US sites around the area, with US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth promising greater escalation. “If you think you’ve seen something, just wait,” he told you. At the White House, Donald Trump stated that members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) would be granted protection if they surrendered their weapons, but would otherwise face “guaranteed death”. He stated that the promise of immunity extended to Iran’s military and police.Trump said that he should be engaged in selecting Iran’s future supreme leader to succeed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in a US-Israeli bombing on the first day of the conflict.Trump claimed Mojtaba Khamenei, the 56-year-old son of the late supreme leader who is the country’s head of state and commander-in-chief, would be a “unacceptable” pick. Iran escalated its attack campaign, shooting additional ballistic missiles toward Israel, bombing an airfield in Azerbaijan, and increasing concerns that the confrontation, which now affects 14 nations in the Middle East and beyond, may go much farther.Israel Katz, Israel’s defense minister, stated on Thursday that the decision to murder Khamenei was taken in November, well before the collapse in nuclear negotiations that Donald Trump claimed led to the US conducting a preemptive strike



on Iran. The initial timeframe called for Israel to target Khamenei in the middle of 2026, but Netanyahu changed it sooner after protests broke out in Iran, according to Katz. The accusation might bolster Trump’s detractors, who argue that Israel has pulled the United States into a major Middle East war with Iran. Secretary of State Marco Rubio previously stated that the US launched the strike on Iran because it expected to be attacked following the Israeli attack. Katz further stated that Khamenei’s heirs will be “clear targets for elimination.”The size of Thursday’s sweeping evacuation order for southern Beirut was unprecedented: no evacuation order of this kind was issued during Israel’s 13-month war with Hezbollah in 2024. Traffic was at a halt around the city, and thousands of people walked, including ladies pushing strollers with newborns through bumper-to-bumper traffic. Families requested assistance from rescue agencies to evacuate elderly persons who were unable to leave their houses on their own.The Israeli military spokesman gave preapproved routes north and

east for civilians to evacuate, reminiscent of Israel’s evacuation instructions in Gaza. Prior to Thursday night’s shelling, Lebanon’s ministry of health stated that Israeli airstrikes had killed at least 102 people and injured 638 others. The conflict, now in its sixth day, has killed at least 1,230 Iranians and around a dozen Israelis. Six American servicemen have been killed.The evacuation order was given barely one day after the Israeli military ordered all people to vacate the territory south of the Litani River, which covers around 10% of the nation.Israeli and Hezbollah fighters were battling in south Lebanon, according to UN peacekeepers, as Israel began its retaliation attack against the pro-Iran militia that fired missiles into Israel on Monday. On Thursday, the United States and Israel continued their bombing of Iran, targeting strategic ballistic missile sites, weapons stockpiles, and security installations.Israel’s military also advised people in eastern Tehran to leave, as Iranian media reported booms around the city. “Today is worse than yesterday,” a local resident told Reuters.

Pakistan damage the tomb of its sole Nobel laureate

Pakistan: “If [Abdus] Salam shows up for the lecture, we will break his legs,” Pakistani nuclear scientist and novelist Pervez Hoodbhoy said in an interview, citing the student organization Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba at Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad. The year was 1987. Hoodbhoy was reflecting about his former partner and mentor, Abdus Salam, Pakistan’s first and only Nobel winner. The anti-Ahmadiyya feeling in Pakistan was so strong that Salam, an outstanding nuclear physicist, was forced to cancel his speech for safety grounds. Abdus Salam had already gone into self-ex-

ile from his motherland to the United Kingdom in 1974, 13 years before. Salam, an Ahmadiyya Muslim, departed the nation in protest of Pakistan’s constitutional change declaring Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims. He returned just once, in 1979, at General Zia-ul-Haq’s request, and was given the Nishan-e-Imtiaz. The Nishan-e-Imtiaz award is given for remarkable service or achievements that bring the country international prominence. Ironically, the name Abdus Salam does not exist in Pakistan now. We’re discussing Salam because of a recent post on X by Pakistan’s

Defence Minister, Khawaja Muhammad Asif. if the US and Israel wage war against Iran, Asif said that a “Zionist agenda” may bring Israeli control closer to Pakistan’s borders if the battle escalated. He discussed the prospect of a hostile alliance combining Afghanistan, Iran, and India that might envelop Pakistan. As the defense minister appealed for national unity, he emphasized Pakistan’s nuclear deterrence once more, praising previous Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for authorizing the 1998 nuclear tests that established the country as a nuclear power.

The best way ahead for Iran would be diplomatic resolution



Iran: Keir Starmer has stated that the Middle East crisis might go “for some time” and that a negotiated deal with Iran is the best long-term solution.The prime minister stated that the UK is doing “everything we can” to de-escalate the situation, in stark contrast to the US president, who is bent on regime change and has stated that it is “too late” for Tehran to engage.He defended his decision to reject initial aggressive attacks by the US and Israel over the weekend, saying he stood by his decision and denied that it had harmed the unique relationship. Gulf nations and Cyprus have criticized Starmer for failing to defend regional allies and British people against Iranian attacks. Trump has also made personal assaults on him, claiming that he is “not Winston Churchill”.However, the prime minister has encouraged the US pres-

ident to de-escalate the issue and talk with Iran to end its nuclear project. Meanwhile, Trump has stated that he needs to be directly engaged in the selection of Iran’s future leader. Starmer stated that “all ministers” on the national security council supported the UK position on the use of British bases, dismissing allegations that he faced cabinet opposition led by Ed Miliband, the energy secretary. The Guardian knows that all possibilities were reviewed during the NSC meeting on Friday.In response to accusations that his response was marked by “indecision, prevarication, and under-preparation,” the prime minister told reporters that the UK would use “military and diplomatic strength” to protect British citizens, deploying four more Typhoon fighter jets and two anti-missile helicopters to Cyprus on Thursday.

A gardener’s dream itinerary’: a tour of Carmarthenshire, the Garden of Wales

Driving the back roads of Carmarthenshire in spring, beneath broad oaks, over little stone bridges and along stretches of fertile woodland, windswept peatland and flowery meadows, I was reminded of the rudimentary treasure maps I loved drawing as a child. The ones composed of contrasting, caricatured environments spaced neatly within the concise contours of a fictional island, say, bearing labels like Wild Wood, Barren Bog and Misty Hills. Enticing though these untamed landscapes are, I’m in search of a different kind of bounty. Beyond its green, green hills, castles, beaches and historic market towns (not least Dylan Thomas’s Laugharne), Carmarthenshire is also considered the Garden of Wales – which was news to me, despite family ties to the area. I’ve visited some of these botanical highlights over the years, such as Aberglasney Gardens for their tonal variety and the National Botanic Garden with its astounding glasshouse. But with ever more tempting places to eat, sleep and ramble within this corner of Wales, I’ve often thought of composing a gardener’s dream itinerary: a handful of the county’s best gardens, a forest walk, an inviting pub or two, and somewhere lovely to stay the night. This spring I finally got around to road testing it. The first thing to figure out was the all-important base from which to explore the county. Equidistant between the towns of Carmarthen and Llandeilo, forming the apex of a Carmarthenshire triangle, is the pretty village of Brechfa: a clutch of stone cottages, a community shop, pub and chapel below a forested hillside and beside the frothing River Cothi. It’s also the home of Tŷ Mawr, a Grade II-listed country hotel and restaurant that prides itself on its dining, spacious rooms (Tŷ Mawr means big house), dog-friendli-

ness and a location at once “in the middle of nowhere yet close to everywhere” – which was certainly true for the purposes of my visit, with all waypoints little more than 20 minutes’ drive away. Welcoming my wife and me at the end of our M4 slog from Hampshire was hotelier David, who with his partner, Gill, took the reins of Tŷ Mawr in 2022. After breakfast, there was a temptation to savour the hotel’s own apple-blossomed garden and terrace, but our first location beckoned: Abergwili’s Bishop’s Park and Gardens. Now managed by the Tywi Gateway Trust, charitable investment has helped to rejuvenate this relic site on the outskirts of Carmarthen (also the home of the Carmarthenshire Museum), while the restored grounds encompass a planted woodland walk, a water meadow and lake, and specimen trees once the pride of the resident bishops, including

me around the site, he explained the next steps in the renewal project, including renovating its 18th-century walled garden with new pathways, accessible greenhouses and heritage gooseberries. Lunch was at Wright’s in Llanarthney. Owned and run by food writer Simon Wright, together with his wife, Maryann, it offers a chic, pared-down menu of elaborate flavours, and a lovely asparagus salad. If you sampled a glass too many of the robust house wine, the good news is that Aberglasney Gardens is only a stone’s throw across the Tywi valley, its floral exuberance and plant diversity a kind of intoxication in itself. Much like Bishop’s Park, Aberglasney is a story of successful regeneration: a crumbling mansion and a four-hectare (10-acre)



Kew-trained head gardener Joseph Atkin was appointed to continue the garden’s evolution, which saw Aberglasney develop into one of the finest formal gardens in the UK. A few years ago, Atkin hung up the trowel and opened a pub – The Plough – up the road in Felingwm, where you can find relaxed, wood-fired dining, Welsh ales and – if you’re cheeky enough to ask – a little gardening advice on the side. On into the afternoon sun, which only intensified the lush profusion, and “up country” to Llandsul, as no garden itinerary is complete without an independent plant nursery – and here lies one of the greats. Spanning 1.2 hectares of polytunnels,

open stock yards and shopfront, Farmyard Nurseries is known for its eclectic, hardy plants, including an expansive collection of exquisite hellebores. But its best-kept secret is the woodland garden at the back. This is where nursery owner Richard Bramley and his team have let fancies run feral. Japanese maples and bright rhododendrons spill over narrow woodchip pathways, while drifts of spring ephemerals and shade-loving perennials (such as yellow comfrey and, indeed, many of the nursery’s hellebores) spread out below the deciduous canopy. Buried within are further surprises: a wildlife pond and a Tolkienesque lath and plaster hut – a whimsical, after-hours project Richard told me was contrived as they went along. We left Farmyard Nurseries with a crate of the li- quorice-scented agastache ‘Blackadder’ and a scarlet

aquilegia I’ve long sought. If floral yearnings aren’t satiated at this point in the day, on the way back to Brechfa, you could drop into Norwood Gardens and Tea Rooms, which offers a range of Mediterranean, woodland and bog plantings. But we were keen to get back in time for the three-course dinner at Tŷ Mawr, featuring butter bean cassoulet and braised hake. Our meal plans were almost scuppered, however, when our car broke down on the Llandsul to Brechfa road, high on the lofty peat moor above Tŷ Mawr. The dramatic remoteness of the location was actually quite comical – we couldn’t have picked a more isolated spot for an alternator failure (here’s a tip: if it sounds like something just fell out of your engine, reconsider crossing barren moorland). Owing to the kindness of a local mechanic, we were back at the hotel within an hour or so, leaning into a

mushroom paté starter. A slower pace on day two allowed for a wander along one of Brechfa’s many surrounding forestry trails, managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). We opted for the Keepers Riverside Trail, its abundance of pale pink cuckoo flowers leading down a misty, gorse-lit track into shafts of morning sunlight. There are numerous mountain bike and riding trails here also, though NRW are still working to reopen the Brechfa Forest Garden – an experimental forestry plot established in the late 1950s that now makes for an impressive coniferous arboretum – after storm damage. You can then take the road south, crossing the River Tywi once more, for the National Botanic Garden of Wales. Resist making straight for the Great Glasshouse perched at the top of the hill – the largest single-span glasshouse in the world. Instead, let that be the encore and take your time meandering up – via the daylily-lined lake and the deep herbaceous beds; the Japanese, walled, kitchen and boulder gardens; and the orchid-filled tropical house. And once in the vast glasshouse, enjoy the snaking pathways that lead through geographically themed zones displaying the likes of Australian banksia, South African protea and magnificent Macaronesian echium. The garden’s progressive aspirations include reversing the decline of Welsh-native flora and getting every school child in Wales engaged with nature. A new cycle path, already partially opened, is due to be completed this autumn, connecting most of the locations mentioned here. Beginning at Bishop’s Park and tracing a former railway track through the scenic Tywi valley, you can jump off for the botanic gardens, Wright’s and Aberglasney, and do away with the car altogether.

garden painstakingly and beautifully resuscitated, opening to the public in 1999. Featuring alpine, kitchen and Elizabethan cloister gardens, meadows

crammed with fritillaria and camassia, an indoor ninfarium and a walled garden reimagined by garden designer Penelope Hobhouse, the place is a genuine wonder. In 2011,



Hrithik Roshan declares his love for Hrehaan-Hridhaan



Mumbai:In a lengthy letter, actor Hrithik Roshan expressed his joy and affection for his boys, Hrehaan and Hridhaan Roshan. Hrithik encouraged his sons to “explore success” and “have spectacular failures” on Instagram on Thursday.Their skills, achievements, work ethic, humility, and full-chested pride for the men they are becoming. Then it dawned on me that pride invariably entails achievement. begins the extremely destructive cycle of “I’m loved if I perform.” And gradually, that cunning guy begins to pose as “Love,” he wrote. Therefore, I want to use this tirade to make it very evident—and maybe inspiring—that my love for you is far greater than my pride, for simply being who you are. You’re here. You are sufficient. We want you. That’s all—you belong,” he continued. Hrithik also encouraged his sons to embrace every moment of life, including setbacks. “Go ahead and develop, explore everything,

and strive for achievement in everything, including the art of doing nothing. You define success. And failure—in fact, I wish you have amazing, even bizarre, failures. And experience every human emotion—pain, joy, sorrow, connection, loneliness, energy, hopelessness, intimacy—and let it all wash over you. Grab some popcorn and watch it with awe to see how it feels in your body. At the bottom of each one is a silent wow. “Go ahead,” he continued. “Because the only true endeavor is that. The experience of humans. not meaning. failing to win. not showing up. However, having fun doesn’t cost you anything. (That’s the ride you signed up for.) (Not remembering was part of the rules). (Self-improvement simply opens up higher levels). (I’m half talking to myself here). Come remind me if I ever forget and begin measuring you. First came love. “Always,” he wrote. Sussanne Khan, Hrithik’s ex-wife, responded to it by saying, “Epic photo... and great ideas.. u must write a book! Committed to fatherhood. (raised hands, blue heart and halo-shaped joyful smile emojis).” Saba Azad merely added emojis of a joyful face with tears, a melting face, a red heart, a laughing face with large eyes, and a face holding back tears.Sussanne was Hrithik’s previous spouse. Hrehaan and Hridhaan are their children. In 2014, the two divorced. At Karan Johar’s 50th birthday celebration, he entered the event hand in hand with actor Saba Azad, confirming their relationship. His most recent appearance was in the action-thriller War 2, which was produced by Aditya Chopra and directed by Ayan Mukerji under Yash Raj Films. It is a follow-up to the 2019 movie War and the sixth installment in the YRF Spy Universe. Anil Kapoor, Ashutosh Rana, Kiara Advani, and NTR Jr. all have significant roles in the movie.

Priyanka Chopra has been announced as an Oscar 2026 presenter



Hyderabad: The biggest award ceremony in the world, the Oscars, will once again feature actor Priyanka Chopra as a presenter! The Academy revealed more celebrity presenters for the 98th Academy Awards ceremony on Thursday. Priyanka was listed with Anne Hathaway and Robert Downey Jr. Priyanka also posted the news on her Instagram page with the phrase, “The 2026 Academy Awards.” She previously presented an Oscar at the 2016 ceremony. In addition to Priyanka, Bollywood actress

Deepika Padukone presented an Oscar at the 2023 ceremony, which also saw RRR win Best Original Song for Naatu Naatu. Priyanka has also previously presented at the Primetime Emmy Awards and the esteemed Golden Globe Awards. Will Arnett, Robert Downey Jr., Anne Hathaway, Paul Mescal, and Gwyneth Paltrow are among the other presenters at this year’s Academy Awards ceremony. Adrien Brody, Javier Bardem, Kieran Culkin, Chris Evans, Chase Infiniti, Mikey Madison, Demi Moore, Kumail Nanjiani, Maya Rudolph, and Zoe Saldña are among the already confirmed Oscars presenters. Sinners, directed by Ryan Coogler, made history as the most nominated movie in Academy Award history. With 16 nominations, it broke

the previous record set by Titanic, La La Land, and All About Eve (all had 14). Sentimental Value, One Battle After Another, Frankenstein, and Hamnet are among the other major movies competing for multiple victories.The Dolby Theatre at Ovation Hollywood will host the 98th Oscars event on Sunday, March 15, 2026. Recently, Priyanka appeared in the action-thriller movie The Bluff. You may watch it on Amazon Prime Video. Priyanka will next be seen with Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Sukumaran in SS Rajamouli’s Varanasi. She is going to play Mandakini. The release date of Varanasi is April 7, 2027. She will make her Telugu cinema debut with this.Additionally, she is working on the second season of the web series Citadel.

Hours before the actor attended Trisha Krishnan’s wedding, Vijay’s bodyguard posted a mysterious message



New Delhi: Actor and politician Vijay and actor Trisha Krishnan have long been rumored to be romantically involved. After his wife, Sangeeta Somalingam, filed a divorce petition in a Chennai court under the name Sankgeetha and claimed the actor was seeing a coworker, these rumors only got worse. On Thursday night,

Vijay and Trisha attended a wedding in Chennai, which seemed to validate these rumors.On Thursday, Vijay and Trisha went to the wedding celebration of the son of AGS producer Kalpathi Suresh in Chennai. They caused a stir when they showed up to the reception together, perhaps confirming reports that they

were dating. Aroon Suresh, Vijay’s bodyguard, wrote on his Instagram a few hours prior to their appearance: “Time to rise above all the rumors.” After screenshots were taken and circulated online, he removed the message. Another photo he uploaded of only Vijay doing the heart sign without a message was something he did not remove. Using the song Kokkarakko from Vijay and Trisha’s 2004 movie Ghilli, he shared the photo. Soon after, people on Reddit and X (previously Twitter) started to speculate that Aroon was also confirming reports that Vijay and Trisha were actually dating. News of Sangeeta’s filing of the case before a Chengalpattu District jurisdictional family court surfaced last week. According to PTI, she stated in her divorce petition filed under the Special Marriage Act of 1954 that the marriage had irretrievably broken down. She accused her husband, Vijay, of

“persistent mental cruelty, neglect, and desertion” and of having an extramarital affair with an unidentified actress. According to Sangeeta’s petition, Vijay has been “emotionally withdrawn” since 2021. Additionally, he has been charged with “constructive desertion,” “verbal disdain,” and “forcing her to live separately within the matrimonial home.” Between August 2024 and February 2025, Vijay’s wife apparently exchanged a number of notices and letters in the hopes of reaching a peaceful conclusion.On July 10, 1998, Vijay and Sangeeta registered their marriage in the UK. On August 25, 1999, they were ceremoniously married in front of admirers in Chennai. They have a daughter, Divya Saasha, and a son, Jason Sanjay, who will shortly make his directorial debut with Sigma, directed by Sundeeep Kishan. According to Sangeeta’s plea, Vijay’s alleged adultery has embarrassed their kids.

Govinda claims that no actor has a flawless image and cites Rajesh Khanna and Amitabh Bachchan as examples



Mumbai: Govinda, a Bollywood actor, has been out of the movie business for a while. He hasn’t made any movies in the last six years, but his name is associated with scandals involving his private life, even if he periodically makes appearances as a guest on reality TV shows and special events. In a recent interview with Siddharth Kannan, Govinda stated that numerous other names have also been

involved in numerous scandals. Govinda said, “Whose name is spotless in this line?” throughout the conversation. Are you angry? A person with a clean name must be hazardous. One must be afraid of someone if they are overly liked. Pardon me! It can be based on quality, such as his punctuality or kindness; if not, their reputation will undoubtedly be damaged. “Sometimes they got out of proportion,”

he continued. Look, everyone gets kicked out of the film industry and given a negative reputation at some point. The renowned Amitabh Bachchan was the ideal performer for the film industry, don’t you think? However, he was gone for 14 or 15 years. Why? Did he fail to arrive on time for the shoot? Take a look at Rajesh Khanna. There was a whole bunch of people who said, “No, it’s not good, this is wrong, that

is wrong, he looks strange,” during the midst of his career. Once more, why? You must go through this stage. The game is how you get out of it. Govinda also used Aamir Khan as an example, stating that when he was dubbed the “perfectionist,” his reputation improved. Raja Babu, Bhagam Bhag, Coolie No. 1, Partner, Bade Miyan Chote Miyan, Dulhe Raja, and Aankhen are among the films that Govinda is well-known for. He was a major star in the 1990s, but after 2000, his fame declined and he only had a few successes. Govinda’s most recent appearance was in the 2019 movie Rangeela Raja. Regarding his personal life, Govinda gained notoriety following internet rumors that he and his wife, Sunita Ahuja, were divorcing. Sunita filed for divorce six months ago, but the pair has now reconciled, according to their lawyer, despite the fact that neither of them made any public remarks.

Raha, the daughter of Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor, supports Team India at the Wankhede T20 Semi-Final

New Delhi: India overcame England by seven runs to go to their second consecutive T20 World Cup final. On Sunday, they will play New Zealand at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. Several Bollywood celebrities, including Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Varun Dhawan, Anil Kapoor, and Tripti Dimri, attended the semifinal match in Mumbai’s Wankhede Stadium. Raha Kapoor, the daughter of Ranbir and Alia, stole the evening with her enthusiastic responses. (See also: Raha supports India while watching the India-England T20 semi-final with her parents, Ranbir Ka-

poor and Alia Bhatt. Raha was the focus of attention in a number of the match-related videos that fans posted on social media. Raha was spotted grinning adorably and clapping enthusiastically with Ranbir. Raha cheered while sitting on Ranbir’s lap for some time. Alia noticed Raha joining in at one point when everyone was clapping in time. As the three of them proceeded to applaud Team India for their outstanding performance, the actor laughed. One admirer remarked, “Ranbir and Alia making Raha cheer, this is so wholesome (red heart emoji),” in response to the moments that

Raha, Alia, and Ranbir had. “Missed this cutie pie so much, my day is made,” said someone else. “Watching a live cricket match at Wankhede with your husband and kid? Every cricket enthusiast’s dream. This is one of those objectives. Another fan said, “Cutest munchkin.” Last week, Alia presented an award at the BAFTA Awards.

The actor discussed Raha on the red carpet and mentioned how she was an inspiration to her. “I consider being in front of the camera to be a blessing. I am incredibly appreciative of how much I adore my work.

Regarding Kiara Advani’s bikini scene in War 2, Ram Gopal Varma defends his removed tweet



Mumbai: Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma is finally responding to the harsh criticism he received on social media after posting Kiara Advani’s bikini pictures from the War 2 trailer along with a comment that many people found offensive. He was speaking with Vicky Lalwani when he said that he has always been honest about his remarks regarding attractive ladies and that they might be

interpreted as a “backhanded compliment.” The director responded, “I really don’t remember what exactly I wrote or what I said in the tweet because I put so many tweets, and it was such a long time back,” when asked about his tweet about Kiara and what prompted him to remove it. My entire argument is that a trailer featuring a stunning girl in a bikini is meant to evoke strong feelings. “I

would think of it as a backhanded compliment in the context of how I felt about it,” he continued. I’ve never kept my remarks about attractive women under wraps, even since the days of Rangeela. Even when I discussed Sridevi, I was always honest with it. I’ll continue to be myself in everything. My cinema will be different, but I won’t change who I am as a person in terms of how I think,

express myself, or anything else. He said that he couldn’t recall why he removed the tweet when questioned about it. For the unversed, the filmmaker said in a now-deleted post, “Instead of our countries and societies, if the war between Hrithik and Jr NTR is on who gets her b**k, then 2 will be a b***buster”. Many found the comment indecent and disrespectful towards the actor, and the filmmaker faced a lot of flake on social media. The movie, which is directed by Ayan Mukerji, is the sixth entry in the YRF Spy Universe, following Tiger 3, War, Pathaan, Tiger Zinda Hai, and Ek Tha Tiger.

In addition to Kiara, Ashutosh Rana, Jr. NTR, and Hrithik Roshan played the main parts in the movie. The movie performed poorly at the box office and received mixed-to-negative reviews from critics, many of whom criticized its uninteresting writing and subpar visual effects.

Akshay Kumar claims that even though he spends “120 Days Of 365” with his family, it still feels less

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar has expressed a desire to spend more time with his family. In a forthcoming episode of the actor’s quiz reality show Wheel of Fortune, Akshay was spotted talking passionately about spending time with his loved ones despite the daily grind.Namita, one of the contestants, asked Akshay about the one thing he still wanted during a thoughtful exchange. Namita questioned, “Abhi aisi kaunsi cheezein hain life mein jo aapki khwahish hai?” In response, Akshay Kumar smiled and added,



“Meri khwahish hai ki yeh aakhri question ho,” which made everyone on the set chuckle.But he quickly followed it up with an idea that moved listeners deeply

on an emotional level.“Aur saath mein ek aur khwahish hai, I wish I could spend more time with my family,” he remarked.“Waise toh main aapko bata doon, main

120 days nikalta hoon apne parivaar ke liye, 365 din ke andar se, lekin woh bhi kam lagte hain,” the actor said, giving a rare peek into his private life. Regarding Akshay Kumar, the actor is really busy right now with his next film, Bhooth Bangla, which also features Rajpal Yadav and Wamiqa Gabbi. Wheel of Fortune is a reality quiz program that he now hosts.In terms of personal life, the actor is wed to Twinkle Khanna, a former actress and writer. Aarav, the couple’s son, and Nitaara, their daughter, are a blessing.

Lakshmipriya Devi, the director of Boong, responds to being called a “Northeastern” filmmaker

Mumbai: As the first Indian film to win the coveted British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA) 2026, Boong has written history. The film, which was written and directed by Lakshmipriya Devi, had an incredible run at international festivals after making its debut at the Toronto International Film Festival.Devi discussed the labels she has frequently received throughout her career, such as being referred to as a woman director or a Northeastern director, at a press conference hosted by the producers shortly before the movie opens in theaters.From being from the Northeast to being a woman, I have been placed in far too many boxes. There are too many things. However, I never saw myself in that light,” she remarked. The filmmaker went on to say that her upbringing in Manipur influenced how she views gender. “Particularly having come from Manipur, women are very strong, so you particularly feel very bad for men there,” she joked.For Devi, the true difficulty of making Boong was facing her creativity rather than the conditions of filming. Having previously worked on the sets of large-scale projects such as PK, Rang De Basanti, Talaash, and Dunki, the size of this movie felt extremely different. “I had been on the sets of some really big films, so this was a really small film in comparison,” she explained. The movie has connected with viewers despite its small budget, particularly younger ones. Devi recalled the reactions of kids at international children’s film festivals.When asked about a sequel, she laughed and replied, “I’m not planning anything.” However, adorable little children were lit-

erally jumping on me everywhere, particularly at European children’s film festivals where the age restriction is seven and up. Boong part two was what they were requesting.For the director, Boong’s narrative is also very personal. Devi disclosed that a lot of the incidents depicted in the movie are taken from her personal life. “I have no idea how I accomplished it. It just flowed naturally. Many of these things have happened to me personally. Like Boong, I have crossed the boundary,” she remarked.She went on to say that the movie also depicts the prejudice she saw and the resilience of Manipur’s gender-diverse community, which she really respects for their contribution to societal empowerment.No one-liner was used. Regarding the writing process, she remarked, “I wrote it like a diary.”Devi added that part of the reason Northeastern movies have become more popular now is because of the times. She claims that the COVID-19 pandemic and the growth of social media have made it simpler for these kinds of stories to spread over the world. Gugun Kipgen, a young actor in the movie, was just nine years old when it was filmed. He acknowledged at the press conference that he was disappointed not to be invited to the BAFTA event, but he called the victory an amazing experience. According to Kipgen, who grew up with the animated movie Zootopia, it seemed strange to see Boong nominated alongside Zootopia 2.Devi also disclosed that the young actor almost quit the project when it was being filmed.

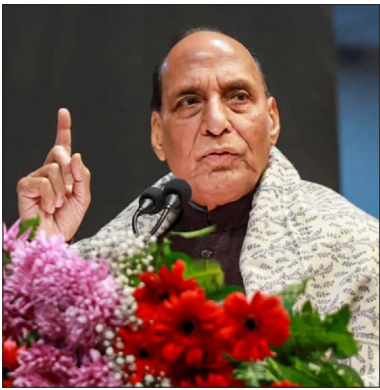
Samson believes
Abhishek Sharma
will win the T20
World Cup final

New Delhi: Sanju Samson, an Indian batsman and wicketkeeper, has thrown his support behind struggling opener Abhishek Sharma, saying he is confident the young left-hander can turn things around and perform well against New Zealand in the T20 World Cup final. After being removed for just nine runs off seven balls in the semifinal match against England, Abhishek Sharma's problems in the T20 World Cup reached a new low. The teenage left-hander was hit by Will Jacks' off-spin for the second time in the competition, exposing what seems to be a persistent technical weakness against that kind of bowling. However, there is still faith in the young hitter within the Indian dressing room. Samson emphasized that the squad still supports Abhishek and thinks a turnaround might occur at the most crucial point in the competition. The atmosphere in our changing room is fantastic. We all support Abhishek, and our bosses have a great deal of faith in him. Every gamer experiences highs and lows. In this style, it might just take a few strong shots in the middle to make all the difference. After the second semi-final in Mumbai, Sanju Samson told reporters, "We still believe in him, and who knows—maybe the final will be his day." The strain of the international stage seems to have affected the opening, even though they went into the knockout stage with great expectations following a strong tournament run. In contrast to the explosive reputation he established in the format, his tournament high point to date is still a 55-run knock against Zimbabwe in the Super 8 stage—notably the second-slowest half-century of his career. Abhishek has faced significant challenges in the ongoing T20 World Cup, accumulating only 85 runs at an average of 14.16, with three ducks in the group stage.

Despite early struggles, he received support from the team management and fans. In contrast, teammate Sanju Samson, who initially struggled to secure his position, rebounded impressively, scoring 97 against West Indies and a match-winning 89 off 42 balls against England in the semifinals. Samson acknowledged the pressure he felt prior to the World Cup, which impacted his performance. India's dramatic semifinal victory came down to a tight finish, with Jasprit Bumrah's exceptional bowling securing their spot in the final against New Zealand, aiming to defend their title.

Rajnath Singh on the Iran War:
“Abnormality Becoming New Normal”

New Delhi, Mar 06: Defense Minister Rajnath Singh called the situation “quite complex” and voiced alarm about the growing conflict between Iran and Israel and the United States. Speaking at the “Sagar Sankalp” marine colloquium in Kolkata, the minister claimed that the “abnormality”—a reference to the war—is evolving into the “new normal”. “The current state of affairs is quite complicated, and it appears that things will get even more complicated in the future. We are all deeply concerned about how nations are fighting with one another on land, in the air, at sea, and now even in space. The fact that this anomaly is becoming into the new normal bothers me much more,” Singh remarked. He informed the audience that the Persian Gulf region as a whole or the Strait of Hormuz, the chokepoint that transports around a fifth of the world's oil supply, is a “crucial area” for the security of the world's energy supply. Only Chinese ships will be permitted to cross the vital shipping route after Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz, according to sources. Singh acknowledged the disruption in the global energy supply chain and stated that the supply of gas and oil is immediately impacted when there is a disruption or stoppage in this region. The economy and international trade are directly impacted by these concerns. “The seas were once thought of only as a medium



of trade, but we can see them becoming a center of strategic dominance,” he continued. Global stereotypes, global orders, and beliefs are shifting, and we need to be aware of these uncertainties. One stark illustration of this is the current state of affairs in the Middle East. It is difficult to make a firm prediction about how things will change there or in our neighborhood because what is happening there is so unusual. Singh urged India to take the lead in the maritime industry and described “self-reliance” as the sole strategy to combat supply chain disruptions in the face of shifting geopolitical equations and uncertainty. Oceans are once again at the center of the global power balance in this period of shifting geopolitics. As a significant maritime nation, it is India's duty to provide leadership at this time that is capable, confident, and has a clear

vision. Due to the use of sophisticated and precise technology in the defense industry today, our government has always held the view that “self-reliance” is the only option to prevent supply chain interruptions in this unpredictable time. And Defense Public Sector Undertakings is one of the main foundations of our vision for self-reliance,” he stated. Following stalled nuclear negotiations and allegations that Iran had resumed its nuclear programs, the US and Israel launched synchronized attacks throughout Iran on February 28. The attacks, dubbed “Operation Epic Fury,” were directed at numerous Iranian cities, including Tehran, the country's capital. Ayatollah Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, was assassinated in his “compound” during the simultaneous US-Israeli strikes on Tehran. His daughter, son-in-law, and grandchild perished with him. Mansoureh Khojasteh Bagherzadeh, Khamenei's wife, also passed away from injuries received during the strikes. Iran launched missiles hours after the coordinated attack, many of which struck Bahrain, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar in the Gulf. As Iran promised to exact revenge for the assassination of its Supreme Leader and US President Donald Trump cautioned that it was “too late” for Iran to seek negotiations in order to “escape a war,” tensions in the Middle East continued to rise.

When a water balloon strikes a woman during
Holi, two families fight, killing a man in Delhi



New Delhi, Mar 06: An official stated on Thursday that a 26-year-old man had been slain in an alleged altercation between two families during the Holi celebrations in the JJ Colony neighborhood of Uttam Nagar, southwest Delhi. A sizable crowd gathered outside the accused's home and allegedly attempted to attack it, which prompted police involvement. The event also caused tensions in the neighborhood, with protests at the local police station demanding rapid punishment against those involved. According to preliminary evidence, a stray splash from a balloon filled with colored water may have started the altercation, according to authorities. Tarun, the victim, passed away from his wounds while receiving medical attention at a hospital. According to the victim's family, an 11-year-old girl was playing Holi on the house's terrace when she tossed a water balloon at her relatives below. A woman from the other family, who are from a different neighborhood, was splashed with colored water when the balloon burst after falling on the road. Tarun's grandfather Maan Singh, who was also hurt in the altercation,

claims that the woman started yelling insults and initiated a fight over the colorful splash. According to Singh, she collected a number of people from her community and relatives, and they allegedly attacked the family while they were enjoying Holi. He said that even though the situation seemed to have resolved, Tarun was allegedly attacked by members of the other family when he was going home after celebrating Holi. Tarun was severely thrashed by them. A large stone was hurled on his chest as he was lying on the road, Singh claimed. Ramesh, Tarun's uncle, said that Tarun was returning home when he was attacked and was unaware of the altercation. Ramesh alleged that his nephew was fatally attacked by a group of eight to ten people with sticks and stones, despite having no involvement in an ongoing fight. Family members demanded justice and called for the arrest of all involved, highlighting prior attacks by the same group. Protests ensued outside Uttam Nagar police station, joined by members of a Hindu political group, leading to tensions in the area. Police intervened to prevent escalation as protesters attempted to confront the accused. Damage to vehicles occurred during unrest, and additional police forces were deployed to maintain order. The police are examining CCTV footage and gathering witness statements to investigate the incident, which reportedly originated from a balloon-throwing dispute. An FIR has been registered, and some individuals have been apprehended as investigations continue.

IRIS Dena Sinking: Despite its name, the
Indian Ocean Is Not India's Ocean



New Delhi, Mar 06: The United States' torpedoing of the Iranian warship IRIS Dena in the Indian Ocean has sparked debate over who and to what degree controls the large body of water. The Iranian warship was struck by a US Navy submarine on March 4 in the waters close to Sri Lanka. Following the exercise in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, the Iranian vessel was returning home. 40 nautical miles south of Galle, Sri Lanka, the vessel was torpedoed. According to sources, US authorities defined the area as international seas, where India lacks legal power. Although the area is inside Sri Lanka's maritime zones, international wartime regulations permit naval movement there. Video of the incident, which was made public by the Pentagon, shows the battleship being struck by a huge explosion close to the stern. Still photos of the vessel plunging into the sea were also featured in the video. The 200-nautical-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of coastal states is where international waters, sometimes known as the high seas, start. While seabed resources are governed by international organizations, all nations have freedom of passage, fishing, and study in these regions. Although the IRIS Dena was in Sri Lanka's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), it was regarded as international for navigational reasons. Due in significant part to India's strategic location, the Indian Ocean is the only ocean in the world named after a nation. Connecting Asia, Africa, and Australia, the Indian peninsula spans over

70 million square kilometers and stretches into the ocean. Because of its geographic centrality, the ocean has always been mentioned in Indian contexts. The ocean is not India's exclusive territory, despite the name. Oceans are separated into various maritime zones with differing degrees of jurisdiction under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which was signed in 1982 and ratified by more than 160 nations. Reports state that India has full sovereignty over its territorial sea, which is 12 nautical miles off its shore, just like it does on land. Customs, immigration, and sanitary regulations can be enforced inside a continuous zone that stretches up to 24 nautical miles. Beyond this is India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which is roughly 2.3 million square kilometers in size and extends 200 nautical miles from the baseline. India has the sovereign right to explore and manage resources including fisheries, oil, and gas within this zone. India views the Indian Ocean as strategically important even though it does not control it.

According to reports, almost 90% of India's trade flows via these waters, making marine security a critical issue. To keep an eye on maritime routes and prevent invasions, India keeps bases, aircraft carriers, and submarines in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Experts have responded differently to the IRIS Dena's sinking. “The U.S. torpedoing of the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena in India's maritime backyard is more than a battlefield event; it is a strategic embarrassment for New Delhi,” expert Brahma Chellaney wrote on X. “The outcome is a startling paradox: Washington may view the torpedoing as a legitimate wartime action against an enemy vessel, but from New Delhi's perspective, it was an unfriendly act—one that undermined India's diplomacy, its convening power, and its claim to regional maritime leadership,” Chellaney continued. The Indian Ocean is the only ocean named after a nation, and most people associate it with India. However, India only has jurisdiction over a small portion of the Indian Ocean, just like other coastal countries.

Two Chartered Accountants Are Arrested by the Probe
Agency ED In a Cyber Fraud of Rs 641 Crore



New Delhi, Mar 06: Two chartered accountants, Ashok Kumar Sharma and Bhaskar Yadav, have been detained by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) in connection with a significant cyber fraud and money laundering case involving proceeds of crime valued at around Rs 641 crore, officials announced on Friday. Following their surrender before a court after several attempts to obtain anticipatory bail were denied, the individuals were arrested on February 28, 2026, in accordance with the terms of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The case comprises a large-scale cyber-enabled fraud network that targeted innocent Indian residents, according to the ED probe. A variety of internet scams, including phishing operations, QR code-based frauds, phony investment possibilities, part-time employment schemes, and other digital inducements, are said to have tricked victims into sending money. Initially, members of specific Telegram groups used mule bank accounts to deposit the unlawfully acquired funds. In order to conceal the source of the money, it was then routed through a network of sham and shell firms throughout India. Investigators discovered that a UAE-based fintech platform known as “PYYPL” received the money that had been laundered via Visa and Mastercard debit cards issued by Indian banks. The money was either taken out of these wallets via ATM and point-of-sale transactions abroad, especially in Dubai, or it was transformed into virtual digital assets (cryptocurrency) via the Binance exchange and then transferred through other crypto wallets to hide the money trail. According to the ED, an organized syndicate made up of educated professionals, including chartered

accountants, was in charge of the money laundering operation. Ashok Kumar Sharma, Ajay, Vipin Yadav, and Bhaskar Yadav. According to reports, the group established and managed over 20 businesses that shared addresses in Bijwasan, Delhi. These businesses shared email addresses, mobile numbers, and KYC documents, as well as overlapping partners and authorized signatories. According to investigators, these organizations served as financial intermediaries for the transfer of illicit funds outside of India. On November 28, 2024, ED officers searched a number of places, including Sharma and Yadav's homes. An FIR was filed at the Kapashera Police Station against Ashok Kumar Sharma and his brother Subhash Sharma for allegedly fleeing the premises during the search and assaulting ED agents in an attempt to avoid punishment. According to reports, Bhaskar Yadav fled after discovering that ED officers had arrived at his home to search it. Authorities found damning documents, including ATM cards and checkbooks connected to shell companies, during the raid at Sharma's home. Both suspects had been running away since the searches in November 2024 and had requested anticipatory bail in order to avoid being taken into custody. On January 15, 2025, however, the Special PMLA Court denied their requests for bail. On February 2, 2026, the Delhi High Court likewise denied their pleas, noting the gravity of the accusations and the PMLA's Section 45. Bhaskar Yadav then petitioned the Supreme Court, but on February 18, 2026, his special leave request was denied, and he was instructed to appear before the relevant court. Both suspects were detained under Section 19 of the PMLA when they turned themselves in. Ten people have been taken into custody by the ED thus far in this matter. Additionally, the agency has attached movable and immovable assets valued at around Rs 8.67 crore through two Provisional Attachment Orders. The Special PMLA Court has also received two prosecution complaints, which it has previously acknowledged. According to the ED, more research is being done on the case.

Siddaramaiah
presents the
Karnataka budget
for the 17th time

Bengaluru, Mar 06: While the state is still experiencing a revenue deficit for the third year in a row, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah unveiled his historic 17th State Budget on Friday, detailing a spending plan of Rs 4.48 lakh crore for the fiscal year 2026–2027.

The state's own tax collection of Rs 2,20,000 crore, non-tax revenue of Rs 16,000 crore, and transfers from the Indian government of Rs 79,050 crore make up the budget's estimated total revenue receipts of Rs 3,15,050 crore. The overall collections for 2026–2027 are estimated to be Rs 4,47,240 crore, including gross borrowings of Rs 1,32,000 crore and non-debt capital receipts of Rs 190 crore.

A revenue deficit of Rs 22,957 crore and a budgetary deficit of Rs 97,449 crore, or 2.95 percent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), have been anticipated by the government. By year's end, total liabilities are projected to be Rs 8,24,389 crore, or 24.94 percent of GSDP.

According to the administration, both numbers show sustained devotion to budgetary restraint since they are still within the bounds established by the Karnataka budgetary Responsibility Act. A request for forest clearance and an updated Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Mekedatu Dam Project will soon be sent to the Indian government.

Tamil Nadu has previously voiced significant resistance to the project, which aims to supply Bengaluru with drinking water. In order to stop caste-based discrimination and atrocities against students at the state's government, commercial, and deemed universities, the government also announced plans to pass the Rohith Vemula Act. In order to house offices under the Scheduled Tribes care Department, the government would build the Sri Maharshi Valmiki Administrative Soudha in Sumanahalli in Bengaluru at a cost of Rs 50 crore as part of tribal care programs.

To maximize their economic potential, waqf assets situated in desirable commercial districts will be developed using a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. The government of Bengaluru announced Rs 1,255 crore for the development of roads and infrastructure at the ward level in five city corporations.

At Wankhede, two Gujaratis, Babu Axar and Bumrah, recreate history

New Delhi: The British were up against two Gujaratis, one of whom was Babu. The conclusion of the narrative is known to all. However, it is renewed every few years. On the cricket field these days. It must therefore be told again. March 5, 2026, a Thursday. It is the Wankhede's second T20 World Cup semifinal. India has scored 253 against England when batting first. In a T20 World Cup, no one has ever chased more than 200. It appears that India will prevail. Once more, Abhishek Sharma has broken hearts; prayers have failed. However, Sanju Samson has responded to them and rekindled his romance with fate. Under the radar, Shivam Dube has carried on with his dream trip. However, the wicket is flat. Before tossing it, the curator removed the grass and gently rolled it. Not a swing. Not a spin. No dew. Lining up the ball and going bang-bang is all that's required. With one less for 37, England is off to a fast start. The dice are then rolled.

India begins with Arshdeep and Hardik Pandya. On the opening ball of the fifth over, Jasprit Bumrah enters the game. Bumrah fills up. That odd whiplash loading, run-up. He runs his fingertips along the seam. Not speed. Not swing. A ball that is slower. It is read early by Harry Brook, who has been middling everything. With his arms outstretched and a dismissive heave that conveys “I've seen better,” he is through the shot before the ball reaches him. The ball ascends. Far away. Above the lights of Wankhede. We need to take a moment, dear reader, to analyze the skill of catching a ball that is flying away from you. It's never simple to run backwards while keeping your eyes on the ball. It is similar to running against the past when you run backwards. The way India celebrated Kapil Dev's capture of Vivian Richards in the 1983 World Cup final is akin to celebrating Diwali, Holi, Eid, and Christmas all at once. A champion's hopes were dashed by that catch. This one is going to follow suit. Overlooking the field is Brook's parabola. No one is in its arc. It will be forgotten if you spill it. There will be encouraging applause and shoulder shrugs. However, tonight a jugalbandi



is being performed by two Gujaratis. It won't be forgotten or fall. Axar sprints, stops, and makes adjustments. He holds out his hands. The ball lands in his palm, refusing to overflow. He would subsequently comment, “It was one of my best catches.” He's not finished yet, though. Ball 13.6. An Arshdeep Singh ball is lifted by Will Jacks in the direction of additional cover. From deep cover, Babu sprints to his left, nearly trips, receives the ball a few yards from the boundary, and passes it to Shivam Dube. In a semifinal, two catches. Both from places where the ball wasn't meant to be. Both were finished with the leisurely assurance of a man who has accepted the challenges of life. Nothing is impossible. Babu Axar is working. However,

the game is really close. In the 14th, Varun Chakravarthy is out for 13; now, 69 off 30 balls is needed.

Bumrah returns. Every Indian leans forward at this point, and every English prayer gets a little more precise. To Bethell, bumrah. The world's greatest bowler is chasing the world's best batsman. At such times, the Wankhede has a certain quiet. This place can accommodate at least 50,000 people, and every seat is full and every throat is sore, so it's not the calm of an empty ground; rather, it's the quiet of stress and an imminent loss. It is the silence of held breath. Indian, biological, and collective. As they wait for a gust of optimism, the entire audience functions as a single pair of lungs. It shows up. At the pinnacle of his game is Jasprit Bumrah. He only divulges eight. The equation begins to breathe once more. Wankhede discovers its voice. Bumrah, who is above eighteen, has returned. A yorker hat trick. Two missile-like low full-toss deliveries. Six runs were given up. Now, England needs 39 out of 12. The jugalbandi concludes the way all the best jugalbandis do: with a note that is so inevitable and well-placed that the silence that follows feels like a resolution: India wins by seven runs. In the presser afterwards, Parthiv Patel will ask Axar Patel about the catches. And he will grin like a man who has been undervalued so many times that he has lost awareness. He would say of Brook, “It was one of my best catches.” He would run out of superlatives to describe the other. Thus: “We prevailed.” At the conclusion, player of the match Sanju Samson will be questioned over the two Bumrah overs. He would grin and add that if it were up to him, he would give Bumrah the POTM. There are two Gujaratis.

Babu is one of them. It felt nearly like the eighteenth century because the British were so nearby. However, everyone was aware of the story's conclusion. It always does. All that was needed was a fresh telling of the tale. India is in the championship game. Two Gujaratis on the cricket pitch will deny the British honor, and they will leave India.

Morocco coach Walid Regragui resigns months before World Cup, Ouahbi appointed successor

Rabat, Morocco: Morocco coach Walid Regragui has quit the team just months before it competes at the World Cup, he confirmed at a late-night press conference on Thursday. Regragui's departure — less than 100 days before the United States, Canada and Mexico host the World Cup from June 11 to July 19 — was widely reported before Fouzi Lekjaa, the president of the country's soccer federation, accompanied Regragui for the press conference that doubled as a tribute to the departing coach.

The team needs a fresh face, a different energy, and a new perspective with a new coach," Regragui said. "I think the team needs a new lease of life before the World Cup, a new vision to continue progressing. My decision to leave is part of this team's evolution." The 50-year-old Regragui led Morocco to the semifinals at the 2022 World Cup — a first for Africa and the Arab world — but he was criticized after the team failed to win the Africa Cup of Nations as the host country after a dramatic 1-0 loss to Senegal in the final in January. Lekjaa said that Mohamed Ouahbi, who led Morocco's under-20 team to the Youth World Cup title, was taking over as Regragui's successor.



It will be Ouahbi's first experience coaching a senior team. The 49-year-old Belgian-Moroccan was previously in charge of Morocco's under-23s and much of his career was spent managing youth sides at Belgian club Anderlecht. I'm not here to build, because the foundations are already in place. I'm here to keep performing," Ouah-

bi said. Ouahbi said João Sacramento would be his assistant coach. The Portuguese is a former assistant coach at Paris Saint-Germain, and he worked under José Mourinho at Roma and Tottenham. Morocco has not won a continental trophy since 1975 and Regragui also faced criticism for a perceived defensive style of play as the team's

World Cup success and flawless qualifying campaigns raised expectations. Some critics already called for his dismissal after Morocco disappointed at the previous Africa Cup in Ivory Coast. Regragui, a former right back for Spanish club Racing de Santander, was appointed Morocco's national team coach in 2022, World Cup.

India name four debutants in One-off Test against Australia

Perth: Australia Women won the toss and opted to bowl first against India Women in their one-off Test, beginning on Thursday at Perth's WACA Ground. Notably, India named four debutants in the pink-ball Test. The match also marks veteran Australian cricketer Alyssa Healy's final international appearance for Australia. India named Pratika Rawal at No. 3, while their revamped bowling attack features uncapped seamers Kashvee Gautam, Kranti Gaud and Sayali Satghare.

Australia are leading the multi-format series 4-2. While India won the three-match T20I series 2-1, Australia women posted a strong comeback to seal the three-match ODI series 3-0. At the toss, Indian captain Harmanpreet Kaur said that while they also considered bowling first, playing in the conditions is key. She also noted India's four debutants and confirmed the team will



Include two spinners and three pacers. "We wanted to bowl first also, but I think batting first or second, you have to come here and face these conditions. So yeah, I mean, it's a great opportunity for us. Hopefully we'll give our best. Yeah, after the T20s we had a bit of a tough time in the ODIs, but it's all about playing your best cricket and hopefully today we'll play our best cricket. We have four debutants today and yeah, we are going With two spinners, three pacers and batters," she said. After winning the toss, Australia captain Alyssa Healy. Australia

Have called up uncapped pair Rachel Trenaman and Maitlan Brown to their squad for the one-off Test against India, which is scheduled to get underway from March 6 at Perth's WACA Ground. In the 3rd ODI, Australia Women produced a dominant batting display to defeat India by 185. In a bold move signaling a new era for Indian women's cricket, India named four debutants in their playing XI for the historic one-off pink-ball Test against Australia, which commenced today, March 6, 2026, at the iconic WACA Ground in Perth.

Bapu Axar and Bumrah: Two Gujaratis rewrite cricket history at Wankhede

Axar, Bumrah brilliance crush England chase

New Delhi: Two Gujaratis, one of them Bapu, versus the British. The world knows how the story ends. But it gets renewed every few years. These days, on the cricket field. So it has to be told afresh. Thursday, March 5, 2026. It is the second semi-final of the T20 World Cup at the Wankhede. Batting first, India have scored 253 against England. Nobody has ever chased more than 200 in a T20 World Cup. India seem destined to win. Abhishek Sharma has broken hearts again—prayers have not worked. But Sanju Samson has answered them, renewed his tryst with destiny. Shivam Dube has continued his dream journey under the radar. But the wicket is flat. The curator stripped it off grass and rolled it lightly before the toss. No swing. No spin. No dew. All you have to do is line up the ball and go bang-bang. And England are off to a flyer: 1 down for 37. Then the dice is rolled. India start with



Hardik Pandya and Arshdeep. Jasprit Bumrah comes on for the first time — the first ball of the fifth over.

Bumrah loads up. That strange, run-up, a whiplash loading. He rolls his fingers over the seam. Not pace. Not swing. A slower ball. Harry Brook, who has been middling everything, reads it early. He's through the shot before the ball arrives, arms extended, the kind of dismissal

Sive heave that says I've seen better. The ball climbs. Long off. He ran 24 metres backwards from the cover position to take a stunning catch off Jasprit Bumrah's slow cutter to dismiss the dangerous Harry Brook inside the powerplay. Brook had looked in ominous touch and his early removal proved to be a turning point in the contest. Axar was not done there. In the 14th over, he caught a sliced

Shot from Arshdeep Singh before smartly relaying the ball to Shivam Dube as he crossed the ropes to remove Will Jacks, breaking a partnership that had been threatening to take the game away from India.

"Axar's catch to dismiss Brook was unbelievable. Brook can take the game away and you have to grab every chance to get his wicket," he said.

Khelo India Tribal Games inaugural edition to be hosted across three cities in Chhattisgarh

New Delhi: The inaugural edition of the Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) will be held between March 26 and April 6 in three cities in Chhattisgarh - Raipur, Jagdalpur and Sarguja. This was announced by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Mansukh Mandaviya, on Thursday, as per a release. The Games will feature seven medal sports - athletics, football, hockey, weightlifting, archery, swimming and wrestling. There will be two demonstration sports - mallakhamb and kabaddi. KITG will see representation from most states and Union Territories of India.

"The Khelo India Tribal Games are part of our expanding footprint that offers an opportunity and scope to every young person wanting to play a sport. It is part of PM Narendra Modi's vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2024 and sports has a massive role to play in that journey," said Mandaviya. The logo, theme song and mascot of the first-ever Khelo India



Tribal Games (KITG) were formally unveiled at the Late B. R. Yadav Sports Stadium in Bilaspur on December 23. The launch ceremony was graced by Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh Vishnu Deo Sai and Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao. Mandaviya stressed how the Games will strengthen the talent base emerging from tribal areas. Tapping talent from tribal regions is key and continuously expanding our athlete-base is the requirement of the hour. We are ensuring that talented youngsters from tribal communities are identified early, supported systematically, and integrated into the national sports framework," Mandaviya

added. The KITG 2026 will be jointly managed by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Sports Authority of India (SAI), Indian Olympic Association, National Sports Federations and the Chhattisgarh state organising committee, with technical standards benchmarked against international competitions. The official mascot 'Morveer', is a name deeply rooted in Chhattisgarh's cultural ethos. Derived from two powerful words -- 'Mor', meaning mine or our own in Chhattisgarhi, and 'Veer', symbolising courage and valour -- Morveer represents the spirit, pride and identity of India's tribal communities.

Chhattisgarh becoming the first state to host this landmark national event, dedicated exclusively to tribal athletes, marks a significant milestone in India's sporting journey aimed at tribal empowerment and grassroots inclusion. The Khelo India Tribal Games are part of the Khelo India Scheme, a flagship Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India, aimed at promoting mass participation and sporting excellence. Khelo India Games have been declared an 'Event of National Importance' in 2020 under the Sports Broadcasting Signals Act, 2007. The Khelo India Tribal Games are part of the Khelo India Scheme, a flagship Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. The marathon was officially flagged off by Chhattisgarh Police IG Badrinarayan Meena, Income Tax Commissioner Shrawan Meena, along with youth icon Rannvijay, whose presence added excitement to the event.

Sanfida Nongrum scores debut goal in India's Asian Cup return



Perth: The last time India scored a goal in the AFC Women's Asian Cup before Wednesday, March 4, 2026, Sanfida Nongrum hadn't been born. A historic goal on not just any day, but her senior India debut. On not just any stage, but the biggest tournament on the continent, as per a press release from AIFF. When Sanfida Nongrum found the net in the 52nd minute after coming off the bench at half-time against Vietnam in India's opening match, the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia

2026 at the Perth Rectangular Stadium on Wednesday, the moment carried far more weight than just a name on the scoresheet. It marked the return of an Indian goal at the continental showpiece and announced the arrival of a new face on the international stage.

For Sanfida, the joy of scoring was mixed with the disappointment of the result. "Although I'm happy to score my first goal on my debut for India, I feel bad that we lost in the last moments. We will take our

learnings and move forward to the Japan match," she said after the game. India head coach Amelia Valverde had brought the youngster on in the second half to inject energy into the attack, and the move paid off almost immediately. The Costa Rican coach later highlighted the impact of the substitution during the post-match press conference. "There are many similarities between the junior and senior camps, but the intensity needed to train with senior players is much higher.

From Kho Kho to Hockey: Rutaja Pisal's inspiring rise in Indian women's team

Hyderabad: At just 23, Rutaja Dadaso Pisal has already established herself as a regular in the senior Indian Women's Hockey Team, emerging as an influential presence in the midfield and has been included in the squad for the upcoming FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers, Hyderabad, Telangana, scheduled from March 8 to 14. Hailing from Phaltan, a small village in the Satara district in Maharashtra, Rutaja's journey into hockey began somewhat unexpectedly, as per a press release. "Before hockey, we used to play Kho Kho in school. It is very popular in Maharashtra. Our teachers noticed that we could run well and had good stamina, and they encouraged us to get into hockey. From there, my journey began," she shared.

"I started playing when I was around 12 years old. I had to give a fitness and endurance test to get into my academy in Pune. I passed the test, and that is where I started playing hockey," she added. Coming from a village where women playing sports was uncommon, Rutaja acknowledged the support she received during her early years. In my village, it was not very common for girls to play hockey. At that time, families were still thinking whether they should send their kids outside for sports or not, but a coach in our



village supported us and encouraged us to go ahead," she said. From there, Rutaja made her way from state and national level tournaments to the Junior Women's Hockey Team, where she helped India win the Women's Junior Asia Cup in 2023 and earned a spot in the Senior camp. Rutaja has

now been part of the senior national camp for over two years and believes the experience has helped her grow significantly as a player. "There are many similarities between the junior and senior camps, but the intensity needed to train with senior players is much higher. Being in the camp for

the last couple of years has helped me improve a lot," she explained. Despite operating primarily in the middle of the park, her intelligent movement inside the circle makes her a constant goal threat, as she has already registered seven goals in her 20 appearances for the senior side.