

ED Attaches 21.65 Crore Assets in Fake Vehicle Loan Fraud Case

Aizawl, Mar 26: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) said it has provisionally attached movable and immovable assets worth Rs 21.65 crore belonging to several car dealers and individuals in connection with a fake vehicle loan fraud involving Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Limited (MMFSL).

The action was carried out under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA), the central probe agency said on Wednesday.

The ED, Aizawl Sub-Zonal Office, provisionally attached movable and immovable prop-

erties worth approximately Rs 21.65 crore belonging to various car dealers and other individuals under the PMLA in connection with a fake vehicle loan fraud perpetrated at the Aizawl Branch of MMFSL.

The ED initiated its investigation based on two FIRs registered by the Mizoram Police on complaints filed by officials of MMFSL, an official statement said. It said that the predicate offences include criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery, and fabrication of documents under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, 1860. Investigation revealed that Jakir Habibur Hussain,

then Area Business Manager of MMFSL, Aizawl Branch, in active connivance with four car dealers of Aizawl and other co-accused, orchestrated a large-scale fraud by sanctioning and processing fake vehicle loans from 2019 to 2024.

Fake customer profiles were created using fabricated government documents, including Voter IDs, Aadhaar cards, and income certificates.

Loan amounts were disbursed to the car dealers' accounts against delivery orders raised on the MMFSL portal; however, no vehicles were actually sold or delivered, the statement said. To conceal



and launder the proceeds of crime, the accused created two fictitious entities, "Mahindra Finance Limited" and "Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services", and opened fraud-

ulent bank accounts in their names with Mizoram Rural Bank.

Car dealers transferred substantial portions of the fraud proceeds to these fake

accounts. Funds were further withdrawn in cash and recycled to pay EMLs on the fictitious loans, creating an appearance of genuine loan servicing. In the first Provisional

Attachment Order on March 7, 2025, the ED had provisionally attached movable properties valued at approximately Rs 9.89 crore, including two vehicles (Kia Seltos and Hyundai Alcazar). The attachment was confirmed by the Adjudicating Authority (PMLA), New Delhi, under an order dated August 19, 2025. The present Provisional Attachment Order covers 12 immovable properties worth approximately Rs 19.68 crore and six bank accounts/fixed deposits worth approximately Rs 1.96 crore, totalling approximately Rs 21.65 crore. The attached immovable properties are spread

across Aizawl, Mizoram, and Tezpur, Nagaon, and Silchar, Assam. Investigation established a sophisticated pattern of layering through mule bank accounts opened in the names of low-level MMFSL employees, including office boys and sweepers, who, acting on the instructions of Jakir Hussain, received credits from the fake Mahindra accounts and withdrew cash, which was handed over to him. The money trail further revealed the deliberate undervaluation of registered sale deeds and the acquisition of properties in benami names to conceal Jakir Hussain's true beneficial ownership.

Dept of Art & Culture celebrates Somnath Swabhiman Parv

Imphal, Mar 26: The Somnath Swabhiman Parv (1000 Years of Unbroken Faith) celebration was observed by the Department of Art and Culture, Government of Manipur, today at Heibok Mahadev, Hiayangthang, Imphal West. Khurajam Loken Singh, Minister, Art and Culture, Government of Manipur graced the function as Chief Guest. Speaking as the Chief Guest of the function, Khurajam Loken Singh, stated that the rich arts, culture, and sporting traditions of the state have been passed down by our forefathers through generations. He remarked that at present, people across the world are becoming increasingly aware of our state's rich and unique traditional arts, culture, and sporting heritage. The Minister further emphasized the importance of preserving and promoting these traditions for future generations while continuing to strengthen cultural identity. He also noted that many such initiatives are being supported under the guidance of the Ministry of Home Af-



fairs, Government of India, to promote cultural unity, particularly in the North Eastern region. H Gyan Prakash, Commissioner, Directorate of Art and Culture and Dr. Mayengbam Veto Singh, Director, Art and Culture also attended the function. Performances by teachers and students of Mahal Mukundadeva Music College added vibrancy to the event. The programme was conducted successfully with active participation from departmental officials, artists, cultural groups, local leaders and public.

AR organises awareness programme on tuberculosis

Imphal, Mar 26: In a concerted effort to combat the challenges of tuberculosis, Assam Rifles organised comprehensive awareness programmes across Tengnoupal and Kamjong districts on Tuesday. These initiatives coincided with the World TB Day, an annual global event observed to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB and to step up efforts to end the global epidemic. The sessions were designed to promote health consciousness and strengthen community outreach. Medical personnel provided detailed insights into the nature of the disease, identifying it as a significant public health concern that remains both preventable and curable. Key discussions revolved around identifying common symptoms such as persistent



cough, fever, weight loss and fatigue, while stressing the vital importance of early detection and

timely medical intervention, informed IGAR(S) in a press release. Special emphasis was placed on

preventive strategies, including maintaining personal hygiene, ensuring proper household ventilation and consuming a balanced diet. Furthermore, the programmes focused on breaking the social stigma associated with the illness, encouraging individuals to seek help without hesitation. Attendees were informed about free diagnostic and treatment facilities available under government healthcare schemes, reinforcing the need for strict adherence to prescribed medication. The events saw active participation from 31 Assam Rifles personnel including their medical officials and staff alongside a significant gathering of civilians at Tengnoupal and Kasong Village. Through interactive discussions, officials successfully dispelled myths and misconceptions, fostering a sense of collective responsibility, it said.

ODI, Test Allotted to Guwahati for India's 2026-27 Home Fixtures

Guwahati, Mar 26: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has officially announced the schedule for Team India (Senior Men) International Home Season 2026-27, with Guwahati selected as a host venue for two prominent international fixtures during the season. As part of the West Indies Tour of India, which will begin on September 27, 2026, and features a three-match ODI series, Guwahati will host the 2nd One Day Inter-

national on September 30, 2026. Further adding to the excitement of fans in the Northeast, Guwahati will host the prestigious Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

The much-anticipated five-match Test series against Australia is scheduled to begin on January 21, 2027, with the 3rd Test match set to be played in Guwahati from February 11 to February 15, 2027. This marks a significant milestone for Assam as the city

continues to strengthen its position as a key destination on India's international cricket map. Hosting both an ODI and a Test match in a single season reflects the growing stature and capability of the region in organising world-class cricketing events. The Assam Cricket Association (ACA) has thanked ICC Chairman Jay Shah and BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia, for entrusting Guwahati with the prestigious fixtures.

Thoubal District Olympic Association inaugurates new office

Imphal, Mar 26: A new office of the Thoubal District Olympic Association was inaugurated at the Multipurpose Indoor Stadium, Thoubal Kshetri Leikai on Wednesday. Dr. M. Veto, Director of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of Manipur, attended the event as Chief Guest and formally inaugurated the Office. President of the District Olympic Association, Thoubal, M. Mani Singh presided over the event, and District Youth Affairs and Sports Officer, Thoubal, Deven Moirangthem, attended as guest of honour respectively. Speaking at the occasion, Dr. M. Veto Singh stated that the efforts made by the District Olympic Association Thoubal for the athletes are highly commendable. He urged the association to continue its work for the athletes and advised the office bearers to move forward with dedication. He also emphasised the importance of mutual respect and guidance between the old and new office bearers. Giving his key note address, M. Madhusudan, General Secretary, Thoubal District Olympic Association stated that after the Manipur Olympic Association took significant steps to promote sports in Manipur, the Olympic movement has also extended its reach to Thoubal district. This idea was conceived by the leaders of the association and was established in 2003 with the former sports organiser, Laishram



Chandrakishwor (retired IPS) of Thoubal Haokha, as the founder president, along with other sports enthusiasts, he said. After functioning for some time, the association was revitalised on February 24, 2023, with renewed vigour and activities. Following this, the Thoubal District Olympic Association has successfully participated in various sports events and competitions. As a significant achievement of the Thoubal District Olympic Association, the first "Thoubal District Olympic Games, 2025-26" in the history of Manipur sports was successfully organized in the state with 20 games/events. The Game was held from September 24 to 28, 2025, across 20 different venues in the district with the support of the public.

The then Deputy Commissioner of the district, Hannah Kahmei, IAS, served as the organizing secretary for the games. It was highlighted that the association's current progress is due to the sacrificing spirit and courage of the present office bearers, and the plan is to continue organizing these games in the coming years. Secretary Madhusudan also proposed that the District Level Sports Associations should collaborate to develop the newly emerging athletes in Thoubal district, nurture their disciplines, and support them in producing more successful athletes in the future for the betterment of society. Many well-wishers and members of the Thoubal District Olympic Association also participated in the inauguration event.

Security forces destroy six more bunkers in Ukhrul

Imphal, Mar 26: In continuation of operation by security forces which commenced yesterday, six bunkers illegally constructed were dismantled on Wednesday at Litan and Mongkat Chepu upper village areas in Ukhrul district. Following the operation, majority of bunkers in the violence affected Litan area have been rendered ineffective. Security forces continued to remain alert and troops are strategically deployed to prevent escalation of violence in the area. Earlier on Tuesday, security forces conducted simultaneous operations at multiple locations within the jurisdiction of Litan-PS during which bunkers were destroyed and dismantled at Lengiangching and Mongkat Chepu villages of both communities. Number of fired cartridges were also recovered.



Area domination was established by security agencies through patrolling in the area and strategic deployment of troops.

AR celebrates 191st Raising Day at Nambol

Imphal, Mar 26: Assam Rifles celebrated its 191st Raising Day at Nambol with active involvement of the civil community. The event was attended by officials, troops and a delegation of 15 law students along with one faculty member from the Royal Academy of Law, Oinam, representing different parts of Manipur. The programme began with the screening of a motivational film that showcased the rich legacy, operational ethos and contributions of Assam Rifles. This was followed by the ceremonial hoisting of the National Flag and the Assam Rifles flag, accompanied by Salami Shastra, which evoked a strong sense of pride and patriotism among those present. Participants then rendered the Assam Rifles song and raised spirited slogans of "Assam Rifles Ki Jai," reflecting unity and high morale.



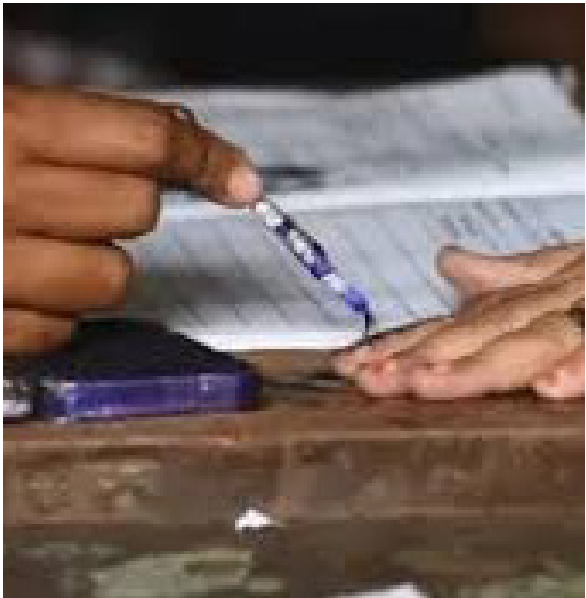
The senior official briefed the gathering on the history, role and operational responsibilities of Assam Rifles, underlining its contribution towards maintaining peace and security in the North East. An interactive session was held between Assam Rifles personnel and the

visiting students, covering aspects of internal security, nation-building, opportunities for collaboration with the legal community and career avenues for law graduates, including entry as Judge Advocate General officers in the Indian Army, said a press release of IGAR(S).

Tension erupts in Singjamei over 'objectionable remarks' against CM

Imphal, Mar 26: Tension erupted in Singjamei as a large number of residents gathered at the residence of Sujata Thokchom, President of Imagi Meira, following allegations that she made objectionable remarks against Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh. According to reports culled from the spot, the situation unfolded after information circulated within the locality claiming that Imagi Meira President Sujata Thokchom had spoken against the Chief Minister. The reports triggered strong reactions among locals, prompting them to assemble in large numbers to voice their resentment. Eyewitnesses stated that the crowd demanded a clear explanation regarding the alleged remarks and sought immediate clarification from Sujata Thokchom. The protest created a tense atmosphere in the area for several hours. Authorities are said to be closely monitoring the situation to prevent any escalation.

Mizoram Governor pitches sericulture overhaul to make India’s silk capital



Aizawl, Mar 26: Mizoram Governor Vijay Kumar Singh has called for a strategic overhaul of the state’s sericulture sector, describing it as an untapped economic powerhouse capable of transforming the state into India’s “silk capital.” Lok Bhavan sources said on Wednesday.Speaking at the grand fashion show titled “Tlangro: The Mizoram Silk Runway” on Tuesday evening in Aizawl, the Governor underscored that Mizoram possesses the unique natural advantage of producing all four major silk varieties: mulberry, eri, muga, and oak tasar, the sources said. The event, jointly organised by the Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles, the Mizoram Sericulture Department, and the National Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC), aimed to show-

case Mizoram’s rich silk heritage while celebrating the artistry, craftsmanship, and immense untapped potential of the state’s silk industry.Singh noted that Mizoram’s temperate climate provides an ideal environment for silkworm rearing. With growing global demand for eco-friendly and sustainable textiles, Mizoram’s natural fibre, particularly eri silk, holds high potential to capture significant international markets, he said.“Sericulture can become a powerful pathway for economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and sustainable development,” Singh said. He also stressed the need for strong collaboration among farmers, government agencies, researchers, and local communities to transform the sector into a genuine engine of growth for the state.

An expedition to cross 50 mountain passes in Sikkim was launched

Sikkim, Mar 26: A high-altitude expedition traversing 50 mountain passes across Sikkim to mark 50 years of statehood was flagged off on March 25.The month-long expedition, titled ‘Swarnim Shikar Yatra’, is being led by the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling. It was flagged off by Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Tshering Thendup Bhutia.Officials said the expedition will be conducted in three phases, covering both iconic mountain routes and several remote, less-



er-explored stretches across the Himalayan state. Besides commemorating Sikkim’s golden jubilee of statehood, the initiative aims to document these high-altitude passes for future expeditions and training purposes.The programme is also expected to promote eco-friendly practices, encourage youth participation in adventure activities, and showcase lesser-known trekking circuits in the state.Addressing the gathering, Bhutia highlighted Sikkim’s immense potential in adventure tourism and

stressed that development must go hand in hand with environmental sustainability. He termed the expedition a historic initiative that would further position the state as a premier destination for adventure tourism. Principal of HMI, Rajneesh Joshi, presented an overview of the expedition, detailing its scale, safety protocols and expected outcomes. He also underscored the institute’s legacy and its long-standing association with Sikkim in promoting mountaineering and adventure sports.

Allahabad HC grants bail to Avimukteshwaranand, restrains public

Lucknow, Mar 26: The Allahabad High Court on Wednesday granted anticipatory bail to Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati, stating that the seer would not be arrested until the chargesheet in the alleged child sexual abuse case is filed by the police authorities.The Shankaracharya had filed a petition for anticipatory bail on February 24 in connection with allegations of sexual harassment of young students (batuks).While granting bail to the seer, the single-judge bench comprising Justice Jitendra Kumar Sinha imposed several conditions.The most prominent condition is that both parties, the Shankaracharya and complainant Ashutosh Maharaj, will neither make statements nor give interviews.“If the bail conditions are violated, the other party can file a bail cancellation application,” the court saidDuring the pronouncement of the verdict, the Shankaracharya’s lawyers urged the court to restrain the complainant from moving around with children and making statements during such visitsOn this, the court said that it should not be violated.It may be recalled that the Allahabad High Court had stayed the Shankaracharya’s arrest on February 27



in the sexual harassment case Justice Jitendra Kumar Sinha had then said that the seer would not be arrested until the order to that effect was delivered, and had asked him to cooperate with the police authorities in the investigation.The Shankaracharya was represented in court by advocate PN Mishra, while Additional Advocate General Manish Goyal appeared on behalf of the state government. Complainant Ashutosh Maharaj’s

lawyer Reena Singh also made submissions. Ashutosh Brahmachari, a disciple of Tulsipeethadhishwar Swami Rambhadracharya, had filed a petition in the district court on February 8 this year.Following the order of Judge (Rape and PCOSO Special Court) Vinod Kumar Chaurasia, the Jhansi police registered an FIR on February 21 against Swami Avimukteshwaranand on charges including sodomy.Significantly, a dispute had

erupted between the seer and the Magh Mela administration on January 18, Mauni Amavasya, at the Prayagraj Magh Mela over the Maha Snan, as authorities had stopped the seer from proceeding towards the nose of the Sangam on a palanquin due to the massive rush of devotees.Eight days later, on January 24, Ashutosh Maharaj approached the Prayagraj Police Commissioner with a complaint against the seer, alleging sexual exploitation of children, the batuks, during Magh Mela-2026 and Mahakumbh-2025. Alleging inaction by the police, a petition was filed in the Special PCOSO Court on February 8. On February 13, two children were presented before the court, and their statements were recorded on February 21. On the court’s order, an FIR was registered at a Jhansi police station on the same day. In the FIR, the Shankaracharya, his disciple Mukundanand, and two to three unidentified individuals were named as accused. On February 24, the Shankaracharya accused Prayagraj Additional Commissioner Ajay Pal Sharma of conspiracy and also filed an anticipatory bail application in the Allahabad High Court.

Assam’s Jal Jeevan push reaches 81.71% rural homes but gaps in delivery persist

Guwahati, Mar 26: Across Assam’s hills and plains, the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) has altered the texture of village life. In many places where women once walked long distances carrying earthen pots to fetch water, taps have now appeared inside homes.Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 15, 2019, with the promise of “Har Ghar Jal”, the mission has so far provided functional household tap connections to 59,02,704 rural households in Assam out of a total 72,24,239 homes. This translates to 81.71% coverage as of March 24, 2026. Yet, behind the impressive headline numbers lies a more uneven reality.In several villages, pipelines remain unfinished, roads dug up during construction have not been restored, and many households say the taps installed under the scheme either do not function or supply water irregularly. Over the past few years, the Centre has invested heavily in the programme in Assam. Between 2019-20 and 2024-25, the state received Rs 18,146.84 crore under the mission. The year-wise allocation to Assam stood at Rs 442.36 crore in 2019-20, Rs 551.77 crore in 2020-21, Rs 4,200.87 crore in 2021-22, Rs 4,588.21 crore in 2022-23, Rs 6,204 crore in 2023-24, and Rs 2,159.63 crore in 2024-25.However, no fresh central funds have been released to any state, including Assam, in 2025-26, as the original JJM programme expired in December 2024. The Assam government is currently man-

aging expenditure through its own share, carry-over funds of Rs 111.06 crore, and recoveries made to complete partially executed schemes.So far, expenditure in Assam this financial year stands at only Rs 12.10 crore, with just Rs 1.21 crore of the central share remaining unspent. Despite the funding constraints, Assam has recorded a sharp rise in coverage — from around 16-17% in 2019 to over 81% today.But the expansion has also exposed persistent implementation problems. While official reports do not provide district-wise details of incomplete or non-functional projects, ground-level accounts suggest that a significant number of schemes remain unfinished or are not delivering water as intended.In many areas, contractors are still awaiting final payments despite having completed their work. In districts such as Tinsukia, roads dug up for laying pipelines remain damaged even after two years. In some villages, taps have been installed, but water supply is either erratic or absent altogether.In February 2026, the office of the Mission Director issued urgent instructions to clear pending bills so that divisions could raise fresh fund demands. There is no official evidence to suggest that funds meant for the Jal Jeevan Mission were diverted to other schemes. However, audits have flagged irregularities in implementation, including excess payments to contractors and poor-quality

work.The Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department has recovered money in several instances. In one case in Guwahati, a contractor was asked to return Rs 93.42 lakh. The Centre also imposed a penalty of Rs 5.08 lakh on Assam during a nationwide review of irregularities.Some contractors have been blacklisted for three years, while disciplinary action has been initiated against officials. The measures followed the Prime Minister’s directive calling for zero tolerance towards lapses in the scheme. In a significant development, the Union Cabinet on March 10, 2026, approved an extension of the programme — often referred to as JJM 2.0, until December 2028For Assam, the extension is particularly important. Around 13.21 lakh households, many of them in remote, flood-prone and hilly areas, are still waiting for dependable drinking water connections.At the same time, a major concern has emerged over pending payments to contractors, many of whom say they executed works using their own resources.Contractors working under the PHE Department claim that dues amounting to nearly Rs 12,000 crore remain unpaid. Protests have been reported from districts such as Dibrugarh and Jorhat, with contractors saying the delays have pushed many families into severe financial distressApurba Lahan, secretary of the All Assam PHE Contractors Association, said the payment crisis has stalled a large number of projects.

AZSU-AMN appeals to ZUF, NSCN-IM after Tamenglong clash

Guwahati, Mar 26: The All Zeliangrong Students’ Union–Assam, Manipur and Nagaland (AZSU-AMN) has appealed to the Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF) and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) to eschew violence and resolve differences through dialogue, following a recent gunfight in Manipur’s Tamenglong district.In a statement issued on Wednesday, the students’ body expressed concern over a fresh exchange of fire between the two groups at New Kaiphundai village in Tousem subdivision, along National Highway-37, on Friday morning around 8:30 a.m. Describing the situation as deeply distressing, the AZSU-AMN said repeated incidents of violence between the factions have created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty among civilians in the region.“The violence has affected innocent civilians, leaving families in a state of anxiety and insecurity,” the statement said, urging both sides to heed the concerns of the public. Appealing for restraint, the organisation called on the groups to prioritise dialogue over armed confrontation. “Let us resolve our differences through dialogue, not guns. Let us prioritise the safety and well-being of our people and future generations,” it said, while urging both factions to act with responsibility towards the community.Reiterating its call to “give peace a chance,” the students’ body said it was painful to witness continued violence overshadowing the aspirations of the Naga community for peace and stability.

Kohima hosted a workshop on “Using administrative data for governance”

Kohima, Mar 26: The economics & statistics department, government of Nagaland, organised a one-day state-level workshop on ‘Using Administrative Data for Governance: Linking Departmental Data at State Level’ on March 24, 2026 at the Secretariat Conference Hall, Nagaland Civil Secretariat, Kohima.The event brought together senior officials and technical experts from 20 state departments to advance the agenda of data-driven governance. The workshop was inaugurated with a welcome address by Neidilhou Keditsu, Director, Economics & Statistics Department.According to DIPR report, development commissioner, Temsunaro Aier, in her keynote address, emphasized that administrative data should be AI ready to leverage the benefits of AI and big data for good gover-



nance and data driven policy making.The technical session began with presentation on the workshop’s theme by Akunu S Meyase, secretary to the Government of Nagaland, economics and statistics department, wherein she emphasized that the prevailing siloed and underutilised governmental data must be integrated and linked to transform the same as strategic asset for evidence-based governance.During the workshop, the following

presentations were made, ‘Use of the PIMS database for scheme implementation such as CMHIS and CM-LIS’ was made by Livitoli Sukhalu, Deputy Secretary, P&AR Department; ‘Best practices from other States’ by Vikosieto Krose, Deputy Director, Economics and Statistics Department; ‘State Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy’ by Er. Pelengulie Chucha, Scientist ‘C’ Nagaland Science and Technology Council,

Science and Technology Department; ‘Data privacy and Interoperability’ by Er. Yanger Longkumer, Program Officer, Information Technology and Communications Department; “Leveraging Administrative Data for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by Abilo Humtsoe, SDG Officer, SDGCC, Planning & Transformation Department.The presentations were followed by a consultative discussion moderated by Neisatuo Puro, while Charles N Kikon, additional directors, economics and statics department spoke on challenges and way forward for administrative data linkages.The workshop ended with a concluding remark by Akunu S Meyase, secretary to the government of Nagaland, economics and statistics department.

Newly constructed Panchayat Bhawan inaugurated at Tsiepama

Dimapur, Mar 26: The newly constructed Panchayat Bhawan of Tsiepama village was inaugurated on March 25 ,2026 by Metsubo Jamir, minister, Rural Development & SIRD, Govt of Nagaland, who graced the occasion as the special guest and in the presence of Zhaleo Rio, advisor for Urban Development and Municipal Affairs, govt of Nagaland, MLA A. Pongshi Phom, RD department officials, village leaders, and elders. The event program was chaired by Temsumongla Lkr, BDO RD Block Medziphema who presided over the proceedings. A dedicatory prayer was pronounced by pastor Seyiezhalie Khro, CRC Tsiepama Village. The words of appreciation, acknowledging the efforts of all stakeholders involved in the construction of the building was delivered by Seyievizo Visezuo, VCC Tsiepama Village. Minister for Rural Development, Metsubo Jamir delivered an address stressing on the importance of maintaining rural population while highlighting that due to rural migration, most villages in Nagaland are becoming ghost villages with no significant population left in the villages. He also pointed out that Nagas need to register and do proper census in the upcoming Nagaland Census drive as due to drop in population in rural villages, various govt schemes are unable to benefit the villagers due to lack of population in the rural villages.Meanwhile, the minister was also optimistic that with the passage of time, Nagas will utilise government funds properly for developmental purposes and looked forward to better public responsibili-



ty.Speaking on the ocaassion, Zhaleo Rio thanked the minister for his presence at Tsiepama Village, an important political village in his constituency, which produced former minister of state and various leaders in the area.The advisor thanked him personally for bringing about much needed village to village infrastructure development in his constituency by gifting the people of Tsiepama village with a new Panchayat Bhawan and for various ongoing projects which were implemented under his leadership. The programme concluded with a song by Mhasikhotso Shüya and closing remarks delivered by the chairperson.

State Level Youth Parliament to be held on March 27

Imphal, Mar 26: Mera Yuva Bharat erstwhile, NYKS, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, is implementing Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament in a three tier bsis viz, District, State and National Level. District Round competition have been completed in 15 districts of the State. The District Level Commillee selected top five youths from each District Level Competitions. The State Level Youth Parliament will be con-testing by only 70 Youths (26 male and 44 female) which will be held at Imphal Hotel, Sangai hall on March 27 at 10.30 a.m.

The topic of the State Level Youth Parliament is “Union Budget 2026: Strengthening the Indian Youth’s Path Towards Viksit Bharat 2047”. Th. Satyabrata Singh, Speaker of Manipur Legislative Assembly will inaugurate the function. W. Paulina Monsang, State Direc-tor, My Bharat, and Dr. Dhanabir Laishram, Social Scientist will grace the function as President and Guest of Honour respectively. Five Jury Members from Uni-versities and Colleges will be evaluating the perfor-mances of the competitors. Prof. Chinglen Maisnam, Head of Department, South East Asian



Studies, Manipur University has consented to be the Ovsrver of Parliament session and Dr. Dhanabir Laishram will be pre-siding as Session Speaker of the State Level Youth Parliament. Youth selected from the District

Level Youth Parliament across the state shall report at 9.30 am at Sangai Hall, Imphal Hotel. Veri-fication of contestants and issue of Identity Card will be done at the Spot in between 9.30 and 10.20 a.m. along with registration.

Efforts on to improve road connectivity in Lamsang: MLA Rajen

Imphal, Mar 26: In a sig-nificant boost to the pig farming sector in the State, a new distribu-tor outlet of European premi-um pig feed “Swiss Highland,” introduced by Yen-Kon Agro, was inaugurated at Taothong Apeiba under Lamsang Kendra. The inaugural function was at-tended by local MLA Sorokhai-bam Rajen, who highlighted the importance of introducing qual-ity feed to enhance pig farming productivity in the region. He noted that the initiative would greatly benefit farmers by improv-ing livestock health and output. Speaking at the event, the MLA also raised concerns regarding transportation challenges faced by the public due to frequent high-way blockades, which disrupt the supply of essential goods. He



stressed the need to strengthen local production systems to reduce dependency on external sources. Further addressing infrastruc-ture issues, Rajen informed that efforts are underway to improve road connectivity within the

constituency. Plans have been set to construct proper drainage systems along key roads be-tween April and May to address waterlogging problems and en-sure smoother transportation. He also appealed to the public for

cooperation during the construc-tion period, acknowledging that temporary inconveniences may arise but assuring that the long-term benefits would significantly improve public convenience and overall development in the area.

Assam Rifles Facilitates Inter-State Educational Exchange: Dima Hasao’s Tribal Students Visit Tripura Governor

Agartala, Mar 26: In a proud and inspiring moment, girl students from Dima Hasao had the rare honour of interacting with the Governor of Tripura during an inter-state educa-tional tour facili-tated by the Assam Rifles, marking a significant step in their journey of learning and empowerment. The initiative, organised by the 21 Sector Assam Rifles, brought 21 girl students from various tribal communities of Assam to Tripu-ra. These students are currently undergoing training at the Free Computer Learning Centre run by “A Ray of Hope” Society (AROH), a dedicated NGO based in Haflong. Accompanying them were eight committed volunteers who have been actively support-ing their academic and personal development.

The interaction with the Gover-nor Indra Sena Reddy Nallu stood out as the highlight of the tour. In an engaging and motivational ex-change, the students shared their journeys of resilience and deter-mination, explaining how access to education and digital literacy

is helping them shape aspirations for a better future. Their stories reflected a strong sense of pur-pose and a growing confidence to pursue paths of independence and leadership. The Governor lauded the courage and ambition of the young learners and appre-ciated the efforts of Assam Rifles and AROH in uplifting marginal-ised communities through mean-ingful educational initiatives. The interaction not only boosted the morale of the students but also reinforced the importance of knowledge, self-belief and per-severance. The inter-state educa-tional tour has been thoughtfully designed to broaden perspectives

and inspire ambition among the participants, many of whom are stepping outside their home dis-trict for the first time. The stu-dents will also visit places of sig-nificance to include Albert Ekka War Memorial, Ujjayanta Palace, Neer Mahal and ICP Agartala. Geographic Reference Such ini-tiatives underscore the continued commitment of the Assam Rifles towards nation-building and so-cial outreach in the Northeast. By empowering young tribal girls through education and opportu-nity, the force remains a stead-fast partner in fostering progress, inclusivity, and hope in remote regions.



Violence Erupts in Tripura’/ Mangalkhali Over Murder; Houses Torched, Tension Prevails

Agartala, Mar 26: Man-galkhali in North Tripura turned into a virtual battle-field on Thursday as thou-sands of people poured onto the streets protesting the murder of Khaled Ahmed and demanding the imme-diate arrest of the main ac-cused. The situation escalat-ed dramatically, with angry protesters alleging police in-action and eventually resort-ing to violence by setting fire to the houses of the accused. A massive road blockade was staged in front of the Mangalkhali Big Mosque from around 9:30 am, lasting nearly two hours. Protesters burned tyres, raised slogans, and expressed grief and outrage over the incident, bringing traffic movement in the area to a complete halt and causing severe inconve-nience to commuters.

Demonstrators alleged that despite several days pass-ing since the brutal attack, police have failed to ap-prehend the prime accused. Tensions intensified as as-surances from the admin-istration failed to calm the agitated crowd. In a violent turn of events, a section of protesters attacked and torched the houses of three



accused—Jubed Ahmed, Saddam Hussain, and Sabir Hussain—reducing them to ashes. Fire department personnel rushed to the spot with two fire engines and managed to bring the blaze under control. However, the houses were completely destroyed before the flames could be contained. Sensing the gravity of the situation, a large contingent of police forces was deployed in the area. Additional Superin-tendent of Police (North District) Kamal Debbarma and Sub-Divisional Police Officer Jayanta Karmakar personally reached the spot. Following their intervention and assurances, the blockade was eventually lifted. The violence stems from a bru-tal attack that took place on the day of Eid last Saturday, when two brothers Khaled

Ahmed and Junaid Ahmed were assaulted with sharp weapons. Both were initially taken to the district hospital and later referred to Silchar in critical condition. Khaled Ahmed succumbed to his injuries during treatment, while Junaid Ahmed contin-ues to battle for his life.

Despite several names sur-facing in connection with the crime, the failure to ar-rest the main accused has fueled public anger. Locals have warned of intensifying protests if swift action is not taken. The situation in Mangalkhali remains highly tense, with additional securi-ty forces deployed. Author-ities are closely monitoring developments, as the next steps by the administration are likely to be crucial in preventing further escala-tion.

Thoubal launches first phase of National De-worming Day

Imphal, Mar 26: The first phase of the National De-worming Day campaign to protect children from worms for this current year was launched in Thoubal district. Under the theme “Worm Free India under the Krimi Mukta Bharat Abhiyan,” the campaign was launched at the election counting hall located at Thoubal DC Com-plex by the Deputy Commis-sioner of Thoubal, Yumnam Robita, IAS, as the chief guest, by ad-ministering Deworming tablet, Al-bendazole tablets, to students. The event was attended by Chief Medical Officer Thoubal, Dr. Y. Nokul, ZEO Zone (iii) Thoubal, Y. Achouba, and DPO, ICDS cell Thoubal, Th. Romita, as president and guests of honors, respectively. Speaking at the event, Deputy Commissioner Thoubal, Yumnam Robita, stated that administering deworming tablets to children helps prevent soil-transmitted intestinal worms. This, she added, protects children from stunted growth, anemia, and mental and physical impairment. For the current year, the

plan is to administer these tablets to children from 1 to 19 years old in schools, Anganwadi centers, and pre-semester students in colleges across Thoubal District. She ap-pealed to ASHA facilitators, school teachers, and Anganwadi work-ers and helpers for their support. Chief Medical Officer Thoubal, Dr. Y. Nokul, speaking as the presi-dent, mentioned that National De-worming Day is observed twice a year, in February and August, since 2015. The main objective is to address the impact of worms on children, which can lead to discomfort, loss of appetite, re-duced school performance, and various other health issues, thus hindering the development of In-dia. He noted that the National Deworming Day has been consis-tently observed since its inception. He further added that while worm infestation was a widespread prob-lem in the past, the initiatives of the government have significantly reduced it. He noted that deworm-ing tablets are currently admin-istered to children from 1 to 19



years old, but children in Class IX/X often show reluctance to take the tablets, which is not ideal. The CMO also emphasised that worm infestation is often caused by unhygienic practices, such as inadequate handwashing and open defecation. Therefore, he stressed the im-portance of educating children on proper hand hygiene and the hab-it of washing hands before eating. He highlighted that beyond aca-demics, teachers have a signifi-cant role in promoting health and hygiene. Anganwadi workers at

the local level also play a crucial role in this regard. He appealed for collective effort to eradicate worm infestation and make the de-worming day initiatives successful. It was mentioned that in this first phase, Thoubal district aims to administer deworming tablets to a total of 82,500 children. A mop-up day will be held on March 31st to administer the medicine to children who were missed today. ASHA facilitators and Anganwadi workers and helpers of Thoubal District participated in the de-worming campaign.

MoU signed to boost Buddhist tourism in Northeast

Aizawl, Mar 26: The North East India Tourism Confederation (NEITC) and the Association of Buddhist Tour Operators (ABTO) have entered into an agreement to foster collaboration in the field of travel and tourism.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) aims to strengthen tourism

linkages with particular emphasis on the promotion of Buddhist pilgrimage across the northeastern region.

The MoU was signed at Anini in Dibang Valley district on Wednesday. The agreement seeks to establish a clear and structured framework of cooperation, delineating the roles,

responsibilities, and collaborative mechanisms between NEITC and ABTO.

It reflects a shared commitment to promoting sustainable tourism prac-tices while positioning the Northeast as a prominent destination in the Bud-dhist pilgrimage circuit.

The MoU signifies a mutual intent to collaborate and strengthen institu-tional ties. It serves as an expression of goodwill and a guiding framework for partnership, without creating leg-ally binding obligations beyond those explicitly outlined, the state-ment added.

Skill development conclave held in Aizawl

Aizawl, Mar 26: Mizoram Governor General Vijay Kumar Singh, (Retd), graced the inaugural programme of the “One Day Skills Development Conclave” at the ICAFI University Mizoram campus in Durtlang North, Aizawl, as the Chief Guest on Wednesday.

Prof. Y. R. Haragopal Reddy, Chancellor of ICAFI University Mizoram, attended the event as the Guest of Honour. The conclave was jointly organised by ICAFI University Mizoram and the Department of Labour, Employment, Skills Development and Entrepreneurship, Govt. of Mizoram.

In his inaugural address, the Governor praised the talented and hardworking nature of Mizo youth. He emphasised that, in addition to their inherent abilities, they must acquire the right skills, greater exposure, and confidence to com-pete not only at the national level but also on the global stage. While urging them to seize opportunities across India and the world, he ad-vised the youth to remain firmly rooted in the rich values and cultural heritage of Mizoram, noting that this foundation would propel them to even greater heights of success. Highlighting Mizoram’s abundant natural beauty, vibrant cul-ture, and peaceful social environment, the Gov-ernor pointed out the immense potential for the state to excel in the service sector -- currently the fastest-growing sector in the economy. He

stressed that skill development must go hand in hand with innovation and entrepreneurship, and expressed hope that the conclave would prove highly beneficial for the youth. He added that the event should not end merely as a platform for discussion, but evolve into a dynamic move-ment that inspires and transforms young people, converting their skills into real opportunities and guiding them towards success in life.

The Governor described the youth as a price-less asset to both the state and the nation, and encouraged them not to limit their ambitions to Mizoram alone. Instead, they should aim for excellence across India and the world. He underscored the urgent need to create the right direction and ecosystem for skill development and entrepreneurship, declaring that “skills are the true currency of success in the modern era.” Noting that India leads the world with the high-est number of startups launched daily, he called upon the youth to focus on practical knowledge, adaptability, and continuous learning - qualities that are in high demand in today’s job market. Since the government alone cannot provide em-ployment for everyone, he urged greater empha-sis on the private sector and entrepreneurship. He encouraged young people to aspire not just to be job seekers, but to become job creators. The Governor further stressed the importance of integrating practical skills with academic

learning, forging stronger linkages between educational institutions, industries, and mar-kets, nurturing entrepreneurial thinking among the youth, and promoting close collaboration among all stakeholders to achieve meaningful success in skill development initiatives.

Prof. Ginlianlal Buhril, Vice Chancellor of ICAFI University Mizoram, delivered the wel-come address. Insightful speeches were also given by Prof. YR Haragopal Reddy, Chancel-lor, and Pu John Tanpuia, Director of the LES-DE Department. Dr. David Lawmzuala, Reg-istrar of ICAFI University Mizoram, proposed the vote of thanks and formally concluded the inaugural session.

Following the inauguration, three distin-guished resource persons shared their expertise: Major Dr. Gulshan Sharma, Director General of Medical Wellness & Spiritual Tourism and Strategic Consultant for MSMEs in the Service Industry, Gujarat; Pinaki Roychoudhury, Social Entrepreneur and Group CEO from Kolkata and K Yatish Rajawat, CEO of the Center for Inno-vation in Public Policy and Founding Partner of the Hundred Million Jobs Foundation. They delivered sessions on two key themes - “From Mizoram to the World” and “Mizo Youths Reaching Out to Pan India” - followed by a highly engaging and productive panel discus-sion.

Territorial Army honours Padma Shri awardee and war veteran on turning 99

Aizawl, Mar 26: The Territorial Army, under the aegis of the 23 Sector Assam Rifles, celebrated the 99th birthday of Padma Shri awardee Havildar Lalbiakthanga Pachuau (Retd), a distinguished veteran of the 3rd Battalion, The Assam Regiment.

Defence spokesman Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said that at 99 years of age, Havildar Pachuau stands as a living embodiment of the finest traditions of the Indian Army.

Having served with distinction in the 3rd Battalion, The Assam Regiment, including participation during World War II, he later transitioned into a remarkable civilian life dedicated to journalism, literature, and social service after voluntarily retiring from the Army upon completing 17 years of service.

He was conferred the Padma Shri in 2021 in recognition of his outstanding contribu-tions to Literature and Education (Journal-ism).

Widely acknowledged as India’s old-est working journalist, he has devoted his life to promoting truthful reporting, social awareness, and community development in Mizoram, Lt Col Rawat added.

Under the theme “A Remarkable Century, A Remarkable Life”, personnel of the Ter-ritorial Army, Assam Regiment, and Assam

Rifles paid tribute to the veteran.

Family members and ex-servicemen joined the celebrations.

His life continues to inspire generations, reinforcing the enduring bond between vet-erans and serving soldiers.

Pachuau began his journalism career in 1953 with a local publication and went on to become a prominent figure in the Mizoram Journalists Association (MJA), serving as its president for three terms.

He was declared the “oldest working jour-nalist in the country” by the Mizoram gov-ernment’s Information and Public Relations Department and the MJA in October 2016.

Pachuau also co-founded the Association for Voluntary Blood Donation (AVBD), serving initially as its general secretary and later as its president multiple times from 2001 onwards.

In 1945, during the final phase of World War II, he joined the Army and earned sev-eral military honours. He was also one of the key delegates during the peace talks between the erstwhile underground Mizo Nation-al Front (MNF) and the Centre in the early 1980s. In the 1990s, Pachuau founded the Mizoram Social Defence Union and actively campaigned against alcohol and drug abuse.

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The Importance of Trust in Relationships

Trust is the foundation of all meaningful relationships. Whether in personal life, professional settings, or public institutions, trust enables cooperation, understanding, and stability. In personal relationships, trust develops through honesty, consistency, and reliability. When individuals feel secure in their relationships, they are more likely to communicate openly and build stronger connections. In workplaces, trust contributes to teamwork and productivity. Employees who trust their colleagues and leaders are more willing to collaborate and share ideas. This creates a positive and efficient work environment. Trust is also essential in public life. Citizens must trust institutions to act fairly and responsibly. When trust is weakened, social stability may be affected. Building trust requires time and effort. It is developed gradually through consistent actions and can be lost quickly through dishonesty or neglect. Maintaining trust therefore requires responsibility and commitment. Education and family environments play an important role in teaching the value of trust. Individuals who learn to act with integrity are more likely to build trustworthy relationships. In a rapidly changing world, trust remains a constant need. It allows individuals and communities to function effectively and work together toward common goals. A society built on trust is more stable, cooperative, and resilient.

Govt buys LNG at lower rates as global prices cool

Bangladesh will import two liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargoes from the spot market at prices lower than its recent purchases, as global fuel rates ease amid diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the US-Israel war on Iran. The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase yesterday approved the procurement for delivery in late April. UK-based TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd offered \$19.77 per MMBtu (metric million British thermal unit) for both cargoes, down from over \$20 per MMBtu in deals struck earlier this month. The total cost is estimated at Tk 1,667 crore.

Officials at the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources said the lower rate reflects a recent dip in global energy prices, driven by expectations of a negotiated end to the Middle East conflict, which has outweighed concerns over supply disruptions in the Gulf. Oil prices have softened in recent days, creating a window for cheaper spot purchases.

According to US media reports, prices fell as a diplomatic push by the US to end the war gathered pace, eclipsing news of more troops being sent to the region and the Strait of Hormuz remaining largely shut.

Brent sank as much as 7 percent toward \$97 a barrel before paring the drop, while West Texas Intermediate was near \$88. The US drafted a 15-point plan to help bring the conflict to a close, according to news reports. The proposal was delivered to Iran via Pakistan.

On March 17, the government approved two LNG cargoes from Aramco Trading Singapore at \$20.96 and \$20.92 per MMBtu. Prior to that, three cargoes were secured at above \$20, including one from TotalEnergies at \$21.58 and two from South Korea's Posco International at \$20.76. The three shipments are expected to arrive between April 5 and April 13.

Immediately after the war began on February

Surveys reveal that the Iran War is beginning to affect the world economy

The Iran war is already taking a toll on major economies around the world, according to business surveys on Tuesday which showed how a surge in energy prices and rising uncertainty were dampening activity and pushing inflation expectations higher. The initial findings of questionnaires sent to purchasing managers at companies in the United States, Europe and Japan are the most comprehensive snapshot yet of the economic impact of the near four-week conflict that has shut off indefinitely a large chunk of the world's energy supplies. The ensuing leap in the price of oil, gas and other related products is a potential double whammy for economies around the world, feeding through into wider inflation and stunting growth. Beyond the trouble that spells for leaders of those economies - including US President Donald Trump himself - it has already prompted many of the world's central banks to envisage tighter policy to keep a lid on price pressures.

Among the 21 economies that share the euro currency, private sector growth all but stalled this month as companies signalled an increase in delivery times and expectations of rising costs that they in turn would be trying to pass on. S&P Global said its flash euro zone composite Purchasing Managers' Index fell to a 10-month low of 50.5 in March, below expectations,



from 51.9 in February. A reading above 50 indicates expansion in the private sector. Measures for both input and output prices in the euro area manufacturing showed much sharper moves. Within the national readouts, business confidence dropped markedly among French firms while German private sector growth slowed to a 3-month low. Chris Williamson, chief business economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said the euro area numbers were "ringing stagflation alarm bells", referring to the risk of a painful

combination of stagnation amid rising prices. S&P Global's US survey painted a similar picture of the world's largest economy, with higher energy prices raising inflation fears amid weaker business sentiment that pointed to weaker private sector employment prospects. 'President Trump may have delayed strikes on Iran's power grid, talking up diplomacy, but investors aren't buying a quick path to peace.'

'President Trump may have delayed strikes on Iran's power grid, talking up diplomacy, but inves-

tors aren't buying a quick path to peace. Its flash US Composite PMI Output Index fell to 51.4 this month. That was the lowest level since last April and followed a 51.9 reading in February and marked two straight monthly falls. The drop this month was in the services sector. Other Group of Seven (G7) economies fared little better. In Britain, S&P Global's survey showed business activity growing at the slowest pace in six months while manufacturers' input costs accelerated at the fastest rate since 1992. In Japan, the flash

composite PMI combining manufacturing and services activities dropped to 52.5 in March from 53.9 in February, its slowest rise in three months.

Outside the G7, India - which sources roughly 90 percent of its crude and nearly half its natural gas from abroad - saw its private-sector growth hit a three-year low in March with input costs rising at their fastest pace since June 2022, in part passed on by firms who also saw their margins compressed. So far, few economists are talking about the war plunging the global economy into outright recession, even as the energy shock from the de facto closure of the Strait of Hormuz - through which around a fifth of the world's oil passes - deepens. "The scenario is very dependent on the duration of the conflict and on the outlook for energy prices," said Nicola Nobile of Oxford Economics, commenting on the euro area impact. That said, there is a growing realisation that the economic consequences will not be short-lived, given the damage to energy infrastructure in the Gulf region inflicted by Iranian strikes in retaliation for US and Israeli missile attacks. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development think tank said last week it was too early to quantify the impact of the conflict on global growth but cited a "significant level of downside risk" for the global economy.

Oil edges up and equities mixed amid mixed messages on 'talks'

Oil prices rose and equities were mixed Thursday as investors tracked developments in the Middle East war after Iranian officials were said to have replied to US demands to end a conflict that has sparked warnings of an unprecedented energy crisis. Markets have been buoyed since late Monday after US President Donald Trump backed down on a threat to destroy the Islamic republic's energy infrastructure and said the two sides were in peace talks.

But while crude prices are down from last week and the mood on trading floors has been less down than most of March, uncertainty and the virtual closure of the Strait of Hormuz -- through which around 20 percent of oil and gas passes -- continues to cast a dark shadow. Washington presented a 15-point plan to end the war, including Iran giving up its enriched uranium and opening up the waterway, while Tehran's state-run TV reported officials had put forward their own five



conditions for hostilities to end. Trump on Wednesday threatened to "unleash hell" if Iran did not strike a deal, but Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said his country does not intend to negotiate. However, the US president also said Iran was taking part in peace talks and the denials were because negotiators feared being killed by their own side. "Pressure on energy prices, shipping flows and broader financial conditions remains one of the few

meaningful sources of leverage (Iran) retains," said Saxo Markets' Charu Chanana.

"There is therefore little incentive to relinquish that leverage prematurely, particularly if market stress strengthens its negotiating position. However, she added: "It would be imprudent to assume diplomacy is absent simply because it is not visible. In conflicts of this nature, public rhetoric and private negotiation often diverge materially. "Markets under-

stand this dynamic, and they also tend to deflect before the political endgame is formally in place." With investors holding on to hope that a deal can be struck, oil prices have stabilised this week, with Brent sitting just above \$100 and WTI around \$90. Equities were also less volatile. After gains on Wall Street and Europe, Asian markets fluctuated after a two-day rally. Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Seoul, Manila and Jakarta fell. Singapore, Wel-

lington and Taipei rose, while Sydney was flat. But City's Index's Fiona Cincotta said: "For the recovery to gain more meaningful traction, investors will want to see clearer signs of de-escalation, including the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz." Her remarks come after the head of the International Chamber of Commerce, John Denton, warned the conflict could cause the "worst industrial crisis" in decades.

"The head of the International Energy Agency has warned that the world is facing an energy crisis more severe than the oil shocks of the 1970s," he added. "From a business perspective, we believe this could yet become the worst industrial crisis in living memory." Meanwhile, the World Trade Organization said disruptions to fertiliser supplies posed a double threat to global food security through scarcity and high prices, with a third of the global fertiliser supply normally transiting the Strait of Hormuz.

Middle East war: global economic fallout

Japan said it had started to release another part of its strategic oil reserves Thursday as it looks to temper the impact on the resource-poor nation from the surge in prices caused by the war. Japan is the fifth-biggest importer of oil, with more than 90 percent of it from the Middle East. Oil prices rose and equities were mixed Thursday as investors tracked mixed developments in the war.

With investors holding on to hope that a deal can be struck, oil prices have stabilised this week. Brent edged up 1 percent to trade at \$103.25 a barrel at 0230 GMT. West Texas Intermediate rose 1.2 percent to \$91.41 a barrel. After gains on Wall Street and Europe, Asian markets fluctuated after a two-day rally. A ship carrying more than 700,000 barrels of Russian crude oil has arrived in the Philippines, a source with knowledge of the matter told AFP Thursday, days after the Southeast Asian country declared a national energy emergency over the Middle East war.

The Sierra Leone-flagged

Sara Sky, bearing high-quality crude from Russia's ESPO pipeline arrived on Monday, with documents showing the consignee as Petron Corp, operator of the Philippines' sole oil refinery, said the source, who asked to remain anonymous as they were not authorised to speak to press. The Philippines is heavily dependent on imported fuel, the cost of which has hit historic highs since the war forced the partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The US Environmental Protection Agency issued a temporary emergency waiver to allow countrywide sales of higher-ethanol E15 fuel in the summer, Administrator Lee Zeldin said, easing smog controls amid government concerns about adequate supply. The government has issued similar waivers in recent years under both the Trump and Biden administrations. The US Postal Service announced an eight-percent rate increase for some retail and commercial products, with the "transportation-related" move coming as global oil prices spiral due



to the war on Iran. As World Trade Organization ministers prepared to meet in Cameroon, the head of the International Chamber of Commerce warned that the conflict could cause the "worst industrial crisis" in de-

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"The head of the International Energy Agency has warned that the world is facing an energy crisis more severe than the oil shocks of the 1970s," John Denton said. "From a business

perspective, we believe this could yet become the worst industrial crisis in living memory." Iran will target shipping in the Red Sea, a crucial conduit for global oil and other goods leading up to the Suez Canal,

if the United States launches a ground invasion, a military official told local media. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the Strait of Hormuz was "closed only to enemies", with the Middle East war hav-

ing all but shut the vital oil and gas shipping route. Iran had informed the International Maritime Organization on Tuesday that "non-hostile vessels" could transit the strait if they meet safety and security regulations in coordination with the relevant authorities.

Disruptions to fertiliser supplies caused by the Middle East war pose a double threat to global food security through scarcity and high prices, a top World Trade Organization official warned. Iran's de facto closing of the Strait of Hormuz has also impacted fertiliser shipments, with a third of the global supply normally transiting the Gulf strait.

The head of the International Energy Agency said he was "ready to move forward" with an additional release of oil reserves "if and when necessary." Fatih Birol's comments in Tokyo came after Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi asked the agency "to prepare to implement an additional release in case the situation drags on" with the war in the Middle East.

BHIM launches biometric authentication for UPI payments, enhances security and user convenience



Kohima: NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL), a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has announced the launch of biometric authentication for UPI payments on the BHIM Payments App, aimed at improving transaction speed, convenience, and security. The newly introduced feature allows users to approve UPI transactions of up to ₹5,000 using their smartphone’s fingerprint or facial recognition. Available on both Android and iOS devices that support biometric capabilities, the feature removes the need for manual UPI PIN entry for smaller transactions. This is expected to reduce instances of failed payments caused by incorrect PIN inputs and make everyday transactions more seamless across use cases such as peer-to-peer transfers, merchant QR payments, and online purchases. Lalitha Nataraj, MD & CEO of NBSL, said, “BHIM Payments App has always focused on making digital payments simple, secure and accessible for every Indian. With biometric authentication, we are making everyday payments easier while strengthening trust in how they are approved.” Biometric authentication adds an additional layer of security, as fingerprints and facial data are unique and stored on the user’s device, reducing risks like PIN sharing. Transactions above ₹5,000 will continue to require UPI PIN verification for enhanced protection.

In Kohima, the feature is expected to accelerate digital payment adoption among local businesses and small merchants, enabling faster and more reliable transactions while improving customer confidence in cashless payment systems.

Fintech VC QED Investors eyes \$2 50-300 million India

Mumbai: Global fintech-focused venture capital firm QED Investors is planning to invest \$250-300 million in India over the next two fund generations, as it doubles down on fintech opportunities such as AI-led financial services, cross-border payments, and wealth-tech, among others Asia-Pacific investments. The firm has already invested about \$220 million in Asia-Pacific since 2020, with eight of its 14 regional bets anchored in India, including One Card, Jupiter Money, and earned wage access platform Refyne.

2 stocks Sunil Singhanian is holding tight despite a 52-week low crash

New Delhi: Ace investor and one of the Warren Buffetts of India, Sunil Singhanian is a well-known and highly followed super investor of India. Known widely for his strategic hold on midcap and smallcap stocks across varied industries, his investment philosophy is more about finding fairly or under-valued companies with strong fundamentals and significant growth prospect. What makes Singhanian stand apart from the average investors is that he does not get affected easily by market sentiments and tends to stick to his picks during market cycles, just like any true follower of Warren Buffett would. Currently, two of his most recent picks for Abakkus Funds are trading at a discount of over 40%. However, as per the last filing, Singhanian has held onto the stocks despite the steep decline in less than a year since they were listed. Does he see something that the average investor does not? Regarding net profits, the company recorded compounded growth of 25% from Rs 16 cr in FY20 to Rs 47 cr in FY25. And for the first 3 quarters of FY26, the profits were Rs 26 cr. The company’s share is trading at a PE of 33x currently while the current industry PE is 34x. In the company’s latest investor presentation, the MD and Chairman, Kailash Punamchand Shah said, “During the quarter, we also progressed on our long-term sustainability and material diversification roadmap with the signing of an MoU with the North East Cane and

Sagility India: 3 reasons why Nomura sees 47% upside potential for this US-focussed healthcare bet

New Delhi: The US healthcare payer industry demonstrates significant market concentration, with the leading 10 payers controlling approximately 60% of total market share based on direct written premiums. Strategic beneficiary of AI

While AI is expected to automate simple queries, Nomura believes Sagility India’s engagement services (30% of revenue) will remain resilient because complex clinical decisions still require human involvement due to regulatory constraints. Furthermore, tools like “Agent Assist” are expected to significantly boost internal efficiency, though much of these gains may be passed back to clients to maintain stable medium-term margins. Exceptional client retention and stability

As of Q3 FY26, the company served 81 client groups with an average client tenure of 18 years and a 95% retention rate. This stability is being boosted by strategic acquisitions, such as BroadPath, which expanded Sagility India’s reach into the mid-market payer segment. Also, the increased margin pressures on US insurance companies, caused by Medicaid funding cuts and Medical Loss Ratio (MLR) rules, are forcing them to adopt digital and AI-



led operating models. This shift is expected to act as a significant tailwind for Sagility India as payers increasingly outsource non-core administrative and clinical tasks. The company generates almost 90% of its revenue from US health insurance payers, with the remaining 10% coming from healthcare providers like hospitals and diagnostic companies. “The company is vertically integrated with operational

flexibility (distributed workforce model) and deep healthcare domain knowledge to deliver superior solutions for all stakeholders, in our view,” said the brokerage house. Strong growth outlook

Owing to margin pressure, there is an increase in the US healthcare outsourcing market, which becomes Sagility India’s main growth driver. The brokerage firm expects the

company to deliver a healthy revenue CAGR of 12% and an EPS CAGR of 20% between FY26 and FY28, driven by lower interest costs and sustained demand. The international brokerage house, Nomura, has initiated coverage on Sagility India with a ‘Buy’ rating. The stock got listed in November 2024. In the last 6 months it has fallen 9% and in the past 1 year, this stock, exclusively focused on the US healthcare market, has declined nearly 8%. But Nomura believes Sagility India can rally almost 47% from current levels, and they have set a target of Rs 55 per share for the stock. What’s fuelling the bullish prediction? Here’s a detailed analysis-The share price of Sagility India has surged 5.3% in the last five trading sessions.

However, the stock has dropped 6.8% in the previous one month and 9% over the last six months. Sagility India’s stock price has declined over 8% since its listing date. Disclaimer: This article provides factual analysis only and is not, and should not be construed as, an offer, solicitation, or recommendation to buy or sell securities. Investors must conduct their own independent due diligence and seek advice from a SEBI-registered financial advisor.

MCX session are available here NSE BSE will close



Mumbai: The Indian stock markets will take a break on Thursday, March 26, as the exchanges will remain shut for Ram Navami. Trading on NSE and BSE will be suspended on Thursday and will resume on Friday, March 27. Along with equity, the currency derivatives market will also suspend trading on Thursday

Banks across various cities of the country will shut for the same reason. MCX observes partial closure

However, Multi Commodity Exchange will only observe partial closure and will remain

closed for its morning session (9:00 AM to 5:00 PM IST). The exchange will resume trading for its evening session (5:00 PM to 11:30/11:55 PM IST) to follow the movements in global markets. Ram Navami is an important Hindu festival which celebrates the birth of Lord Rama. It usually falls on the ninth day of the lunar month of Chaitra. The festival is celebrated with great devotion throughout the country, as people from different backgrounds join in the devotion and festivities.

While the month of March nears its end, the stock market

will observe one more holiday this month. Domestic indices will remain shut on March 31 on the occasion of Shri Mahavir Jayanti. This marks a total of three holidays for the equity markets in March. This also includes March 3 holiday for Holi. The Indian equity markets will be closed for 2 days in April 2026. On April 3, 2026, NSE and BSE will remain closed for the occasion of Good Friday, followed by another closure on April 14 for Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Jayanti.

TVS Motor announces Rs 12 interim dividend for FY26; Check record date, key details

For the month of May, markets will observe two holidays as well: first on May 1 for Maharashtra Day and second on May 28 for the festival of Bakri Eid. Banks shut on March 26

Not just the equity markets, financial institutions across various cities of the country will also remain closed on the occasion of Ram Navami. However, in some states the festival will be celebrated on March 27, and so the bank closure would be in accordance with the RBI calendar. Readers are advised to check the official website of RBI for detailed information on city-wise bank closures

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Mumbai: Incorporated in 2001, Hyderabad-based Sai Parenteral’s is a diversified pharmaceutical formulations company with expertise in research, development, and manufacturing. It operates in two segments: branded generic formulations and contract development and manufacturing organisation (CDMO) products and services for domestic and international markets. Brokerage firms tracking the issue believe that the fundamentals and export expansion support long-term prospects, the IPO valuation appears expensive versus peers. However, they advise long-term investment only, warning that listing gains may be limited amid valuation and execution risks. Sai Parenteral’s operates in the branded generic formulations and CDMO businesses, with the product portfolio covering both high-value and high-volume categories across various therapeutic areas. SPL’s offerings span across dosage forms such as injectables, tablets, capsules, liquid orals and ointments, said SBI Securities. The injectables dosage is a high margin segment for the company, and it plans to increase the share of injectables in the total revenue mix in the coming years. The issue is valued at FY25 (proforma) P/E and EV/Ebitda multiples of 88.2 times/46.3 times respectively based on post-issue capital, which appears to be at premium to its peers,” it added with a ‘subscribe for long-term’ tag. At a pre-IPO P/E of 72.19 times and ROCE of only 9.28 per cent, the valuation appears stretched. Peers like Innova Captab trade at 32.45 times and Gland Pharma at 44.71 times with significantly higher scale and earnings. The business fundamentals and growth trajectory are solid, but the P/E of 72 times is expensive for a company of

this size and RoCE, said Swastika Investment-Morgan Stanley Asia (Singapore), Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance, India Emerging Giants and Quant Mutual Fund. The Noured acquisition is the strategic pivot, a regulated-market beachhead in Australia

New Zealand backed by 451 TGA-approved dossiers and a government-grant-subsidised facility that would have taken years to build organically, said Ashika Research. “Management has demonstrated disciplined capital allocation across four acquisitions. We recommend ‘subscribe’ at the cut-off price for long-term investors with a 2-3 year horizon. Investors seeking near-term earnings visibility should await post-listing price discovery,” it said. “The IPO comprises a fresh issue and an offer for sale, intended to fund capital expenditure for facility expansion, support working capital requirements, reduce debt levels, and provide partial liquidity to existing shareholders while improving visibility and access to capital markets,” it added with a ‘subscribe’ Sai Parenteral’s has reserved 50 per cent of the net offer for qualified institutional bidders (QIBs), while non-institutional investors (NIIs) will have 15 per cent of allocation.

Retail investors have 35 per cent of the reservation in the issue. Last heard, Sai Parenteral’s was commanding no grey market premium (GMP) of Rs 7 apiece, suggesting a muted listing for the investors. Arihant Capital Markets is the sole book running lead manager of Sai Parenteral’s IPO and Bigshare Services is the registrar of the issue. Shares of the company shall be listed on both BSE and NSE on April 2, Thursday.

Financial regulators intensify efforts to over Rs 73,000 crore unclaimed funds

Mumbai: Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), and Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) have intensified measures to help citizens reclaim unclaimed deposits to the tune of Rs 73,241 crore, minister of state for finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Tuesday. Substantial pool of unclaimed money continues to sit within India’s financial system, with Public Sector Banks (PSBs) transferring Rs 60,518 crore to the RBI’s Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund, according to the latest official data. The figure, as of January 31, 2026, highlights the scale of dormant deposits that remain untouched by account holders or their beneficiaries. Rs 8,973.89 crore worth unclaimed insurance accounts

Unclaimed insurance amounts currently stand at Rs 8,973.89 crore, while mutual funds account for another Rs 3,749.34 crore in unclaimed assets as of late February 2026, Chaudhary said. Together, these numbers point to a persistent challenge in reconnecting rightful owners with their funds. Regulators have stepped up efforts to address the problem. The central bank has introduced revised guidelines to streamline the settlement of claims, particularly in cases involving deceased depositors. Banks are now being encouraged to proactively identify and contact nominees or legal heirs, alongside publish-



ing lists of unclaimed accounts and conducting awareness campaigns. A notable change includes allowing multiple nominees in bank accounts, making it easier for families to access funds when needed. Incentives have also been introduced to speed up claim settlements, offering a small percentage payout on recovered deposits within defined limits. Parallel steps Insurance and market regulators have taken parallel steps. Insurers

are being pushed to improve communication with policyholders, while mutual fund operators have simplified documentation requirements and enhanced digital claim processes. Despite these measures, officials acknowledge that reducing the growing pile of unclaimed assets will require sustained outreach and greater public awareness, especially in smaller towns and rural areas where financial literacy remains uneven

Mark Carney chastises Air Canada’s CEO for an English-only accident statement



Canada: Mark Carney, Canada’s prime minister, has claimed that Air Canada’s chief executive’s choice to publish an English-only message of sorrow following a fatal disaster in New York shown a “lack of judgment, a lack of compassion.”Amid mounting calls for his resignation, the airline chief’s error has reignited grievances and concerns about linguistic rights safeguards in Quebec, where French is the sole official language.Two pilots were killed late Sunday when a fire vehicle collided with an Air Canada Express jet arriving at New York’s LaGuardia airport. The next day, Air Canada CEO Michael Rousseau posted a four-minute sympathy video online, expressing his great sadness over the loss of life and describing the incident as a “very dark day” for Air Canada. It included only two French words: “bonjour” and

“merci”.Rousseau does not speak French, which is spoken by his mother and wife, as well as over 80% of Quebec’s population. When he took the post in 2021, he promised to learn the language, but months later, he sparked outrage when he addressed the Montreal Chamber of Commerce in English.Air Canada, based in Montreal, said in a statement on Wednesday that Rousseau wanted to address “everyone affected by the tragedy, whether directly or indirectly” himself. “He therefore recorded a message as a matter of priority before departing on a flight for the crash site. Despite his efforts, his ability to express himself in French does not allow him to convey such a sensitive message in that language as he would wish.”The video included French subtitles, and all available information was communicated in both official languages on the Air Canada

website.But the explanation did not satisfy federal ministers, who have summoned him to the official languages committee to “explain himself” to lawmakers.“We proudly live in a bilingual country. There are two official languages here and Air Canada has a special responsibility whatever the situation to communicate whatever the situation in both official languages,” Carney said. “I am extremely disappointed by the message released by the CEO of Air Canada. It shows a lack of compassion, and we will be closely following his comments before the official languages committee as well as the comments coming from the board of Air Canada.”- Canada’s languages commissioner usually receives 100 complaints about the airline each year. But as of Wednesday morning, the commissioner said it received nearly 800 complaints about the vid-

eo.The two pilots killed in the collision were Antoine Forest from Coteau-du-Lac, Quebec, and Mackenzie Gunther, a 2023 alumnus of Toronto’s Seneca Polytechnic. Mélanie Joly, the industry minister, joined the criticism, saying many of the victims and their families were francophones. “It is a question of moral leadership,” Joly said.“If he still doesn’t speak French today, it’s disrespectful to his employees and to his francophone customers, so yes, I think that if he doesn’t speak French, he should resign,” François Legault, the Quebec premier, told reporters. The federal Bloc Québécois leader, Yves-François Blanchet, said the Air Canada board should force him out. “He should leave. He should acknowledge the fact that he doesn’t have the requisite respect for Quebec society,” he said. “There is a limit to the number of insults that one is supposed to stand.”In the 1950s, company bosses in the province would speak only English to their workers – and often refuse to allow French to be spoken. Those dynamics helped spark the Quiet Revolution – the bloodless overthrow of Catholicism and the anglophone ruling classes in the province – and a Quebecers separatist movement.In recent years, Quebec’s nationalist government has passed laws to dramatically strengthen protections for the French language amid fears English is overtaking it, especially in large cities.

Iran rejects the US cease-fire offer and presents its own amid a drive for negotiations

Iran: Iran rejected a US cease-fire proposal on Wednesday and responded with its own discussion plan, as mediators attempted to keep diplomatic communications between the warring countries open.According to Iranian state TV, an unidentified official stated that Tehran had rejected the plan received through Pakistan, stating that it would “end the war when it decides to do so and when its own conditions are met,” and that it would continue fighting in the region until then.Iran’s foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, subsequently stated that while the ideas had been “passed on to the country’s senior authorities,” Iran has “no intention of negotiating for the time being.” Donald Trump, speaking at a fundraiser in Washington on Wednesday night, said Iran was still interested in reaching an agreement. “They are negotiating, by the way, and they want to make a deal so badly, but they’re afraid to say it because they figure they’ll be killed by their own people,” added the leader.“They’re also afraid they’ll be killed by us,” he joked, before adding that no one wanted to govern Iran for fear of being assassinated by the United States.China’s foreign minister Wang Yi made separate calls to his Turkish and Egyptian colleagues, urging dialogue and informing Egyptian foreign minister Badr Abdelatty: “With both the United States and Iran signalling a willingness to negotiate, a glimmer of hope for peace has emerged.”Meanwhile, Israel’s military said on Thursday its forces had carried out a wave of strikes across Iran, including in the central city of Isfahan. A brief military statement said Israeli forces “completed a wide-scale wave of strikes targeting infrastructure of the Iranian terror regime in several areas across Iran”.Kuwait said it had arrested six people over an alleged Hezbollah plot to assassinate leaders in the Gulf state. The Ministry of Interior said five of those arrested are Kuwaiti citizens. It added that 14 more members of the group had fled the country: five Kuwaitis, five more Kuwaitis whose nationalities have been revoked, two Iranians and two Lebanese. The US military said late on Wednesday its forces had hit more than 10,000 targets so far in the Iran war, including destroying 92% of the Iranian navy’s largest vessels. Thousands more targets had been hit by Israeli forces, US Navy Admiral Brad Cooper, from US Central Command, claimed. “We have damaged or destroyed over two-thirds of Iran’s missile, drone and naval production facilities and shipyards, and we’re not done yet,” he added. The five-point plan Iran put forward included an end to the fighting and the assassination of its officials, guarantees that



no other war is started against it, reparations for the current conflict, and Iranian control over the strait of Hormuz.Despite the apparent Iranian rejection of the US deal, the White House press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, said discussions were continuing and were productive. She told reporters on Wednesday that “it became clear that Iran wants to talk and President Trump is willing to listen”.Leavitt also suggested the US was sticking to its four- to six-week timeframe for ending the war, saying it had been a “resounding victory” so far. It was announced that Trump’s rescheduled trip to Beijing would take place on 14 May, leading to speculation the US hoped the war would be over by then. Intermediaries from Pakistan had delivered a 15-point ceasefire proposal to Iran earlier in the day, the Associated Press reported. It was said to include sanctions relief, the dismantling of Tehran’s nuclear programme, restrictions on its use of missiles and reopening the strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint for about 20% of the world’s oil.The White House said some of the reported points were in the plan, but others were not official. Some had already proved to be intractable sticking points in negotiations before the war began.A senior Iranian official speaking to Al Jazeera described the proposal as “extremely maximalist and unreasonable”, while other officials said the country was still reviewing it, despite seeing it as too favourable to US demands.Tehran launched more drones and missiles on Israel and Gulf countries overnight and on Wednesday, including an attack that sparked a huge fire at Kuwait international airport, while Israel continued its bombardment of Iran.Iran’s five-point plan is likely to be a non-starter for the US, particularly as it includes continued Iranian control over the strait of Hormuz, but Egyptian and Pakistani officials suggested in-person negotiations between Washington and Tehran could begin as soon as Friday, with Pakistan or Turkey as possible venues. The White

House said on Wednesday that face-to-face talks were an option but cautioned reporters “not to get ahead of themselves”. Trump said the US was in negotiations with a party in the Iranian government who was engaging with his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, the US special envoy, Steve Witkoff, the US secretary of state, Marco Rubio, and the US vice-president, JD Vance. It was unclear who exactly the US negotiating team was in contact with, as officials from Iran’s foreign ministry and military denied Trump’s statements that negotiations were taking place.Iranian officials are sceptical about coming back to the negotiating table with the US, after the country was attacked twice before while in the middle of discussions. The US attacked Iran’s nuclear facilities during the 12-day war between Iran and Israel last summer and launched its latest conflict while progress was reportedly being made towards a comprehensive deal between the two parties.Israel and the US have also killed much of Iran’s senior leadership, including more pragmatic figures such as the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larjani, creating concern for the safety of its Iranian interlocutors, some of whom Israel has threatened to kill.“We have a very catastrophic experience with US diplomacy,” the Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baghaei, told India Today on Tuesday.As diplomacy sputtered forward, the US continued to amass troops in the Middle East. At least 1,000 troops from the 82nd airborne division will be sent to the region, according to the Associated Press, as well as 5,000 more marines and thousands of sailors. The deployment of the additional troops comes as the Trump administration appears to be considering plans to invade Iran’s Kharg Island to pressure it to reopen the strait of Hormuz. The island holds 90% of Iran’s crude oil exports. The 82nd airborne division is specialised in flying into contested areas and securing them.

UK armed personnel are authorized to board Russian tankers in British seas



London: Downing Street has authorized the UK armed forces to board Russian oil tankers in British seas as part of an escalation against Moscow’s sanction-evading Shadow Fleet.The Royal Navy has already joined allies in combat against the boats. Last week, it assisted in tracking down a sanctioned Russian oil ship in the Mediterranean, which was later boarded by the French navy.However, the prime minister’s proposal will let British military forces and law enforcement to go farther in combating the fleet of often-aging vessels that transport Russian crude oil under phony national flags or complex ownership structures in order to circumvent Western sanctions. The EU, UK, and US have imposed sanctions on more than 600 boats. The new regulations would only apply to those

sanctioned by the UK.Starmer will go to Helsinki on Thursday for the Joint Expeditionary Force Summit, a UK-led alliance focused on maritime security that includes ten NATO nations. The summit will debate methods to confront Russia. Other JEF members, including Finland, Sweden, and Estonia, have conducted operations against alleged shadow fleet boats in the Baltic.While the goal is to undermine Russia’s economy and consequently its war operations in Ukraine, Russia has warned that direct action against shadow fleet boats might result in actual combat. A senior Russian official said Moscow could deploy its navy to protect Russian-linked vessels from potential European seizures. Nikolai Patrushev, a former FSB director who heads Russia’s maritime board, last month said

WHO warns of health crisis ‘unfolding in real time’ across Middle East

Iran: The World Health Organization’s regional leader has stated that a complete cessation of hostilities in the Middle East is required to avert a “health crisis unfolding in real time”.Dr. Hanan Balkhy, the WHO’s regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean, advised that hospitals and other health-care institutions be recognized as “safe havens.”She stated that officials were revising instructions and prepared for any impact on nuclear installations, and that assaults on water desalination facilities would be “a disaster”.Iran and the Gulf nations are among the region’s 22 countries and territories, which also include



that the consequences of regional wars would last long after open hostilities ended. She expressed worry about the consequences on maternal mortality and mental health, as well as children who have been orphaned and lack access to school. Balkhy said she was also “very, very worried” about the potential for nuclear sites to be hit, whether deliberately or accidentally, and the health repercussions of a lack of water should desalination plants be further targeted.She was speaking before Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization reported a projectile hitting the grounds of the Bushehr nuclear power plant on Tuesday night. The same facility was reportedly hit on 17 March.“My worry is driving me to prepare and to have my teams prepare. And that’s what we’re doing,” she said. Asked about Iran’s threat to destroy desalination facilities, she said “it would be a disaster”, potentially leav-

ing vast numbers of people in Gulf countries trapped without water.The WHO is working with other UN agencies “to try to find ways to potentially mitigate such catastrophe if it does happen”. Balkhy said rainwater could also carry contamination from attacks on oil sites or nuclear facilities into underground water sources. “So even if there was any hope of other types of water sources, it can become contaminated,” she said. “We are seeing this unfolding in a very dangerous way and the only solution for us at this moment is for a significant de-escalation or a pause – and hopefully a permanent pause – in this escalation of the war.”Even if there was conflict, she urged: “Let’s secure the healthcare sector. Let’s not attack hospitals, health workers, and health-care facilities and patients. Let’s have at least a safe haven for them.”The WHO has verified dozens of attacks on

healthcare in Lebanon, Iran and Israel since the US-Iran war began.And last week an attack on El-Daein teaching hospital in East Darfur, Sudan, led to the deaths of at least 70 people, including 13 children, two nurses and a doctor, leaving the hospital nonfunctional.Balkhy said that, in the past, people in countries at war “would go and hide in the hospitals because they were sure it would not be bombed. That’s not the case any more. So I think we need to focus a lot on how do we bring back the compliance with the international humanitarian law on securing healthcare.” Meanwhile, she said the crises in Gaza, Sudan and Yemen were being neglected as the world’s attention turned to the US-Iran conflict. “It is very distressing because, behind that neglect, there’s a lot of hardship and death and sickness and illness and displacement that is going unrecognised.”

The Philippines declares a national energy emergency due to the US-Israeli war on Iran

Iran: The Philippines has declared a national energy emergency in reaction to the US-Israeli assault on Iran, claiming that the country has just 45 days of petroleum remaining. It comes as transportation workers, commuters, and consumer groups around the country prepare to go on strike for two days beginning tomorrow to protest the hike in fuel costs. The Philippines imports 90% of its oil from the Middle East. Meanwhile, South Korea started

a statewide energy-saving campaign on Tuesday, encouraging people to take shorter showers, ride bicycles for short journeys, avoid charging phones and electric cars at night, and use washing machines and vacuum cleaners only on weekends. South Korea imports around 70% of its crude oil through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has effectively blocked in response to the U.S.-Israeli bombardment.



Holy parades and earthly pleasures in Spain: Easter in Granada

As I turned the corner on a narrow, cobbled street in Granada, I felt as if I had stumbled upon a slightly sinister re-enactment society. Mysterious men dressed in white robes and tall, conical, face-covering hats with slits for their eyes were followed by women in black dresses and mantillas, holding pillar candles and crosses, then children wearing caped cloaks, carrying baskets of prayer cards. It was indeed a re-enactment of sorts, but deeply rooted in Catholicism, representing the Passion of Christ, staged during Holy Week (Semana Santa), which runs from 29 March to 5 April this year. Easter processions are held across the country, but this Andalusian city hosts one of the most authentic in Spain.

Unlike more celebratory parades, these are sombre affairs, as each of the 32 brotherhoods weaves its way through the streets with enormous floats (pasos) hoisted on the shoulders of scores of men (costaleros) who spend months preparing for this herculean task – a coveted role, often passed down from father to son. To rehearse, they carry heavy wooden tables through the streets after dark, which is a startling sight when you come across a team in training.

On the floats are larger-than-life figures of a weeping Virgin Mary and Christ on the cross, as well as precious icons normally sequestered in chapels.

The bearers are hidden underneath, surrounded by velvet drapes, so all that is visible is their white-soled feet as they inch their way along. Every so often, a cheer rises from the spectators, when a difficult manoeuvre has been managed. Palm Sunday marks the first of eight days of processions, Good Friday being the busiest with six events throughout the

city, but – having visited many times in an attempt to improve my Spanish – my personal favourites are on Maundy Thursday in the Albaicín, the Moorish quarter of the city. At San Miguel Bajo church at 5pm, the brotherhood of Aurora emerges to commence its seven-hour slow march with soulful renditions of saetas – flamenco-style religious songs – and then a brass band accompanies the statues as they pass by. Then, at midnight, the Cristo del Silencio procession moves in silence, guided by candlelight, the only sound a repeating muffled drum with Christ on the cross borne aloft by penitents in black cloaks. I have yet to stay awake until 4am for the finale at Granada cathedral.

Whether or not you come to Granada at Easter to witness the processions, it's a great time to visit, with the weather warming up and the streets coming alive. At the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains – popular with skiers, cyclists and walkers – it's my favourite city in Spain, with elegant architecture, lush gardens and varied cuisine. I can get pleasantly lost for hours in the meandering streets of the Albaicín, then walk down the steep slope to Plaza Nueva, great for people-watching, and on to the tree-lined boulevard by the Genil River, lingering at the art nouveau restaurant Las Titas (The Aunties). It's a strenuous walk (or easy bus ride) up to Sacromonte, past the Roma caves museum, with magnificent views over the Alhambra (the Islamic palace and citadel, which is a Unesco world heritage site) and the entire city your reward.

The sociable Spanish eat outside in all weathers. At Easter, special foods include almond-based pastries such as



piononos de Santa Fe – thin, rolled sponge cakes soaked in syrup, topped with toasted cream representing the Pope's crown – and torta real de Motril, from a 150-year-old recipe of almonds, egg white and a shiny sugar crust, both sold in cafes and bakeries (panaderías) across town. You can also buy homemade pastries at some convents – look for the sign Venta de dulces. A savoury dish you will spot on Easter menus around the city is potaje

de vigilia, a stew of cod, chick-peas and spinach.

But food here is special at any time of year – with plenty of meat-free choices too. Something to celebrate is the free tapa (often quite generous) with every drink from the bar, and drinks are cheap, at about €3 for a glass of wine or beer. A tapas crawl may take in La Goma in Calle Gracia, Bar Poë in Calle Verónica de la Magdalena and Tocateja in Calle Trinidad. The menú

del día at restaurants is great value – three courses for about €15, served on weekdays – followed by siesta time when shops close from 2pm to 5pm (except in the city centre), then open again, often until 10pm. For indoor eating, my latest discovery is the popular Mezze in Calle Laurel de las Tablas, opened last year by two British entrepreneurs and an Argentine chef. It serves eastern Mediterranean dishes, my choice being aubergine “meatballs”, stuffed

artichokes and tempura mushroom. After that, you may fancy some flamenco, and there is no shortage of high-standard establishments. Jardines de Zoraya in Calle Panaderos is my favourite. What makes it extra special is the optional dinner you can order beforehand (show €25; dinner €32). I also love El Tabanco del tío Gregorio, a small flamenco club in Cuesta de San Gregorio (Friday and Saturday, €15). Back on a religious theme,

Granada has a host of ecclesiastical sites that are worth visiting. Many are built on the site of former mosques, including the Renaissance cathedral containing the lead coffins of the zealous Christian monarchs Isabella and Ferdinand (who notoriously expelled the Muslims and Jews in 1492), their daughter Joanna the Mad and her husband, Philip the Handsome.

A short bus ride takes you to the Cartuja monastery, an over-the-top baroque monument with a picture gallery of sacred scenes and a secluded cloister garden planted with orange trees and aromatic plants. The Easter Saturday procession starts from the Alhambra, and what could be a better backdrop?

This magnificent monument attracts millions of visitors annually, so you need to book well in advance, but don't be fleeced by the many “official” sites. Book via tickets. alhambra-patronato.es and pay €22.27. It's free to walk up to the grounds and through the gardens, though – a pleasant early evening stroll to avoid the crowds. Convento de San Gregorio Bético (actually a church), next to an Arab souk, was reputedly once a wine warehouse and then a brothel. At noon each day, nuns gather to sing praises.

As I sat listening behind the choir screen, it took me back to when I saved up pocket money to buy my first record in 1963: Dominique by The Singing Nun (6s 8d). After a long day in this very walkable city, it's sheer bliss to unwind at a hammam, my choice being Al Andalus in Calle Santa Ana, where you can sip herbal tea between dips in hot, cold and steam baths. It's another ancient custom the granadinos have kept alive.

A local's guide to Burgos, Spain: 10 top tips

Castilian cuisine

Eating out in Burgos is a delight. The restaurants are generally very affordable and for a small city there is a lot of variety. But for something classic, it's hard to beat Ojeda. Slap-bang in the city centre this much-loved restaurant was founded in 1912, and its main dining room, upstairs from the bar, is still the most impressive in the city, decorated with intricately carved wood and cool tiled walls. The lamb chops (chuletillas de lechazo) or the sole (lenguado salvaje) with basil sauce (both around €20) are always good, but the lechazo – milk-fed lamb slow-roasted in a wood-burning oven (prices vary according to weight) – is something special and, without doubt, the most famous and best dish in the city, and probably the entire province.

Tour the vines

Burgos is an excellent base for a tour of the Ribera del Duero, one of Spain's most famous wine regions. An hour's drive or so south-west of the city takes you into the undulating vine-filled landscape, with its abundance of atmospheric, apricot-coloured small towns. Here, as in its sister region of Rioja, the tempranillo grape is king. Be sure to check out the bodegas of Villacreces (bottles from €10), Arzuaga (bottles from €18) and Vega Sicilia, Spain's most famous wine producer. It's best to ring in advance to organise a tour.

Pincho hopping



As in the Basque city of San Sebastián, going for pinchos – like tapas – is part of everyday life in Burgos. The best time for a pincho tour is either Thursday or Friday night, or Saturday or Sunday afternoon. Start on Calle San Lorenzo at La Quinta del Monje and order a glass of local Ribera del Duero red wine with a pincho of charcoal-grilled sirloin with foie gras (€3.50). Then head a few bars up the street to Casa Pancho.

Here, order an ice-cold caña (small beer) with a cojonudo, a small piece of bread topped with a quail's egg, spicy chorizo and red pepper. From there, move on to La Cantina de Burgos and wash down the carabinero (prawn) croquettes or bean stew with a glass of verdejo white wine. Finish at La Favorita for fried lamb sweet-breads, and be sure to try some of the house wines: they are written on a slate board in the middle of the



bar (from €2 a glass).
Bloodless bullring

Spain has probably the second-strongest basketball

league in the world behind the NBA. And San Pablo Burgos, the local team, plays in the country's top division. Although the players finished in 11th place last season, the fans were declared the best in the league. And the stadium, housed in the city's bullfighting arena, reaches its 10,000 capacity each weekend. The standard is high, the atmosphere feverish (almost football-like) and the ticket prices (€25 for a standard ticket) are significantly lower than for an NBA fixture. The new season starts in mid-September and if you're in the city over the weekend, it's a great afternoon out.

Stay in a castle

The Landa hotel doubles from around €120 room-only) was rebuilt from the ruins of a 14th-century tower and is set in lush gardens about a mile from the city centre. It is the most luxurious of Burgos's hotels, with an excellent restaurant that serves classic Castilian cooking, such as morcilla (like a fried black pudding with rice) with fried eggs. Or stay right in the centre at Meson del Cid (doubles from €69 room-only), with views of the cathedral from most of the bedrooms, and a restaurant in a 15th-century stone-built hall with beams and the original fireplace.

Gothic glory

Seen one cathedral in Spain, you've seen them all, right? Wrong. Burgos cathedral rises from the city centre like an ecclesiastical exclamation mark, and its grey Gothic spires are the city's most recognisable landmark. It started life in the 11th century as a Romanesque church but was transformed in the 13th century into one of Spain's first Gothic cathedrals. Today, it is a mishmash of styles,

with an interior that is no less beautiful or complicated. It was declared a Unesco world heritage site in 1984 and is the only Spanish cathedral that has this distinction independently, without being joined to the historic centre of a city. Follow the labyrinthine of naves, Gothic cloisters and Renaissance chapels, and visit the resting place of Rodrigo “El Cid” Diaz de Viva.

Michelin-star dining

For something more refined after all the bar-hopping, try Burgos's first and, so far, only Michelin-starred restaurant, Cobo Vintage. Chef Miguel Cobo combines the traditions of Burgos with those of the more northerly region of Cantabria, which has also played an important role in his culinary development. The Origen tasting menu, which is perhaps most expressive of the Cobo's philosophy, includes dishes such as morcilla biscuits, smoked scallops and fresh cow's milk croquettes. The wine list is packed with excellent, and reasonably priced, local wines. Indeed, at €70, it's one of the cheaper Michelin-star tasting menus you'll come across.

Go in search of cavemen

Just 25 minutes' drive outside the city is one of the most famous archaeological sites in the world: Atapuerca. The caves on this site were home to the earliest human beings in Europe a million years ago. Among the many discoveries here are cave paintings, some with scenes of hunts and others with geometrical patterns. Visiting this Unesco site costs from €6, and guided visits can be organised from the Human Evolution Museum in Burgos's city centre.

Monastic retreats

The monastery of Santa Maria la Real de las Huelgas is near Burgos University and surrounded by a high grey wall. As you enter from the north-west of the complex, the imposing, disorderly medieval church, replete with sturdy buttresses and cloisters, tumbles into view.

Alfonso VIII and Eleanor of England ordered the construction of the Las Huelgas monastery in 1187. The king wanted a memorial for himself and his descendants; the queen wanted an influential, female-only monastery that would be as independent as possible. Both achieved their objectives. Alfonso VIII, Queen Eleanor and their direct descendants were buried in the monastery, and the power and independence of the nuns and abbesses living there was upheld. The sisters were subject only to papal authority, not to the local archdiocese.

Be sure to visit the Claustro de los Caballeros and the monastery's church. Both are beautiful. End with a gin and tonic. Although British in origin, gin and tonic is a drink the Spanish have made their own. Almost any bar in Burgos (and all of Spain for that matter) will serve you a paralytically strong G&T, but some are a cut above the rest. Vara cafe, just off the city's historic centre, has an impossibly large gin selection, from as far afield as Japan and Scotland, which it displays proudly at the central bar; the cheaper brands start at €7. For views over the city, head to the roof terrace at the Silken Hotel. In 2016 its bar won a local competition for the best gin and tonic. Enjoy the views of Burgos by night and toast to a trip well done.

Mardaani 3, which debuted on theaters in January of this year, will soon be available on OTT

New Delhi: Soon, the third installment of Rani Mukerji’s Mardaani flicks will be available on OTT. The actor plays Shivani Shivaji Roy again in Mardaani 3, which debuted in theaters in January. Find out the movie’s digital release date and location. Netflix will begin streaming Mardaani 3 on March 27. On Thursday, the official Netflix India account announced the news on social media by sharing a photo of Rani from the movie along with the caption, “Criminals ke bure din shuru.” Sherni aa rahi hai shikaar karne (Criminals’ bad days have begun). The tigress is going to hunt. Watch Mardaani 3 on Netflix, which opens on March 27. When the movie first came out, reviews were mixed, and those who enjoyed it left heart-shaped comments. “Have got my week-end watch, kudos Netflix,” someone commented. Another person used thumbs-up emojis to write, “Great.” Some, however, did not



enjoy the movie as much as the earlier installments. One Instagram user wrote, “Mid sequel seriously, nothing new to offer, just that same kind of social message repetitive, completely became average due to underwhelming second half completely.” Another person posted on X (previously Twitter), “Pehle Al Pacino ki movies add karle (First

add Al Pacino’s movies).” One person joked that Rani resembled Priyanka on the billboard and added, “Why am I seeking Priyanka Mohan face here?” Under Yash Raj Films, Aditya Chopra is the producer and Abhiraj Minawala is the director of Mardaani 3. It is a follow-up to the 2019 release of Mardaani 2. In the third movie,

Rani is joined by Janki Bodiwala and Mallika Prasad. The movie follows Shivani Shivaji Roy, a police inspector, as she looks into the case of ninety-three teenage girls who vanished in three months under inexplicable circumstances. According to Sacnilk, Mardaani 3 made ₹76.20 crore worldwide when it debuted in theaters on January 30. The first movie, Mardaani, made ₹59.30 crore when it was released in 2014, whereas Mardaani 2 made ₹67 crore globally. Because it wasn’t as successful as the first two movies, it had mixed reviews when it came out. Even while Mardaani 3 doesn’t completely reimagine the franchise, it does highlight its significance. The Hindustan Times review of the movie states, “The film is anchored by the sheer authority of Rani Mukerji’s Shivani, a screen presence that still cuts through noise, even when it treads familiar ground and doesn’t quite land all its twists.”

With just rs. 65 crore at the conclusion of the first week, Ustaad Bhagat Singh



Mumbai: Alongside Ranveer Singh and Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar: The Revenge, which debuted in theaters on March 19, Pawan Kalyan’s action comedy has found it difficult to maintain its position at the box office. Ustaad Bhagat Singh ended its first week with disappointing box office results, whereas Dhurandhar has become a full-fledged theatrical phenomenon. Sacnilk reports that Ustaad Bhagat Singh made ₹2.50 crore on Monday and ₹1.75 crore on Tuesday. Wednesday, the movie’s seventh day, brought in ₹1.14 crore, its lowest single-day profits to far. As of right now, the movie has made ₹65.74 crore domestically. It’s obvious that Dhurandhar 2 frenzy has affected

Pawan’s movie, which is finding it difficult to stay strong at the box office. In contrast, Dhurandhar 2 made an astounding ₹623.42 crore on Wednesday after collecting ₹47.70 crore, of which ₹2.50 crore came from Telugu. Additionally, the movie is much behind Pawan’s prior release, Hari Hara Veera Mallu, which ended its first week with ₹79.73 crore. Additionally, Ustaad Bhagat Singh is having trouble making over ₹100 crore at the global box office. Mythri Movie Makers is producing the action comedy, which is directed by Harish Shankar. Pawan Kalyan plays the title role in the movie, while Sreeleela, Raashii Khanna, and R. Parthiban play important parts. Both critics and viewers gave the movie mixed to unfavorable reviews. At a recent event, the film’s director, Harish Shankar, addressed the unfavorable reviews and poor box office receipts, saying, “Trolls are more than free to troll anything, I take constructive criticism.” For example, “the first half was a little slow,” “the scene was not very well written,” or “it could have been written much better.” I don’t think I should take the troll material seriously because I don’t know who they are or where they are, but I will accept constructive critique. They are too self-conscious to disclose who they are.

Bhushan Kumar and Vivek Agnihotri collaborate to direct the movie Operation Sindoor



New Delhi: The code-name of India’s targeted military operations on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir after the Pahalgam terror assault served as the inspiration for Bhushan Kumar and Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri’s new film Operation Sindoor, which they revealed on Thursday. The book Operation Sindoor: The Untold Story of India’s Deep Strikes Inside Pakistan by Lt Gen K.J.S. “Tiny” Dhillon (Retd) will serve as the basis for the movie. The movie will be directed by

Agnihotri. Agnihotri’s I Am Budha Productions and Kumar’s T-Series will produce the movie. India’s targeted military attacks on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, which represent a pivotal moment of strategic resolve, bravery, and accuracy in India’s history, are cited by the film’s creators as inspiration. They referred to the movie as a cinematic reaction to the horrific 2025 massacre at Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, which claimed the lives of 26 innocent civilians, the majority of whom

were tourists. “Some stories pick you, not the other way around. One such tale that needs to be recounted with integrity, bravery, and accountability is Operation Sindoor. This is more than a movie. It is an epiphany. It becomes crucial to accurately record such significant events when a country experiences them, Kumar said in a statement.” This is not just a film,” said director-producer Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri. It is an epiphany. In addition to punishing Pakistan and exacting revenge for the

Pahalgam terror incident, India has shown its strength in contemporary warfare with Operation Sindoor. In order to comprehend not only what occurred but also how and why it occurred, we have carried out in-depth, ground-level research in partnership with several Indian Armed Forces wings. What is shown is a reality that is far more intricate, precise, and disturbing than what is accessible to the general population.” Agnihotri, who is well-known for movies like The Bengal Files, The Tashkent Files, and The Kashmir Files, stated that he has always supported telling difficult but important topics. “My goal is not to make noise, but to confront it—with facts, with clarity, and the magic of cinema. My effort is to bring this story of courage, professionalism, and strategic clarity to audiences with authenticity while also presenting it as an exciting cinematic experience.” We’ll soon reveal more information about the film.

Udaybir Sandhu claims that the bathroom scene in Dhurandhar 2 kept him up for three nights



Mumbai: Even the supporting cast in Dhurandhar: The Revenge are receiving enormous notoriety due to the frenzy around the film. Pinda, the drug dealer and best buddy of Ranveer Singh in the movie, is one character that has particularly connected with viewers. The actor who played the part, Udaybir Sandhu, has now disclosed that the violent toilet encounter scene upset him so much that he was unable to sleep for three days following filming. In an interview with Faridoon Shahryar, Udaybir revealed that the most crucial sequence for the movie and his character, Pinda, was the encounter in the bathroom. After performing that sequence, he remem-

bered receiving a heartfelt appreciation from Aditya Dhar. “I didn’t sleep for three nights,” he claimed. I had trouble sleeping throughout the three days we spent filming the sequence.” I couldn’t sleep the first night because I was nervous, and it kind of worked for the character because we had to show that he was a little dozed off,” he clarified. However, I had trouble sleeping for the next two nights after that incident. “You don’t know what you have done,” Aditya Sir responded when I asked if I had performed well. The scene from Dhurandhar: The Revenge with Udaybir Sandhu and Ranveer Singh has taken over the internet. In the intense bathroom

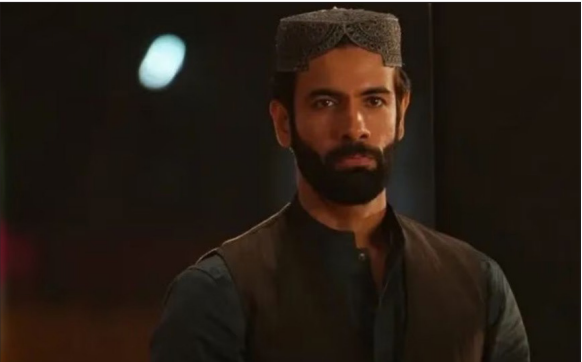
exchange, Pinda recognizes Hamza as Jaskirat and wonders why he never went back to his mother and sister. As Hamza fights to preserve his identity and keep his cover as an Indian agent in Pakistan, what starts off as a painful encounter quickly turns into a vicious altercation. The now-viral quote from Udaybir, “Ghar di yaad nahi aayi tujhe, Jassi?” (Didn’t you miss home, Jassi?) has resonated with viewers and swiftly became an internet meme. The origin narrative of Ranveer Singh’s character, Jaskirat Singh Rangi, and his transformation into Hamza Ali Mazari, an undercover agent who penetrates Pakistan’s underbelly, are told in this spy action thriller. The movie also picks up where the previous part left off, following Hamza’s ascent through the ranks of Lyari’s criminal underworld as he pursues his goal of destroying the terror network that operates out of Pakistan and gets closer to becoming its kingpin. Rakesh Bedi, Arjun Rampal, R Madhavan, and Sanjay Dutt play major parts in the film, which is directed by Aditya Dhar. Both critics and viewers gave the movie favorable reviews when it debuted, and it has been doing well at the box office ever since. The movie has made over ₹600 crore domestically and ₹1000 crore globally in just one week.

Due to “negative publicity,” Danish Pandor remembers the tragic first-day theater attendance

Mumbai: Since its March 19 premiere, filmmaker Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar: The Revenge has continued to be a hot topic of conversation. The movie broke box office records in less than a week and is still having an incredible run in theaters. However, the movie experienced a setback the day before it was released when its paid reviews were allegedly canceled because of “technical issues.” Actor Danish Pandor recently spoke with ABP Live about a “heartbreaking” moment when he witnessed barely 40–50 people in the theater on the day of the movie’s premiere amid what he called “negative publicity.” “It’s all about the audience,” Danish noted when discussing how the cancellation of the paid reviews

affected him. I recall that the movie was released on Friday following the cancellation of the Thursday screening. I was devastated beyond belief. I was unable to comprehend what was going on. I couldn’t stop asking myself, “Why is this happening? This movie is so amazing.” Additionally, there was an excessive amount of bad press surrounding it. “I went for the 2:30 pm show when the film finally released on Friday,” he continued. There were only forty or fifty people in the theater. I couldn’t stop thinking, “We made such a beautiful film, and there are no viewers.” Reviews began to flood in after 8 p.m. People started viewing it and discussing it on social media all of a sudden. There was no turning back because

it picked up so well. The truth is that no one can stop viewers from expressing their appreciation for a movie, regardless of how much hate surrounds it. Danish plays Uzair Baloch, the cousin of Rehman Dakait, played by Akshaye Khanna, in the movie. The movie had a huge opening at the box office in spite of the obstacles. Dhurandhar: The Revenge became the largest opening day for a Bollywood movie to date, earning ₹145 crore, including paid reviews. After registering two days in a row of ₹100 crore, it concluded its first week with a domestic collection of ₹643 crore and a global total of more than ₹1000 crore. Dhurandhar: The Revenge has been one of the fastest films to reach the ₹1000 crore club, setting



a new standard in the industry. The movie is still doing well and is predicted to make more money than its first installment, which brought in ₹1300 crore globally. Under the direction of Aditya Dhar, the movie chronicles the beginnings of Ranveer Singh’s character, Hamza Ali Mazari, also known as Jaskirat Singh Rangi, and follows his ascent

to become Lyari’s kingpin while fulfilling his quest to destroy Pakistan’s terror network. Arjun Rampal, Rakesh Bedi, Sara Arjun, Sanjay Dutt, and R Madhavan all play significant parts in the movie. Celebrities like SS Rajamouli, Ram Gopal Varma, Mahesh Babu, Allu Arjun, and Alia Bhatt have also praised the movie.

Pictures of Ranveer smoking in “Dhurandhar 2” while donning a turban were made up

Mumbai: Filmmaker Aditya Dhar of Mumbai declared on Thursday that the pictures of Ranveer Singh’s character smoking while donning a turban are “completely untrue” and made up to cause trouble. Additionally, Dhar threatened to “deal with firmly” any picture alteration. “Dhurandhar: The Revenge,” the second installment of his espionage story, has gotten an extraordinary amount of love from viewers all across the nation and the world. The filmmaker, who is enjoying the glory of the film’s enormous success on the big screen, said he is thankful and appreciative for this. “However, I’ve noticed that some people are spreading altered images by employing artificial intelligence to change publicly issued promotional content in order to fabricate false and deceptive narratives. In one such fake picture, the character Hamza/Jaskirat is shown smoking while donning a turban. This is wholly false and does not appear in the movie or any other official content that we have produced. In a statement, Dhar added, “It is a purposeful act of deception meant to provoke and create mischief.” The filmmaker’s remarks follow the filing of a police complaint against the actor and the filmmakers for the picture that depicts Ranveer Singh’s character smoking while donning a turban. Dhar stated that he wants to express “unequivocally” how much he respects the Sikh community. Additionally, each character in the movie has been portrayed with the highest care, respect, and accountability. Any attempt to imply otherwise by manipulated content is dishonest and malicious. In the statement, he stated, “I urge audiences to rely only on official content and watch the film as intended, and not fall prey to AI-generated misinformation being circulated with ulterior motives.” Images of Ranveer’s character smoking while wearing a turban and a sequence in which R Madhavan’s character recites passages from the Guru Granth Sahib while smoking were criticized by a Sikh organization in Mumbai. Madhavan clarified on Wednesday that Dhar was extremely cautious when filming the scene and that his character extinguishes the cigarette prior to uttering those lines. According to industry tracking site Sacnilk, Dhurandhar: The Revenge, which debuted on March 19, has already made over ₹900 crore at the movie office worldwide. The movie, which stars Ranveer in the lead role, is a sequel to Dhar’s 2025 film “Dhurandhar,” which went on to gross over ₹1,000 crore at the global box office.

Vicky Kaushal Applauds Aditya Dhar and Expresses Excitement for Dhurandhar 2

Mumbai: Aditya Dhar’s popular film Dhurandhar and its follow-up, Dhurandhar The Revenge, have been discussed by actor Vicky Kaushal. On the red carpet of the first International Film Festival of Delhi (IFFD) in the nation’s capital on Wednesday, he spoke to news agency PTI. “I’m just very happy to see how Dhurandhar is working,” Vicky remarked. I haven’t seen the second part yet, but I really enjoyed the first. However, Aditya is a fantastic director with a fantastic cast, and



I’m thrilled that everyone is enjoying the movie so much. I can’t wait to see it when I return to Mumbai.” He said, “Abhi toh festival ki baat karte hai. Usme abhi bhi waqt hai” (Let’s talk about the festival now) when a reporter inquired about the status of his next movie, Love and War. Time is still on your side. In the nation’s capital, 140 films from 47 different countries will be screened at the International Film Festival of Delhi (IFFD) in 2026. A red carpet event and a gala screening of

the Oscar-nominated movie Sirat kicked off the festival at Bharat Mandapam. The spy action thriller Dhurandhar made over ₹1300 crore worldwide when it debuted in theaters in December 2025. In order to dismantle a terror network that targets India, the movie centers on Ranveer Singh, an undercover Indian intelligence operative who infiltrates Karachi’s crime syndicates and Pakistani political power structures. Akshaye Khanna, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal, R

Madhavan, Sara Arjun, and Rakesh Bedi were among the other actors in the film. In addition to exploring his beginnings as Jaskirat Singh Rangi, the sequel follows the ascent of Ranveer’s character Hamza Ali Mazari in the Karachi underworld. The movie debuted on March 19 and has already made over ₹900 crore at the box office. In 2019, Aditya directed his first film, Uri The Surgical Strike, which starred Vicky. His most recent appearance was in the epic historical action movie Chhaava (2025),

which is based on the life of Sambhaji, the Maratha Empire’s second emperor. Laxman Utekar is the director and Dinesh Vijan is the producer of this Maddock Films version of Shivaji Sawant’s Marathi novel Chhava. Rashmika Mandanna and Akshaye Khanna are also in the cast. The next film starring Vicky is Love & War, directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Actor couple Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt are also featured. The movie’s release date has not yet been revealed.

Amid the Middle East Supply Shock, India Accelerates Oil and LPG Import Agreements



New Delhi, Mar 26 : According to industry sources on Thursday, India has expedited the signing of contracts to diversify imports of LPG and crude oil.Contracts are being finalized following “detailed negotiations on rates that suits India’s economic interests,” according to sources.The list of possible suppliers includes Russia, from which India purchased substantial quantities of cheap crude just after its war on Ukraine started and Moscow was subject to sanctions, until those sales were curtailed in accordance with conditions imposed by the US.Reduction was a requirement to sign the interim tariff agreement in February since the US had voiced

concerns about India purchasing Russian oil, claiming it was funding the war on Ukraine. India consented to purchase goods from the US to make up for the cut. However, after Tehran blocked tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial choke-point for 20–25% of the world’s seaborne crude commerce, the US-Israel war on Iran, which started on February 28, caused oil prices to skyrocket and limited supply routes.An estimated 40% of India’s enormous oil needs—between 5.5 and 6 million barrels per day—came through the Hormuz channel, making it a vital supply route. In order to compensate for the loss of supplies from the

Middle East, Washington then granted Delhi 30 days of “permission” on March 6 to purchase Russian oil that had already been loaded onto ships. According to Bloomberg, India has already purchased an estimated 60 million barrels from Russia, with delivery scheduled for April 2026 (article behind payroll).The government has emphasized that neither petrol nor gas are currently in short supply.Junior Petroleum Minister Suresh Gopi said Parliament this week that the nation’s three strategic reserves currently contain an estimated 3.372 million tons, or two-third of their maximum potential.Furthermore, according to Gopi, the current total reserves, or SPRs, which store crude or unprocessed oil and ready-to-use gasoline, are 74 days, including depots with oil marketing firms. Prime Minister Narendra Modi previously stated: “We have diversified our energy imports over the past 11 years. Previously, we imported from 27 countries.” We are now importing from 41.

Regarding the availability of LPG, or liquified petroleum gas, which is used by more than 33 crore Indian households to cook meals, the government stated in early March that it had authorized a 25% increase in domestic production and that panic

buying was not necessary. Reports of hotels and restaurants closing owing to a scarcity of commercial LPG were followed by assurances. A 30-day reprieve from buying sanctioned Iranian oil has also been granted by Washington; however, this is limited to crude that has already been stored on ships and must be used by March 20, 2026.By April 19, all such cargo must be discharged, or unloaded.The waivers will discharge about five million barrels per day within a month, according to Kpler, which offers real-time markets and commodities analytics. However, the company cautioned that this won’t be enough to counteract persistent disruptions in Middle Eastern supplies. This is due to the fact that rapid uptake will be constrained by payment limitations and shadow fleet hazards.According to Kpler, the total amount of oil lost since the start of the conflict has reached 133 million barrels, and if flows do not resume, it might reach 600 million barrels by the end of April.Due to the war and strain on the Hormuz, outages reached 10.7 million barrels per day, maybe 11.5 by late March. The situation was made worse by strikes from both Iran and the United States that damaged refineries and depots.

Due to a passenger food complaint on Vande Bharat, Railways fined the caterer Rs 10 lakh



New Delhi, Mar 26 : In response to a passenger’s complaint, the Railways strengthened its control over its own business, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), by fining it Rs 10 lakh.IRCTC has been fined Rs 10 lakh after a passenger’s complaint about the food quality on train number 21896 (Patna-Tatanagar Vande Bharat Express) on March 15 was taken seriously.In addition, the service provider in question has been fined Rs 50 lakh and the contract has been terminated.”Passenger safety and quality are our top priorities,” an Indian Railways representative

said. According to the government, Indian Railways distributes almost 58 crore meals on all of its trains each year, and the average number of complaints—including those regarding overcharging—is only about 0.0008%.Over the last three years, fines of Rs 2.6 crore have been levied in response to investigations into these allegations. There have been three documented instances of train passengers being assaulted by Pantry Car employees in 2025. The relevant Government Railway Police have filed a lawsuit against the Pantry Car employees.Additionally, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways,

Information and Broadcasting, and Electronics and Information Technology, revealed on Tuesday that five new changes had been approved in keeping with Indian Railways’ commitment to implement reforms in 2026. According to Ashwini Vaishnaw, five new reforms are being introduced and four changes have already been publicized under the continuing “Reform Express” campaign.

Two of the five new reforms deal with cargo, one with building, and two with passenger convenience. Speaking about the fifth reform, which focuses on the transportation of salt, Vaishnaw stated that India is among the world’s top producers and exporters of salt. Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu are the three main producing states.

Approximately 9.2 million of the approximately 35 million tonnes of salt generated in India each year are transported by railways, indicating a large unrealized potential.

Raghav Chadha voiced issues over fruit juice products’ deceptive promotion

New Delhi, Mar 26 : Raghav Chadha, an MP for the Aam Aadmi Party, questioned fruit juice beverages’ “misleading branding and false advertising” on Tuesday. Speaking in the legislature, Chadha emphasized that a lot of goods are “sugar syrups” that are sold as fruit juices.According to the AAP MP, a significant portion of consumers—particularly younger consumers—consume these beverages under the false impression that they are nutritious and healthful, but in actuality, many of the products are merely “sugar syrups.” Chadha pointed out the deceptive images. “When we buy fruit juice, there is a picture of fresh fruit juice, but the back of

the packaging says that the picture is only for marketing purposes,” she said.He also expressed worries about the consequences of drinking such beverages, claiming that they can lead to lifestyle disorders, diabetes, and obesity. ”My question to the honourable minister, through you, is what steps the government is taking to ensure a ban on misleading imagery so that companies do not mislead visually while complying technically,” said Chadha.Additionally, he asked the administration what measures are being taken to guarantee that the front of the packaging has disclosures about high-sugar products. Chadha demanded that products be divided into

two categories: genuine fruit juice and beverages including sugar, concentrates, and preservatives. Chadha also commented on X following her speech in Parliament, saying, “You think you’re drinking Fruit Juice? Reconsider.

Large food companies are offering sugar water with glossy images of “fresh fruit” on the front.He claimed that millions of people, particularly children, are being pushed toward diabetes and other lifestyle disorders by the deceptive branding.Chadha called on the government to act decisively to safeguard consumers and make sure that advertising and branding are honest and not misleading.

The initial list of 23 candidates for the 2026 Tamil Nadu assembly election is released by the AIADMK

New Delhi, Mar 26 : The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) has announced its first list of 23 candidates for the Tamil Nadu assembly elections scheduled for April 23, fielding Edappadi K Palaniswami, the party’s general secretary, from the Edappadi constituency. The AIADMK plans to contest 169 assembly seats, with its National Democratic Alliance (NDA) allies competing for an additional 65 seats. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will contest 27 constituencies, followed by the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) with 18, Anna Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) with 11, and the Tamil Manilaa Congress (TMC) with 5. Smaller parties like the Indhiya Jananayaka Katchi (IJK) secured



two seats, and the Tamilaga Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (TMMK) and Puratchi Bharatham received one seat each.The first candidate list follows the party’s 297-point election manifesto, which promises ₹2,000 monthly allowances for

women and a one-time ₹10,000 support per family to help mitigate rising expenses. Additional proposed benefits include enhanced ration provisions, refrigerator distribution, and free cooking gas cylinders for ration card holders.

Paid bus rides are extended to men, already free for women.Palaniswami, known as EPS, previously served as Tamil Nadu’s chief minister from 2017 to 2021 and has represented the Edappadi constituency multiple times since 1989. Other notable candidates include K P Munusamy from Veppanahalli, D Jayakumar from Royapuram, and C V Shanmugam from Mailam, among others.

The main electoral rivalry is anticipated between the AIADMK-led NDA and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA), which includes allies such as Congress and others. The elections may see a three-way contest, with actor Vijay making his electoral debut with the TVK party.

In yet another poignant IPL narrative, RCB’s Mangesh Yadav uses his skill to overcome poverty

New Delhi : The majority of aspiring Indian cricket players originate from poor families, and anyone might be moved to tears by their journey to the IPL in the face of hardship.

If you recall, Mangesh Yadav is one such tale. Mangesh, a truck driver’s son, won ₹5.2 crore in the auction last year and joined Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB). The IPL is a very amazing tournament because of stories like that. In addition to Indian cricket players, the IPL has transformed the fortunes of other foreign players who were not very wealthy before their partnerships. Recently, Mangesh, a left-arm seam bowler, and his father spoke with RCB Bold Diaries about their shared struggles. To be honest, these tales inspire faith in miracles.”A truck driver’s life is no life,” stated Ramavadh, Mangesh’s father. We don’t get to eat or take a

full wash. We have to worry about unloading the truck if it’s full and reloading it if it’s empty. ”I struggled a lot to pay for Mangesh’s bills. There were moments when I couldn’t sleep at night because of that money, and I would constantly wonder where I could find the money to make ends meet while driving.”I would assume that after that, others who were close to me would also ask them over the phone if I could get some assistance.

I would see to it that his and my costs were covered. We continued to fight the actual struggle. Success is never one’s own. Mangesh’s father was prepared to break his back in order to support his gifted son in realizing his ambition. But a lot more people played a crucial role in his unexpected ascent.Phoel Chand Sharma, his coach and uncle, also contributed. “I would play with a rubber



stumper ball or a tennis ball. I then proceeded to the village. My uncle believed I could play professionally after seeing me perform. After that, I participated in a few professional tennis competitions. It pleased him. Then he sent me to meet Phool Sir in Delhi,” Mangesh remarked. In the Madhya Pradesh T20 League, Mangesh became well-known. The 23-year-

old described his early years as follows: “When I was a little kid, I would go out to play, the kids would fight among themselves and then I would go home crying.” His father then said, “He would tell his mum that he would not play with anyone.” Bring me a ball and a bat, please. His mother would bowl to him in the tiny courtyard after we got him a bat and a ball, and he would bat.

On March 28, defending champions RCB take on Sunrisers Hyderabad to begin the 19th season of the league. Josh Hazlewood, their Australian import, has been sidelined for the first few games due to injury. Then Yash Dayal has been completely ruled out.

What one individual finds repulsive, another may find delicious. Given this, it is reasonable to anticipate that Mangesh will make his IPL debut as soon as possible.

Prithvi Shaw acknowledges his faults and outlines India’s IPL comeback mission

New Delhi: For Prithvi Shaw, the upcoming IPL season is very important, and he has stated that he is doing everything in his power to leave his mark. He hopes to make a solid comeback to the Indian cricket squad by dominating with the bat and impressing the selectors with regular performances. Prithvi skipped the previous season and was not auctioned in the IPL 2025 auction. His former team, the Delhi Capitals, selected him in the expedited round this year after he failed to attract any buyers in the first round. on 2018, Shaw scored a century on his Test debut against the West Indies, kicking off his international career with a bang. But he quickly left the team due to poor form and fitness problems. He is currently trying to climb back up the ranks in all formats.Aiming for a powerful comeback, the Delhi Capitals batsman talked about his preparations and mentality before the IPL. In an effort to recapture his spot on



the Indian squad and leave his mark, he disclosed that he is training harder than ever and giving it his all both on and off the field. ”I believe that’s the reason I’m playing. Without a doubt, I must return to the Indian team. I’m working really hard because of this. Shaw answered, “I worked three times as hard today as I used to.”I don’t like to discuss it, but I feel like I’m giving it my all—not 100%, but 200%—to return to the Indian squad, win this trophy, or give it my all on practice or game days. ”I handled all of the highs and lows over the past few years with a lot of

respect and a grin. Naturally, I continue to think about it when I return. However, there’s only one way to succeed: put in a lot of effort and give it your all. If you’ve made mistakes, learn from them.”Shaw was realistic when discussing his batting position. Regarding the opening slots, he stated that as long as the team wins, it doesn’t matter who KL Rahul plays with. He also acknowledged the intense rivalry, pointing out that every slot in Indian cricket is hotly fought because to the abundance of gifted openers. ”To be honest, I haven’t given it much thought. KL (Rahul) should have a fantastic season if he opens with anyone else. I won’t argue that I ought to open. We should win the match with whoever opens.There is competition, of course. There will always be rivalry in cricket, whether you play in the Ranji Trophy, IPL, India, or India A. As you can see, there are ten openers today. Thus, competition will exist,” he stated.

Claims on social media claiming Prime Minister Modi alluded to a lockdown in India

New Delhi, Mar 26 : A rumor that Prime Minister Narendra Modi alluded to a Covid-style lockdown while speaking to Parliament on the ongoing West Asia issue started to circulate on social media amid an increase in online searches regarding a potential lockdown in India. However, a deeper examination of his speeches in the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha reveals that the assertion is false. Modi may have mentioned a lockdown when discussing the worldwide effects of the current crisis in West Asia, according to a number of blogs and internet conversations. This led to online searches like “India lockdown again,” “lockdown news,” and “Is lockdown coming back in India?”Following the government’s announcement of an all-party meeting to address the situation and its effects on India’s supply chains and economy, the conjecture grew more intense. The Prime

Minister did mention the Covid-19 pandemic in his speeches to the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha earlier this week, but only as an illustration of how the nation managed a worldwide emergency.Modi emphasized the value of maintaining national unity in trying times when speaking to Parliament about the effects of the West Asia conflict. He added that India has previously managed disturbances during the Covid period. He cautioned that the worldwide disruptions brought on by the conflict might have long-term economic repercussions while urging people to stay “prepared and united, just as it had stood together during the COVID-19 pandemic.”As we can see, the circumstances surrounding this conflict are always shifting. As a result, I would likewise advise my fellow people to be ready for any challenge. There is a good chance that this war’s negative consequences will last for a very long time.

However, I can reassure the nation’s citizens that the administration is vigilant, prepared, and working diligently on strategy, making all required decisions,” Prime Minister Modi stated. There are no COVID-related emergencies in India that would call for a lockdown. There aren’t many active Covid instances in the nation right now, and public health is still under control.Rather, the government’s focus in Parliament has been on reducing the economic and supply-chain effects of the fighting in West Asia, especially the impediments to supplies of fertilizer, oil, and gas.In his recent remarks to Parliament, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made no mention of a lockdown. He merely brought up the Covid-19 era to emphasize how the nation responded to previous international disruptions with cohesion and readiness.

The first treasury audit in 48 years has begun at Jagannath Temple

New Delhi, Mar 26 : The first examination of gold, diamonds, and jewelry at Puri’s 12th-century Shree Jagannath Temple Ratna Bhandar (treasury) since 1978 was started on Wednesday by goldsmiths, gemmologists, and servants.The activity started at 12:09 p.m., which is thought to be auspicious, according to Arabinda Kumar Padhee, administrator of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA). “A thorough inventory is being prepared by combining 3D mapping with photography and videography,” he stated. He stated that during the first day’s six-hour exercise, about 80% of the Ratna Bhandar’s mobile valuables were enumerated. In accordance with the state government’s Standard Operating Procedure, a handling and supervising team was assembled for the exercise. The conversion of measures and accounting processes is being supervised by Reserve Bank of India officials.The teams traveled under strong protection from the temple office to the Singhadwara (Lion Gate) on their way to the treasury, escorted by Puri district administration and police. The responsibility of detecting diamonds, sapphires, pearls, rubies, and other precious stones has fallen to specialized gemmologists, including specialists from Mumbai. Every ornament was set on velvet cloth, exposed to various lighting sources, and captured digitally. New serial numbers will be assigned and compared with records from the 1978 process using tagging technology.In contrast to previous evaluations that used conventional units, SJTA officials stated that the current procedure will convert measurements into grams for standardized documentation.

Truck Driver's Son Mangesh Yadav Is Now Set To Live His IPL Dream At RCB

RCB's Five Crore Buy Mangesh Yadav Debuts

New Delhi: For Mangesh Yadav, the IPL 2026 auction was special, not just because Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) signed him for a staggering Rs 5.20 crore, but also because it marked the end of years of struggle for his family. Hailing from Madhya Pradesh, Mangesh comes from a modest background. His father, Ram Awadh Yadav, is a truck driver who would wake up at 3 AM and spend long days navigating dangerous roads to support the family. Mangesh's father endured hardships while supporting his son's cricket journey. The family's finances were stretched for years, with his father borrowing money and taking loans to cover coaching, equipment, and travel expenses. At the time of his IPL breakthrough, the family was still living in a rented house in Borgaon, around 75 km from Chhind-



Wara city. His father often spent sleepless nights worrying about how he would arrange money for coaching and other expenses. Life as a truck driver was incredibly tough, with constant pressure—from the stress of unloading a fully loaded truck to the uncertainty of finding goods to transport when the vehicle was empty. "I had to struggle a lot for money. Sometimes I couldn't sleep at night, thinking about how I would raise money

for him. The life of a truck driver is no life at all. You don't have time to eat or bathe. When the truck is full, you worry about offloading, and when it's empty, you have to worry about filling it up," Mangesh Yadav's father said. With Mangesh having secured a lucrative IPL deal, the family can finally hope for some financial breathing space. And with IPL 2026 just days away, Mangesh could be in line for his debut,

especially with Yash Dayal unavailable for the defending champions. Before entering formal cricket, Mangesh made a living playing tennis-ball tournaments, often traveling long distances across Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh in unreserved train compartments and state buses. For him, more than earning money, the real achievement was not having to ask his father for financial support. His structured cricket journey began at the age of 16, when a family friend helped him move to Noida after he stood out in a local tournament. At Wonder Cricket Club, coach Phoolchand Sharma recognized his potential and waived his hostel fees for three years. Mangesh has admitted that, without Sharma's support, he might never have been able to pursue cricket professionally.

India Secures Double Bronze Medals At The Asia Cup 2026 Stage I Archery Tournament

Bangkok: India secured a pair of bronze medals at the Asia Cup Stage I archery tournament in Bangkok on Wednesday, with the women's recurve team and the men's compound team finishing on the podium after strong performances. According to Olympics.com, the Indian women's recurve trio of Ruma Biswas, Kirti and Ridhi produced a commanding display to defeat Malaysia 5-1 in the bronze medal match at the SAT Football Stadium in Bangkok. The team had earlier finished third in the qualification round with a combined score of 1915, led by Ruma's 650. The Indian women opened their campaign with a 6-2 win over Chinese Taipei in the quarter-finals but fell 5-1 to China in the semi-finals before bouncing back to secure bronze. In the men's compound team event, Rajat Chauhan, Uday Kamboj and Rishabh Yadav edged past Bhutan 234-232 in a closely fought bronze medal clash. The Indian trio had earlier defeated Chinese Taipei 238-228 in the quarter-finals but suffered a narrow 234-233 loss to Vietnam in the semi-finals. India had dominated the compound men's qualification round, finishing on top with a score of 2126. Rajat Chauhan led the standings with 712, while Rishabh Yadav (708) and Uday Kamboj (706) followed closely. India's medal



Prospects remain strong heading into the final days of the competition. The country has already assured medals in the women's compound and men's recurve team events, with both teams set to compete in gold medal matches against Kazakhstan on Friday. The mixed team events are scheduled for Thursday, while the individual finals will also conclude on Friday. Among individual contenders, Tejal Rajendra Salve will compete for bronze in women's compound, while Prathamesh Jawkar and Uday Kamboj are set to face off in an all-India men's compound final. Rajat Chauhan could further bolster India's tally if he wins his bronze

Medal match. Ridhi Phor will also be in action in the women's recurve bronze medal match, though India will have no representation in the men's recurve individual medal rounds. India fielded a 16-member squad, comprising eight men and eight women, across recurve and compound disciplines at the continental meet. VBF Archery Coach, Jong Woo Park, highlighted the precision and consistency in her approach, noting her ability to maintain a disciplined routine and execute quick, decisive shots under pressure. "She performed near-perfectly on the technical side. She possesses a consistent routine and excels at quick, decisive shots.

Anmol Ekka and Sakshi Rana Express Pride Over Nominations For Hockey India 8th Annual Awards



New Delhi: Ahead of the eighth edition of the Hockey India Annual Awards, which is scheduled to be held on 27 March in New Delhi, promising Indian hockey talents Anmol Ekka and Sakshi Rana expressed their pride and excitement after being nominated for prestigious under-21 honours. Anmol Ekka has been nominated for the Hockey India Jugraj Singh Award for Upcoming Player of the Year 2025 (Men Under 21). Meanwhile, Sakshi Rana is in contention for the Hockey India Asunta Lakra Award for Upcoming Player of the Year

2025 (Women Under 21). The nominations highlight the standout contributions of the two players last year, according to a press release from Hockey India. Speaking about his nomination, Anmol Ekka said, "It's a great feeling to be nominated for this award. Some distinguished names have won the award in the past, but I didn't think I'd be amongst the players being nominated. So, when I saw my name, it was an amazing feeling. I haven't told my family about the nomination yet. I will hopefully tell them when I win."

The 20-year-old shone at the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Tamil Nadu 2025 in Chennai, scoring four goals - all coming from penalty corners. His most vital contribution came in the third-place match against Argentina, where his goal helped India secure the Bronze medal and earned him the 'Player of the Match' award. Sharing his experience from the tournament, Anmol stated, "I got a lot of experience and exposure at the Junior World Cup. It felt like a reward for all the hard work that I have done in the last couple of years."

Chennai and Ahmedabad Named As Venues For 2027 Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test Series

New Delhi: The Board of Control for Cricket in India has announced the fixtures for India's international home season in 2026-27, headlined by a five-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia. The marquee series will be played across January and February 2027. India's home season will feature West Indies, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Australia, with 22 international matches scheduled across 17 cities in a multi-format programme. Among them, the Border-Gavaskar Trophy stands out, given the history and intensity of the rivalry. The series will begin on January 21, 2027, in Nagpur, followed by the second Test in Chennai and the third in Guwahati. Ranchi and Ahmedabad will host the fourth and fifth Tests respectively, ensuring a wide geographical spread. The last time India hosted the Border-Gavaskar Trophy was in 2022-23, when the hosts secured a 2-1 series win. Meanwhile, Cricket Australia has already unveiled its 2026-27 international calendar, which leaves limited turnaround time ahead of the India tour. Australia are scheduled to play 10 Tests in a 14-week window between December and March, making it one of the most demanding stretches in their recent history. "That Border-Gavaskar Trophy tour, a final frontier for the likes of Pat Cummins, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon, who have never won a series in India, will also be a quick-fire campaign given CA's anniversary Test begins back in Melbourne on March 11," Cricket Australia said in a statement. "The decision to hold



back Starc, Cummins and Hazlewood from the early rounds of the IPL underlines CA's intent to manage workloads and ensure their key bowlers are ready for the demands of the 2026-27 schedule," the statement added. The first Test match of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in 2027 is scheduled to take place in Nagpur. The match will begin on January 21, 2027, marking the start of a five-Test series between India and Australia. The BCCI announced that the 2026-27 home season will feature 22 international matches across 17 cities, with the prestigious series against Australia serving as the centerpiece. Following the opening match in Nagpur, the series will proceed to Chennai, Guwahati, Ranchi, and conclude in Ahmedabad. This

schedule ensures a wide geographical spread for the much-anticipated rivalry, which India last won 2-1 during the 2022-23 season. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has officially announced the international home season schedule for 2026-27, which features visits from the national teams of West Indies, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, and Australia. The multi-format programme includes a total of 22 international matches—comprising nine ODIs, eight T20Is, and five Tests—hosted across 17 different Indian cities. A major highlight of the season is the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia, which will see five Test matches played in Nagpur, Chennai, Guwahati, Ranchi, and Ahmedabad starting in January 2027. Prior to

the Australian tour, India will host the West Indies for a white-ball series beginning in September 2026, followed by assignments against Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. Ahmedabad will host the final Test match of the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy series in 2027. The match is scheduled to take place from February 27 to March 3, 2027, according to the international home season fixtures announced by the BCCI. The high-stakes series against Australia will begin on January 21, 2027, in Nagpur, before moving to Chennai, Guwahati, and Ranchi. This upcoming tour is being described by Cricket Australia as a "final frontier" for veteran players like Pat Cummins and Steve Smith, who have yet to win a Test series in India.

National Record Holder Gulveer Singh Set To Lead Indian Elite Field At World 10K Bengaluru



Bengaluru: National record holder in the 10,000 m and 5,000 m, Gulveer Singh, will lead the Indian elite field at the 18th edition of the World 10K Bengaluru, scheduled on April 26. A World Athletics Gold Label Race, the event continues to attract some of the finest distance runners from around the world while also providing Indian athletes the opportunity to test themselves against elite international competition on home soil as per a press release. Gulveer Singh heads into the race in red-hot form,

having finished third at the New York City Half Marathon earlier this month, where he clocked 59:42, which is the best timing for any Indian half-marathon runner. The national record holder in both the 10,000m (27:00.22) and 5000m (12:59.77), Gulveer enjoyed a standout 2025 season, winning both events at the Asian Athletics Championships. He also set an event record of 1:12:06 at the World 25K Kolkata 2025. "The TCS World 10K Bengaluru is one of the most competitive road races in the country, and I'm

excited to line up this year. It will be a great opportunity to test myself again on the roads in Bengaluru," said Gulveer Singh. Earlier in the month, organisers also announced a strong international elite lineup for the 18th edition of the race, including the likes of Harbert Kibet of Uganda, Kenya's Vincent Langat, Ethiopia's Gemechu Dida and Eritrea's Samuel Habte. Speaking about the quality of the field, Singh said, "The TCS World 10K Bengaluru attracts some of the best international athletes every year.

Man City's Rodri Denies Vinicius Jr Feud While Fueling Rumors Of Summer Real Madrid Move



New Delhi: Star Manchester City midfielder Rodri has dismissed any talk of a rift with Vinicius Junior following his boycott of the 2024 Ballon d'Or ceremony. The Spanish international picked up the 2024 men's award ahead of the Real Madrid star. "I have nothing against

Vini Jr.," Rodri told Spanish radio station Onda Cero. "I have maximum respect for him, for everything he did that Ballon d'Or year as well. It's other people who decide who wins the Ballon d'Or. They tried to put us against each other, but that's not the case." Tensions flared when

City fans unveiled a tifo at the Etihad Stadium during their 2024 encounter, taunting Real Madrid and Vini Jr. for boycotting the event after he did not win the most prestigious individual award in men's football. The duo have since faced each other regularly, with UEFA drawing the

two clubs against each other in six of the last seven UEFA Champions League campaigns. The most recent of these encounters came in the Round of 16, with the Spanish club once again advancing. "It doesn't matter if they arrive at the match in a good or bad moment, Real Madrid is always Real Madrid," he added. Rodri, who has a year left on his contract, has now fuelled speculation about a possible return to Spain, most likely with Real Madrid. "Playing at the Bernabeu is incredible. It's a very intimidating place," said the Spanish international. "The fact that I played for Atletico Madrid does not stop me from playing for Real Madrid. You cannot refuse the best clubs in the world." Rodri played for the red side of Madrid, told Onda Cero.

Dhoneesh and Anjali Clinch First Medals

Raipur: Karnataka's Dhoneesh N and Odisha's Anjali Munda clinched the first two gold medals of the inaugural Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 with a dominant performance in the men's and women's 200m freestyle event at the International Swimming Complex here on Wednesday. According to a press release from KITG, Karnataka dominated the opening day in the pool, winning five of the six gold medals on offer, while hosts Chhattisgarh also opened their account with a silver and bronze medals in the women's and men's 100m breaststroke, respectively. Thirty States and Union Territories are participating in the inaugural edition of the Khelo India Tribal Games that will witness close to 3800 participants compete in nine sports disciplines.