

Mizoram: ZPM Party Officially Names H Lalremtluanga As The New Aizawl Mayor

Aizawl, Apr 29: The ruling Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) has announced its leadership team for the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) following its sweeping victory in the recent civic polls. At a celebration held at the party office on Tuesday, H Lalremtluanga, representing Ward-6 which covers Chanmari West, Edenthlar, and Hunthar localities, was named mayor for the 2026–2031 term. R. Lalawmpuii, who represents Ward-16 comprising Bethlehem Veng, Bethlehem Vengthlang, and College Veng, will serve as deputy mayor. Lalremtluanga had earlier secured a win in the 2024 AMC by-election from the same ward. Lalawmpuii, first elected in 2021 from a reserved seat, returned to the corporation this year after contesting successfully from a general seat.

The ZPM-led AMC government has also appointed four Executive Corporators, including one woman and three men, to strengthen its administration. Elections to the 19-member civic



body were held on April 21, with results declared on Monday. ZPM secured 17 seats in a landslide, while the Mizo National Front (MNF) and Congress won one seat each.

The BJP, which contested 11 wards, failed to secure any representation. According to official data, four houses were completely damaged, while several public infrastructure facilities were also affected. These include two school buildings, two church halls, two health sub-centres, an anganwadi centre and a public library. Aizawl district reported the highest damage, with 39 houses

affected by windstorms. In Lunglei district in southern Mizoram, 31 houses were damaged due to windstorms and landslides. The district also reported damage to two church halls, two health sub-centres, and one each of an anganwadi centre, school and public library. In Siaha district, three houses and a school building were damaged, while Kolasib district, bordering Assam, reported damage to four houses. No casualties have been reported so far, officials said. Schools in several districts, including Aizawl, Kolasib, Lunglei and Mamit, remained closed on Tuesday

due to heavy rainfall that has been lashing the state since Monday. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Aizawl recorded 57.8 mm rainfall on Tuesday, followed by Mamit (47.5 mm), Khawzawl (35.5 mm) and Serchhip (34.5 mm). The IMD has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall with thunderstorms and lightning in the next three days in Aizawl, Kolasib, Mamit, Champhai and Serchhip districts. Gusty winds with speeds reaching 50–60 kmph are likely in Kolasib district on Wednesday and in Aizawl district on Thursday, it added.

Exit polls predict NDA dominant victory in Assam elections

Guwahati, Apr 29: Multiple exit polls released after the Assam Assembly elections indicate a clear and decisive lead for the NDA, with projections suggesting the BJP-led alliance could secure its most commanding victory in the state to date. According to various survey agencies, the NDA appears firmly on track to form the government again, while the Congress-led opposition alliance is expected to lag behind. The ‘Future Edge’ survey has projected 82–91 seats for the NDA, while the Congress alliance is expected to win 28–39 seats and others 2–6 seats. Similarly, ‘Axis My India’ has estimated 88–100 seats for the NDA and 24–36 seats for the Congress alliance. Surveys by ‘P-Mark’ and ‘Matrize’ also place the NDA comfortably ahead, projecting 82–94 and 85–95 seats respectively. The Congress alliance is expected to secure between 25 and 40 seats in these projections. Polls by ‘NDTV’ and ‘Times Now’ further reinforce the trend, estimating 88–101 seats for the NDA, while the Congress bloc is projected to win between 22 and 36 seats. However, some variation exists. The ‘People’s Plus’ poll projects a comparatively lower tally for the NDA at 68–72 seats, with the Congress alliance at 22–26 seats and others at 11–15 seats. Other agencies, including ‘JVC’, ‘PrajaPoll’, ‘People’s Inside’, ‘Vote Vibe’, and ‘One India’, also point to a clear NDA advantage. The ‘Zee News’ poll estimates 80–86 seats for the NDA and 29–35 for the Congress alliance. Meanwhile, ‘CNN-News18’ projects

90–100 seats for the NDA, 23–33 for the Congress alliance, and 0–6 for the AIUDF. Across the board, exit polls not only predict a win for the BJP-led alliance but also suggest it could be the strongest performance since it first came to power in Assam in 2016. The NDA alliance comprises the BJP along with its regional partners—the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the Bodoland People’s Front (BPF). On the other hand, the opposition bloc is led by the Congress and includes the Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP), Rajior Dal, the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC), and left parties such as CPI(M) and CPI(ML). In the 126-member Assam Legislative Assembly, several pollsters have predicted that the NDA could approach or even cross the 100-seat mark. Axis My India projects 88–100 seats, Matrize 85–95, JVC 88–101, and P-Marq 82–94 for the alliance. In contrast, projections indicate a decline in the opposition’s strength. Axis My India estimates 22–36 seats for the Congress-led alliance, Matrize 25–32, JVC 23–33, and P-Marq 30–40. Historically, the BJP-led alliance secured 86 seats in 2016 (BJP 60, AGP 14, BPF 12). In 2021, the tally dipped to 75 seats, with the BJP winning 60, AGP 9, and UPPL 6 seats. Exit polls now suggest not only a return to power but also a significant improvement over previous performances. Meanwhile, the Congress-led alliance, which had secured 49 seats in 2021 along with partners including AIUDF and BPF.

In Brief

Riyan Parag caught vaping inside RR dressing room

Guwahati: Rajasthan Royals (RR) captain and Assam cricketer has found himself in the eye of a controversy after TV cameras caught him vaping in the dressing room during the IPL match between RR and Punjab Kings in New Chandigarh on Tuesday. Smoking is completely prohibited on the dressing room and stadium premises, except in designated areas. Therefore, it was shocking that Parag was allegedly holding an e-cigarette/vape — which is banned in India. This act may put the young cricketer in trouble as he may have to face legal action now. Under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA), 2019, the production, sale, purchase, import, export and advertisement of e-cigarettes and vapes are banned. Any violation of the law can attract strict penalties, including imprisonment and substantial fines, making the incident more than just a breach of basic stadium regulations.

Mizoram Reports Fresh COVID-19 Cases

Aizawl: Health authorities in Mizoram have urged the public to stay alert after new COVID-19 cases were detected following a period with no reported infections. Officials cautioned that COVID-19 has not disappeared and can re-emerge at any time, stressing the importance of continued precautions. The virus spreads easily through close contact, respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing, and contact with contaminated surfaces. Authorities identified vulnerable groups, including infants, the elderly, individuals with underlying health conditions, and those undergoing long-term medical treatment, advising them to take extra care. The public has been advised to avoid crowded places, refrain from touching the face, and limit physical contact such as handshakes. Self-medication without proper medical consultation has also been discouraged.

AIIMS Guwahati marks DNA Day and International Immunology Day

Guwahati: The Department of Biochemistry, AIIMS Guwahati, successfully organized a five-day Continuing Medical Education (CME)-cum-Workshop on “DNA Biology, Molecular Diagnostics, and Advances in Immunology” from April 25 to 29, commemorating DNA Day (April 25) and International Immunology Day (April 29). The event was supported by the Department of Health Research, Government of India, New Delhi, under Support to Institute Program. The CME witnessed enthusiastic participation of over 125 delegates and featured eminent experts, including Dr. Amit Awasthi (THSTI, Faridabad), Dr. Amit Singh (IISc Bangalore), Dr. Rupesh Srivastava (AIIMS New Delhi), and Dr. Diganta Das (GMCH Guwahati). The workshop included lectures on contemporary themes in immunology, covering areas such as gut microbiota in inflammatory bowel disease, macrophage metabolism in tuberculosis, primary immunodeficiency disease, and the gut-immune-bone axis in osteoporosis.

Storm Havoc in Tripura as IMD Extends Red Alert Till May 1

Agartala: The India Meteorological Department has extended a red alert for several districts of Tripura till May 1, warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, and strong winds over the coming days. According to the Meteorological Centre in Agartala, rainfall ranging between 7 cm and 20 cm is very likely at one or two places across Khowai, West Tripura, Sipahijala, Gomati and South Tripura districts from April 29 to April 30.

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As of April 28, 2026, Mizoram has reported eight active COVID-19 cases. Since the onset of the pandemic, a total of 19,98,442 tests have been conducted, with 2,39,710 positive cases recorded. The state has reported 734 deaths, while 2,38,968 people have recovered.

Officials reiterated that continued public cooperation is crucial to prevent further spread of the virus.

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This act may put the young cricketer in trouble as he may have to face legal action now. Under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA), 2019, the production, sale, purchase, import, export and advertisement of e-cigarettes and vapes are banned. Any violation of the law can attract strict penalties, including imprisonment and substantial fines, making the incident more than just a breach of basic stadium regulations. The Act came into force on September 18, 2019. One of the key reasons for the ban is that it does not cover products licensed under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

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CME was followed by an intensive hands-on workshop wherein participants gained practical exposure to cutting-edge techniques such as DNA and RNA isolation, DNA quantification and purity assessment, PCR-based analysis, and droplet digital PCR (ddPCR). While addressing the gathering, Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Puranik, Executive Director, AIIMS Guwahati, highlighted the growing importance of molecular diagnostics and immunology in modern healthcare.

He emphasized that such capacity-building initiatives are essential for bridging the gap between research and clinical practice. He encouraged participants to translate their learning into improved patient care and innovative research, and commended the organizers for bringing these critical themes to the forefront of medical education.

Prof. Subash Gupta, Head of the Department of Biochemistry, along with other faculty members, expressed satisfaction with the active participation and engagement of the delegates.

Relentless Rain Cuts Off Parts of Sribhumi, Temporary Bridge Washed Away

Sribhumi, Apr 29: Continuous rainfall has severely disrupted connectivity in parts of Sribhumi district, leaving several areas in the southern region of Ramkrishnanagar virtually cut off.

A temporary footbridge over the Singla River at Anipur was washed away after water levels rose sharply following days of incessant rain.

With the collapse of this alternative crossing, transport and communication links between Anipur and nearby areas have been almost completely severed.

Residents of villages including Anipur, Timukha, Dullavchhara, Nibia, and Ratabari are facing severe difficulties as daily movement has been badly affected. Students, patients, traders, and commuters are struggling to travel across the region.

The latest disruption comes months after the collapse of the main concrete bridge connecting Anipur and Ramkrishnanagar.

In that incident, seven vehicles—including two overloaded dumpers, two Alto cars, a Bolero pickup,

a Maxima pickup, and a motorcycle—fell into the Singla River, leaving several people injured. Since then, connectivity in the area has remained fragile.

Following that collapse, authorities had constructed a temporary footbridge to restore limited movement. However, the recent surge in river water levels has swept away the makeshift structure, worsening the crisis.

Local residents have alleged that emergency services have been seriously affected due to the lack of a reliable crossing, raising concerns over access to medical care and the transportation of essential goods.

Meanwhile, construction of another temporary bridge has reportedly begun, but residents have expressed dissatisfaction over the slow pace of work, saying the delay is increasing hardship for thousands in the affected areas.

The situation remains critical as rainfall continues across the region.

Storm Havoc in Tripura as IMD Extends Red Alert Till May 1

Agartala, Apr 29: The India Meteorological Department has extended a red alert for several districts of Tripura till May 1, warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, and strong winds over the coming days.

According to the Meteorological Centre in Agartala, rainfall ranging between 7 cm and 20 cm is very likely at one or two places across Khowai, West Tripura, Sipahijala, Gomati and South Tripura districts from April 29 to April 30.

For the remaining districts, an orange alert has been issued, indicating similar rainfall intensity at isolated locations. The forecast also warns of thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds reaching speeds of 50–60 kmph in parts of the state. The IMD has further extended the red alert for West Tripura and Sipahijala districts from April 30 to May 1, while other districts will remain under an orange alert. From May 2, the alert level is expected to ease slightly, with

Sipahijala and South Tripura under an orange alert and the rest of the state under a yellow alert.

The warning comes after significant rainfall was recorded across the state. North Tripura received 37 mm rainfall, Unakoti recorded 17 mm, while Dhalai reported 99 mm. Khowai received 68.8 mm, West Tripura 91.5 mm, Sipahijala 145.5 mm (highest), Gomati 79.1 mm and South Tripura 77 mm.

Meanwhile, a powerful storm on April 28 caused widespread damage across all eight districts of the state. According to the State Emergency Operation Centre in Agartala, a total of 1,534 houses were damaged—76 completely destroyed, 195 severely damaged, and 1,263 partially affected.

Unakoti district was among the worst affected, with 518 houses damaged, including 26 fully destroyed. Other districts also reported significant losses, including North Tripura (136 houses), Dhalai (272), Sipahijala (250), West Tri-

pura (37), Khowai (85), and South Tripura (236). No house damage was reported in Gomati district, although two people were injured after a tree fell on them.

The storm uprooted trees, disrupted infrastructure, and damaged 129 electric poles, affecting power supply across several areas. Many roads were blocked due to fallen trees, though clearance operations have been completed in some places, with restoration work ongoing in others.

Officials said all rivers are currently flowing below danger levels, but heavy rainfall continues in several areas. Kamalpur subdivision in Dhalai district recorded the highest rainfall at 159 mm.

Authorities and disaster response teams are closely monitoring the situation, warning that continued rainfall may lead to waterlogging and further disruption. Residents have been advised to remain cautious, especially during thunderstorms and strong winds.

Efforts to restore peace dialogue on Manipur CM



Imphal, Apr 29: Manipur chief minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh, while emphasizing the essence of peace for progress on Tuesday said, “Peace is a precondition for development of the state”. Referring to the recent violence incidents in the state, Singh added, “As a chief minister of Manipur, I too felt the same pain and sorrow over the unfortunate incident. Addressing an event in Imphal East district today, he said that the unfortunate incident –killing of two kids in a bomb attack at Tronglaobi in Bishnupur district – occurred all of a sudden when the state government was putting at its efforts to restore free movement along the high-ways for all communities of the state and the restoration of peace through dialogue and talks. “Such incidents caused pain and anguish to all communities,” he added.

Asserting that the case has been handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for investigation, the chief minister assured that the culprits will be booked and brought to justice at the earliest. Despite the challenges and hindrances that came in the way, he said that the state government’s efforts to restore free movement along high-ways and rebuild trust among communities through sustained dialogue and engagement continued. In connection with Tuesday’s event, the chief minister stressed on the importance of preserving indigenous religion

and cultural heritage. The event was related to the inauguration of a temple of Ebudhou Phunal Ningthou Telheiba–Santhok Ningthou Apanba, a deity associated with indigenous communities like Meitei, Maring (one of the recognized tribes of Manipur), etc. at Chanam Sandrok in Imphal East district. He said, “Our indigenous religion and cultural heritage remain a vital force in shaping the identity and collective spirit of Manipur, inspiring trust, resilience, and togetherness among all.”

While offering prayers for the continued peace, stability, and well-being of the state and its people, the chief minister said this Shanglen (temple) reflected “the enduring strength of our spiritual and cultural traditions.”

“Such sacred spaces play a vital role in nurturing harmony, discipline, and positive values in society, guiding individuals away from negativity and towards a path of unity and righteousness,” he said. On the occasion, five candidates from Keirao Assembly constituency who have successfully cleared the Manipur Public Service Commission (MPSC) examination recently were felicitated. The chief minister said that “Hard work leads to success irrespective of family background and stressed the need to instill this mindset in future generations to help them succeed in life.”

Fresh gunfight 4 injured

Imphal, Apr 29: After a brief lull, tensions flared up again in Manipur’s Ukhrul district following a fresh gunfight between armed groups on Tuesday, leaving at least four persons injured. Sources said the clash occurred around 10:30 a.m. at Ringui under Litan police station, involving armed groups from the Tangkhul Naga and Kuki communities. A highly placed source said at least four persons were injured, while the Ringui Village Protection Committee confirmed that two Naga Village Guard (NVG) members sustained severe injuries. However, the identities and exact condition of the injured could not be independently verified. In a statement, Ringui TNL condemns: Condemning the incident, the Working Committee of the Tangkhul Naga Long (TNL) confirmed that four NVG members were injured and described the attack as “brutal and unprovoked”. Village Protection Committee alleged that the gunfight erupted after Kuki armed groups operating under the Suspension of Operation (SoO) pact attacked NVGs who were monitoring the area along Ringui Horei. It claimed the incident took place within the jurisdiction of Ringui village and triggered panic among residents. It further alleged that repeated attacks in the area had forced civilians, including women and children, to live in fear and uncertainty. It warned that continued aggression could escalate tensions and seriously threaten peace and stability in the region, and appealed to the authorities to intervene and ensure security.

Two injured as heavy rain thunder storms damage over 1,500 houses

Agartala, Apr 29: Severe storms accompanied by heavy rain and thunderstorms caused widespread destruction across Tripura on April 27 and 28, damaging at least 1,534 houses in different districts of the state. Two people were injured during the adverse weather, while road communication and electricity supply were badly affected in many areas. According to the State Emergency Operation Centre, no fatalities have been reported so far. However, 129 electric poles were damaged and several roads were blocked after trees were uprooted by strong winds. Unakoti district recorded the highest damage. In Kailashahar subdivision, 518 houses were affected, including 26 that were completely damaged and 33 that suffered major damage. In Dharmanagar subdivision of North Tripura district, 136 houses were damaged. Dhalai district also witnessed losses. Ambassa reported damage to 23 houses, while Kamalpur and Gandatwisa subdivisions recorded 97 affected houses each. In Longtharai Valley, 55 houses were impacted, including 20 that were fully damaged. The bulletin also noted that maximum temperatures are likely to stay 5 to 6 degrees Celsius below normal for the next three to four days, while minimum temperatures are expected to remain close to normal. Sepahijala district faced considerable destruction as well, with 61 houses damaged in Bishalgarh, 91 in Sonamura and 98 in Jampuijala. Fallen trees blocked roads in several areas, though restoration work has already begun.

In West Tripura district, Sadar subdivision reported 28 road blockages, all of which were later cleared. Mohanpur subdivision recorded damage to 37 houses due to heavy rain and hailstorm. Khowai district reported 41 damaged houses in Teliamura and another 44 in Khowai subdivision. The weather department has predicted light to moderate rain or thundershowers at many places over the next 24 hours. Thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds reaching up to 80 kmph may occur in isolated areas. Chief Minister Manik Saha said the government is taking all necessary steps to support affected residents. He stated that houses and electric poles were damaged in several districts due to the storm and heavy rain, adding that district administrations have already taken required measures. He further assured that the state government stands with the affected people and is committed to providing every possible assistance. Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a fresh weather bulletin fore-



casting widespread rain and thunderstorms across Tripura over the next seven days. Heavy to very heavy rainfall, strong winds and disruptions to normal life are likely in some areas. According to the Meteorological Centre in Agartala, light to moderate rain or thundershowers are expected in all districts from April 28 to May 5. Weather activity is likely to remain strongest during the first two days, with isolated places expected to receive between 7 cm and 20 cm rainfall. On April 28 and 29, districts such as Khowai and West Tripura may experience thunderstorms with lightning and wind speeds of 60 to 80 kmph in isolated places. Other districts may see winds of 50 to 60 kmph along with heavy rain. Conditions are expected to gradually improve after May 1, though rain and thunderstorms may continue in many areas. Gomati district saw multiple road blockages in Karbook, Udaipur and Amarpur subdivisions. Two people were injured in Kakraban under Udaipur subdivision. The district also reported major damage to power infrastructure, with 81 electric poles affected in Udaipur and 48 in Amarpur. South Tripura district reported 59 partially damaged houses in Sabroom and 177 houses in Belonia, including 27 that were fully destroyed.

Officials said damage assessment is continuing in several affected areas. Financial relief measures for impacted families have already started in some subdivisions. Authorities also stated that river levels across the state remain below danger marks in most places. However, the Juri river in Dharmanagar was flowing slightly above the expected flood level. Rainfall data showed heavy showers in several regions. Kamalpur in Dhalai district received the highest rainfall at 159 mm. Khowai recorded 121.4 mm, while Kanchanpur received 120.8 mm.

In Sikkim, the PM announces development projects valued at much than Rs 4,000 cr

Gangtok, Apr 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday launched 30 development projects worth around Rs 4,018 crore in Sikkim, while attending the closing ceremony of 50 years of statehood celebrations. The projects span a wide range of sectors such as infrastructure, connectivity, healthcare, education, power, urban development, environment, tourism and agriculture. These projects are aimed at accelerating holistic and inclusive development in Sikkim, officials said. Among major projects, Modi laid the foundation stone for a 100-bed Ayurveda hospital at Yangang in Namchi district and inaugurated 30-bed Integrated Sowa Rigpa Hospital at NIT Deorali, which will strengthen access to traditional and integrative systems of medicine in the Himalayan state. The Prime Minister also inaugurated the permanent campus of Sikkim University at Yangang, the administrative block of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose University of Excellence at Chakung, the Helen Lepcha Medical College at Socheygang in Gangtok, and the Dentam Professional College in Gyalshing district. He also unveiled a model residential school at Hee Gyathang, a college at Mangshila in Mangan district, and a monastic hostel-cum-classroom at Boomtar Gumpa in Namchi. The Prime Minister launched the implementation of IT-enabled educational infrastructure projects



Narendra Modi at the 50th anniversary celebration of statehood of Sikkim

across 160 schools in Sikkim. To improve connectivity in Sikkim, Modi laid the foundation stone for double-lane steel arch bridges over the Teesta river at Sirwani and Lower Samdong, connecting Namchi and Gangtok districts. He also inaugurated the widening of a road from Birdhang to Namchi via Kitchudumra to enhance inter-district accessibility, improve travel efficiency, and facilitate smoother movement of people and goods. Among the projects in the power sector, Modi inaugurated the improvement, upgradation and revamping of the Transmission and Distribution (T&D) network in Gangtok to strengthen a reliable power supply in the region. In the

urban development infrastructure sector, the Prime Minister launched the Jan Seva Sachivalaya (Mini secretariat) at Lumsey, the Civil Service Officers Institute in Gangtok, and housing for police personnel at SAP Pangthang. As part of environmental protection efforts, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for sewerage system rehabilitation at Singtam town under the river pollution abatement initiatives. In the tourism and pilgrimage sector, Modi inaugurated the redevelopment of the Ridge Precinct in Gangtok, and eco-tourism and pilgrimage infrastructure at Dodak in Soreng. He also launched infrastructure related to the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra,

including facilities at 18th Mile and Hangu Lake, and a lodge at Krishna Pranami Mangaldham, Namphing. Modi laid the foundation stone for an eco-pilgrimage complex at Silnon in Gyalshing district. The Prime Minister inaugurated the Sikkim IF-FCO processing plant, which is expected to provide a significant boost to agro-processing and strengthen farmer livelihoods and value chains in the state. Modi also unveiled indoor cricket facilities at Mining and Rangpo in Pakyong district to promote youth engagement and sports development. He inaugurated such sporting infrastructure in five other states of the northeast region. Earlier in the day, the PM visited the Orchidarium in Gangtok and lauded the ecological and floral heritage at the Swarnajayanti Maitri Manjari Park, which has been developed as a world-class Orchid Experience Centre. “Visited the Orchidarium in Gangtok and was mesmerised by its beauty. Sikkim’s rich biodiversity is truly extraordinary. Such efforts reflect our deep harmony with nature. They also inspire us towards conservation and sustainable living,” Modi said on X. The PM’s visit marks an important milestone in the golden jubilee year of Sikkim’s statehood and reflects the government’s “continued commitment to the rapid and sustainable development of the Himalayan state”, the officials said.

‘Eucalyptus Road’ in Tinsukia sees tree loss as extreme weather takes toll

Doomdoo, Apr 29: The century-old Doomdoo–Baghjan–Dighaltarang road in Assam’s Tinsukia district, locally known as the “Eucalyptus Road”, is witnessing steady loss as extreme weather has led to the loss of its iconic trees. Stretching about 14 km, the road connects Rupbon (Trolley Line), Rupai, Baghjan and Dighaltarang, and serves as a key link between the Maguri-Matapung Beel and Tinsukia town. Hundreds of eucalyptus trees lining both sides were originally planted as windbreaks to protect tea gardens from strong gusts, a legacy of the British-era plantation system. Residents said the tree-lined stretch, once known for its distinctive appearance and fragrance, is now showing signs of decline, with many trees uprooted during recent storms and lying scattered along the roadside. Frequent storms, heavy rainfall and changing weather patterns have led to a rise in tree damage in recent years, residents and conservationists



said, pointing to broader climate-related stress on the region’s ecosystems

Eucalyptus, locally known as Nilgiri or Safe-da, is a fast-growing evergreen species native to Australia. Introduced to India in the 19th century and later to Assam during the colonial period, it became widely planted along roads and tea estates for timber, oil extraction and wind protection. While valued for its economic uses, the species has also drawn criticism for high water consumption and limited support for local biodiversity compared to native trees. Environmentalists have called for measures to protect the remaining trees, noting their role in shaping the region’s landscape. They said Assam’s roadside plantations, often linked to the history of tea cultivation, have evolved into cultural markers over time. Experts have suggested a scientific assessment of the stretch and the possible introduction of climate-resilient native species, along with community-led conservation efforts.

PM Modi introduces the first network of cricket academies in the Northeast

Guwahati, Apr 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 28 inaugurated six indoor cricket academies across Northeast India, marking a major push to strengthen sports infrastructure in the region. The facilities, developed by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), were virtually launched during a state function in Gangtok.

The academies are located in Rangpo in Sikkim, Doimukh in Arunachal Pradesh, Imphal in Manipur, Madankurkhang in Meghalaya, Aizawl in Mizoram, and Dimapur in Nagaland. Officials said the move builds on the inclusion of Northeastern states in India’s domestic cricket structure and is expected to improve talent identification and competitive exposure in the coming years. With structured facilities now in place across all seven states, the focus will now shift to coaching, fitness development, and creating pathways for players from the region to progress to national and international levels. Described as a first-of-

its-kind pan-Northeast cricketing network, the academies aim to provide high-performance training facilities closer to home for aspiring cricketers in the region. Each centre is equipped with indoor practice pitches, modern gymnasiums, temperature-controlled swimming pools, and dedicated training infrastructure, enabling year-round practice despite the region’s long monsoon season.

The project was initiated during the tenure of Jay Shah as BCCI Secretary, with foundation stones laid in May 2024. Shah

Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), attended the inauguration along with senior BCCI officials. BCCI office bearers termed the development a “red-letter day” for the Northeast, noting that the academies will reduce the need for players to travel outside the region for professional training and help create a stronger talent pipeline.

High-speed trail after night out led to fatal Mathgharia crash, say police

Guwahati, Apr 29: The investigation into the fatal road accident at Mathgharia in Guwahati, which claimed the lives of three young women, has revealed key details about the events leading up to the crash. Guwahati Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Jayanta Sarathi Bora while sharing the findings on Tuesday said that the injured victims were immediately rushed to Gate Hospital after the accident. “However, the driver was missing from the scene, and the vehicle’s driver-side door was found open, raising initial concerns. Police later identified the accused driver as Shamim Ahmed,” DCP Bora said. He said investigations revealed that the car was registered in the name of Pan-kaj Kumar Dutta and had been rented to Bhargav Deka. Ahmed had reportedly taken the vehicle from Deka earlier that day. Bora said GPS data and CCTV



footage were crucial in reconstructing the timeline. CCTV footage confirmed that Ahmed and the three women were at a rooftop bar there for nearly five hours, reportedly spending around Rs19,000,” he said. Following the accident, Ahmed allegedly fled, travelling through Shillong, Sivasagar, and Dibrugarh, before being detained. The truck driver has also been arrested, and

a detailed investigation is ongoing. “At about 3:00 AM, the group left the location. GPS tracking showed the vehicle moving across major roads such as GS Road, RG Baruah Road, and Mother Teresa Road, reaching speeds of up to 130 km/h. The crash occurred at 4:02 AM when the car, travelling at around 96 km/h, rammed into a stationary truck,” Bora added.

87.67% students clear Mizoram class 12 exam

Aizawl, Apr 29: Mizoram recorded a pass percentage of 87.67 in the class 12 board examinations, results of which were declared by the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) today. Mizoram School Education Minister Dr Vanlalhlana said that 87.67 per cent of 12,243 students passed the Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination 2026 and pass percentage was 6.57 per cent higher than the previous year, with boys scoring marginally higher than girls.

Across the Arts, Science, and Commerce streams, boys secured an 87.7 per cent success rate, while girls followed closely at 87.66 per cent.

The Minister said that Govt Higher Secondary School students' pass percentage in various streams could be above 80 per cent in this year's results. He said that the teachers and students' efforts in government schools are welcome and proud. He also congratulated the teachers and students of the schools where all the candidates passed.

Of the 12,243 students who sat for the examinations held between February and March, 10,734 passed, 1,394 could not, and 115 qualified for compartmental examinations.

The Minister congratulated the students on their success and wished them all the best in their higher education. He advised those who have did not succeed this time not to give up and to work harder, and remember that they have the potential to achieve success for their families and country.

The Minister thanked MBSE officers and staff, higher secondary school teachers, students and parents, community leaders and education officials for their efforts in ensuring the timely release of the results. He also invited all education stakeholders to continue to do their utmost for the development of Mizoram education.

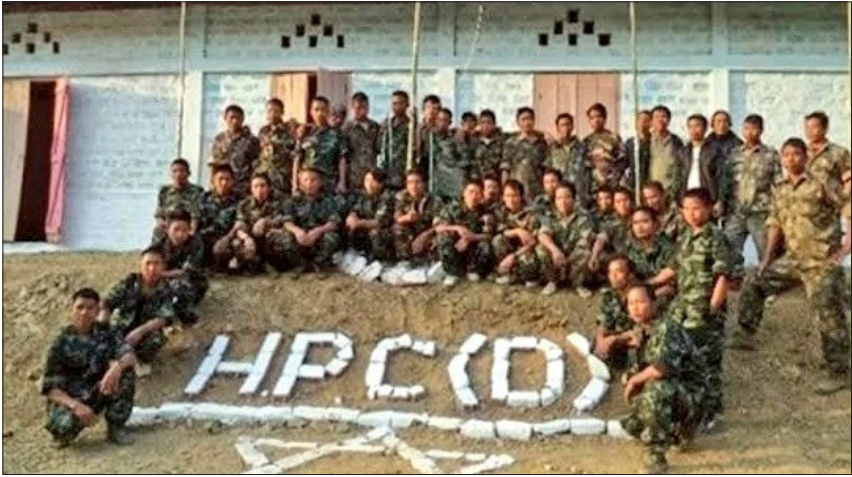
Dr Vanthlana said that it is an important time for the students who have passed the exam to choose a path and a career in life.

The Minister said that the government and the people should work together to improve education scenario further. He urged parents to pay more attention to their children's education and do their utmost to ensure that they become responsible citizens and make progress in life.

Forty-Three Members Of The Final Active Hmar Militant Group Are Set To Surrender In Mizoram

Aizawl, Apr 29: Forty-three members of the Lalhmingthanga Sanate-led faction of the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) are set to formally surrender in Mizoram on Thursday, marking the end of the state's last active ethnic insurgent group. The ceremony will take place at the Police Central Training Institute in Sesawng, about 40 km from Aizawl, in the presence of Chief Minister Lalduhoma and Home Minister K Sapdanga. The event follows the peace accord signed on April 14 between the Mizoram government and the HPC(D), which effectively closed a chapter of insurgency that had spanned four decades. Though the Sanate-led faction had been largely dormant in recent years, it was regarded as the final surviving Hmar insurgent outfit in the state and had been linked to sporadic extortion activities in Hmar-dominated villages.

The agreement, signed at Sakawrdai in Aizawl district—the headquarters of the Sinlung Hills Council (SHC)—outlined a comprehensive development plan for the Hmar-majority region. Key provisions include enhanced budgetary allocations, a special development package, infrastructure upgrades, and improved connectivity. The HPC(D) charter of demands also sought administrative transfer of the SHC, establishment of project and agriculture offices, increased budgetary support from 2027–28, and recognition of cultural observances such as Sikipui Ruoi and Hmar Martyrs' Day as official holidays within the council's jurisdiction. Other demands incorporat-



ed into the accord include construction of internal roads, an Eklavya Model Residential School, and a Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Awasiya Vidyalaya hostel. The government pledged to make "utmost efforts" to implement these commitments.

The Sanate faction was the last of three Hmar insurgent groups active in Mizoram since 1986. The first, led by Hmingchungnunga, signed a peace accord in 1994 that created the Sinlung Hills Development Council. A second faction under H Zosangbera reached an agreement in 2018, leading to the establishment of the Sinlung Hills Council with greater autonomy. Sanate, originally from Khawlian village in present-day Saitual district, had broken away after expressing dissatisfaction with the 1994 accord and operated with a small cadre from bases in Assam's Cachar district.

43 Hmar rebels to surrender in Mizoram today

Aizawl, Apr 29: Altogether 43 members of the Lalhmingthanga Sanate-led faction of the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) will lay down arms in Mizoram on Thursday. Chief Minister Lalduhoma and Home Minister K Sapdanga will attend the event at the Police Central Training Institute in Sesawng, around 40 km from Aizawl. The 'homecoming ceremony' follows the peace accord signed between the Mizoram government and the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) on April 14, effectively marking the end of insurgency in the state. Though largely dormant in recent years, the Sanate-led faction was considered the last surviving ethnic insurgent outfit in Mizoram and was allegedly involved in sporadic criminal activities, including extortion in Hmar-dominated villages. The agreement, signed at Sakawrdai in Aizawl district -- headquarters of the Sinlung Hills Council (SHC) -- focuses on the comprehensive development of the Hmar-majority SHC region. Key provisions include higher budgetary allocations for the council, a special development package, infrastructure upgrades and improved connectivity.

Nagaland issues advisory in view of inclement weather

Kohima, Apr 29: The Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) has issued a weather advisory based on the latest meteorological inputs indicating continued rainfall activity accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds across the State over the coming days.

The NSDMA has advised the public to remain cautious during thunderstorms and lightning events. People are also advised to avoid open areas, seek safe shelter during lightning, and stay updated with official weather advisories. For accurate, real-time alerts and verified weather updates, citizens are urged to download and use the Safer Nagaland App.

Suspected World War II-Era Shell Unearthed in Assam's Tinsukia District

Tinsukia, Apr 29: A suspected World War II-era tank shell was discovered at Singri village under the Ledo police outpost in Tinsukia district on Wednesday, April 29, triggering security concerns and swift action by authorities.

According to sources, the explosive-like object was found by a local resident, identified as Mohammed Ismail, during soil excavation work near his shop.

Workers initially noticed a large metallic object while digging and soon suspected it could be hazardous. Local residents immediately informed the police, following which security personnel rushed to the site, cordoned off the area, and implemented precaution-

ary measures to prevent any untoward incident.

Officials believe the object may be an old tank shell dating back to World War II. The Ledo–Lekhapani region is historically significant due to its strategic role during wartime operations, including activities linked to the Stilwell Road and Allied forces in the eastern sector.

Bomb disposal experts and relevant agencies have been alerted to ensure the safe handling, inspection, and disposal of the suspected ordnance.

Authorities stated that further examination will determine the exact nature and origin of the object, while investigation and security assessment remain ongoing.

Union Minister stresses better coordination between Assam Rifles, State Police for border security in Mizoram

Aizawl, Apr 29: The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, on Tuesday held a high-level interaction with officials of Siaha district through video conference from MINECO Secretariat Conference Hall, Aizawl.

Various topics including cross-border issues, international trade, security related issues, education and health and how to mitigate these challenges were discussed at length. The minister stressed better coordination between Assam Rifles, State Police, District Administration, and Village Councils to ensure both security and welfare of border residents.

The Siaha SP highlighted the peaceful law and order situation stressing that a strict vigil against illegal



cross-border activities including drugs and arms trafficking is maintained under the overall framework of national security.

Deputy Commissioner VL Hruaizela Khiangte along with head of offices and officials from

Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) also joined from DC's office, Siaha. The DC gave a brief overview of the district.

The department officials from the district appraised the minister on the ongoing schemes as well as their achievements and the challenges they faced.

The Union Minister was supposed to visit the district but had to make alternative arrangement due to inclement weather.

Heavy Rain Forces School Closures Across Five Districts in Mizoram

Aizawl, Apr 29: All schools in five districts of Mizoram remained shut on April 29 as heavy rainfall and strong winds continued to batter the state, officials said.

Schools in Aizawl, Serchhip and Lunglei districts were closed for a second consecutive day. Meanwhile, authorities in Hnahthial and Lawngtlai districts also ordered closures as a precautionary measure, School Education Director Angela Zothanpuii said.

District administrations cited risks such as landslides, mudflows, rockfalls, and flash floods due to continuous downpours in the region.

The Mizoram State Disaster Management and Rehabilitation Department reported extensive damage, stating that more than 70 houses, along with several church halls, schools, and government buildings, were affected between Monday and Tuesday due to storms. No casualties have been reported so far.

According to the India Meteorological Department, Aizawl recorded the highest rainfall at 57.8 mm in the past 24 hours. Other affected areas include Mamit, Khawzawl, Serchhip, and Siaha districts.

The weather office has forecast continued heavy to very heavy rainfall, along with thunderstorms and lightning, in several districts including Aizawl, Kolasib, Mamit, Champhai and Serchhip till Friday.

Winds reaching speeds of 50–60 kmph are also expected in Kolasib and Aizawl over the next two days, the IMD warned, indicating the possibility of further disruptions.

1,008 people killed in accidents in Assam between January-March in 2026

Guwahati, Apr 29: As many as 1,008 people lost their lives in 4,219 road mishaps in Assam between January and March this year. However the figures have decreased slightly compared to the corresponding period last year. In 2025, 1,035 fatalities were recorded in 4,232 accidents between January and March.

This was revealed in a State-level Road Safety Review Meeting held chaired by Chief Secretary Dr Ravi Kota on Tuesday to comprehensively review the State's road safety performance across all 35 districts for the first quarter of 2026 (January-March). While the number of accidents remained almost at the same level as last year, nine districts -- Kamrup (Metro), Kamrup, Nagaon, Lakhimpur, Sonitpur, Golaghat, Barpeta, Dhubri and Hojai -- accounted for nearly 50 per cent of the fatalities. However, several high-volume districts, including Sonitpur, Nagaon, Dhemaji, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh and Biswanath, recorded a significant year-on-year reduction in fatalities, reflecting the impact of focused district-level interventions and sustained enforcement. The Chief Secretary observed that fatalities declined by only 2.6 per cent year-on-year despite no increase in crash volume, meaning that roughly 11 lives are still being lost on Assam's roads every day -- indicating that crash severity remains high. He further noted that while Assam's severity index of 0.24 is better than the national average of around 0.36 (NCRB 2022), crashes in the State remain disproportionately deadly compared to safer states such as Kerala (0.10) and Tamil Nadu (0.13). In light of this, district-wise figures were scrutinised in detail, with particular focus on districts reporting increases in accidents and fatalities. A deep root cause analysis was undertaken to identify contributing factors and specific high-risk accident locations across all 35 districts. Expressing concern over rising incidents in certain districts, the Chief Secretary directed that, after each accident, the District Commissioner and Superintendent of Police, as part of the District Road Safety Committee (DRSC), must personally review the case in detail and ensure that prompt remedial measures are taken.

Widespread Protests in Manipur Hills After Mulam Attack

Imphal, Apr 29: Residents in Moreh staged a sit-in protest condemning the recent attack and urged the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office to ensure accountability and take steps to restore peace in the region.

A protest rally was also held in Churachandpur (Lamka), where participants raised concerns over the alleged attack on the Kuki village of Mulam and demanded justice. Protesters also called for a fair and transparent investigation into the controversy surrounding the alleged audio tapes linked to former Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh.

Another rally took place in Kanggui, where demonstrators voiced similar concerns, demanding accountability and restoration of peace.

Meanwhile, two Kuki women's organisations—Kuki Women Organisation for Human Rights and Kuki Women Union General Headquarters—submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi through the Deputy Commissioners of Kangpokpi and Churachandpur districts.

In the memorandum, the organisations expressed concern over the alleged audio tapes attributed to N. Biren Singh and the April 24 armed attack on Mulam and Songphel villages, stating that the issues strike at the core of the rule of law and reflect the continued suffering of the Kuki-Zo community since May 2023.

They called for a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the audio tape case under judicial



supervision, and an investigation by the National Investigation Agency into the Mulam–Songphel attack. The groups also demanded ex-gratia relief and rehabilitation for affected families, increased deployment of central forces in vulnerable areas, and the initiation of structured political dialogue with Kuki-Zo representatives.

The organisations further urged authorities to ensure that the proposed "Mass Rally for Justice, Truth and Accountability" scheduled for April 29 proceeds peacefully.

Officials said the situation is being closely monitored as demands for accountability and action continue to intensify across the region.

Zubeen Garg Death Case

Court Orders Seizure of Mahabir Aqua, Freezing of Accused's Bank Accounts

Guwahati, Apr 29: In a significant development in the ongoing investigation into the death case of legendary Assamese singer Zubeen Garg, a special fast-track court has ordered the seizure of Mahabir Aqua, a business allegedly owned by one of the prime accused, Siddharth Sharma.

The court has also directed authorities to freeze bank accounts belonging

to Sharma, along with those of several other individuals allegedly linked to financial transactions involving him, thereby expanding the scope of the investigation.

Mahabir Aqua, a packaged drinking water unit located at the Soigaon Industrial Development Centre in Chhaygaon, has now come under judicial scrutiny as part of the case proceed-

ings.

The matter was earlier transferred to the fast-track court by the Gauhati High Court for detailed examination and an expedited hearing. Following multiple days of continuous proceedings, the court issued these fresh directives on April 29.

During the hearing on April 28, the defence counsel for Siddharth Shar-

ma argued that his role was limited to managing stage performances of Zubeen Garg and that he had no responsibility for the singer's personal security.

The latest court order marks a crucial turn in this high-profile case, with investigators now focusing on alleged financial links and associated business entities connected to the accused.

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Promises Made, Promises Kept

Every election season, manifestos overflow with solemn assurances — farm loan waivers, free electricity, new schools, stronger roads. Voters weigh these pledges carefully, and in many cases, they decide elections. When a party wins on the back of such promises, it enters into an unwritten but binding contract with the electorate. Honouring that contract is not merely good politics; it is the bedrock of democratic accountability. Too often, however, the gap between the campaign trail and the treasury is vast. Governments cite fiscal constraints, changed circumstances, or prior administrations’ mismanagement to justify broken pledges. While some revision is inevitable when reality diverges from projection, habitual non-delivery corrodes public faith in institutions themselves. Citizens who feel repeatedly deceived disengage from civic life or, worse, turn to populist alternatives that promise even more and deliver even less. The remedy lies in honest campaigning backed by transparent governance. Parties should cost their promises before announcing them, and present credible timelines after winning. Where a pledge proves undeliverable, governments owe constituents a frank explanation — not silence. Independent audit bodies and legislative scrutiny can keep administrations honest, but civil society and a vigilant press are equally essential. Democracy thrives not on the making of promises, but on the discipline to keep them.

Strict financial discipline is now necessary due to the energy crisis

The ongoing geopolitical tensions involving the US, Israel, and Iran have again exposed how vulnerable the international energy markets are to conflicts and strategic rivalries. For Bangladesh, an economy that’s heavily reliant on fuel imports and has limited fiscal flexibility, this shock presents an immediate macroeconomic challenge. The upcoming national budget for FY2027 should, therefore, go beyond minor adjustments and adopt a transparent, rules-based and forward-looking policy approach. Managing the transmission channels of a global fuel shock is a complex task. The primary impact is inflation as an increase in global oil and LNG prices raises domestic transport costs, which in turn affects fuel prices and overall living expenses. Bangladesh has been experiencing persistently high inflation for about three years, which at times reached double digits. In March 2026, point-to-point inflation was 8.71 percent.

An energy-driven price surge could reinforce inflation expectations, making it more difficult for the monetary policy to stabilise prices without risking further economic slowdown. The external sector is just as vulnerable. Bangladesh depends heavily on imports for nearly all its petroleum and a growing amount of LNG for power. When global fuel prices rise, the effects are felt here immediately: trade deficit widens, foreign exchange reserves are strained, and maintaining exchange rate stability becomes more difficult. In FY2022 and FY2023, the country’s reserves declined sharply due to a surge in the global energy and commodity prices as the Russia-Ukraine war broke out. For example, the reserves, which stood

at \$46.48 billion on November 3, 2021, shrank to \$25.92 billion on July 31, 2024 (estimated in the traditional method before the introduction of IMF’s BPM6 method). This prompted import restrictions and currency adjustments. A new energy shock could bring these same pressures back, especially since forex reserves still remain fragile.

The growth implications are equally harmful. Rising energy costs increase expenses for industry, agriculture, and transportation. Sectors that rely heavily on energy—especially textiles, manufacturing, and irrigation-dependent farming—experience shrinking margins and less competitiveness.

As a result, investment decisions are postponed or reduced, further dampening the already stagnant private investment, which has hovered around 22-24 percent of GDP for over a decade. In FY2025, it further declined to 22.03 percent of GDP. In this context, the energy shock is more than a price concern; it acts as a barrier to structural change. The main constraint remains fiscal. Bangladesh’s fiscal situation is strained, with a tax-GDP ratio at 6.73 percent in FY2025—one of the lowest among peer economies. While subsidies for electricity and fuel have historically helped stabilise the economy, they have also imposed a continuous fiscal burden. The Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) requires significant annual subsidies to cover the difference between generation costs and retail prices.

When global fuel prices rise, the subsidy burden grows rapidly, creating a difficult policy choice. That is, the government either has to fund it through higher fiscal deficits or pass

the costs to the consumers via price hikes, which could fuel inflation. In this context, the next budget should prioritise policy credibility over short-term gains. First, the government has to establish a transparent, rules-based fuel pricing mechanism. The existing method, characterised by irregular and sudden changes, creates uncertainty. Implementing a formula-based system that gradually adjusts domestic prices in line with international trends would mitigate fiscal risks and enhance predictability. This mechanism should incorporate smoothing measures to prevent sharp price spikes, while still reflecting market conditions. Second, the subsidy system should be reformed. Wide-ranging energy subsidies are expensive and tend to benefit wealthier households and energy-intensive industries rather than helping the poor.

Therefore, the budget should be reallocated to a more targeted subsidy approach that supports sectors where intervention is both economically sound and socially needed. For instance, the agriculture sector needs temporary support for irrigation costs, and public transport subsidies could help reduce urban expenses. Providing direct financial assistance to low-income households through the existing social welfare programmes would be more effective than applying universal price controls. Third, boosting revenue is critically important. Bangladesh continues to face revenue deficits that underpin its fiscal fragility. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) frequently falls short of its targets, revealing both administrative challenges and broader political economy issues. The budget must include tangible

steps to broaden the tax base, reduce exemptions, and enhance compliance. Digitalising VAT systems, integrating tax databases, and applying stricter enforcement against evasion are essential to ensure fiscal sustainability.

Fourth, the government needs to control non-essential spending. When budgets are tight, prioritisation is key. Resources should focus on sectors that boost productivity and resilience rather than being spread thin across low-impact projects. This includes investing in energy infrastructure, logistics, and human capital, which offer long-term growth benefits. Fiscal consolidation isn’t about blanket austerity; it’s about making careful decisions to ensure that public funds are used where they provide the most value. Fifth, in addition to immediate fiscal actions, the budget must tackle the structural challenge of energy security. Bangladesh’s dependency on imported fossil fuels creates a strategic weakness.

Diversifying energy sources is essential, not just for environmental reasons but also for economic stability. Accelerating investments in renewables is crucial. Although renewables currently make up only 5.37 percent of the country’s energy mix, there is considerable potential, particularly in distributed solar systems and rooftop installations. Sixth, efforts must be put into expanding domestic gas exploration. While the country’s proven gas reserves are limited, adopting advanced exploration technologies and forming partnerships with international companies could uncover more resources. Additionally, infrastructure efficiency must be enhanced as system losses in power generation

and distribution incur hidden costs for the economy. Tackling these inefficiencies can provide immediate fiscal and economic advantages.

Seventh, strategic fuel reserves are essential. Many countries maintain reserves to buffer against short-term supply disruptions and price spikes. Currently, Bangladesh’s reserve capacity is limited. The budget should allocate funds to build and maintain strategic petroleum and LNG reserves as a buffer against external shocks. Last, the budget should incorporate a contingency plan for external shocks. As geopolitical conflicts and supply chain disruptions increase global economic uncertainty, the fiscal policy must stay adaptable to address unforeseen events without compromising discipline.

This could include setting aside contingency funds or creating specific procedures for emergency spending. The main message is clear. The external shocks have become structural rather than occasional. The global economy faces heightened volatility driven by geopolitical and economic influences that impact energy markets, trade, and financial systems. For Bangladesh, it is crucial to incorporate resilience into the foundation of macroeconomic policies. The FY2027 budget should serve as more than an annual financial report. It must act as an indicator of policy credibility. It should reflect a decisive move towards rules-based governance, fiscal discipline, and strategic investment. Dependency on ad hoc measures and short-term fixes will increase vulnerabilities. Instead, a cohesive framework is essential to harmonise immediate stabilisation with long-term transformation.

Is Bangladesh-US trade deal a backdoor for GMO dumping

Bangladesh signed the US Reciprocal Trade Agreement on February 9, 2026, just three days before the national election. Within two weeks, the US Supreme Court ruled that the tariff regime underpinning such agreements—imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)—violated federal law. The ruling represents a victory for the rule of law and the US constitutional framework. Immediately after that, Malaysia declared its agreement with the US “null and void,” establishing a precedent for sovereign reassessment of such deals. The Bangladesh Interim Government, to avoid the reimposition of the reciprocal tariff rate (37 percent) proposed on April 2, 2025, on top of the usual most-favoured-nation (MFN) tariffs on certain or all Bangladeshi imports, signed the deal. Upon signing the “trade deal,” the US reduced the reciprocal tariff rate to 19 percent on Bangladesh’s originating goods. This was perceived as a “relief,” but at what cost? Meat, dairy products are a blow to rural livelihood

The US trade deal is nothing but a dumping of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) through meat and dairy products. As the former adviser in the Ministry of Fisheries & Livestock (MOFL), I was aware of the possibility of imports of meat and dairy products. Obviously, we raised concerns that such imports would have a significant adverse impact on our livestock and poultry sectors and the livelihood of people. Importing meat and dairy products from the US poses unequal trade terms for Bangladesh. The livestock and poultry sector in Bangladesh represents a fundamentally different economic model from that of the US. Here, livestock is embedded in a livelihood economy, whereas in the US, it is part of an industrial agro-capitalist system. In the US, industrial livestock farming accounts for 21 lakh farms but engages less than two percent of the pop-



ulation. Contrarily, in Bangladesh, livestock keeping is part of the livelihoods of 80-85 percent of 4.1 crore households, often led by women. The meat and milk supply from these sources contributes two percent to the national GDP and 16 percent of agricultural GDP, and provides a significant proportion of animal protein for the 17.5 crore people. Over 83 percent of rural households own livestock (animals and poultry), 46 percent own bovine animals (cattle/buffalo), and 76.3 percent own poultry.

Bangladesh’s poor livestock keepers do not receive any subsidy, but will have to compete with a heavily subsidised industrial livestock sector. The US Department of Agriculture has spent at least \$72 billion in subsidies to livestock and seafood producers over the past few decades. This asymmetry is critical. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), small-holder livestock systems are highly vulnerable to import competition due to limited access to credit, technology, and state support.

This trade agreement with the US will allow agricultural and livestock products into the Bangladesh market as per Article 2.3, in which some issues are one-sided; for example: (1) Bangladesh will have to provide non-discriminatory or preferential market access to the US; (2) Bangladesh shall ensure that its sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures are science- and risk-based and do not operate as disguised restrictions on

bilateral trade, and shall remove unjustified SPS barriers in areas that undermine reciprocity in agricultural goods; and (3) Bangladesh shall not enter into agreements or understandings with third countries that include non-scientific, discriminatory, or preferential technical standards; include third-country SPS measures that are incompatible with US or international standards; or otherwise disadvantage US exports to such third countries. None of these is in favour of Bangladesh’s interests. It is an imposition to accept the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) unconditionally, despite having an authenticated regulatory system in place.

It’s nothing but GM soybean and Bt corn dumping Article 1.6 of the agreement mandates that Bangladesh allow genetically modified (GM) products without pre-market approval, labelling, or additional regulation. US livestock are fed with genetically modified crops (soybean and corn). Article 1.6 states: “Bangladesh shall maintain, for products of agricultural biotechnology, science- and risk-based regulatory frameworks and efficient authorisation processes, to facilitate increased trade in such products.” It also states that these products shall be imported and marketed in Bangladesh for the same purposes without requiring pre-market review, deregulation, additional labelling requirements, or approval from Bangladesh.

One simple demand from

environmental and farmers’ organisations was that GMO products, whether produced in the country or imported, should be labelled. But this agreement removes such requirements and necessary regulatory measures. This agreement authorises the US to unload its genetically modified (GM) foods and other products which are considered hazardous by other countries. In the manner of a typical neocolonial power, the US used tariff threats to achieve economic, political, and trade concessions.

The corn and soybeans used for chicken, dairy and meat cattle feed in the US are genetically modified. US chicken feed also contains meat meal from recycled animal by-products (mainly beef and pork). This is a sensitive issue for Bangladesh, with over 90 percent of the population being Muslim. Over 90 percent of the acreage planted with GM soybean varieties in the US has primarily herbicide-tolerant traits, like MON89788 and DAS-44406, for chemical weed control. According to a 2019 study by the European Union, many weeds (47 species worldwide) have adapted to the widespread use of such chemicals and become resistant. These herbicide-tolerant weeds are an increasing problem. Widespread adoption of the chemicals has led to an accelerating increase in herbicide use and, consequently, an “arms race” in genetic engineering technology and the use of complementary herbicides. The increas-

ing amount of herbicides sprayed not only causes substantial environmental problems but also creates new challenges for the risk assessment of health effects, since products derived from these plants can introduce new herbicide residues into the food chain.

The US is the world’s second-largest producer of soya beans, accounting for 28 percent of global production. Large agribusiness corporations are highly dependent on exports. The American Soybean Association (ASA) had announced that 2025 would mark a third straight year of losses, while the National Corn Growers Association raised alarms about “the economic crisis hitting rural America.” In 2025, losses for the nine major commodity crops ranged from \$35 billion to \$44 billion.

Under this trade agreement with the US, Bangladesh is not importing soybean and corn directly; they will come through the import of meat and dairy products and other soybean- and corn-based products. Besides, a genetically modified growth hormone called recombinant bovine somatotropin (rBST) is used to increase cows’ milk production by 10-15 percent. Milk from rBST-treated cows is used to make ice cream, butter, cheese, and yoghurt.

What do we do now? The US Reciprocal Trade Agreement was concluded with nine countries. Among these, Malaysia was the first country to declare the trade deal with the US invalid on March 15, 2026. This should prompt Bangladesh to re-evaluate the deal or follow the Malaysian decision. From a legal standpoint, Bangladesh is not bound to passively accept the consequences of a contested agreement. Article 6.5 permits termination, while Article 6.2 allows renegotiation. In international trade law, such clauses are not symbolic—they are instruments of sovereignty. The key question, therefore, is not about legality but political will.

How the Kabinnama may defend the rights of Muslim women in Bangladesh

Last year, a legal controversy arose regarding “a Muslim wife’s approval to second marriage” flooding social media, creating confusion, uncertainty, and agitation among the netizens. Some of the social media posts speculated ideas such as “wife’s approval is no longer required for second marriage” or “the High Court allows second marriage without wife’s approval,” among others. This led to the question of whether Muslim men in Bangladesh has ever needed to obtain the consent of their first wives before contracting a second marriage. Here’s what the Bangladeshi law says about this issue.

Section 6 (1) of the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961 (MFLO) says that a married Muslim man cannot remarry while he is already in a marriage unless he seeks written permission from the Arbitration Council. Also, any marriage conducted without such permission will not be registered under the Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act, 1974. There is no provision regarding a wife’s consent to her husband’s second marriage in any law in the country. This raises the question as to what led to those posts on social media. Back in 2021, a Supreme Court lawyer challenged the validity of Section 6 of MFLO in a writ petition, saying that this section is arbitrary and discriminatory towards both men and women. She argued that Muslim family law allows a man to have four wives at a time, but simultaneously asks a man to ensure justice and equal rights for all wives. But the Arbitration Council does not have the capacity to ensure that the wives are getting proper maintenance and equal rights; rather, it permits polygamy without ensuring justice for the wives.

In December 2025, the High Court gave its final verdict rejecting the writ petition. The judgment states that Section 6 of MFLO is neither discriminatory, arbitrary, nor unconstitutional. Hence, the authority of permitting a second marriage still lies with the



Arbitration Council. However, netizens misunderstood the judgment and flooded social media with posts, creating confusion. Here’s why the power to give permission lies exclusively with the Arbitration Council.

Practically speaking, in most cases, the wife’s permission might not be free from undue influence. A husband could coerce his wife to give permission. She might also not permit a second marriage simply because of jealousy, even if the husband has enough grounds to remarry. The council may allow the husband to remarry on specific grounds like sterility, sickness, physical incapacity to establish conjugal relations, mental illness of the current wife, or if the husband gets a decree for restitution of conjugal rights and the wife refuses to resume conjugal relations. Simply put, there is a significant possibility of misapplication of power in this regard. That is why the permission lies with the Arbitration Council.

The council, if deemed fit, will record its reasons and grant permission to the remarry. However, to obtain permission, the husband must apply to the chairman, justifying his intention and providing information about his wife’s consent in the first place. From a feminist standpoint, this is obviously not enough. It portrays blind adherence to century-old patriarchal customs. This is where the long-standing debate and muted conversations regarding stipulations in Muslim marriage come. Muslim marriage, being of a contractual nature, provides the scope for inserting stipulations. Many Muslim countries such as

Qatar, Kuwait and UAE have made provisions for inserting stipulations. In Bangladesh, there is no specific provision for inserting stipulations in Muslim marriage apart from Section 17 of the Kabinnama, which reads “Special Conditions if any,” and leaves only three lines to insert the conditions, which is barely sufficient.

More importantly, people are not aware of the rights that Shariah as well as Bangladeshi law have given them. Sometimes, even the Kazi himself does not know the purpose of Section 17. Typically, they write something that reinforces the normal events of a marriage, such as “Agreed to maintain the conjugal life as per Islamic ideals and shall abide by the rules and regulations of the Muslim family laws.” Most women are not aware that they can put stipulations regarding completion of their education, continuation of a job after marriage, etc in the Kabinnama. A woman can even put a stipulation that the husband cannot remarry without her consent. If the husband breaks any stipulation, the wife has the right to seek divorce. Thus, an absolute and exclusive marital power has been given to women; however, very few of them have actually exercised it in reality. It brings us to the question: should we then change the law or bridge the gap between knowledge and ignorance? We believe the latter is more effective, given the current legal system of our country. Also, getting anxious by reading clickbait news that many online media are selling these days does not do anyone any good.

NPCI urges users to follow safe digital payment practices amid rising online transactions

Aizawl: As digital payments continue to grow rapidly across India, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has urged citizens to adopt safe transaction practices to protect themselves from online fraud and financial scams.

In an advisory issued recently, NPCI highlighted five key safety measures

for users making digital payments through UPI and other online platforms. The organisation advised users to always verify the recipient's name before making any payment to avoid sending money to the wrong person or business. It also stressed the importance of using only trusted and official payment applications and websites.NPCI further

warned users against sharing confidential details such as UPI PINs, OTPs, or bank account information with anyone, including individuals claiming to be from banks, police departments, or government offices. Users were also advised not to rush into making payments under pressure and to carefully verify requests before proceeding.

The advisory encouraged people to keep SMS and app payment alerts activated and regularly monitor transaction notifications for suspicious activity. In case of fraud or suspicious calls, users have been asked to report incidents to the national cybercrime helpline by dialing 1930 or through the Department of Telecommunications portal.

RISM launch reflects growing push for industry-driven higher education in India's knowledge economy

Kohima: The launch of Ramaiah Institute of Science and Management (RISM) by the Gokula Education Foundation (Medical) highlights the increasing shift in India's higher education sector towards industry-integrated and technology-focused learning models aimed at supporting the country's expanding knowledge economy.

The deemed-to-be university, launched in partnership with the University at Albany, will begin aca-

demic operations in August 2026 with programmes centred on artificial intelligence, aerospace engineering and management studies. Analysts believe the move aligns with rising industry demand for skilled professionals in advanced technologies, automation and innovation-driven sectors.RISM plans to offer undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes, including B.Tech courses in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence, Aerospace

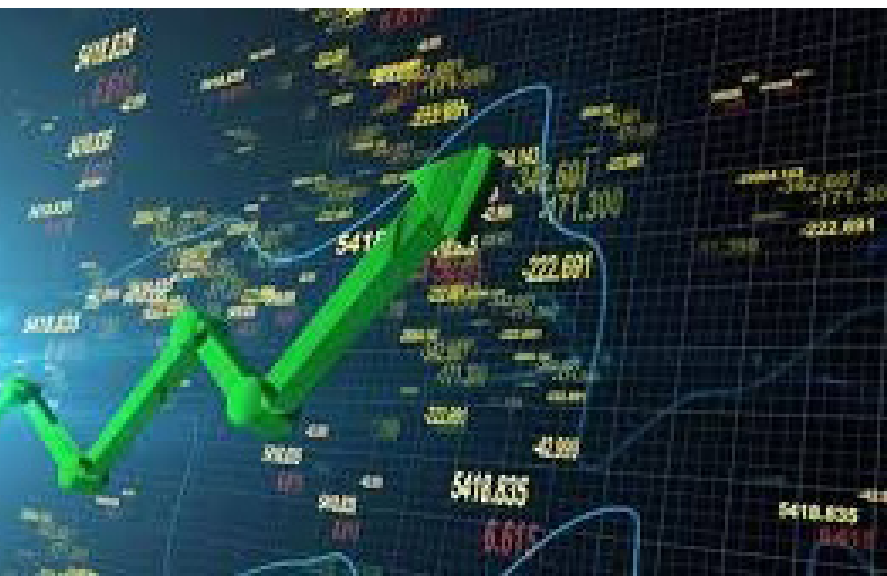
Engineering and Electrical Sciences, along with BBA and MBA programmes. The institution said its curriculum has been developed with industry and academic partners to strengthen employability through internships, live projects, translational research and industry-sponsored Centres of Excellence.The university's decision to establish its main residential campus near Bengaluru's Information Technology Investment Region in Devanahalli places it close

to aerospace clusters, special economic zones and the upcoming Foxconn facility, potentially strengthening industry-academia collaboration and regional innovation ecosystems.

Gokula Education Foundation (Medical) said the university would also introduce a "Professors of Practice" model, integrating senior industry professionals into academic departments to bridge the gap between academic learning and evolving market requirements.

Tanla Platforms share price jumped 20% today stock

Mumbai: Tanla Platforms Ltd, an AI-native platform company, saw its shares rising 20 per cent in Monday's trade after the company said its profit after tax for the quarter ended rose 14.5 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 134.30 crore on 15 per cent YoY rise in revenue at Rs 1,177.50 crore. Overall margin for the quarter came in at 27 per cent against 27.6 per cent in the December quarter and 25.3 per cent in the same quarter last year, Tanla Platforms said. There was a 60 basis points (bps) decrease in gross margin sequentially but increase of 173 bps YoY. Enterprise business gross margin stood at 20.2 per cent while Platform's 98.3 per cent. Following the development, the scrip was up 19 per cent in the afternoon trade, before it extended gains to 20 per cent, hitting upper circuit limit at Rs 583.65. With this, the scrip erased its year-to-date losses, with the scrip now up 11.83 per cent for 2026 so far.Tan-



la Platforms said its free cash flow for the quarter came in at Rs 206.30 crore while its cash balance, post dividend and buyback, stood at Rs 1,143.60 crore. For the year, net profit came in at Rs 509 crore and sales at Rs 4,418 crore.

Uday Reddy, Founder Chairman & CEO, said: "FY26 reflects the strength of our execution, delivering

9.7 per cent revenue growth and strong free cashflow generation. Our financial performance is not just a metric of success, but proof that solving real-world problems through trusted AI-led platforms, drive tangible value for our customers and sustainable high-quality growth for their business." Tanla Platforms Ltd is the largest Communi-

cation Platform as a Service (CPaaS) player in India. Tanla has two major businesses: Enterprise (91 per cent) and Platform (9 per cent), both using blockchain technology to reduce spam and fraud activities revenue of Rs 1,121 crore, reflecting a 12 per cent YoY increase, driven by a recovery in the Enterprise Communications segment.

Stricter RBI provisioning, faster IBC recovery Nomura, Ambit warn Banks face twin reset:

Mumbai: India's banking sector is staring at a twin reset that could directly impact lenders such as State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Bank of Baroda. The trigger is not limited to individual balance sheets but a system-wide tightening of how stress is identified and resolved. New provisioning rules from the Reserve Bank of India and tighter insolvency timelines are coming together at the same time. Analysis from Nomura and Ambit Capital says banks will face higher upfront costs as they recognise bad loans earlier, even as faster resolution under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code improves recoveries. RBI's provisioning shift raises near-term stress for banks Historically, insolvency cases in India stretch well beyond intended timelines, often taking two to three years. This delay reduces recovery value as assets deteriorate during prolonged legal processes. The 2026 amendment seeks to change that through strict timelines such as a 14-day admission window and faster approvals. The intent is to preserve asset value and improve recovery outcomes for lenders. Banks get more control through creditor-led resolution Ambit Capital says, "CIIRP allows for an out-of-court, negotiation-based process initiated with around 51% creditor approval within a 150+45-day window."This gives lenders the ability to take quicker decisions and engage directly with potential buyers, improving speed of resolution. At the same time, the report notes that such a system will require careful monitoring to ensure fair price discovery.

For banks, the change is significant because it reduces procedural delays that previously lock capital in stressed assets for years. Nomura says not all banks are

affected equally by the new provisioning framework. The report says, "The impact on PSU and mid-tier banks will be higher; several PSU banks have highlighted that the one-time provisioning hit could impact net worth by 3-9%."Public sector banks typically carry higher levels of legacy stressed assets, which makes the transition to stricter provisioning more painful.At the same time, these banks also benefit more from faster insolvency resolutions, as a large portion of their bad loans are tied to corporate borrowers that fall under the insolvency process. Private banks better placed due to stronger buffers One of the biggest structural benefits of the insolvency reform is the potential to release capital tied up in unresolved cases.Ambit Capital says the new framework will "support faster capital recycling and improved recovery outcomes."By reducing delays and improving clarity in the resolution process, banks can convert stressed assets into cash more quickly. This improves capital efficiency and allows lenders to redeploy funds into new loans.The impact is particularly important for banks with large corporate exposure, where recovery timelines have historically been long and uncertain.Large private sector banks are relatively better positioned to absorb the impact of tighter norms.Nomura says, "Large private banks are better placed, in our view, as the transition impact would be lower given provision buffers of around 2-4% of net worth."Two forces at play, higher provisioning and faster recoveryTaken together, the Nomura and Ambit Capital reports point to a system where banks are being pushed to recognise stress earlier while also being given tools to

resolve it faster.Ambit Capital says, "For banks, benefits are two-fold - stronger ongoing recoveries for corporate-focused lenders and one-off P&L gains from TWO recoveries."This dual effect means that while earnings may come under pressure in the near term due to higher provisioning, recoveries from previously written-off assets could support profits later.A key structural change in the insolvency framework is the introduction of a creditor-driven resolution mechanism, which reduces dependence on lengthy tribunal proceedings.Nomura says the Reserve Bank of India's move to Expected Credit Loss based provisioning changes how banks recognise risk across loan books. The immediate consequence is a hit to profitability and capital. Nomura estimates that for several public sector banks, the one-time transition could reduce net worth by 3% to 9%, while capital ratios also see some drag before stabilising. Ambit Capital says the other side of the equation lies in the resolution of stressed assets under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.The brokerage says, "The shift to enforceable timelines is expected to enhance recovery NPV by compressing resolution cycles."The report says, "Implementation of the ECL norms will result in higher upfront provisioning, especially in unsecured retail, MSME and corporate exposures." Under the new system, banks classify loans into three stages depending on stress levels, with sharply higher provisioning required once accounts begin to slip. This forces lenders to account for potential losses earlier rather than waiting for defaults to fully materialise.

OnEMI Technology IPO to open Check price band, objectives of Rs 925 crore issue

New Delhi: Fintech firm, OnEMI Technology Solutions is set to go public soon, as the company will open its IPO worth Rs 925 on April 30. The share price band for the issue has been fixed for Rs 162 to Rs 171 per share. The IPO is a book-build issue comprising fresh equity worth Rs 850 crore, while the company's investors will offload equity worth Rs 75 crore via the offer for sale route. The company will issue over 4.97 crore fresh equity shares, with a face value of Rs 1 each amounting to Rs 850 crore, while investors will offload over 44 lakh shares aggregating to Rs 75.92 crore. This brings the total issue size at Rs 925.92 crore. The share allotment is expected to be finalized just a day after bidding closure, i.e. on Wednesday, May 6. Investors will receive their shares and requisite refunds on Thursday, May 7, and the company is expected to list on bourses by Friday, May 8.OnEMI Technology IPO: Lot Size

Retail applicants are required to bid for a minimum of one lot comprising 87 shares amounting to Rs 14,887 (based on the upper price). While small non-institutional investors may bid in lots of 14 aggregating to Rs 2,08,278.

For Big non-institutional investors the lot size stands at 68, valued at Rs 10,11,636. According to the company's DRHP, it will utilize the majority of its fresh proceeds towards fund-



ing the growth of its subsidiary. Of the total fresh float, Rs 750 crore will be deployed to meet the capital requirements of its subsidiary, Si Creva's business.The IPO is being handled by JM Financial, HSBC Securities and Capital Market (India), Nuvama Wealth Management, and SBI Capital Markets. Centrum Capital is the registrar to the offer. Kisshat parent company,

OnEMI Tech will open its IPO for public bidding on Thursday, April 30, and bid for three days with the IPO closing its bidding on Tuesday, May 1. Investors should note that stock exchanges will be closed on Friday, May 1 in observance of Maharashtra Day so no bidding will take place on that day.

RIL shares in focus: Jio IPO timeline & retail surge two big catalysts ahead

New Delhi: The Reliance Industries (RIL) share price will stay in focus today. The oil-to-chemicals to new energy conglomerate declared its Q4 results. Its consolidated net profit declined 12.6% year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 16,971 crore in Q4FY26, compared with Rs 19,407 crore reported in Q4FY25. Sequentially, the net profit fell 9% from Rs 18,645 crore.

Jio, retail to drive growth at RIL, say brokerages; O2C to see moderate growthThe company's consolidated revenue came in at Rs 2.94 lakh crore, up 12.6% YoY, as against Rs 2.61 lakh crore, while it stood at Rs 2.65 lakh crore, QoQ.The company's consolidated EBITDA was Rs 44,141 crore, compared to Rs 43,832 crore, 0.7% YoY. It was at Rs 46,018 crore in Q3FY26.The consolidated EBITDA margin narrowed to 15% from 16.8% in Q4FY25 and 17.4%, QoQ.Due to the higher feedstock prices caused by the disruption in global energy markets, the Mukesh Ambani-led firm reported a double-digit drop in net profit YoY. The earnings for the fourth quarter of FY26 reflect the dangerous impact of the continuing West Asia conflict on Indian companies' operations and earnings For the whole of FY26, RIL's consolidated net profit surged by 16% to Rs 80,775 crore,



and net sales rose 9.6% to Rs 10.57 lakh crore over the last year. This is the first instance of any Indian firm reporting an annual revenue of more than Rs 10 lakh crore. However, India's most valuable company, with a market capitalisation of nearly Rs 18 trillion, witnessed its steepest earnings fall in the last 13 quarters. RIL's consolidated net profit had previously declined 14.9% YoY in the third quarter of FY23. If you want to read in detail about the earnings of Reliance Industries, you can read on this link. RIL - Retail Business

Reliance Retail Ventures' net revenue grew 11% YoY, and was higher at 14% YoY on a comparable basis

(adjusted for FMCG demerger from December 2025).

Quick commerce (QC) offering, JioMart, has scaled up rapidly, with the number of daily average orders rising 29% QoQ (4x YoY) as hyperlocal deliveries scaled up to electronics and fashion & lifestyle categories, with a 2-hour delivery promise. "I am happy to note that we are advancing steadily towards the listing of Jio Platforms. This will mark a defining milestone in its journey as it continues to scale new heights and contribute to India's digital future," said Mukesh Ambani. Reliance Jio reported 12.6% YoY revenue growth in the March quar-

ter. Reliance Jio reported a revenue of Rs 38,259 crore in Q4 FY26, up from Rs 33,986 crore in Q4 FY25. The vertical's profit also grew 13% YOY to Rs 33,986 crore. Motilal Oswal on Reliance Industries

The domestic brokerage house has slashed the target price on Reliance Industries to Rs 1,655 from Rs 1,715, still implying an upside of over 25% from the current market price. However, it maintained its 'Buy' rating on the stock.

"While the energy business weakness drives the near-term earnings downgrade, sustained mid-to-high teen growth in Reliance Retail and a tariff hike, along with the impending Jio Platforms IPO, remain the key triggers for RIL's stock price," said the brokerage. RIL reported a subdued Q4, with consolidated EBITDA declining 4% QoQ, primarily driven by weaker profitability in the Energy business due to the disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict. However, the company's consumer-facing businesses remained resilient.On the other hand, Reliance Retail's revenue growth picked up to 11% YoY, though EBITDA growth was modest at 3% YoY, as margins contracted 60 basis points YoY due to the ramp-up of low-margin hyper-local deliveries.

Trent bonus shares, dividend: Tata stock up 30% in a month

New Delhi: Trent bonus issue record date: Tata Group stock Trent Ltd has been on a roll in April as the retail chain major has gained more than 30 per cent the last one month. The company has also announced the record date for the issue of its bonus shares and dividend, which were announced along with the quarterly results. Shares of Trent have risen more than 30 per cent in the last one month from Rs 3,295 levels to top Rs 4,300-mark on Wednesday. The total market capitalization of the company stood above Rs 1.55 lakh crore. However, the stock is still down 32 per cent from its 52-week high at Rs 6,259, hit in June 2025.

Corporate actions in Trent: dividend and bonus issue Trent had announced a dividend of Rs 6 per share, or 600 per cent (for each share with a face value of Re 1), along with its earnings a week ago, on April 22. Besides this, the Tata group firm also announced a bonus issue in 1:2 ratio for the eligible shareholders of the company. Trent also announced to raise Rs 2,500 crore via rights issue for expansion plans. The



board of directors have fixed the record date as June 10, 2026 (Wednesday) for payment of dividend, subject to approval of shareholders at the AGM, which is scheduled to be held on June 23, 2026. If the dividend on equity shares is approved at the bonus equity shares in the proportion of 1:2. It means that one equity share as bonus share for every two \$2 billion Airtel Money IPO in the offing? What we know so far

existing fully paid up equity shares held by the members of the Company, subject to statutory and regulatory approvals, said the company in a separate exchange filing. Retail expansion to sustain with fundraising on cards: Management is confident of long-term structural growth and will continue to invest in

retail expansion and brands. Incremental investments will be made to expand the hyper market brand - Star Bazaar and new brands such as Burn Toast in the coming years, said ICICIDirect Research with a 'buy' rating and a target price of Rs 5,075.Trent reported a net profit at Rs 455 crore in the March 2026 quarter, rising 30 per cent on year-on-year (YoY) basis. Its revenue from operations increased 20 per cent YoY to Rs 4,937 crore and operating profit stood at Rs 668 crore, up 43 per cent on a yearly comparison. Operating margins improved Q4FY26, it opened 23 Westside and 109 Zudio stores (including 2 stores in the UAE) and consolidated 1 Westside store and expanded its presence to 47 new cities.

According to state media, Tehran has “no plans to participate” in new negotiations while accusing the US of breaching the ceasefire



Iran: Iran’s military accused the United States of violating a precarious ceasefire between the two nations, hours after Donald Trump announced he was sending negotiators to Islamabad. Iranian state media claimed on Sunday night that Tehran does not now want to participate in new negotiations with the United States.On Sunday, President Donald Trump declared that an Iranian cargo ship that attempted to breach the blockade imposed by the United States close to the Strait of Hormuz had been apprehended. “We are looking at what’s on board, and we have complete custody of their ship!” Trump posted on social media. According to Iran’s military, the ship was sailing from China. An Iranian military spokeswoman is quoted by state media as saying, “We warn that the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran will soon respond and retaliate against this armed piracy by the US military.”The late-Sunday incident made it more likely that the ceasefire would break down before negotiators could meet again in Pakistan.On Monday, the United States announced that it will be sending a delegation to Pakistan for a potential round of negotiations to put an end to the US-Israeli conflict in Iran. However, remarks made by Iranian official media that there were “currently no plans to participate in the next round” seemed to jeopardize the most recent round of talks before they had even started. The return of a US delegation to Islamabad, led by the vice-president, JD Vance, with Trump’s special envoy, Steve Witkoff, and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, comes after Iran on Saturday reimposed tight restrictions on the transit of commercial shipping in the strait of Hormuz, reversing an

agreement made hours before to reopen the strategic waterway, over the US’s refusal to lift its naval blockade.“Iran stated that its absence from the second round of talks stemmed from what it called Washington’s excessive demands, unrealistic expectations, constant shifts in stance, repeated contradictions, and the continuing naval blockade, which it considers a breach of the ceasefire,” Iran’s official IRNA news agency wrote.The war, entering its eighth week, has killed thousands in Iran and Lebanon and sent oil prices surging because of the strait’s closure. In an interview aired on state television late on Saturday, Iran’s chief negotiator, the parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, had said “there will be no retreat in the field of diplomacy”, while acknowledging a wide gap remained between the sides.Trump said on Sunday that any talks in Islamabad, which would come before the two-week ceasefire expires on Wednesday, were the “last chance” for Iran to agree to a peace deal.“If Iran does not sign this deal, the whole country is getting blown up,” he told Fox News. Trump then reiterated a threat made earlier that the US would specifically destroy Iran’s power plants and bridges if it did not sign the agreement.He said the deal the US is offering, which entails reopening the strait and ensuring Iran does not have enriched uranium, was a “very fair and reasonable deal” and unless Iran accepts, he vowed to knock out “every single Power Plant” and “every single Bridge”.Pakistan’s foreign affairs ministry said the country’s deputy prime minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar, had spoken on Sunday with Abbas Araghchi, Iran’s foreign minister, during a phone call that in-

cluded discussion on “the need for continued dialogue and engagement as essential to resolving the current issues as soon as possible for promoting the peace and stability in the region and beyond”.A phone call was also planned between Iran’s president, Masoud Pezeshkian, and Pakistan’s prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif.Washington’s envoy to the UN, Mike Waltz, told ABC News that he believed a new round of talks would lead to an “incredibly consequential” outcome. For Tehran, the strait of Hormuz’s closure – imposed after the US and Israel launched the Iran war on 28 February during talks over Tehran’s nuclear programme – is perhaps its most powerful weapon, inflicting political pain on Trump.The US president’s renewed threat to hit Iran’s power plants and bridges fits a pattern of such warnings throughout the war, several of which preceded moves to de-escalate.He abruptly announced the ceasefire two weeks ago, just hours after declaring that Iran’s “whole civilisation will die tonight”.Trump accused Iran of violating the two-week ceasefire by firing at two merchant ships in the strait after a brief uptick in transit attempts on Saturday.Esmail Baghaei, a spokesperson for Iran’s foreign ministry, said the US blockade of Iran’s ports and coastline had violated the ceasefire and was “unlawful and criminal”. By “deliberately inflicting collective punishment on the Iranian population, it amounts to war crime and crimes against humanity”, Baghaei wrote on social media. Roughly one-fifth of the world’s oil trade normally passes through the strait, and the global energy crisis threatens to deepen as the war drags on. Iran on Sunday held firm on its insistence that ships would not pass while the US blockade remained in effect.Two liquefied petroleum gas tankers were seen on ship-tracking websites moving eastbound towards the strait early on Sunday morning, but the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported that Iran’s armed forces turned them back.Friday’s announcement that the strait would reopen caused the sharpest one-day drop in oil prices in years, while stock markets hit all-time highs on the expectation the disruption would soon end. But with the strait yet to reopen, markets could face new volatility when they reopen on Monday.Pressure for a way out of the war is mounting on Trump as his fellow Republicans prepare to defend narrow majorities in Congress in the November midterm elections.Apart from the two-week ceasefire in Iran, Israel and Lebanon announced a separate ceasefire last week.More than 1 million Lebanese have been displaced by the Israeli invasion, which Israel said was in pursuit of Hezbollah, the powerful Shia armed group allied with Iran that fired across the border in support of Tehran.

The main queries Keir Starmer needs to address regarding the Mandelson appointment

London: Given the persistent calls for Keir Starmer to step down over his nomination of Peter Mandelson as US ambassador, the next 48 hours will be critical to his problematic leadership. Starmer will address the House of Commons on Monday over the Guardian’s disclosure that Mandelson was permitted to hold the position of US ambassador in spite of failing a security authorities’ screening process. Olly Robbins, the Foreign Office’s top civil servant, who Starmer fired on Thursday and is attempting to blame for the controversy, will provide his perspective on Tuesday. These are the main queries that Starmer needs to respond to. To what extent was Starmer aware of problems with his choice for the US ambassador?It was well known that Peter Mandelson’s selection as US ambassador was dangerous. Known as the “prince of darkness,” Mandelson had previously been forced to resign from his position as a Labour minister. The public was aware of his connections to Jeffrey Epstein, a convicted sexual offender. His consulting firm, Global Counsel, also had ties to China. Thus, the fundamental question is clear: why did Starmer choose him? The current crisis facing Downing Street stems from the Guardian’s revelation that United Kingdom Security Vetting (UKSV) said Mandelson should be declined “developed vetting” clearance in late January 2025, only for that advice to be overruled by the Foreign Office so he could take up the post. Starmer has said it was “unforgivable” and “staggering” that officials did not tell him Mandelson was denied UKSV

clearance. But was the prime minister made aware there were problems with the vetting process?It has been suggested, for example, that mitigations were put in place before Mandelson took up the post. To be clear, UKSV did not recommend mitigations or “risk management”, opting for straight “clearance denied”. But when deciding to give Mandelson clearance anyway, the Foreign Office could have put in place some restrictions to mitigate risk. If that happened, was Starmer aware? And if he was told that there were issues, why did he not demand to get to the bottom of them? Was Starmer aware of any problems with Mandelson’s STRAP clearance?The Foreign Office informed Mandelson that the position in Washington required an even higher level of clearance, known as DV+STRAP, a few days after granting him “developed vetting” clearance against the recommendations of security authorities. Access to materials even more sensitive than top secret, such intelligence material, requires STRAP clearance, often known as “indoctrination.” According to reports, these documents are printed on pink paper so that they may be easily recognized. It is unclear whether or not Mandelson received STRAP clearance, but it is hard to see how he would perform his role without it. Did Mandelson get this top-level clearance? If so, how was that possible, given that he’d been denied the lower-level clearance by UKSV? And if Mandelson got STRAP clearance with mitigations put in place that affected his ability to do the role, for example by limiting his access to

particular documents or areas of foreign policy, how did Starmer not know that? Has Starmer now viewed the UKSV document outlining the reasons Mandelson shouldn’t be vetted? If yes, will he explain why?According to Robbins’ friends, he was legally obligated to keep the specifics of this extremely invasive screening procedure private. “Not only is there no duty to disclose the details of a vetting case, there is a duty not to disclose them,” stated former senior civil servant Ciaran Martin. Citing the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act of 2010, former Foreign Office permanent secretary Simon McDonald described vetting as a “confidential process.” According to publicly available government documents, the process includes a questionnaire and interviews requiring disclosure of highly private information, including about personal finances, business connections and sexual history. Starmer is likely to be pressed on whether he has now seen the full details of why Mandelson failed his vetting. Assuming he now has the facts, what will Starmer now tell parliament about the reasons why Mandelson was deemed a security risk? Have all members of the intelligence and security committee received the unredacted UKSV document?A humble address vote in the Commons in February compelled the government to mandate that “all papers” pertinent to Mandelson’s appointment be made public. The motion states that documents that are thought to be detrimental to foreign relations or national security should be sent to the parliamentary intelligence and security committee.

Trump claims the US military captured a container ship flying the Iranian flag

Washington,: Tehran accused Donald Trump on Sunday of breaching the precarious ceasefire between the two nations after the US military detained an Iranian-flagged container ship that tried to cross an American blockade close to the strait of Hormuz.Trump said on social media that a “Iranian-flagged cargo ship named TOUSKA” attempted to breach the US Navy blockade, “and it did not go well for them.”Trump said that the Touska ignored a warning from a US Navy guided missile ship to stop in the Gulf of Oman. “[Our] Navy ship stopped them right in their tracks by blowing a hole in the engine room,” Trump stated, noting that the ship is currently under the control of US soldiers. “The TOUSKA is under U.S. Treasury Sanctions because of their prior history of illegal activity,” Trump added. The ship is on the treasury department’s list of sanctioned vessels. Iran’s military vowed to respond and

accused the United States of having “violated the ceasefire” that has been in place since 8 April.“We warn that the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran will soon respond and retaliate against this armed piracy and the US military,” said a spokesperson for the military’s central command centre, Khatam Al-Anbiya, cited by ISNA news agency.Iranian state media also reported that Tehran had rejected new peace talks, citing the ongoing blockade, threatening rhetoric, and Washington’s shifting positions and “excessive demands”.Video posted on social media by the US defense department later showed the interception of the ship by US forces. The video includes audio of the container ship’s crew being warned that they will be fired on if they refused to stop. “Vacate your engine room,” a US sailor can be heard saying. “We’re prepared to subject you to disabling fire.”The video then shows the USS Spru-



ance firing on the Touska. The cargo ship was stopped near Iran’s border with Pakistan, and is more than 900ft long, according to the tracking website Marine Traffic.The Iranian government has not yet commented.The latest military action by the US raises new questions about the possibility of extending a ceasefire between the two warring nations.Trump had

previously announced that US officials would be headed to Pakistan on Monday for more talks with Iranian leaders about the ongoing US-Israel war on Iran. Touska had previously left Port Klang, a major port in Malaysia, when the vessel then attempted to move past the US blockade, according to tracking information from TankerTrackers.com.

Ed Miliband will take steps to counter the energy shock from Iran while stepping up his efforts to achieve net zero



London: In light of the Middle East war, Ed Miliband will reiterate Labour’s commitment to net zero this week, stating that “the era of clean energy security must come of age” as fossil fuel costs skyrocket.In reaction to the anticipated energy crisis brought on by Donald Trump’s conflict with Iran, the energy secretary is scheduled to make a statement on Tuesday and provide a set of new policies.These will include increasing the use of solar on public land, delinking gas and electricity pricing to lower consumer costs, and accelerating the Warm Homes initiative to promote the quick adoption of solar panels and electric vehicles. He is anticipated to state, “As we face the second global energy shock in less than five years, the lesson for our country is clear; the era of fossil fuel security is over and the era of clean energy security must come of age.”Claims that the strait of Hormuz, a crucial maritime choke point, was reopening caused oil prices to plummet on Friday. However, those hopes were crushed over the weekend when Iran insisted it would stay under “strict control.” On Monday, the price of oil was expected to increase by almost 4%, somewhat correcting the decline from the previous session.Miliband has faced pressure to increase oil and gas development in the North Sea, especially from the Conservatives and Reform, ever since the start of the Iran war caused oil prices to rocket past \$100

per barrel in March.He is anticipated to respond by criticizing people who are “retreating to the comfort of false solutions” in his speech on Tuesday. However, he would avoid for the time being the contentious issue of whether to permit drilling in the Jackdaw and Rosebank fields, for which the Conservatives had already started the licensing procedure. He is anticipated to state, “The North Sea is an important resource for our country which we will continue to use for decades to come.”

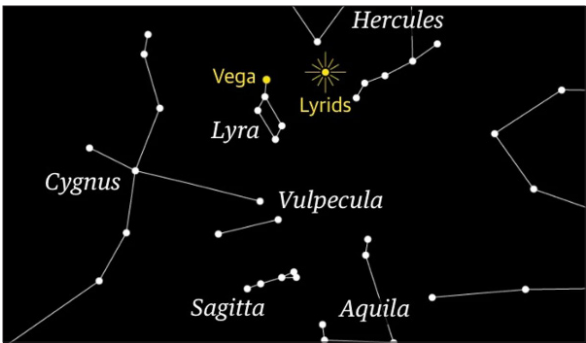
“I disagree with those who argue that we should “turn off the taps” for the night. However, I disagree with those who claim that “drilling every last drop” will somehow lower bills or provide energy security. A fossil fuel crisis cannot be resolved by increasing the use of fossil fuels.The process of determining whether these fields may be utilized is “ongoing,” according to government sources. Additionally, ministers are investigating the use of “tie-back” agreements, which permit additional extraction adjacent to current fields. Rachel Reeves said in Washington last week: “We are looking at what we can do to exploit more of our resources in the North Sea through tie-backs,” describing this as “the quickest way to bring on stream more oil and gas”. However, Miliband will stress that the broader thrust of government energy policy remains to accelerate the shift away from fossil fuels.Speaking at a

conference organised by the think-tank the Good Growth Foundation, Miliband will argue that it would be “completely irresponsible” to carry on with business as usual in the face of the energy shock – particularly since there is now “a compelling alternative in the form of clean energy. An alternative that cannot be disrupted by foreign wars because it comes from our own wind, sun and nuclear resources. That isn’t subject to global price shocks because it is locked in at stable prices here at home.” He will cite the fact that since the start of the Middle East crisis, UK consumers’ demand for renewable energy solutions has already grown significantly. Since the start of the war, Octopus reports that sales of heat pumps and solar panels have increased by 50% and 50%, respectively. He will add, “And March was the best month ever for EV sales in the UK. Contrary to an extraordinary amount of misinformation, it was already cheaper to run an EV than a petrol or diesel car before this crisis, and, with the right tariff, cheaper to run a heat pump than a gas boiler.” It is unclear how the government intends to go about “delinking” electricity prices from the cost of gas generation, but options are expected to include striking new better-value contracts for legacy green energy projects.At the moment, the wholesale price of electricity is set by the most costly generation at a given time, which is often gas-fired power stations – a system also in place across many other European countries.In the short-term, the chancellor is understood to be considering raising the electricity generator levy – in effect a windfall tax on low-carbon energy producers – and using the proceeds to cushion the blow for consumers.Domestic energy bills are fixed until July by the price cap imposed by the regulator for Great Britain, Ofgem, but are then expected to rise by about 12%, to £1,836 a year for a typical household – although ministers have stressed that energy usage tends to be lower over the summer months.The Treasury has already stepped in with financial support for consumers dependent on heating oil; and announced that it will backdate to this month a scheme aimed at reducing bills for the UK’s most energy-intensive manufacturers.

Lyrid meteor shower returns to the spring skies

London: The yearly Lyrid meteor shower returns to the spring skies this week. The shower peaks late on Wednesday, April 22, and early the next morning, although being active since April 16.The view from London at 00.01 (BST) on Thursday, April 23 is seen in the chart. Lyrids is the name for the radiant, the meteors’ origin point. It is situated near the brilliant star Vega in the constellation Lyra. The meteors will spread out in all directions at a maximum speed of roughly eighteen miles per hour, giving the impression that they are coming from the radiant. The meteors themselves are known for their brightness and speed, occasionally leaving smoky “trains” in the sky.The Lyrids have been documented since 687 BC. They have more recently been linked to comet Thatcher, which was found in 1861. The comet’s dust tail previously included the meteoroids that burn up in our atmosphere to create the meteor shower.After midnight, after

your eyes have acclimated to the darkness, which takes 20 to 30 minutes, you will likely get the best sights. The view from the southern hemisphere is restricted because the radiant will lie low in the northern sky.

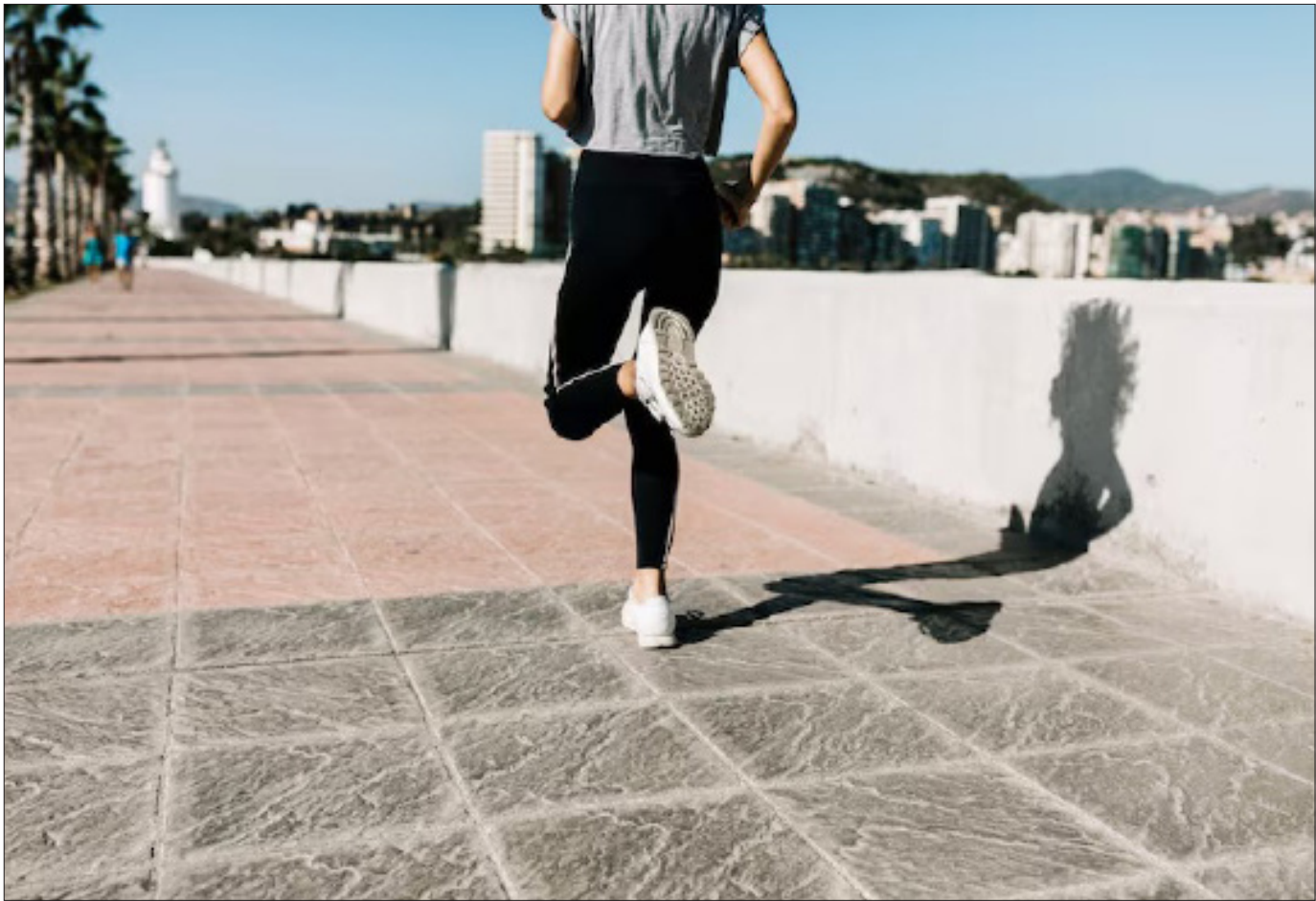


I tried the first sub-two-hour marathon shoes. Could they help get my running back on track

They’ve been billed as “humanity’s fastest shoe”, the cutting edge of trainer technology, lighter and bouncier than anything that’s gone before. Sabastian Sawe was wearing them when he became the first person to run an official marathon in less than two hours in London on Sunday, as was Tigst Assefa when she beat the women-only marathon record on the same day. But could the Adidas Adizero Adios Pro Evo 3 help me – a lapsed runner of questionable skill – get my running mojo back? I was sceptical. My trusty New Balance trainers have seen me through a number of long-distance runs, and of the many reasons why I increasingly found running a slog, footwear didn’t feature highly on the list. I have run three half-marathons – the Great North Run, my home-city race – in my 20s and 30s, although my finish time was notably worse on my last go. After I hauled myself across the line in September last year, I decided I’d give running a rest for a while and ran nowhere further than the few yards to make the last train for the whole of winter. When my flatmate dragged me to our local parkrun as part of his London marathon training a few weeks ago, things were worse than I thought – I came 305th out of 345 runners and could barely walk for two days afterwards. But if any-

thing was going to help me turn things around, it was the much-hyped Adidas “super shoe” designed to help runners “break through your limits” and “chase records”. If they helped Sawe make history and push the limits of humanity’s physical achievements, surely the pair I had borrowed from Adidas could help me beat my 35-minute 5km time I’ve been unable to improve in recent weeks? Adidas says this shoe is the result of three years of intensive research in collaboration with world-class athletes. It’s 30% lighter than the previous version and the first sub-100g marathon super shoe, weighing just 99g, lighter than a banana or a bar of soap. In fact, they’re so light the receptionist of my building almost refused to accept the parcel, believing that whatever was inside the box must surely have been stolen. After assuring him there were definitely trainers inside that probably weighed less than the shoebox itself, I took them home to try on. These shoes, like other super shoes that came before, have attracted some criticism and accusations they give athletes an unfair mechanical advantage in races where seconds can make a huge difference. Nike’s Vaporfly Elite shoes, with their controversial carbon-fibre-plated soles, caused quite a stir when they first came on the scene a few years ago. Some have ar-

gued these types of shoes create an unequal playing field, with the extreme propulsion they provide closer to cheating than athleticism. So I was surprised when the shoes I took out of the Adidas box felt as if they were made of paper and polystyrene and might dissolve in the rain. The “weightless” upper material, a blend of textile and synthetic that was apparently inspired by kitesurfing sails, has a translucent quality. The “super foam” base is 50% lighter than previous versions and almost feels as if it could blow away in the wind. These shoes – when a limited release goes live to the public at 9am on Thursday – will set you back a whopping £450, and it’s difficult to see them having the most longevity. Previous super trainers have been criticised for essentially being “one-marathon” shoes that lose their bounce quite quickly. I put them on and dashed out the door to give them a whirl. There was no denying they were comfier than any shoe I’ve worn before. The cushioned base felt like walking on air – but air that gives your foot a little push up with each step. The base was chunkier than I’m used to, and the forefoot rocker really propels you forward, so it took a while to feel comfortable that I wasn’t going to twist my ankle as I ran. But I soon got into the rhythm and felt much more buoyant



than any time I’ve run before. Of course, no shoe was going to stop my muscles from aching, as they quickly did, or my lungs from struggling. I was soon out of breath and realising that even humanity’s fastest shoe was no match for months of no exercise and indulgent eating. I completed my 5km in 34

minutes, one minute faster than my recent best attempt. Sawe managed to run more than a quarter of the marathon (almost 12km) in the same time on Sunday. I’ll take the improvement, whether it was down to the shoes or not, but I don’t think I’ll be rushing to scrawl it on the side of my trainers in black

pen, as Sawe and Assefa each did with their record-breaking times. The image of Sawe holding the trainer with “1:59.30 WR SUB 2” was a huge marketing coup for Adidas, whose share price rose on Monday. Before heading home, I decided to see if I could run at Sawe’s average marathon pace of 16.9

seconds per 100 metres. With the shoes helping to propel me, I was able to hit that pace very briefly but couldn’t sustain it for more than a few seconds. But with a bit more training and the best shoes in the world on my side, who knows what pace I’ll be able to hit in a few months.

A moment that changed me: I cried about my cleft lip for the first time in my 60s

At a fundraising event, I looked across the crowded room and saw a woman with a cleft – a gap in the lip (and sometimes the palate) where a baby’s face doesn’t fuse properly during pregnancy. She was standing on her own, and I beckoned her over to join the small group I was with. She politely declined and before I quite realised what I was doing, I was crossing the room to speak to her.

I too had been born with a cleft. I’d talked to doctors, my parents, my wife and other friends about it to varying degrees over the years, but as I walked towards her, I knew this was going to be the first time – in more than 60 years – that I was going to have a conversation about living with a cleft with someone who also has one. I was terrified I might offend her, but I said something like: “Isn’t it scary walking into a crowded room? Because it feels as if everyone is looking at us.” Rose and I then dived straight into one of the most emotional, joyous, exciting and edgy conversations I’ve ever had. We talked about the insecurities that come from living with a facial difference, the bullying and traumas, and the way we had shaped ourselves to try to navigate a normal life – psychologically but also physically, including surgery. Rose talked so openly that it allowed me to realise and share things I hadn’t discussed with anyone. Neither of us had had that sort of depth of conversation about our clefts before. I finally felt as if I could connect with someone on a subject I’d tried to ignore all my life. The conversation was so intense that we ducked the call to go through for dinner – the staff had to come and collect us. Then we realised we had been seated together, and we carried



on talking. The next day, I cried for the first time about my cleft, letting go of a lot of sadness and emotion that I had never given myself the space to reflect on. When I was five, I had an operation to close my cleft lip. At 19, I had two more operations, this time to fill out my upper lip, which involved having my lips stitched together for nearly two months – I had to eat blended food through a straw. Then I went off to university with quite a lot of noticeable scar tissue. The surgeons had done a good job over the years, and although my teeth remained a mess I thought: I’m done with having a cleft. And so I just tried to ignore it. Over the next few decades, whenever I met people with clefts, through work or socially, I would never mention it. I managed to get into my 60s without ever really talking about its impact on me, or anyone else. It felt as if I had ghosted myself and the whole cleft community. By the time I was attending the dinner last October, I was happily married, with three



grownup children, and had enjoyed a career in public relations. But I had also recently started seeing a therapist, keen to unravel a few feelings and beliefs I felt had been holding me back. Over the course of our sessions, I came to realise how being born with a cleft may have made me sit back a bit – I wouldn’t put myself forward at school, and at work I’ve been a compa-

ny director but never the CEO. There are opportunities I’ve missed, such as turning down an offer to be on television, or not joining team sports, even though I love them. I’ve always had a desire for approval, and a fear of being bullied (which I have been). I never felt fully comfortable walking into a crowded room. I seem sociable and gregarious, but underneath I feel

as if I’m having to work harder because I fear being rejected. When I realised I was ready to embrace my cleft more, I became a regular donor to Smile Train, a cleft care nonprofit organisation. Later, I joined their advisory council and it was at a Smile Train fundraising dinner that I met Rose. I had expected the event to be full of other people with clefts, but I think she was the only one. It was the first time I’d met someone who really understood what it was like to live with a facial difference – and it was a relief to discover that I was not alone in my long-held insecurities. After that evening, we kept in contact. Since then, I’ve been able to talk to others more freely, including my wife and friends. Many have said they don’t “see” my cleft, or that it doesn’t define me. That’s a wonderful thought, but it also doesn’t acknowledge my feelings about it, and the way I mask them, just to function. Rose was a huge part of me being able to build a bridge to the past, and find a way forward.

Health Matters: Stop Negotiating With Your Sleep, It Is Making You Sick

We have built entire cultures around not sleeping. The all-nighter is a badge of honour. But medicine is now saying, loudly and clearly, what many of us have chosen to ignore: chronic sleep deprivation is not a productivity hack. It is a slow-moving health crisis. India is the second most sleep-deprived nation in the world. Average sleep in Indian cities has dropped to under six hours a night. One in three working adults reports chronic fatigue – and yet we celebrate this. For this week’s Health Matters, News18 spoke with three of India’s leading physicians – a psychiatrist, a cardiologist, and a pulmonologist. They all reiterated what we already knew – sleep is medicine, not just rest.

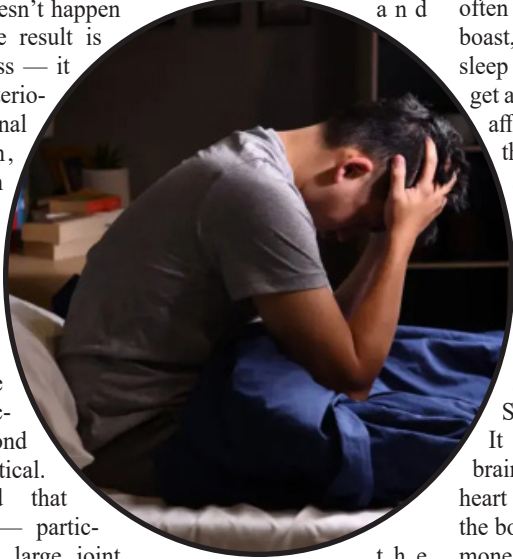
The Brain Pays First

Dr Pratima Murthy, former director of NIMHANS, was unequivocal on one point that we rarely hear framed this way: sleep is not passive. It is an active, biological repair process. During sleep, the brain clears out toxic waste products that accumulate through the day. If that clearing doesn’t happen consistently, the result is not just tiredness – it is cognitive deterioration, emotional dysregulation, and disruption to the autonomic nervous system, affecting everything from thought processes to blood pressure to organ function. Her second point was practical. She cautioned that many Indians – particularly those in large joint families, or those with demanding schedules – are not protecting their sleep the way they protect other health habits. Her advice: identify whether you are an owl or a lark, build a fixed sleep-wake routine around that, and treat sleep hygiene seriously. That means a light

meal at night, no stimulants, a quiet and dark environment, and phones kept away. “Sleep is such a gentle thing,” she said, “but such a powerful part of our lives.”

The Heart Keeps Score

Dr Puroshottam Lal, one of India’s known interventional cardiologists and chairman of Metro Hospitals explained the cardiac cost in terms that are hard to brush aside. Sleep deprivation causes the inner arterial wall to stiffen, reducing its ability to relax and contract the way a healthy artery must. It triggers a surge in cortisol and adrenaline, raises blood pressure, drives insulin resistance, and pushes cholesterol in the wrong direction. None of these in isolation would be alarming. Together, they constitute a significant and independent risk factor for coronary artery disease. His second concern was specific to younger patients. Dr Lal noted that the combination of professional pressure, late-night screen habits, and disrupted routines means that young people today are compromising both the quantity and



quality of their sleep – and paying for it with their hearts earlier than any previous generation. “Almost every heart patient’s medical history,” he observed, “talks about a problematic sleeping schedule.”

A Pulmonologist’s Warn-

ing Dr Randeep Guleria, former director of AIIMS Delhi, brought a perspective that is both population-level and deeply clinical. He pointed out that as a species, humans have gone from sleeping eight to nine hours a generation ago to barely five to six hours on average today – and that this shift is showing up directly in the epidemic of non-communicable diseases: diabetes, hypertension, stroke, and early-onset coronary artery disease. Sleep deprivation, he said, does not travel alone. It combines with obesity, with sleep apnoea, and with metabolic disruption to drive a compounding health burden – particularly in the young. His second point was a quiet indictment of public health priorities. Guleria noted that sleep has never quite made it to the same level of conversation as diet or exercise, even though the evidence demands it. People come into clinics with complaints that seem unrelated – fatigue, stress, metabolic issues – and when you go to the root, the problem is often sleep. “People even boast,” he said, “that they sleep only four hours and get along very well. It starts affecting their health in the long run. That is something they need to realise.”

The Bottom Line

Three different specialties, three different bodies of evidence – and one shared conclusion. Sleep is not downtime. It is maintenance. The brain clears its waste, the heart resets its pressure, and the body recalibrates its hormones – all during sleep, all for free, every single night. The good news is that sleep debt, unlike many of the conditions it causes, is still reversible. But that requires us to stop treating rest as something we will get around to once everything else is done. Everything else will wait. Your body won’t.

Karisma Kapoor’s Viral Reaction to Photographers Taking Her Photos

Mumbai: Karisma Kapoor has joined the increasing number of celebrities criticizing the invasive actions of photographers. The actor is seen adamantly requesting that photographers respect her limits while filming her in a new video that has gone viral.

Karisma was spotted outside the set of India’s Best Dancer Season 5, where she will judge alongside Jaaved Jaaferi, Terence Lewis, and Geeta Kapur. Karisma maintained a kind demeanor while the judges posed for photos, but after the session was over, she made her position known. “Zyada zoom mat karna (Don’t zoom too much),” she said to the photographers. Preity Zinta discussed her views on celebrity and privacy in an interactive session with fans on X only one day prior to the release of Karisma’s video. She stated, “Nothing is a sacrifice.... I have learned to accept things the way they are & manage expectations,” in reference to striking a balance between maintaining relationships with fans and safeguarding her private life. Since I’m a pretty private person, I now have to do a lot of balancing. It’s important to establish limits with people and the media, even though I enjoy communicating with my followers and never let them down by sending them images.” She was very adamant about protecting the privacy of her family. “I don’t like it when people or media try to take photographs of my children (that’s non-negotiable) & take pictures of me without asking cuz when anyone asks, I always say yes unless I’m in a rush to catch a plane or when I’m in a temple,” she said.



Preity acknowledged that some paparazzi behavior might be intimidating. Additionally, I dislike having paparazzi follow me around and suddenly jump at me. It can be frightening at times. It’s a little unsettling because I know that many of the current generation of actors invite the paparazzi to come and take pictures of them, and I can understand their urge to be in the news all the time. ”I’m totally cool with them at events (because it’s their job), but it’s a little too much when they show up outside my gym or hide outside my building,” she said in closing. Since I’m a human, I also need to take breaks and remain grounded. Having said that, I’m not whining; I’m just being open about my feelings because I am incredibly appreciative of all the chances I have and the fact that people adore me.” This draws attention to an issue that is becoming more and more prevalent in the industry: the necessity for polite limits between celebrities and paparazzi.

Neha Dhupia on Being Pregnant Prior to Marriage

New Delhi: In April 2018, Neha Dhupia and Angad Bedi tied the knot in a small gurudwara ceremony. Everyone was taken aback, especially when the couple welcomed their daughter, Mehr, in November. This led to a lot of conjecture about when they became pregnant. Neha and Angad discussed their unusual love story, including how a “unexpected” pregnancy helped bring them together, in an interview with comedians Bharti Singh and Harsh Limbachiya. Angad disclosed that he had been attempting to win Neha over for about ten years during the talk. “I spent eight years pursuing Neha. “I persisted in pursuing her throughout that period, but she never responded because she was extremely busy,” he remarked. The Pink actor also talked about how he was astounded by Neha’s “running form” when he first saw her.”When I first saw her, I thought she was very beautiful,” he clarified. I stood behind her as she ran on a treadmill, admiring her incredible figure. Her running form captured my heart. She’s an athlete, I thought. Neha was preoccupied with her career while



Angad attempted to convince her. “I used to think I had to wake up, exercise, and go to work—my entire focus was on work,” she remarked. It wasn’t like I only wanted to concentrate on my work, but it was okay if I happened to run into someone fascinating. He attempted to build a relationship with her by collaborating on a project after his attempts at persuasion failed. Angad disclosed that Neha had invited him to collaborate on a film without narration. He showed up as she had requested. Her mother was present while I spent time with her on set. In the end, I spent a lot of time with her mother. He remembered thinking, “If her mother is so nice, she must be nice

too.” Even with Neha’s parents’ blessing and approval, things did not turn out the way he had hoped. But when they were pregnant, things changed for them. “I want to express my gratitude to God for our pregnancy; she is the gift that made our love story possible. If not, you continue to scan your surroundings. We always gaze far away, even when the love you’re looking for is just next to you. Neha said, “He was by my side the entire time.” ”Our daughter got us together because we were pregnant, and we were like, just do it,” she continued. First for him, then for me, and then for us, the entire cosmos came together. In 2021, Neha and Angad welcomed a son, Guriq.

Rupali Ganguly posts a critique of Alia Bhatt’s leather ensemble from Milan Fashion Week

Mumbai: After reposting a scathing post criticizing Alia Bhatt and her Milan Fashion Week attire, television actor Rupali Ganguly sparked internet discussion.

On April 27, the Anupamaa actor uploaded a video on Instagram Stories that raised concerns about Alia’s purported use of leather from animals in her attire. Despite without adding a message of her own, Rupali’s choice to share the video was interpreted by many as a subtle yet direct response, particularly considering her long-standing position as an animal lover. The video, which was first posted by a person by the name of Sai Lohith, attacked Alia Bhatt’s appearance from Milan Fashion Week, which she attended as a Gucci brand ambassador. “3-month-old baby calves and 4-month-old baby lambs” are said to have provided the leather for her costume.”Is this what you support Alia?” was the direct question posed to the actor in the video. Her accessories were also criticized, especially the Gucci Horsebit 1955 shoulder bag, which the video claimed symbolized an animal-harming culture.”Your cat, Edward, how would you feel if someone



murdered your son and used his skin to make bags and shoes?” the speaker said, adopting a more sentimental tone. Gucci was also charged in the film with “exploiting snakes, crocodiles, silkworms, cows, sheep, and goats.”A mismatch between Alia’s fashion choices and her initiative “Coexist by Alia Bhatt,” which advocates for harmony between people and animals, was also highlighted in the article. The commenter criticized her, saying, “If this is the idea of your co-existence, then the

animals are doomed.” Many saw Rupali’s resharing of the video—without any additional context—as an endorsement of the opinions voiced. Actress Smriti Khanna responded to the post by saying, “After watching this video, I feel so guilty and ashamed.” I still use leather items even though I became vegan after getting a dog. I appreciate you creating this. I’ll make an effort to improve myself.” Alia Bhatt has not yet addressed the uproar surrounding the tweet.

The internet is enthralled with the new poster as Ranveer Singh’s Dhurandhar travels to Japan

Mumbai: Dhurandhar, starring Aditya Dhar and Ranveer Singh, is currently on its way to Japan after lighting up the Indian box office. The film’s producers revealed an international poster on Wednesday, confirming that it will be released in Japan. Additionally, social media users couldn’t stop praising the poster’s intense atmosphere and calling it “dope.” The film’s producers announced the release date of Aditya Dhar’s spy thriller in Japan on social media on Wednesday. On July 10, the movie will be released in Japan. Ranveer Singh plays Hamza in the international poster that was released with the update. “It’s time for Japan to experience the Dhurandhar energy!” was the post’s caption. arriving on 10.7.2026 at theaters throughout Japan. Social media users quickly showered the new worldwide poster with praise as soon as the change appeared. Fans praised it profusely on timelines, saying it was ideal for a

worldwide audience. One commenter said, “Looks sick asf,” while another said, “Dude.. it’s a real Poster!” One social media user commented, “This poster slaps,” while another said, “I love how modest Japanese movie posters look.” One admirer said, “Poster looking dope asf,” while another said, “Dhurandhar in Japanese will be more deadly with that accent.” Celebrities from several industries praised Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar, which broke box office records. December of last year saw the release of the first movie. Dhurandhar The Revenge, the sequel, debuted in theaters on March 19. It attracted enormous audiences to theaters all across the world. Together, the two-part spy thriller series has made nearly ₹3,000 crore at the box office. When the first installment was released in December 2025, it made almost ₹1300 crore worldwide and won praise from critics and consumers alike. It narrates the tale of an Indian spy breaking



into Pakistan’s criminal and political underbelly in Karachi. The 1999 IC-814 hijacking, the 2001 Indian Parliament attack, the 2008 Mumbai attacks, and the circumstances surrounding Operation Lyari are just a few of the real-life incidents involving geopolitical tensions that are interwoven into the plot. The training of Ranveer Singh’s character to become

Hamza Ali Mazari was depicted in the sequel. Additionally, it advances the plot by depicting him seizing control of Lyari’s power structure while attempting to destroy a terror network in Pakistan that poses a threat to India. Arjun Rampal, R Madhavan, Rakesh Bedi, Sara Arjun, Danish Pandor, and Sanjay Dutt were among the other actors in the movie.

Why Irrfan Added a “R” to His Name and Removed “Khan”



Mumbai: On April 29, 2020, Irrfan Khan passed away. His sixth anniversary of passing away is today. Hindi Medium, his final movie, was released in April of 2020, just after his passing. Due to complications from a colon illness, he passed away at the age of 53. Since March 2018, he had been battling a neuroendocrine tumor, a rare type of cancer. His filmography was full of amazing projects he worked on in both Bollywood and the West, and his well-known reputation made his loss seem much more significant. Before becoming well-known in movies, he made a significant contribution to theater and

television. Irrfan Khan has discussed if removing the “Khan” from his name was a “conscious decision” back in 2016. In response, he stated openly that he wanted his “caste or religion” to be forgotten in favor of his work. Irrfan Khan told India Today, “At one point in time I understood that it’s us... it’s our choices that write the story of our life,” reiterating that it was a very deliberate choice. My actions and decisions will help me write my life’s narrative, not our history or my ancestry. Every time I visit my hometown, I still hear people talking about what our ancestors accomplished, and they take great

pride in that. ”They are not accountable for their own decisions,” he continued. I’m depressed. I think it’s pointless to live in the past. You’re still alive. Your behavior counts. Your life will be shaped by the decisions and acts you make. I wanted to make it clear that my accomplishments should be recognized rather than my caste, religion, or origin. He continued by stating that these were his “personal things” and ought to stay that way, out of the spotlight. The Paan Singh Tomar actor answered the same question in a 2012 interview with IBN Live, providing an intriguing explanation for why he likes Irrfan’s two “Rs.””I am Irrfan, just Irrfan,” he declared. Khan was removed from my name a long time ago. I don’t want my religion, last name, or ancestry to be known. I don’t want my ancestors’ accomplishments to be acknowledged.”- Sahabzade Irrfan Ali Khan, often known as Irrfan Khan, added that he preferred the way the two “Rs” sounded because they “roll on the tongue.” The actor ended on a humorous note, saying, “I always thought ‘Sahabzade Irrfan Ali Khan’ was too pompous.” However, The Song of Scorpions (2023), which was released after his death, was his last performance. It was released in theaters after making its debut at the 2017 Locarno Film Festival.

Annu Kapoor makes a startling assertion on actors losing composure in private moments

Mumbai: Actor Annu Kapoor has now responded to the industry’s long-running discussion about intimate scene filming with an open admission. According to the actor, there have been times when male performers have lost control while filming these scenes and kept going even after the director had called cut. Annu recently spoke with Siddharth Kannan about filming personal scenes on set during an episode of his YouTube show. He related an occasion in which an actor lost control while filming a private scene during the chat. “Even when the director tells them to stop, I have witnessed actors become aroused during personal situations. Many people exploit these circumstances, but I have never done so. In one of these scenes, the hero lost control. He continued even after “cut” was called. The actress had to fight to escape and flee. She spent two days in her room because she was so shaken, according to Annu. He stated that if the actor saw the interview, she would support his account of what happened, but he did not identify the actors. The actor also reflected on his collaboration with Priyanka Chopra on Vishal Bhardwaj’s 7 Khoon Maaf. He disclosed that Priyanka was uncomfortable acting out a kissing sequence that was included in the script.”Vishal said the scene was written for a reason and couldn’t be removed,” Annu revealed. His crew later told me that she was uncomfortable. I didn’t cause any problems, but the word got out somehow. Such situations have always been handled professionally by me. I just ask an actress if she’s okay if she’s feeling anxious. I don’t ask for anything more because it would cause her further discomfort. In a previous conversation, the actor recalled Priyanka’s public statement that she would not film private moments with him. “It’s clear to me that if I had been the hero, Priyanka Chopra would not have objected. I have no personality and no appearance, which is why she was having trouble. I’m not sure why, but this really offended her,” he remarked. Jolly LLB3, starring Akshay Kumar and Arshad Warsi, included Annu Kapoor.

Rajpal Yadav Joins Salman Khan and Nayanthara’s Film With Vamshi Paidipally Amid a Rs 9-Crore Debt Case

Mumbai: With his ongoing Rs 9-crore cheque bounce case, Rajpal Yadav has been going through difficult times. Many of his colleagues in the film business, including Salman Khan, have expressed their support for him. According to the most recent information, Rajpal Yadav will appear in Salman Khan’s upcoming movie, #SVC63, which is being produced by Dil Raju and directed by Vamshi Paidipally. Nayanthara plays the key role in it as well. ”Salman Khan has cast Rajpal Yadav to play a key role in this action-packed entertainer,” according to a report. Rajpal will play Salman Khan’s right-hand guy in the movie, and the two will have a close, dynamic relationship throughout. It’s one of the most significant roles, and the casting was done well. Salman thinks Rajpal is a perfect fit for his role and is really fond of him. Rajpal Yadav was supposed to begin filming the movie in May, but the source stated that he actually began yesterday. ”Rajpal is thrilled to see Salman Khan again. The two have collaborated on a number of cult movies, such as Mujhse Shaadi Karogi (Chotta Pandit) and Partner (Chotta Don). The source continued, “This one also has a special quality for Rajpal, and the humorous angle will make everyone laugh out loud.” Produced on a huge scale by Dil Raju under the Sri Venkateswara Creations banner, this ambitious action movie represents Salman and National Award-winning filmmaker Vamshi Paidipal-



ly’s first collaboration. According to sources, the team is currently working on a large, specifically constructed set in Mumbai, where important scenes and high-intensity action blocks will be filmed.

The entire cast and technical team will shortly be revealed by the producers. The film, which is slated for a major theatrical release in 2027, is a high-energy action drama with powerful emotional beats. Vamshi Paidipally, a director renowned for his ability to achieve the ideal balance between grandeur and emotion, has continuously produced powerful performances. Prabhas, Jr. NTR, Mahesh Babu, Ram Charan, Allu Arjun, and Vijay are just a few of the celebrities with whom he has worked. Vamshi has made a name for himself as a filmmaker with a broad appeal. Maharshi, his National Award-winning film, is another example of his vision.

Kareena Kapoor Responds to Jimmy Fallon’s Show Performance by Diljit Dosanjh

Mumbai: With his most recent visit on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, Diljit Dosanjh surprised his admirers. Two years after making his debut, this was the singer-actor’s second appearance on the late-night American talk program. Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan also struggled to maintain composure, much like his admirers. The Punjabi superstar’s enthusiastic performance on the show was praised by Kareena. She celebrated Diljit’s next significant achievement on the international scene by posting a video of him on Instagram and referring to herself as a “Forever a Fan Girl.” In addition, Kareena included a red heart emoji in her message. The singer-actor lights up the stage in the video while performing his popular Punjabi song, Morni. He dazzled the audience not only with his singing but also with his vivacious dancing. Diljit sported a traditional all-black Punjabi attire for his performance, complete with sneakers and a matching turban. Kareena’s long-standing relationship with Diljit, both emotionally and professionally, is also shown in her admiration. The two celebrities have previously collaborated on movies including Crew, Good Newwz, and Uda Punjab. Diljit and Jimmy Fallon collaborated on a social media post earlier this week to publicize Diljit’s arrival on the show.

Diljit and Jimmy were seen dancing to the Punjabi singer’s song “Morni,” which has music by Tru-Skool and lyrics by Channi Nattan, in the Instagram video. They were in a room where the host of the show was seen doing everything in his might to keep up with the singer’s flawless steps. Diljit chose to serve looks on the show, whereas Jimmy dressed casually in a white shirt, gray pants, and a red tie. He was dressed entirely in black, with straight-fitting slacks and a jacket with white accents and golden buttons. He wore a pink turban to provide a splash of color. Regarding his career, Diljit last appeared on screen in Border 2. He is now preparing for the premiere of his next movie, Main Vaapas Aaunga. Naseeruddin Shah, Sharvari, and Vedang Raina will play additional important roles in the Imtiaz Ali-directed movie.

Shreyas Iyer criticizes bowlers as the Punjab Kings suffer their first IPL 2026 defeat



New Delhi: Shreyas Iyer, captain of the Punjab Kings (PBKS), admitted that the team’s first Indian Premier League 2026 defeat is a teaching moment. He viewed this loss as merely an off day and noted that the squad had previously done well in high-scoring games, both when chasing and defending. Iyer emphasized the significance of remaining upbeat, avoiding thinking about what could have been done better, and keeping an optimistic outlook going forward. In their IPL match at Mullanpur on Tuesday night, RR defeated PBKS by six wickets thanks to half-centuries from Yashasvi Jaiswal and Donovan Ferreira as well as a blistering effort from Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. Despite the defeat, PBKS maintains its top spot with 13 points with six victories, a draw, and a loss. With six victories and three defeats, or 12 points, RR moves up to third place.”It teaches you a lot since, in my opinion, this is our first loss of the season. Additionally, we have played numerous games in which we have both chased and defended 200 or more. This is just one of those

games when we have to ignore the fact that things didn’t go our way. Iyer remarked following the game, “And I feel that in retrospect, a lot of things could have happened, but I just want to stay positive going ahead and be optimistic in our approach.” Marcus Stoinis (62* in 22 balls, with four boundaries and six sixes) and Prabhsimran Singh (59 in 44 balls, with six fours and a six) helped PBKS to 222/4 when they were sent to bat first. However, Yashasvi Jaiswal (51 in 27 balls, with seven fours and a six) and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (43 in 16 balls, with three fours and five sixes) began the chase with a 51-run partnership. With four balls remaining, the victory was secured by a fifth-wicket partnership of 77 runs between Donovan Ferreira (52* in 26 balls, with six fours and three sixes) and Shubham Dubey (31* in 12 balls, with three fours and two sixes). Iyer praised the hitters for adjusting well to a slow, tacky pitch and thought PBKS had a strong total of 224. He acknowledged, though, that the bowlers’ execution was lacking, especially when it came to their plans to use slower deliveries and yorkers. He also gave credit to the opposition’s middle-order comeback, emphasizing the crucial roles played by Shubham Dubey and Donovan Ferreira, whose late runs and partnership were crucial. Iyer praised the score of 224, commending the batting performance against challenging conditions, noting the wicket was tacky and slow. He acknowledged shortcomings in bowling execution, stating plans for slower balls and yorkers were not effectively implemented, particularly referencing a strong partnership between Ferreira and Shubham Dubey that secured crucial runs. Iyer highlighted the increasing difficulty of bowling in T20 cricket, where batters attack aggressively from the outset, making it tough for bowlers to adhere to plans. He concluded that despite strategies, success relies on execution, and it simply wasn’t their day in the match.

PM Modi during the opening of the Meerut-Prayagraj route



New Delhi, Apr 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Ganga expressway on Wednesday, a significant infrastructure project spanning 594 kilometers in Uttar Pradesh’s Har-doi district. This six-lane expressway, which is expandable to eight lanes, connects Meerut to Prayagraj and reduces travel time considerably from eleven hours to six. During the event, PM Modi emphasized India’s progress amidst global unrest, asserting that

some internal detractors, particularly associated with the Samajwadi Party (SP), are against the state’s development. He denounced the SP’s anti-development stance and criticized their approach towards women, particularly referencing the women’s quota bill and the perceived decline during previous UP administrations, which he termed ‘jungle raj’. Highlighting the transformation of Uttar Pradesh, PM Modi remarked on

the state’s current status as a leader in expressway development, boasting the most expressways in India and the presence of 21 airports, including five international facilities. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who noted that PM Modi had laid the foundation for the expressway in December 2021, stated that its inauguration would further propel the state’s development trajectory. The Ganga expressway, built at a cost of ₹36,230 crore, strategically connects twelve key districts: Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Badaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh, and Prayagraj. It has been developed through a public-private partnership model and features a design speed of 120 km/h. Among its notable attributes is a 3.2-kilometer-long airstrip near Shahjahanpur for the emergency landing of Air Force aircraft. Furthermore, the expressway is enhanced with an Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS), along with provisions for CCTV surveillance, emergency call boxes, ambulances, and patrolling units, all aimed at ensuring safety for travelers.

Meghalaya Honeymoon Murder Accused Gets Bail, While the Family of an Indore Man Seeks Justice

New Delhi, Apr 29: The family of Indore resident Raja Raghuvanshi has demanded a CBI investigation into the matter and asked how a Meghalayan court granted bail to his wife Sonam in spite of the fact that she was allegedly the “mastermind” of his murder.

In an effort to obtain justice, Raghuvanshi’s relatives announced on Tuesday that they would petition the Meghalaya High Court to overturn the lower court’s ruling granting Sonam bail. In the Sohra area of the East Khasi Hills district in Meghalaya, transport businessman Raja Raghuvanshi vanished on May 23 of last year when the couple was on their honeymoon. On June 2, his disfigured body was discovered in a steep canyon close to a waterfall. In the case, Sonam was arrested along with a number of other people, including her purported lover. Sonam was granted bail by a Meghalayan court on Tuesday. Later, in an



emotional interview with reporters, Uma, Raja’s mother, expressed her confusion over Sonam’s bail despite being the “mastermind” of her son’s murder.”The Meghalaya Police thoroughly investigated the case over the past nine months, but it was beyond our understanding how the game suddenly changed in a month or two,” she stated.”We only want justice for my innocent son, who was murdered, from the government. “I want the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to look into this case,” she continued. Vipin Raghuvanshi, Raja’s older

brother, stated that his family will appeal the Meghalaya High Court’s ruling granting Sonam bail. “While arguing for Sonam’s bail application in the court, her lawyer primarily emphasised that the Meghalaya Police did not properly inform her of the specific reason for her arrest, violating legal provisions,” he stated. Vipin claimed he had not yet received a copy of the chargesheet from the prosecution and had not had an opportunity to thoroughly examine it, leading him to fear “manipulation” in the investigation. Sonam spent more than ten months in judicial detention at Shillong District Jail after being detained on June 9, 2025, in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, on suspicion of conspiring to kill her husband. Sonam and her purported boyfriend Raj Kushwah were among the eight people named in a 790-page chargesheet that the Meghalaya Police filed in September of last year.

Ahmedabad Cyber Police Uncover a Rs 47 Lakh Insurance Fraud, Arresting Two

New Delhi, Apr 29: An advanced interstate fraud ring that operated out of Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, and specialized in high-value insurance scams has been eliminated by the Ahmedabad City Cyber Crime Branch. Two important suspects who pretended to be senior officials from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and the Ministry of Finance in order to defraud a citizen of about Rs 47 lakhs were apprehended as a result of the operation. The investigation uncovered a carefully thought-out “modus operandi” intended to take advantage of gullible people’s confidence. The victim was singled out by the suspects, 32-year-old Sumitkumar Koli and 27-year-old Ashu Agrawal, who claimed that a substantial amount of Rs



10 lakh from an earlier LIC policy was still outstanding in a government fund. The gang members used several high-ranking identities to carry out the crime, including as “Jitendra Goswami” (a Senior NPCI Officer) and “Mitesh Kumar” (a Ministry of Finance officer). According to police, they further cemented their legitimacy by using WhatsApp to distribute fake identification cards and official-looking

documents with technical language and government emblems. The deception was carried out in a number of deliberate phases. The suspects first persuaded the victim to pay “processing fees,” “stamp duties,” and “GST” in order to obtain the purported insurance money. The fraudsters allegedly forced the victim to open new bank accounts at ICICI and HDFC banks and buy a new SIM

card during a more intrusive stage of the scam. The criminal operation involved the manipulation of a victim’s mobile-linked banking by receiving OTPs directly on the suspects’ devices, leading to illegal fund transfers exceeding Rs 47 lakh.

The arrests, led by ACP H.S. Makadia and PI M.H. Bhetariya, were made in Modinagar, Ghaziabad using surveillance and intelligence. Sumit Kumar Koli, a former telecaller, manipulated victims while his associate, Ashu Agrawal, provided overpriced illegal SIM cards. Following the arrests, the Ahmedabad Cyber Crime Branch issued a public warning against fraudulent calls promising high returns and clarified that government officials do not request personal bank transfers for payments.

Playing senior to Vaibhav Sooryavanshi left Yashasvi Jaiswal stunned



New Delhi: In his opening partnership with 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi at the Rajasthan Royals in IPL, Yashasvi Jaiswal, who is still only 24 and one of the most promising young players in Indian cricket, has had to take on a more senior role. The two have gotten along nicely with the Royals thus far despite their age difference. With the obvious goal of striking the boundary, Sooryavanshi has demonstrated gutsy purpose by taking on bowlers from the opening ball. Jaiswal, on the other hand, balances danger and responsibility in his strokeplay by adding a feeling of control and structure but being equally aggressive. The Royals are a formidable duo at the top thanks to their different styles, which is also a major factor in the team’s continued playoff contention. When Sooryavanshi scored 43 of their opening stand of 51 against Punjab Kings, the two clicked once more. Jaiswal was content to let the 15-year-old steal the show. Jaiswal scored 51 from 27 balls. With RR ending PBKS’ winning run, the two laid the stage for a successful pursuit. After yet another powerful stand, Jaiswal praised his young opening partner Sooryavanshi, stating he enjoys seeing him dominate from the other end and commending the 15-year-old’s gutsy attitude to the top of the order this season. Jaiswal expressed enjoyment in batting alongside Sooryavanshi, praising his exceptional performance. He referred to himself as still young, contrasting his experience with Sooryavanshi’s youth. Jaiswal outlined Rajasthan Royals’ strategy during a challenging chase, emphasizing the importance of maintaining an attacking mindset and capitalizing on scoring opportunities, particularly on a high-scoring pitch, to achieve their goal of surpassing 200 runs.

The 594-kilometer Ganga Expressway between Meerut and Prayagraj is inaugurated by PM Modi

New Delhi, Apr 29: The 594-kilometer Ganga Expressway, one of the nation’s longest high-speed routes that connects Meerut and Prayagraj and aims to improve connectivity throughout Uttar Pradesh, was officially opened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday. It is anticipated that the six-lane highway, which has the potential to be expanded to eight lanes, will greatly shorten travel times while facilitating the quicker, safer, and more effective movement of people and products throughout the state. The project, which is intended to reach speeds of up to 120 kmph, is viewed as a significant boost to infrastructure-led growth. According to officials, the highway will expand economic ties between western and eastern Uttar Pradesh and improve communication through-



out 12 important districts: Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Badaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh, and Prayagraj. Yogi Adityanath, the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, stated in a post on X that the opening of the expressway from Har-doi would provide new impetus for the state’s growth. He said that the project would assist speed up growth and close regional gaps by acting as a “lifeline” for villages,

farmers, business owners, and young people. Pankaj Chaudhary, the president of the BJP in Uttar Pradesh and a union minister, also praised the launch, describing it as a historic infrastructure project and a significant step toward modernizing the state’s road system. The Prime Minister reportedly arrived in Har-doi at around 11 a.m., officially opened the motorway, went to an exhibition by the Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority

(UPEIDA), planted saplings, and spoke to a crowd before leaving later that day. A 3.2-kilometer airfield next to Shahjahanpur that is intended for Indian Air Force aircraft emergency landings is a crucial component of the highway.

Modern traffic and safety systems, such as an Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS), CCTV surveillance, emergency call boxes, ambulances, and routine patrolling units, are also installed in the corridor. Along the way, integrated manufacturing and logistics clusters will be part of the project, which is being constructed using a public-private venture partnership model. In order to increase agricultural marketing, draw in investment, and create jobs, these will include warehouses, cold storage facilities, and food processing facilities.

A Gujarat Titans star’s significant comment regarding Shubman Gill



New Delhi: Anuj Rawat, the wicketkeeper-batter for the Gujarat Titans (GT), praised captain Shubman Gill for his calm leadership while highlighting the value of preparation and mental clarity throughout lengthy competitions like the Indian Premier League (IPL). Prior to GT’s match against the reigning champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) on Thursday, Rawat told ANI that being prepared for opportunities requires constancy in preparation. “I believe that as a cricket player, you have to continue preparing yourself since you have the opportunity to do so anytime you have the chance. It’s crucial to maintain your physical and mental well-being while you wait for your chance, Rawat added.

Rawat commended Gill’s captaincy, noting significant improvement and a mature approach, exemplified by his ability to balance aggression and composure. He observed, “There is a time to be aggressive and a time to stay calm,” reflecting on Gill’s leadership qualities. Rawat attributed part of his own development to GT’s batting coach Matthew Hayden, who has been instrumental in enhancing his power-hitting skills for his middle-order role, emphasizing the necessity of finishing innings strongly. Rawat also praised teammate Glenn Phillips as a “gun fielder.” Anuj Rawat began his IPL career with Rajasthan Royals, later moving to Royal Challengers Bengaluru where he played from 2022 to 2024, recording 318 runs across 22 matches. He highlighted a notable performance where he scored 66 runs against Mumbai Indians. After his stint with RCB, he joined Gujarat Titans for the 2025 season, currently serving as a backup wicketkeeper-batter and retained for 2026. As of now, the Titans under Gill’s captaincy sit fifth in the points table with four wins and four losses, while the defending champions Bengaluru, led by Rajat Patidar, occupy the second position with six wins. Both teams are set to clash on April 30 at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

As controversy surrounds IPL 2026, Riyan Parag was caught vaping in the Rajasthan Royals dressing room

New Delhi: Videos of Riyan Parag vaping in the Rajasthan Royals’ dressing room went viral on Tuesday during their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 match against Punjab Kings in New Chandigarh. A television camera momentarily caught Parag using what seemed to be a vaporizer during the 16th over of the second innings. As soon

as the video became viral, many fans voiced their concerns and demanded action. Due to Parag’s failure to capitalise at a crucial point in the chase after scoring 29 runs off 16 balls, this incident attracted even more attention. The video has since gone viral on social media, prompting concerns about potential disciplinary ac-

tions. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) maintains stringent rules for player behavior in stadiums, despite the lack of a clear public policy against vaping. Health and safety regulations typically prohibit the use of tobacco or related goods in dugouts or changing rooms, which puts Parag in danger of penal-

ties. The 24-year-old is already dealing with difficulties as he leads the Rajasthan Royals in the 2026 season following Sanju Samson’s transfer to the Chennai Super Kings. Fans and previous players have criticized Parag for his inconsistent batting, as he had only scored 81 runs in seven innings prior to this game.

Punjab Kings suffered their first defeat of the season as Rajasthan Royals defeated them by chasing down 222 with six wickets in hand despite the off-field commotion. Romi Bhinder, the manager of the Rajasthan Royals (RR) squad, was previously fined Rs 1 lakh and sent an official warning for using a cell phone inside the dugout during

the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru on April 10 at the ACA Stadium in Guwahati. Due to Bhinder’s use of a gadget during the game, the BCCI’s Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) has sent him a show-cause notice and asked for a response within the next 48 hours.

Manav Thakkar And Yangzi Liu Join UP As Diya Chitale Tops The UTT Season Seven Auction

Mumbai: UP Prometheans made full use of their purse, bringing together India's Manav Thakkar—one of the world's leading doubles players—and two-time league MVP Yangzi Liu in a standout combination at the Butterfly Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) Season 7 auction on Tuesday. According to a release, reigning champion Bernadette Szocs emerged as the highest-valued player at 40 L tokens, joining two-time winners Dempo Goa Challengers, while Diya Chitale was the highest-valued Indian for the second consecutive year, moving to PBG Pune Jaguars for 37.4 L tokens.

Chitale's international doubles partner, Manush Shah, was picked up by U Mumba TT for 37.2 L tokens, bolstering their line-up alongside the retained Akash Pal. Fifteen-year-old Divyanshi Bhowmick became the youngest-ever player to be signed by a Butterfly UTT team, earning a spot with Sathiyam Gnanasekaran-led Dabang Delhi TTC, while Syndrela Das, 16, was se-



cured by Dempo Goa Challengers. The franchise-based league, co-promoted by Niraj Bajaj and Vita Dani under the aegis of the Table Tennis Federation of India, will take place from July 9 to 26 at the Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium in Goa. It'll be live-streamed on Jio-Hotstar and broadcast live on the Star Sports Network. Commenting on the auction, Mrs. Dani said: "The auction once again reflected the depth and quality that Butterfly UTT has built over the years. It was encouraging to see teams invest in emerging Indian players as a core part of their structure, ultimately reflecting the strength

of a grassroots ecosystem that continues to raise the bar." Reigning champions U Mumba TT held back early before striking late, bringing in India's history-maker Manush Shah, reuniting with Lilian Bardet, and adding Wales' Anna Hursey to round out their squad. Suhail Chandhok, U Mumba TT CEO, said, "Manush is one of the most exciting talents in table tennis today—a left-hander who adds strength in both singles and doubles. Anna Hursey is another exciting prospect who will be making her Butterfly UTT debut." aving opted not to retain anyone, PBG Pune Jaguars went big for Chi-

tale and paired her with the seasoned Snehit SFR and France's Prithika Pavade. Mudit Dani, Omar Assar, and Sayanika Maji completed the roster. Speaking on the occasion, team owner Punit Balan said, "Diya is already among the best players in the world, and we're thrilled to have her as a central part of our plans. Around her, we've focused on building a strong, well-rounded unit." Two-time champions Dempo Goa Challengers' auction strategy saw them go for experience in their foreign spots—with Spaniard and Butterfly UTT regular Alvaro Robles returning to the team where he won the title in 2023—and filling their Indian spots with the best emerging talents. On the team's strategy, Goa's team owner Shrinivas Dempo said, "Having proven performers like Bernadette and Alvaro gives us experience at the top level, while bringing in young Indian players like Syndrela and Abhinandh PB adds energy and potential. It's a combination we're really excited about.

FIFA Eases Suspension Rules And Introduces Red Cards For Covering Mouth At World Cup

New Delhi: In a landmark move to clean up on-field conduct and ensure the presence of star players in the latter stages of the tournament, FIFA and the International Football Association Board have announced significant amendments to the Laws of the Game ahead of the 2026 World Cup. The new regulations introduce a strict crackdown on "concealed communication" while also offering a double amnesty for yellow-card accumulations. The most striking addition to the disciplinary code is the introduction of a straight red card for players who cover their mouths during on-field confrontations.

This measure comes in response to a series of high-profile incidents in which players were accused of using discriminatory or abusive language while hiding their lips to avoid lip-reading or VAR detection. Lawmakers pointed to the controversial UEFA Champions League clash earlier this year between Real Madrid and Benfica. Vincius Junior alleged he was racially abused by Gianluca Prestianni, but because the latter covered his mouth during the exchange, evidence was deemed insufficient for a full sanction. Prestianni was eventually handed a six-match ban on April 24, but the incident highlighted a loophole in officiating. Similarly, the 2026 Africa Cup of Nations final saw



chaotic scenes, with hidden insults allegedly prompting a temporary pitch walk-off by the Senegal national football team. Under the new mandate, any player who covers their mouth while confronting an opponent may be sent off at the referee's discretion. The IFAB said the aim is to "eliminate the cloak of invisibility" that has allowed such behaviour to persist on the pitch.

Additionally, players who leave the field in protest of a referee's decision — as seen in the AFCON final — will now face an immediate red card. While red-card rules have been tightened, FIFA has moved to ease the impact of yellow cards to reflect the expanded 48-team format. With the addition of a new knockout round (the Round of 32),

the risk of key players missing semi-finals or the final due to minor cautions had increased significantly. All single yellow cards will be wiped clean after the group stage, allowing players to enter the Round of 32 with a fresh slate. A second amnesty will apply after the quarter-finals, ensuring that a player booked in the semi-final will not be suspended for the final unless they receive a red card. "Reflective of the expanded format, these changes are designed to keep the best players on the pitch for the biggest matches," a FIFA spokesperson said. Previously, bookings were only wiped after the quarter-finals, but the additional Round of 32 has necessitated an earlier reset to avoid suspension-heavy knockout rounds.

Nausheen Naz's Inspiring Journey From Vegetable Vendor To Top Goal Scorer



Bhopal: In the recently concluded 16th Hockey India Sub Junior Women's National Championship 2026, one name stood out on the scoring charts: Nausheen Naz. The 15-year-old striker from Seoni, Madhya Pradesh, was the tournament's most clinical finisher, ending the campaign as the top scorer with an incredible nine goals, according to a release.

Currently attending the U-18 National Coaching Camp at SAI Bhopal, Nausheen's rise to the national stage is a testament to her resilience. Her journey is defined by a fierce determination to over-

come financial hardship and deep-seated social prejudices. For Nausheen, starting hockey was about resourcefulness rather than having the best gear. Inspired by her elder sister, Tahoor Naz, a 10-year-old Nausheen was desperate to play but lacked a hockey stick. "I told my sister I wanted to play, but we didn't have the money for a stick. I found a broken one on the ground and brought it home. I took it to a local blacksmith and used a nail to fix the pieces together so that I could play. I practised with that repaired stick for a whole year before I finally received a proper one from

a day-boarding program," Nausheen recalls. Coming from a humble background, Nausheen's journey was further challenged by financial instability.

Her father has worked as a vegetable seller and a truck driver, and currently helps transfer cartons to support the family. Beyond the finances, Nausheen had to fight a social battle in her hometown. "I come from a very poor family, and in my community, few people encouraged girls to play sports. People would say that girls shouldn't step out to play. It became so difficult that I actually stopped playing for two years and helped my father sell vegetables," she shares. It was her mother's unwavering support that eventually brought her back to the field. "My mother stood by me. She told my father that he should support his daughter's passion and not listen to what others say. Because of her, I was the Gwalior Women's Hockey Academy camp.

Manchester United Edge Closer To Champions League Spots After Dominant Brentford Victory

chandigarh: Manchester United moved to the brink of a return to the Champions League with a 2-1 win over Brentford, but the performance showed both their growing control and lingering vulnerabilities. United made a strong start and were ahead early when Casemiro headed in from close range after good work from Harry Maguire. The early goal settled the hosts, who had already threatened through a lively opening spell led by Kobbie Mainoo. The second goal came just before half-time and again highlighted the influence of Bruno Fernandes. Instead of shooting, he chose to pass, setting up Benjamin Sesko for a simple finish. It was Fernandes' 19th league assist of the season, leaving him just one short of the Premier League record held by Thierry Henry and Kevin De Bruyne.

Despite the scoreline, the game was far from comfortable. Brentford created several clear chances, especially in the first half, but poor finishing and strong goalkeeping from Senne Lammens kept United in control. Igor Thiago in particular missed multiple opportunities that could have changed the



game. United looked more controlled after the break, but Brentford remained a threat. Dango Ouattara hit the post, and late pressure finally brought a goal when Mathias Jensen scored from distance. A nervy finish followed, but United held on. The win leaves United third and just two points away from confirming a top-five finish and Champions League qualification, with four games remaining. It is a significant turnaround under Michael Carrick, who has steadied the side after a diffi-

cult mid-season period. For Brentford, the result extends a poor run and dents their hopes of European qualification. For United, it is another step forward — even if not yet fully convincing. Manchester United secured a crucial 2-1 victory over Brentford in their English Premier League (EPL) clash, boosting their push for Champions League qualification. United took control early with Brazilian star Casemiro opening the scoring in the 11th minute. Before Benjamin Sesko doubled

the lead in the 43rd minute following a swift counterattack. Mathias Jensen pulled one back late for Brentford in the 87th minute, but the hosts, Man Utd, held on for all three points at Old Trafford on Monday. The result sees Manchester United consolidate third place in the Premier League standings, strengthening their chances of finishing in the top five and qualifying for next season's Champions League.

Brentford, meanwhile, remains ninth, still in contention for a European spot. United's win puts them within touching distance of securing Champions League football, while Brentford will look to bounce back as the race for European qualification intensifies in the final stretch of the season. Arsenal lead the Premier League standings with 73 points from 34 matches, followed by Manchester City in second place with 70 points from 33 games. Manchester United occupy third with 61 points from 33 matches, while Liverpool and Aston Villa are tied on 58 points each, having also played 33 matches. Brentford sit ninth on the table with 48 points from 33 games. During the clash, Man Utd captain Bruno Fernandes Monday,

Punjab FC Defeats Zinc Football Academy To Defend The AIFF Elite Youth League Title

Garhshankar: Three second-half goals inside ten minutes saw Punjab FC successfully defend their AIFF Elite Youth League 2025-26 title, securing a commanding 3-0 victory over Zinc Football Academy in the final at the Ramsar Sahib Sports Stadium in Paddi Sura Singh, Garhshankar on Tuesday. A ten-minute burst in the second half saw The Cubs score three goals with Karish Soram opening the scoring in the 69th minute. Vishal Yadav doubled the advantage in the 70th minute, and the game was put to bed by a 79th-minute strike by Thongram Rishikanta Singh. Punjab FC dominated possession throughout the first half, with most of the play confined to the Zinc Academy half. Vishal and Sameer both tested Zinc FA goalkeeper Smarnik Thapa early on, but the custodian responded well to keep them out.



The goalkeeper was called into action again in the 30th minute, producing an excellent diving save to deny Satnam Singh's header from a corner. At the other end, Zinc FA made good use of their set-pieces to create a couple of opportunities, but their efforts were directed straight at Viswajeet, ensuring both sides went into the half-time break locked at 0-0. Zinc FA continued to be resilient in defence, but the deadlock was broken in the 69th minute, after captain Vishal Yadav was pulled down just outside the penalty box. Karish Soram left the goalkeeper no chance as a stunning left-footed curler flew into the top left corner. The defending champions doubled their advantage within a

Minute. A misplaced pass by a slipping Zinc Academy defender allowed Vishal Yadav to intercept the ball high up the pitch. The Punjab skipper calmly defeated the advancing goalkeeper and slotted it home to make it 2-0. Punjab FC continued the attacking momentum and found its third goal in the 79th minute. Moirangthem Sayonba Singh provided a perfectly weighted assist for Rishikanta, who dribbled past his marker and found the back of the net with a left-footed shot. Punjab FC controlled the remaining of the game and defended their title in front of their home supporters.

The league took a hiatus of more than three months to allow player availability for the senior and U20 women's national teams camps and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Women's Asian Cup in March and the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup in April, as per a press

WAF Inspects Mumbai And Delhi As Probable Host Cities For World Armwrestling And Para Armwrestling Championships

Mumbai: A high-level meeting was held at Varsha Bungalow, the official residence and office of Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis, in Mumbai, as part of the official inspection visit by the World Armwrestling Federation (WAF) for the World Armwrestling & Para Armwrestling Championships 2026 scheduled to be held in India from October 26 to November 7, 2026.

The meeting was attended by Assen Hadjitodorov, President, World Armwrestling Federation (from Bulgaria), and Mircea Simicel Simionescu, General Secretary, World Armwrestling Federation (from Romania), along with the President of AAFI and Vice President of AAFI, Preeti Jhangiani and Co-Founder of Pro Panja League, Parvinn Dabass, who hosted the visiting delegation, according to a release. As part of the visit, WAF officials inspected facilities in both Mumbai and Delhi, which are being considered as probable host cities for the championship. Discussions during the visit also included interactions with the Paralympic Committee officials Sangwan (Vice President PCI), Mr Rahul Swami (CEO PCI), Manish



Rana (Paralympic Sports Specialist PCI) in India, focusing on support, organisation and the development of Para Armwrestling in India. Following the inspection, World Armwrestling Federation (WAF) confirmed that all technical requirements are met. India offers the necessary infrastructure, including major international airport hubs, online visa access and all key elements required to host a successful global event.

Assen Hadjitodorov, President, World Armwrestling Federation, stated, "India has demonstrated strong capability and commitment

in hosting events of this scale, having successfully hosted the Asian Armwrestling & Para Armwrestling Championship last year. The infrastructure, organisational strength and overall preparedness give us great confidence that the World Armwrestling & Para Armwrestling Championships 2026 will be conducted at the highest standard here. I would like to thank Parvinn Dabass and Preeti Jhangiani for being such wonderful hosts." Speaking on the successful inspection, Preeti Jhangiani said, "It is a proud moment for us to host the WAF delegation and show-

case India's readiness to stage the World Armwrestling & Para Armwrestling Championships. We are grateful for the support and encouragement extended by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, which gives us great confidence that we can deliver a world-class event." Parvinn Dabass added, "This inspection marks an important milestone for Armwrestling in India. The encouragement and backing from Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, along with such positive feedback from WAF, motivates us to deliver a world-class tournament for World Championships.