

Nagaland MP Hits Out at Congress for Hindering Women’s Reservation



Kohima, Apr 20: Nagaland’s Rajya Sabha MP Phangnon Konyak has sharply criticized the Congress party, accusing it of obstructing the progress of women’s reservation in Parliament. Speaking

during a public interaction, Konyak alleged that opposition parties were deliberately stalling reforms that would ensure greater representation of women in legislative bodies. The Women’s Reservation

Bill, which seeks to reserve one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women, has long been a subject of debate in Indian politics. While successive governments have pledged support, its implementation

has faced repeated delays. Konyak argued that the opposition’s reluctance to cooperate reflects a lack of commitment to gender equality and democratic inclusivity. “The Congress has consistently stood in the

way of women’s empowerment by blocking the reservation bill,” Konyak said. She emphasized that the measure is not just about numbers but about creating opportunities for women to participate meaningfully in

governance. According to her, the obstruction undermines decades of advocacy by women’s groups and civil society organizations.

Observers note that the issue of women’s reservation has resurfaced in recent months as part of broader discussions on political reform. Supporters of the bill argue that India, despite having women leaders at the highest levels, still lags in overall representation. Currently, women account for less than 15 percent of seats in the Lok Sabha, a figure far below global averages. Advocates believe that reservation is necessary to correct structural imbalances and encourage more women to enter politics. Konyak’s remarks also highlight the growing impatience among women leaders from smaller states, who see the bill as a path-

way to amplify voices from underrepresented regions. She stressed that women from states like Nagaland face additional challenges due to cultural and social barriers, making institutional support even more critical. “Reservation is not a privilege; it is a necessity to ensure fair participation,” she added. The Congress party has yet to issue a formal response to Konyak’s comments, but party leaders in the past have argued that the bill requires broader consensus and careful consideration of sub-quotas for marginalized groups. Critics of the opposition stance, however, contend that such arguments are often used as delaying tactics rather than genuine concerns. Political analysts suggest that the renewed debate could influence upcoming legisla-

tive sessions. With growing public pressure and visible support from women MPs across party lines, the government may attempt to push the bill forward. Yet, without opposition cooperation, passage remains uncertain. The confrontation between ruling and opposition parties underscores the deep divisions that continue to stall reforms. Civil society organizations welcomed Konyak’s strong words, noting that vocal advocacy from women leaders is essential to keep the issue alive. They argue that the bill’s passage would mark a historic milestone in Indian democracy, ensuring that women have a stronger voice in shaping policies and laws. For many activists, the obstruction is not just political but symbolic of entrenched resistance to gender equality.

Verdict Expected in Abhijit–Nilotpal Lynching Case That Shook Assam

Guwahati, Apr 20: A fast-track court in Nagaon is set to deliver its verdict on Monday in the brutal 2018 lynching case of Abhijit Nath and Nilotpal Das, a case that had sent shockwaves across Assam.

The incident took place on the night of June 8, 2018, at Dokmoka in Karbi Anglong district, where the two young men from Guwahati were brutally killed by a mob on suspicion of being child abductors.

The trial has been ongoing in a fast-track court, and after a prolonged hearing process, the judgment is finally scheduled to be announced. The Karbi Anglong Police had filed a chargesheet against 45 accused, all of whom are currently in judicial custody.

During the trial, a total of 14 witnesses were presented. However, 8 of them reportedly turned hostile during the proceedings, while 6 maintained their original state-

ments.

In connection with alleged threats to witnesses, the victims’ families had also filed a separate case at Dokmoka Police Station in 2019, in which police have already submitted a chargesheet. The prosecution has been led by special public prosecutor Jiaur Kamar, while senior advocate Bijon Mahajan represented the victims’ families in court. The investigation into the case was carried out by then Superintendent of Police G. V. Sivasprasad, who gathered substantial evidence against the accused and ensured that the chargesheet was filed within the stipulated time.

Despite this, the families of the victims have had to wait nearly eight years for justice. With the verdict now imminent, there is widespread anticipation and anxiety among the public regarding the outcome of the case.

Opposition Unity Meeting in Guwahati Ahead of Assam Election Results

Guwahati, Apr 20: With just a week left for the announcement of election results, all opposition candidates from 126 assembly constituencies in Assam gathered in Guwahati on Sunday night. The meeting, organised by the Congress at Green Wood Hotel, brought together candidates from the Congress, Assam Jatiya Parishad, Rajior Dal, AHPCL, and Left parties, along with their leadership.

The event was described as a unity initiative by the Congress to keep opposition candidates aligned ahead of the results. However, Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president Gaurav Gogoi avoided commenting on seat projections, stating that the election outcome was not the focus. He emphasised instead a broader vision of building a “New Assam” through development and unity.

Gogoi alleged that the ruling



government under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had damaged Assam’s social harmony, economy, and culture. He said

the opposition’s goal is to rebuild and strengthen the state. He also claimed that voters who previously supported the BJP and its allies had

shifted their support toward the opposition in this election.

Rajior Dal president and MLA Akhil Gogoi expressed confidence that the opposition would form the next government, claiming a possible combined win of 70–80 seats, while the NDA may be limited to 30–40 seats. Assam Jatiya Parishad president Lurinjoyoti Gogoi also made strong claims, saying he would win from Khowang constituency and predicting defeats for several ruling party candidates. He accused the state leadership of authoritarian governance and said the opposition focused on key issues such as unemployment, land rights, development, and protection of indigenous identity.

As political tensions rise, all sides are awaiting the election results, which are expected to determine the future political direction of the state.

Court convicts 20 accused in Abhi-Nil mob lynching case

Nagaon, Apr 20: The court has held 20 out of the 45 accused guilty in the sensational Abhi-Nil mob lynching case.

Pronouncing the verdict today, the Nagaon Sessions Court acquitted the remaining 25 chargesheeted accused owing to lack of evidence against them. Two youths, Nilotpal Das and Abhijit Nath of Guwahati, were returning after visiting the Kangthlangso waterfall in Karbi Anglong district when they were brutally killed by a mob on suspicion of being child-lifters on June 8, 2018. The chargesheet in the case was filed in 2024 and the trial, which began at Diphu, was later transferred to the Nagaon Sessions Court as per an order of the Gauhati High Court. The court will pronounce the quantum of punishment on April 24. The prosecution was represented by Special Public Prosecutor Ziaul Kamar and senior advocate Bijon Mahajan appeared on behalf of the victims’ families, while the defence for the accused was led by lawyer Manas Sarania.

Heavy rainfall triggers chaos in Guwahati

Guwahati, Apr 20: Heavy rainfall since Sunday evening threw normal life out of gear in Guwahati with severe waterlogging reported from several city localities. Anil Nagar, Nabin Nagar, Hatigaon and Rukminigaon are among the worst-hit areas. Stretches of arterial roads like the GS Road, RG Baruah Road and MRD Road also went under water, causing massive traffic snarls. Commuters had to face immense inconvenience as they remained stranded in traffic jams for hours. In view of the situation arising out of flash flood, the Kamrup (Metropolitan) district administrators has declared closure of all educational institutions within the Guwahati Municipal Corporation area on Monday. Residents have rued that they had to endure similar situations after a heavy downpour with the government doing precious little to find a permanent solution to this perennial problem in Guwahati. A woman identified as Payal Nath lost her life after she slipped into an open drain in an inundated road in Maligaon area of Guwahati. Though passersby pulled her out of the drain and rushed her to a hospital, she was declared dead on arrival by doctors.

Guwahati Citizens Call for Stronger Press Freedom Protections

■ A citizens’ meeting in Guwahati was held to resist attempts against press freedom and intimidation of journalists in Assam.

Guwahati, Apr 20: A citizens’ meeting was held in Guwahati calling for strong resistance against alleged attempts to curb press freedom and incidents of intimidation and disrespect towards journalists in Assam. The gathering brought together prominent citizens, intellectuals,

lawyers, journalists, and representatives of political and non-political organisations, all of whom expressed concern over what they described as increasing pressure on the media. The meeting strongly condemned recent incidents, including the burning of bundles of newspapers of Asomiy Pratidin and an alleged attack on its Lakhimpur office. Participants termed these acts as assaults on democracy and the freedom of the press, asserting that citizens must

stand firmly with journalists in protecting the “fourth pillar” of democracy. Organised in association with the Guwahati Press Club, the meeting also discussed ways to resist what speakers described as systematic and continuous attacks on media institutions. Senior lawyers, writers, activists, and journalists stressed that press freedom is essential for democracy and must be defended collectively. Senior advocate Anil Kumar Bhat-tacharyya strongly criticised

the attitude of those in power, stating that journalists have every right to question the government without fear. He said journalists must not hesitate to expose wrongdoing and hold authorities accountable, adding that attempts to intimidate the press would not last long.

Legal expert Arup Borbora highlighted what he described as a nationwide pattern of pressure on the media and called for stronger protection for journalists. He also sug-



gested that land be allotted for the development of the Guwahati Press Club to strengthen journalistic infrastructure.

Journalist Haider Hussain, however, said that citizens

also share responsibility for the current challenges facing the media and stressed the need for introspection within the press as well. Representatives from vari-

ous organisations, including student bodies and political groups, also participated in the discussion. Leaders such as Akhil Gogoi warned that media suppression is being carried out in a systematic manner and said resistance would grow if such trends continue. The meeting concluded with a unanimous resolution describing the media as the “soul of democracy” and calling on citizens to stand united in defence of press freedom at all costs.

Nagaland University Scientists Use Invasive Plant for Cancer Research

Kohima, Apr 20: Researchers from Nagaland University and Fazl Ali College, Mokochung, have transformed one of the State’s most problematic invasive weeds into a powerful tool for next-generation healthcare and sustainable manufacturing, unlocking major end-use applications in pharmaceuticals, medicine and green industry.

Mikania micrantha has long posed ecological challenges across Nagaland.

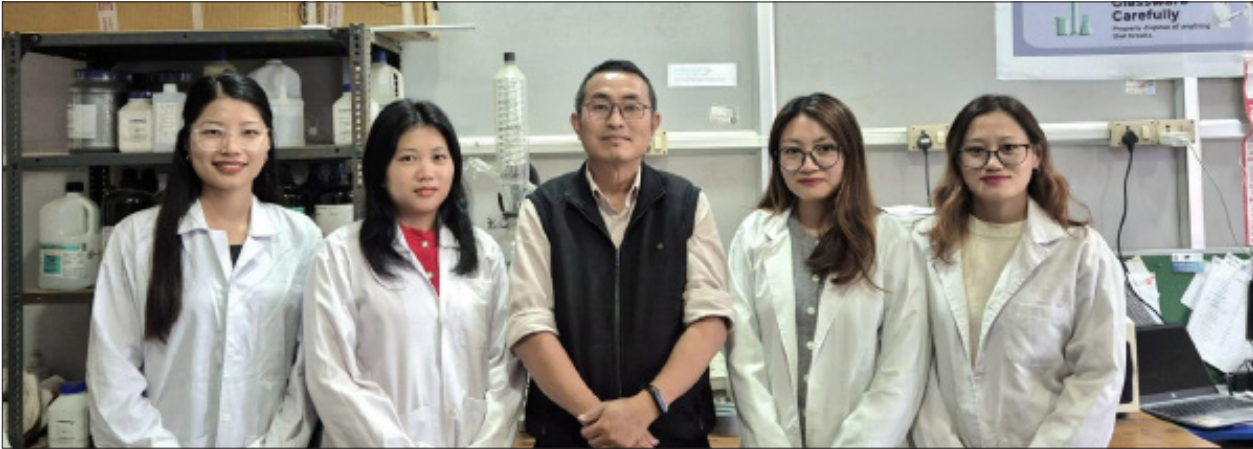
The research team has developed an eco-friendly method to convert the invasive plant, Mikania micrantha, into silver nanoparticles that can efficiently accelerate drug production, combat harmful bacteria and show promising anticancer activity, all without relying on toxic chemicals conventionally used in nanomaterial synthesis.

The researchers adopted a “green chemistry” approach that replaces hazardous industrial processes with plant-based science. Using leaf extracts, the team created highly stable silver nanoparticles that act as ultra-fast catalysts that can produce essential drug components known as ‘imidazoles’ in

30 to 180 seconds. These compounds are foundational to a wide range of medicines used across therapeutic areas.

The research was supported by Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) and the National Fellowship for Scheduled Tribe Students (NFST-MOTA). The findings have been published in the Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications, a peer-reviewed scientific journal that disseminates short reports of significant findings across the fields of biochemistry, biophysics and molecular biology.

The paper was co-authored by Manthae C. Phom, Phitovili Sumi, Betokali K. Zhimomi, Khonzani Yanthan, Tonge W. W. Shokip Tumtin and Tovish Pucho. Commending the Nagaland University-led research team for their groundbreaking work, Prof. Jagadish K. Patnaik, Vice Chancellor, Nagaland University, said, “This innovative study highlights a fast, eco-friendly approach to drug synthesis while demonstrating significant antibacterial and anticancer potential. Such research underscores



the university’s commitment to scientific excellence and sustainable solutions to address global health challenges.”

The study’s most immediate impact lies in pharmaceutical manufacturing. The nanoparticles function as reusable catalytic engines, enabling faster, cleaner, and more cost-effective production of key drug ingredients.

Unlike conventional methods that depend on expensive and toxic reagents, this approach offers a scalable and sus-

tainable alternative for industry.

Importantly, the nanoparticles can be reused at least six times with minimal loss of efficiency, significantly reducing production costs and chemical waste—an advantage with strong implications for large-scale drug manufacturing.

Elaborating on the important outcomes of this research, Dr. I. Tovish Pucho, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, Nagaland University, said that there is still a huge po-

tential for many more locally available plants to show such promising properties and with proper funding, further research is possible. Beyond their productions, these nanoparticles demonstrated strong antibacterial activity against dangerous pathogens, including Staphylococcus aureus (a major cause of hospital infections) and Yersinia pestis. This opens up potential applications in antimicrobial coatings, wound care products, and infection control systems.

Many anti-social elements taking part in night torch rallies: Manipur Police

Imphal, Apr 20: Manipur Police on Sunday said many anti-social elements under the guise of protesters have engaged in violent activities at various parts of the state capital in night protest torch rallies.

Following the Tronglaobi bomb attack on April 7 in Bishnupur district, in which two children were killed, and the storming of a CRPF camp near Gelmol, in which three persons were killed, the five valley districts have witnessed several protests and clashes between security forces and protesters.

Addressing a press conference, Imphal West SP Ksh Shivakanta Singh said, “Over the past few days, night Meira (torch) rallies are taking place in various areas of Imphal. During several of these occasions, many anti-social elements, under the guise of protesters, have engaged in violent activities. These include the use of petrol bombs, catapults fitted with iron projectiles, and stone pelting directed at security forces.”

Night torch rallies at



casions, many anti-social elements, under the guise of protesters, have engaged in violent activities. These include the use of petrol bombs, catapults fitted with iron projectiles, and stone pelting directed at security forces.”

Singjamei and Sagolband in Imphal West district and Khurai in Imphal East district turned violent with security forces firing rounds of tear gas shells to disperse agitators.

“It has also been observed that many protesters are under the influence of liquor

or other intoxicants. Furthermore, it has been learnt that some instigators are supplying petrol/kerosene bombs, catapults and iron projectiles ahead of these rallies,” the SP added.

Despite these provocations, security forces have exercised maximum re-

straint while dispersing the gatherings, with the aim of preventing any collateral damage, he said.

In light of the recent incidents, the concerned agencies are actively carrying out their lawful duties, he said. The SP said, “movement of ambulances and doctors was also affected at various areas, destruction of CCTV cameras, and traffic fencing was carried out by certain elements.”

He appealed to all law-abiding citizens to co-operate with law enforcement agencies in maintaining peace and harmony and to refrain from violence, destruction of public property and other unlawful activities. Legal action will be initiated against those involved in violence, as well as against instigators, he added.

NBBGC becomes Sikkim college to achieve

Sikkim, Apr 20: Nar Bahadur Bhandari Government College (NBBGC), Tadong has been selected under the Department of Biotechnology’s “STAR College Scheme”, becoming the first college from Sikkim and North Bengal to receive the recognition. The NBBGC was shortlisted among 34 institutions across the country after submitting a proposal under the scheme and later made a final proposal at the DBT headquarters in New Delhi in the second week of March, principal Dr. D. Purohit said.

Coordinator Dr. Satyadeep S. Chhetri, along with assistant coordinator Dr. Mingma T. Sherpa, presented the final proposal. Only 10-15 colleges are selected each year under the scheme, the principal said.

The NBBGC also received mentorship support from Hindu College, University of Delhi, during the preparation of the proposal. The two institutions are actively collaborating under the Vidya Vistara Programme of the Government of India. Under the DBT-STAR College Scheme, the college is expected to receive financial assistance of about Rs. 1 crore over a period of three years for its science departments.

The funds will be utilized to strength-



en laboratory infrastructure, procure advanced scientific equipment, and organise workshops, seminars and training programmes for both students and faculty, the release mentions. “The initiative aims to promote interdisciplinary learning, enhance practical skills, and encourage research-oriented education at the undergraduate level.” The principal, faculty and students expressed great pride in the accomplishment, which, they said, is set to significantly elevate the quality of science education in the region. “The NBBGC reaffirms its commitment to fostering innovation and academic excellence in the eastern Himalayan region,” Dr. Purohit added.

Girl dies after falling from moving school bus in Arunachal's West Siang



Shillong, Apr 20: A 13-year-old girl died in Arunachal Pradesh's West Siang district after she fell down from a moving school bus, police said on Sunday. Nyayir Kame, a resident of Lungte village in Shi-Yomi district, fell after the bus failed to come to a complete halt. Aalo Police Station officer-in-charge Lakhi Mena said while quoting the investigating officer.

The incident occurred around 2 pm near Darka when the school bus, en route from Pasighat in East Siang district, was carrying students, including Kame, who had attended a church-organised youth camp in Basar, Leparada district.

Police said Kame felt nauseous and urged the driver to stop, but she alighted prematurely, leading to her fatal fall. “An FIR has been lodged and a case registered,” police added.

Opposition Unity Forum reviews post-poll scenario; vows

Guwahati, Apr 20: In a significant show of solidarity ahead of the Assam Assembly election resultstopood here on Sunday. Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) president Lurinjoyti Gogoi, who issued a statement late on Sunday evening, highlighted the outcome of the meeting. Leaders extensively discussed the state's post-poll political scenario, ground-level feedback from the April 9 voting, and future strategies to safeguard the interests of the people of Assam. The deliberations focused on protecting the rights of the Assamese people, upholding democratic values, and advancing development-oriented goals. Participants resolved that opposition forces must remain firmly united to move forward collectively. The gathering is significant as it marks the first major coordination exercise by the opposition platform after the single-phase Assembly elections on April 9. Votes are scheduled to be counted on May 4. No details regarding specific attendees or resolutions were made public immediately after the meeting.

This development comes ahead of the election results, with political observers awaiting the outcome that will determine the state's governance for the next five years.



“Opposition forces will unite and advance in the interest of the rights of Assamese residents, the protection of democracy, and development. The meeting concluded with a firm commitment to progress through unity, resolve, and people-oriented politics,” Gogoi stated.

Cong trying to delegitimise Assam's delimitation by terming it 'gerrymandering': Himanta

Guwahati, Apr 20: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday accused the Congress of attempting to “delegitimise” the delimitation process carried out in the state in 2023, and asserted that the redrawing of constituencies was to “prevent our civilisation from being devoured by illegal migration”. He maintained that the process was for “restoring balance and safeguarding indigenous Assamese representation”. The CM's reaction came after questions were raised on the redrawn constituencies, based on which the 2024 Lok Sabha and the recent April 9 Assembly elections were held, alleging that the exercise was carried out to suit the ruling dispensation. “Gerrymandering – Congress' ill informed Cabal has been excessively using this term to delegitimise Assam's delimitation exercise and, in turn, misinform the nation. Don't fall for their propaganda,” Sarma said in a post on X. The term ‘gerrymandering’ has its origins in the US and is defined by the Britannica as “a practice of drawing the



boundaries of electoral districts in a way that gives one political party an advantage over its rivals (political or partisan gerrymandering) or that dilutes the voting power of members of racial or ethnic minority groups (racial gerrymandering)”. Sarma maintained that Assam's delimitation was not a conspiracy, but a “long overdue cor-

rection after decades of political neglect and vote-bank appeasement”. “It, in fact, reflects the aspirations of the people of Assam and is yet only a stopgap arrangement to prevent our civilisation from being devoured by illegal migration,” he said. He said that for years, especially in Lower Assam region, “unchecked demograph-

ic changes reshaped constituencies while Congress and its ecosystem chose silence because it suited their electoral interests”.

The real distortion of representation happened then, not now, the chief minister claimed. He maintained that when boundaries are being realigned to reflect ground realities, the same Congress leaders, backed by the Left ecosystem, are crying “gerrymandering”. “That argument is not just weak, it is outright hypocritical. They are not defending democracy; they are defending a system that benefited them politically,” he added.

Sarma said delimitation was about restoring balance and safeguarding indigenous Assamese representation.

It ensured that those rooted in the land, its culture, language, and identity, are not politically sidelined in their own state, he claimed. “The truth is simple: those opposing this exercise are uncomfortable because it challenges the very imbalance they once exploited and pushed Assam to the perils!” Sarma added.

Arunachal BJP slams opposition for stalling 33 per cent in Parliament

Guwahati, Apr 20: The Arunachal Pradesh unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday condemned the Congress and its allies for blocking the 33 per cent Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament, accusing them of betraying women and exposing an “anti-women mindset”.

Addressing a press conference at the state party headquarters here, Women and Child Development Minister Dasanglu Pul strongly criticised opposition parties, including Congress, Samajwadi Party, TMC and DMK, for opposing the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill for women's reservation.

“By blocking the bill, the opposition has betrayed half the country's population,” Pul asserted, calling it a ‘moral failure’ that squandered a historic chance to boost women's role in policymaking and democratic participation.

She accused the opposition of ‘undemocratic’ tactics, consistently obstructing women's empowerment whenever it arises, using “political excuses and delaying tactics” to deny women their place in Parliament and state assemblies.

Praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, Pul quoted him as saying women's share in policymaking is “not a favour but their natural



right.” She warned that those obstructing the bill would face “strong backlash from women voters” in the upcoming elections.

The minister slammed opposition demands for religion-based quotas within the women's reservation as “unconstitutional” ploy to delay proceedings and divert from empowerment goals. Delimitation, she stressed, is essential for “one person, one vote, one value,” and its delay hampers women's quota rollout. Increased women lawmakers at the Centre and state levels would benefit society, particularly children and daughters, Pul told the gathering.

The BJP Arunachal unit reaffirmed its commitment to women's empowerment, balanced representation, and democratic institutions, vowing to fight “anti-women forces”.

NSCN (I-M) slams killings, warns over provocations

Guwahati, Apr 20: NSCN (I-M) has condemned the brutal killing of two civilians on April 18, near Yaolen Kuki village, alleging involvement of Kuki SoO cadres.

In a statement, NSCN (I-M) said two innocent commuters—Chinaoshang Shokwungnao of Tashar village and Yaruimgam Vashum of Kharasom CC village—were allegedly killed by Kuki militants, who it claimed were being sheltered under Suspension of Operations (SoO) arrangements, and that such actions had exceeded all tolerance limits. NSCN (I-M) further said that such aggressive provocations have not only escalated tensions but also inch towards “a complete failure of the so called Indian state mechanism”, warning that Nagas would be compelled to pursue “defensive measures to safeguard our land and sovereignty.” NSCN (I-M) also said it was no longer a mere claim, alleging that multiple local reports and testimonies indicate collusion between Indian security forces and Kuki armed groups under SoO, aimed at undermining the “political situation in Nagalim and destabilising the region” through what it termed proxy war disguised as ethnic conflict. It further alleged that the use of Kuki groups, which it described as a remnant of colonial-era policy, was aimed at sabotaging the Naga movement. The group condemned the loss of innocent lives and called for an immediate, independent and transparent investigation into the incident.

PREPAK-PRO militant held, bunkers destroyed in Ukhrul operation



Imphal, Apr 20: Officials reported on Monday that central security forces and state police arrested an insurgent and destroyed three bunkers after unidentified gunmen fired on civilians at TM Kasom in Manipur's Ukhrul district, resulting in two deaths. He was apprehended in the Kakching Lamkhai Laipham Loknung area under the jurisdiction of Kakching Police Station. The report stated that the operations were launched after unidentified gunmen, suspected to be militants, fired on civilians at TM Kasom under Litan Police Station in Ukhrul district, killing two people on the spot on Saturday. Meanwhile, police reported that an unknown man found unconscious at Bora Galli, Thangal Bazar, at around 5:45 pm on April 18, was declared dead on arrival at RIMS Hospital. According to a press release from

the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of City Police Station, the deceased appeared to be around 35 years old, had a round face, and a swarthy complexion (Kulei Kuchu). The man was approximately 5'4" tall, thinly built, and was wearing an olive green T-shirt and khaki cargo pants. During a subsequent operation, the joint forces destroyed three bunkers (Yaolen-01 and Paileyao-02) located between the Yaolen and Mongkot Chepu hill ranges under Litan Police Station in Ukhrul district. Additionally, 48 empty cartridges and two live rounds were recovered. In the operation, security forces arrested an active cadre of the proscribed People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak Progressive (PREPAK-PRO), identified as Sorokhaibam Pathou Meitei (25) of Chairen Mangjing, Moirang, in Bishnupur district.

Assam’s Nikshita takes Top Honour in Youth Boxing Nationals



Guwahati, Apr 20: Assam’s Nikshita Konwar continued the state’s strong run in women’s boxing, clinching gold at the 8th Men’s and Women’s National Youth Boxing Championship that concluded at Sonapur in Guwahati on Sunday. Competing in the Under-19 category at the Don Bosco University Hall, Nikshita edged past Haryana’s Vanshika 3-2 in the girls’ 65kg final. The Assam boxer won the opening two rounds of a closely fought bout. While Vanshika responded strongly in the third round, Nikshita held her composure and defended well to seal the victory. The gold marked a significant milestone as Nikshita secured her first national junior title. She had reached the final after a 4-1 win over an Andhra Pradesh boxer in the semifinal. Hosts Assam finished with two medals. Sandeep Basumatary claimed bronze after losing in the boys’ 80kg semifinal. The championship was organised by the Assam Amateur Boxing Association (AABA) with support from the Boxing Federation of India. AABA president Siddhartha Bhattacharya and secretary Hemanta Kumar Kalita, along with other office-bearers, congratulated the medal winners. Both Nikshita and Sandeep have been selected for the national high-performance camp following their performances.

Pawan Khera moves Gahati High Court for anticipatory bail

Guwahati, Apr 20: Congress leader Pawan Khera today filed a prayer in the Gauhati High Court for pre-arrest bail in a case filed against fir allegedly making defamatory statements against the wife of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The case was registered by the Crime Branch of Guwahati Police based on a complaint lodged by Sarma’s wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sarma. Khera had claimed that Riniki Bhuyan Sarma holds multiple passports of different countries and properties abroad.

The Congress leader moved the Gauhati High Court after the Supreme Court on April 17 refused to grant him protection from arrest and declined his plea to extend the duration of transit anticipatory bail in this case. The apex court had also asked Khera to approach the competent court in Assam for anticipatory bail, refusing his request to extend relief. The Justice Maheshwari-led Bench of the SC also clarified that if the jurisdictional court is not functioning, a request can be made for urgent listing, which will be considered in accordance with law.

Manipur govt warns of action against employees who remain absent during shutdown

Imphal, Apr 20: The Manipur government has directed all employees to attend office amid the shutdown call beginning today to protest against the Tronglaobi incident. In an official order issued by the Chief Secretary’s office, all Administrative Secretaries and Heads of Departments have been instructed to ensure attendance in their respective offices, including sub-

ordinate offices, during the shutdown protests. “It is hereby ordered that all Administrative Secretaries and Heads of Departments ensure attendance in their respective offices and subordinate offices in view of the calls for disruption/bandh issued by various groups. Attendance reports should be sent to the concerned Administrative Departments. Departmental

proceedings should be taken up against those who are absent from duty without authorized leave,” the order signed by Chief Secretary Dr. Puneet Kumar Goel stated. “All Deputy Commissioners shall ensure functioning of all offices in districts and ensure attendance in all offices. Departmental actions shall be initiated against the employees who are absent,” the order added.

Yaba tablets seized
Silchar, Jan 07: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said a woman was arrested after banned Yaba tablets worth Rs 3 crore were seized from her possession in Cachar district. These tablets, also called ‘crazy drug’, contain a mixture of methamphetamine and caffeine and have been banned in India. In a post on X on Tuesday night, Sarma said, “Based on reliable inputs, @cacharpolice apprehended a woman and seized 20,000 YABA tablets worth Rs 3 cr from her possession.”

Lai council chief visits border village, takes stock of trade with Myanmar

Aizawl, Apr 20: Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Lai Autonomous District Council C Lalsawmzuala, accompanied by Lawngtlai Deputy Commissioner Donny Lalruatsanga, visited Hruitezawl village and took stock of border trade with Myanmar. Highlighting the importance of smooth and well-coordinated trade with neighboring Myanmar, he emphasized the need for systematic planning and better arrangements. Lalsawmzuala stated that the Council Government aims to regulate and properly manage the movement of goods and transportation along the Chhimtui river routes. He further pointed out that since Hruitezawl is located near the international border, there is a strong



need for vigilance in various aspects. He encouraged the villagers to work diligently for the welfare of the land and the people. Stressing the importance of cooperation between the local leaders and the government, he assured that

efforts would be made to address their needs. Deputy Commissioner Donny Lalruatsanga noted that as Hruitezawl serves as a point of cross-border trade with Myanmar, there is a high risk of illegal entry from across the border. He

urged the local leaders to remain alert. He also mentioned that around 300 refugee families are currently residing in Hruitezawl under the government’s knowledge and are being monitored. He stressed the importance of ensuring that no illegal activities take place in the area and called upon the community leaders to extend full cooperation. He also assured continued support from the administration in addressing the needs of the village. During their visit, Lalsawmzuala and Lalruatsanga also visited the popular tourist spot Bawinu in Hruitezawl. They emphasized the need to preserve its natural beauty while improving accessibility, visitor facilities, and infrastructure for tourism development.

Widespread Shutdowns and Rising Tensions Disrupt Normal Life in Manipur

Imphal, Apr 20: Manipur is facing severe disruption as multiple shutdowns and protests have brought normal life to a standstill amid rising tensions over recent incidents of violence. The United Naga Council (UNC) has called a three-day total shutdown across all Naga-inhabited areas from midnight April 20 to midnight April 23, in protest against the killing of two Naga civilians in Ukhrul district. The council described the incident as a “barbaric” and “premeditated” attack, alleging the involvement of Kuki militants and calling it a grave threat to the safety and dignity of the Naga community. During the shutdown, all institutions, businesses, and transportation services will remain closed, except for emergency services. The council has also questioned the state government’s handling of law and order and announced a candlelight vigil on April 23 to honor the victims, along with a temporary suspension of social and economic ties with the Kuki community. At the same time, a separate five-day statewide shutdown called by Meira Paibis and

various civil society organizations has paralysed daily life, particularly in the Imphal valley. Roads remain largely deserted, with protesters blocking movement and forcing the closure of shops, markets, and public transport. The agitation stems from public outrage over the killing of two minors. Although the Joint Action Committee (JAC) had earlier reached an understanding with the government, fresh demands—including a deadline for the arrest of the accused by April 25—have intensified the protests and prolonged the blockade. Amid the unrest, the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) has accused security forces of using excessive force against protesters and criticized the state leadership for failing to control the escalating violence. The organization alleged instances of assault on civilians, use of tear gas in sensitive locations such as hospitals, and mishandling of detainees, warning that such actions could further aggravate the situation. Police authorities, however, have stated that anti-

ti-social elements have infiltrated protest rallies and engaged in violent acts, including the use of petrol bombs, catapults, and stone pelting against security personnel. Officials also reported that some participants were under the influence of alcohol and that certain instigators were supplying materials for violence. Despite these challenges, security forces claim to have exercised restraint in handling the situation. State Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam has appealed to the public and civil society groups to withdraw the shutdowns, highlighting the hardships faced by daily wage earners, farmers, and students. He said the government has accepted most of the demands raised by the JAC and has offered jobs and compensation to the families of the victims. He also assured that adequate security arrangements are in place, including the deployment of central forces and advanced protective vehicles, and urged all communities to maintain peace and resolve issues through dialogue.

Tiger Trafficking Accused Caught in Kaziranga

Guwahati, Apr 20: Officials of Eastern Range, Gamiri and Crime Investigation Range, Biswanath Chariali under the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve have apprehended an absconding accused involved in illegal trading of Royal Bengal tiger body parts. Based on intelligence inputs, the investigation team apprehended the accused, identified as Ratnakanta Pegu (41), a resident of Aathaisisharia village in Biswanath district. Official sources informed that Pegu had been on the run since November 2025 in connection with offence case, ER/02-2025. Officials said the accused also has a history of involvement in rhino poaching cases between 2019 and 2024. Further investigation into the case is currently underway.

Refugee Influx Rises in Mizoram Amid Forced Recruitment Fears in Myanmar

Aizawl, Apr 20: A fresh wave of refugees from Myanmar has entered Mizoram, as young people continue to flee alleged forced recruitment drives by the Chin National Army (CNA). According to officials, at least 31 out of 34 recent arrivals have taken shelter in the Hnahthial district of southern Mizoram. Many of the refugees are teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18, particularly from western Chin State’s Dawn village and nearby areas. They reportedly crossed the border to escape being recruited into insurgent groups engaged in ongoing conflicts with Myanmar’s military. Some refugees claimed

that several youths had already been taken away to serve as combatants. “Fearing a similar fate, we fled our homes and sought refuge across the border,” some of them said. With this latest influx, the number of Myanmar nationals taking shelter in Mizoram has increased to 29,691 as of Friday, up from 29,657 recorded in the second week of April. Authorities noted that the arrivals reflect a steady but gradual flow of displaced people across the border. The new entries have had only a minor impact on Mizoram’s ongoing biometric registration process



for refugees. The overall completion rate has slightly dropped to 96.09% from 96.17% earlier. Officials stated that the biometric enrollment drive, which began in January, has progressed slowly in recent months. However, districts such as Aizawl, Champhai, and

Lunglei have already achieved full enrollment, while the remaining districts are expected to complete the process by the end of 2025. Meanwhile, in Lawngtlai district, which borders both Bangladesh and Myanmar, authorities have also completed biometric registration of refugees from Bangladesh. Out of 2,118 refugees from the Chittagong Hill Tracts currently staying there, biometric data of 603 individuals—amounting to 28.47%—has been collected so far. Officials confirmed that districts with smaller refugee populations, including Champhai, Lunglei, and Aizawl, completed their enrollment processes last year.

Legal Action Threatened Over Violence During Rallies in Manipur

Imphal, Apr 20: Manipur Police has warned that legal action would be initiated against those involved in violence, as well as against instigators, during protest rallies led by women activist groups over the past few days in the strife-torn State. “Over the past few days, nightly Meira rallies are taking place in various areas of Imphal. During several of these occasions, many anti-social elements, under the guise of protesters, have engaged in violent activities. These include the use of petrol bombs, catapults fitted with iron projectiles, and stone pelting directed at security forces,” a statement issued by the state police on Monday said. “It has also been observed that many protesters are under the influence of liquor or other intoxicants.

Furthermore, it has been learnt that some instigators are supplying petrol/kerosene bombs, catapults and iron projectiles ahead of these rallies,” the statement read. “Despite these provocations, security forces have exercised maximum restraint while dispersing the gatherings, with the aim of preventing any collateral damage. In the light of the recent incidents, the concerned agencies are actively carrying out their lawful duties,” the police force stated. “An appeal is hereby made to all law-abiding citizens to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in maintaining peace and harmony and to refrain from violence, destruction of public property and other unlawful activities. Legal action will be initiated against those involved in violence, as well as against instigators,” it warned.

Meghalaya: VPP Escalates Lumpongden Row, Calls Mass Rally At Motphran On April 22

Shillong, Apr 20: The political atmosphere in Meghalaya has reached a fever pitch as the Voice of the People Party (VPP) formally announced a massive public rally at Motphran on April 22. This move represents a strategic escalation in their campaign against the MDA 2.0 government, specifically targeting the controversial 60-year lease agreement granted for the Lumpongden Island resort project. A Stand for Indigenous Rights Speaking after an emergency executive meeting, VPP President Ardent Miller Basaiawmto framed the upcoming 2 PM gathering as a “defensive wall”

for the Khasi-Jaintia community. Basaiawmto didn’t hold back, accusing the NPP-led administration of suffering from a convenient “short-term memory” when it comes to safeguarding indigenous land and interests. He asserted that the government’s consistent refusal to engage with stakeholders has pushed the party to mobilize the masses. Expanding the Battlefront While the Lumpongden resort remains the focal point, the VPP is effectively using this momentum to bundle together a growing checklist of systemic grievances. The rally aims to give voice to: Employment Scandals:

Chronic alleged irregularities within the Meghalaya Public Service Commission (MPSC) and various District Selection Committees. Systemic Neglect: The plight of teachers and the persistent insecurity faced by border communities. The Silence Factor: The administration’s absolute lack of intervention regarding the Green-Tech Foundation’s hunger strike, which has now persisted for over two weeks. From Protest to Political Movement The VPP has made it clear that the Motphran rally is not a one-off event but a “stepping stone” for a larger, statewide agitation.

By following up with massive awareness drives across the region, the party intends to synthesize local frustrations into a unified political challenge that could redefine the state’s power dynamics. For the MDA 2.0 administration, the April 22 rally is a critical juncture. Ignoring these “matchups” between policy and public sentiment is a dangerous game. Much like a captain who forgets to use his best bowler while the game slips away, the government’s continued silence may soon allow a localized protest to transform into an uncontrollable wave of dissent.



North East Chronicle

APRIL 21 2026 VOL 02 NO. 58

Editorial

The Culture of Blame

When problems arise, the instinct to assign blame often overshadows the need to find solutions. Whether in governance, workplaces, or daily life, accountability is frequently replaced by finger-pointing. This culture slows down problem-solving and discourages initiative. Individuals and institutions become more focused on avoiding responsibility than addressing issues effectively. True accountability is not about blame—it is about ownership. A system that encourages responsibility and rewards problem-solving is more likely to deliver results. Moving away from a blame culture requires a shift in mindset. Progress depends not on who is at fault, but on how quickly solutions are found.

Registration-based fuel rationing can ease long lines at filling stations

New crises! New vices! Stand in a fuel queue for an interminable 20 hours. Come back tomorrow and repeat the drill. This is not a dramatisation. This is what thousands of vehicle owners across Bangladesh have been living through. And the worst part is that most of this suffering is not being caused by an actual shortage; in fact, the country’s octane stock has almost reached full storage capacity after a fresh consignment of 25,000 tonnes of octane arrived at the Chattogram port on Friday night.

So, the suffering for fuel is being caused more by panic, hoarding, and the absence of any structured distribution system. And as we understand, the new fuel prices alone might not be able to tackle the situation very desirably. Energy security depends not just on supply availability but also on the equitable and efficient distribution of that supply to end users. When that distribution collapses into a free-for-all, even a country with “historically” large reserves can be pushed into a functional crisis beyond possibilities for swift recovery. That is precisely where we find ourselves. In this context, our proposal for the distribution of fuel—particularly for vehicles—is straightforward: assign fuel access days based on the last digit of a vehicle’s registration number. It may simply go like this: Digits 0 and 1 on Day 01, 2 and 3 on Day 02, and so on across every five consecutive days. A less complex odd-even system will not effectively solve the current remarkable situation. Every vehicle gets its designated window. No one will be permanently denied access. They are simply scheduled more constructively.

One might question, what if someone needs fuel on a day other than the one assigned to them? Our answer is simple. That problem already exists.

Right now, countless people cannot access fuel at all because they cannot physically afford to wait in a queue for 15 to 25 hours. A scheduled system does not create hardship; it distributes it more fairly and more predictably. Fuel rationing during supply stress is not a radical idea. It is a tested instrument of crisis management. During the 1973 oil embargo, the United States introduced odd-even rationing by licence plate number to manage demand at the pump. The approach reduced queue lengths and curbed panic buying within weeks. The principle works because it replaces uncertainty with structure, and structure calms behaviour.

Unmanaged distribution systems disproportionately harm working-class citizens under fuel supply stress, while those with resources and connections find workarounds. Those with the capacity to keep a driver waiting for a full day are quietly filling every container they own. Those without that capacity are abandoning their vehicles entirely. There is a second dimension to this that we cannot ignore. Individual-level hoarding creates an artificial scarcity that feeds on itself. Sometimes people hoard not because they need more but because they fear others will take it first. A rationing calendar breaks that psychological spiral by removing the uncertainty that drives it. The five-day plan also needs a geographic dimension to be effective. It should be designed in a way so as not to encourage people to drive 60 or 70 kilometres to the nearest open station in another district to refill fuel, which will then defeat the entire purpose. If the five-day model proves insufficient, the fallback is a stricter 10-day system where one digit in the registration number gets one day exclusively. Under that model, no single vehicle can refuel within a 10-day window. That is not cruelty.

Anyone who has genuinely managed their vehicle responsibly knows that a full tank may last longer than 10 days under normal usage. Genuine hardship comes from inequality of access, not from having a scheduled access window. We are not blind to implementation challenges. Enforcement needs cooperation from fuel station operators, law enforcement, and a verification mechanism tied to registration numbers. Bangladesh has demonstrated the capaci-

ty to roll out systems at scale when the political will exists. The question is whether that will arrive before this situation deteriorates further. If we do not act, the demand-side disorder during supply disruption can push even a well-stocked economy into a genuine shortage within days. We are not at that point yet. But we are not far from it either if the Iran-US ceasefire doesn’t hold. The response to these reasons and propositions can either be that they receive the intended attention, are scrutinised, and perhaps, following a few necessary changes here and there, a proactive initiative is taken to roll out the rationing system. Or, this proposition will be fired and disposed of with dozens of counter-arguments. It remains to be seen where we are headed as the queues for fuel keep getting longer.

Once more, the vicious circle of unfulfilled promises

In Bangladesh’s political history, perhaps the most defining years are 1971, 1990, and 2024. Much has been said about the political, military, and social dimensions of these watershed moments. People made supreme sacrifices at these junctures to realise their political aspirations, but came up short each time. Curiously, the shortcomings receive little scrutiny in our history. We revel in glory, but avert our gaze from the erosion that follows. We hesitate to confront failure with honesty. The Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci spoke of two interrelated spheres within the state: political society and civil society. At present, Bangladesh’s civil society finds itself unsettled, even paralysed, by the conduct of the political society. Efforts at state reform and institutional renewal seem to have faltered, with the new parliament making it clear that the reformist demands of civil society will not be fulfilled so easily, nor is there a roadmap as to when or how those might be realised. Members of the ruling BNP, despite campaigning for a “yes” vote in the referendum, have yet to take oath as members of a Constitution Reform Assembly. The gap between political commitment and action, further exemplified by the dilution, expiration, or repeal of key ordinances passed during the interim period, has left civil society largely disillusioned. More than 20 months after the uprising, it finds itself with diminishing agency, unable to either advance the reform agenda it once championed or meaningfully process the trauma of the uprising.

A similar pattern unfolded in the years after 1971. Freedom fighters and freedom-loving people who defeated the Pakistani military gradually lost ground to the entrenched bureaucratic order that effectively absorbed and neutralised the promise of transformation. The same policing system, the same DC offices, the same land administration, the same hierarchical structures returned, as if in a tribute to their colonial masters. Similarly, the post-1990 period saw little substantive change. Military rule was overthrown, pro-democracy students and protesters handed a “ten-point” programme to the two leaders, but subsequent decades saw major parties alternate in practising the same politics of power, leaving the British-era bureaucratic order intact. Alongside came political corruption, organised patronage networks, enforced disappearances, killings, the erosion of electoral systems, etc. So, civil society had to begin from scratch again. This time, school and college students stepped forward, their demand for safe roads taking aim at the dysfunction and injustices of the state. These students would later return to the streets to resist quota-based inequalities that subsequently evolved into a broader mass uprising.

So, another “December 16” moment came, powered by people’s aspirations for building an inclusive society. Its continuity led to the February 12 election and referendum. The interim government conducted various experiments on the ideas of reforms before finally placing a portion of uprising-induced demands before the nation through the referendum. Despite procedural flaws and signs of coercion in the reform process, the majority of voters endorsed it as an expression of collective will and necessity, including support from BNP. Yet BNP persistently refuses to join the Constitution Reform Assembly. Of the ordinances issued by the interim government, as per Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman, 97 have been ratified without changes, 13 amended before becoming law, and seven repealed, with the remaining 16 left to



face further scrutiny and change. It is the fate of key ordinances that has caused particular concerns.

The message emerging from the conduct of the government and parliament over the past two months is difficult to ignore. The last election, to them, seems little more than a regime-change vote. As if the “Red July” did not happen. As if hundreds were not killed to bring about this moment. As if thousands of young people did not want something through their defiance and ouster of an autocratic regime. During the interim period, BNP functioned as a principal political actor, deeply embedded in the process. The interim government could scarcely act without its consultation and consent. But since the election, many structural legal reforms have been diluted, dismantled, or stand at risk of meeting either fate. Ordinances aimed at preventing enforced disappearance, improving human rights conditions, and strengthening judicial independence have been lost to political inertia. The contradictions are striking. At the outset of its election manifesto, BNP had pledged to implement its “31-point” reform programme alongside the July charter. It promised to end enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, adopt legal frameworks in line with international conventions, and ensure accountability for those involved in grave abuses. It also pledged to strengthen the independence of the judiciary, stating that control of the subordinate courts will be placed with the Supreme Court, a law for the appointment of judges will be enacted, and the separate secretariat for the judiciary established in 2025 will be strengthened.

These commitments echoed the spirit of earlier reform agendas. The interim government’s ordinances reflected similar intentions. For instance, provisions were introduced for a Supreme Judicial Appointment Council to recommend judicial candidates independently to the president. Measures were proposed to ensure that decisions on appointments, promotions, transfers, and discipline of judges would fall under a separate secretariat, reducing political interference. But such reforms have now been rendered ineffective through the repeal of Supreme Court-related ordinances. Meanwhile, had a strong and independent human rights commission existed during the long Awami League period, it might have mitigated some of the widespread abuses committed then. Interim ordinances created space for independent investigations into allegations against security forces. But that, too, has now been stalled. Among the victims of such abuses, BNP leaders and activists form a significant proportion; one wonders what the families of those victims felt as these reform measures were quietly undone in parliament.

At its core, meaningful reform requires a transformation of political culture—a departure from entrenched hierarchies and colonial legacies. It demands an undiluted commitment to change. Recent parliamentary experience suggests that Bangladesh

remains trapped within its old structures and tendencies. Political parties themselves do not appear ready for genuine transformation. When one party holds an absolute majority in parliament, the opposition can hardly do anything beyond protests and walkouts to impact outcomes. But after decades of bitter experience, people no longer wish to see the parliament reduced to a platform for rhetorical speeches without effect. We have yet to see meaningful reform legislation emerging with bipartisan support through discussions between the government and the opposition. Instead, there are growing signs that the aspirations of July are being sidelined.

BNP policymakers insist they will implement reforms in their own way. It is also true that a government barely two months old requires time. Civil society, too, must exercise patience. But if the civil society is sceptical, it is because it has endured repeated cycles of hope and betrayal before. Since 1972, it has waited to see the realisation of the ideals of the Liberation War; since 1991, the implementation of the ten-point programme; and for the past 21 months, the fulfilment of the promise of “Red July.” This prolonged uncertainty risks pushing society towards extremism on one hand, while allowing entrenched power structures to continually reproduce themselves on the other. It also raises an uncomfortable question: how much of our independence and uprisings since 1971 can still be claimed as unqualified achievements? Are we, in reality, still struggling to move beyond zero? For the country’s oligarchic structures, neither 1971, nor 1990, nor 2024 appears to have posed a fundamental challenge. It is time for the citizens to look closely in the mirror and determine a workable course.

What prevents women from riding bicycles

Stand on any road in Dhaka. Men and boys cycle freely, weaving through traffic with ease. Now look for women—you will see very few. And when you do, they draw stares. This is not just cultural; it reflects a persistent economic exclusion the country has been facing for decades.

The stigma is rooted in perceived immodesty and a stubborn assumption about where women are meant to exist. Half the population is locked out of one of the cheapest and most liberating forms of transports available. According to a 2018 IMF estimate, reducing gender disparity in labour force participation could raise Bangladesh’s GDP by almost 40 percent. Another figure by the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) shows that only around 42.5 percent of working-age women participate in the labour force in the country, against some 81.3 percent of men. Here, the reason is not that the women are not as qualified or educated as men, but the fact that men are allowed to have more access and more freedom to move. According to a programme by the Women’s Empowerment for Inclusive Growth (WING) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that connects women across five different districts to build their entrepreneurial skills, physical mobility is among the most pressing constraints for female entrepreneurs.

Distance is also one of the main causes of dropouts among schoolgirls in the country and ensuring mobility could effectively tackle that problem. For example, India’s Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojana in Bihar—launched in 2006—was an initiative aimed at solving the distance problem many girls faced by providing them with bicycles. A study in the



American Economic Journal found it raised girls’ enrolment by up to 59.8 percent and cut the gender education gap by 51.2 percent. In Zambia, a UN-documented programme found girls with bicycles experienced 22 percent less sexual harassment while travelling to school.

One of the barriers to women not using cycles to commute to and from their places of education or work is a lack of institutional support and infrastructural capacity. For example, the Netherlands—known for its cycling culture—heavily invested in safe infrastructure including dedicated bike lanes with speed limits up to 50 kph to close the gender gap among people using cycles. So, one thing is fairly clear: infrastructure does not follow demand, it creates it. There is also a public health lens that can be considered here. For example, a ten-year Swedish cohort study of 23,732 adults found that those who cycled to work had significantly lower odds of obesity, hypertension, and elevated blood sugar. Another 2023 study found that active commuting reduces cardiovascular risk by around 11 percent, with stronger protective effects for women. In light of recent unrest in the Middle East, Bangladesh is facing a structural energy strain, with 46% of supply imported and costs rising and more people switching to cycling might help to solve this problem.

So, what methods can Bangladesh adopt to ensure more people—especially women—can safely pick up their bikes to make regular journeys? Well, three actors must stop waiting for each other. First, the private sector, especially the ready-made garment industry where women are the work-force majority, can introduce subsidised bicycle access for female employees. Development organisations can also come forward by initiating schemes like “Cycle to Work”.

The government can play the most important role by making roads safer, building cycling lanes, ensuring safety lighting, and running public campaign that would normalise women using cycles. It is worth remembering here that Bangladesh has shifted norms before—from girls’ education to women’s work. A bicycle has the potential to unlocks access to markets, schools, and healthcare. Keeping women off bicycles is not only cultural, it is an economic and social cost the country can no longer ignore.

Bet on value funds when the chips are down

New Delhi: As the market has seen a meaningful correction, individuals should consider investing in value funds. These funds invest in fundamentally strong companies available at a discount to intrinsic value. Fund managers in value funds take contrarian bets, which start delivering when market leadership shifts from expensive growth to reasonably valued segments. Value funds generate alpha through buying undervalued stocks, benefiting from mean reversion, and playing sector rotation cycles. “As sentiment stabilises, these stocks tend to see valuation re-rating, making corrections an ideal entry point for value strategies,” says Nirav Karkera, head, Research, Fisdom. Investors should focus on the fund manager’s discipline and consistency in following a true value approach, as well as the portfolio’s valuation comfort (P/E, P/B vs market). They must be prepared for periods of underperformance, since value investing requires patience. Swapnil Aggarwal, director, VSRK Capital, says unlike flexi-cap funds, which diversify across market caps, value funds are more tilted toward large-cap, out-of-favour sectors, leading to sharper gains during valuation re-rating cycles. Value investing style delivers its strongest returns in the one to two years after a market downturn, not during the bull run.

“Investors who got into value funds after the Covid crash in 2020 saw exceptional returns in 2021-22. The current correction has once again created that gap,” says Sha-shank Udupa, a fund manager at Small-case.

Benefits when market recoversMarket corrections are when value investing shows its worth. The broad correction across all market sizes has caused significant mispricing across financials, infrastructure, and some industrial companies. Value funds can invest across different market caps and focus on safety. These



funds are well-placed to benefit when the market recovers. Sonam Srivastava, founder, Wright Research PMS, says value investing perform best during periods of fear and correction. “Investors who bought value funds during earlier corrections often saw strong returns over three to five years. The current market looks like a similar opportunity,” she says. Value funds tend to outperform particularly in early cycle recoveries and rotation-driven markets, where valuation gaps start narrowing. Value funds generate alpha primarily through valuation-driven stock selection, buying fundamentally strong companies that are temporarily undervalued and benefiting when prices revert to fair value. Swapnil Aggarwal, director, VSRK Capital, says unlike flexi-cap funds, which diversify across market caps, value funds are more tilted toward large-cap, out-of-favour sectors, leading to sharper gains during valuation re-rating cycles. Value investing style delivers its strongest returns in the one to two years after a market downturn, not during the bull run.

Cultural capital meets market strategy: Sunrise Spices taps Bihu sentiment to strengthen Assam footprint

Jorhat: Sunrise Spices, part of ITC Ltd., has leveraged Rongali Bihu to deepen its market penetration in Assam through its four-day cultural initiative, ‘Kristir Milan Setu – Bridge of Cultural Unity’, held from April 14 to April 17. The event reflects a strategic blend of cultural investment and brand positioning in a region where consumer behaviour is closely tied to tradition and community identity. The initiative showcased Assam’s tribal diversity through performances of Assamese, Bodo, Karbi, Rabha and Mising dance forms, with participation from 56 groups across the state. Designed as a cultural union, the programme created an immersive engagement platform, reinforcing brand recall through experiential marketing.

Performances were evaluated on authenticity, coordination, expression and stage presence, ensuring a structured and competitive showcase. The event concluded with a felicitation ceremony attended by Assamese actor Ravi Sarma, alongside a Barabaran performance by the Tezpuriya Thespian Dance Group. Sunrise Spices Business Head Piyush Mishra said the initiative aligns with the company’s focus on preserving heritage recipes while strengthening regional consumer connect. In Jorhat, such culturally aligned campaigns significantly influence demand patterns during festive cycles. In Upper Assam’s evolving retail landscape, where traditional preferences intersect with modern branding, Sunrise Spices’ approach enhances consumer loyalty, drives seasonal sales, and positions the brand competitively against regional and national players.

Dividend amount announcement Reliance Industries earnings expectations

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL)

New Delhi: India’s most valued listed firm, is scheduled to announce its financial performance for the fourth quarter next week. According to the BSE results calendar and the company’s recent exchange filing, the RIL board would meet on Friday, April 24, 2026, to consider and approve the company’s audited financial results for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2026. On Friday, shares of the oil-to-telecom conglomerate, which currently has a market capitalisation of Rs 18,47,317.84 crore, settled 1.61% higher at Rs 1,365.10 apiece on the BSE, up from the previous close of Rs 1,343.45. RIL Q4 results date, time

While the Mukesh Ambani-led firm hasn’t announced an official time for the earnings release, historical trends over the past three quarters indicate that RIL has announced earnings after market hours, setting expectations for a late-afternoon or evening announcement on the upcoming Friday, April 24. Reliance dividend 2026Beyond the quarterly scorecard, during the April 24 meeting, the board will also recommend a dividend on equity shares of the company for the financial year ended March 31, 2026. Looking at RIL’s dividend history, it doled out a final dividend of Rs 5.50 per share on August 14, 2025. This followed previous final payouts of Rs 10 on August 19, 2024, Rs 9 on August 21, 2023, and Rs 8 on August 18, 2022. “Jio’s revenue is likely to grow ~2.5% QoQ, driven by a ~0.6% increase in subscriber base along with a ~1% sequential improvement in ARPU to ~Rs216,” the brokerage said. PL Capital pointed out that RIL’s standalone EBITDA is expected to take a sequential hit, dropping to Rs 14,150 crore. This is driven by “higher freight costs due to disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz, elevated gas costs from lower availability for captive use, and weak petchem spreads”. PL Capital expects Jio’s EBITDA to rise 3.3% quarter-on-quarter, fueled by steady subscriber additions and a 1.1% sequential increase in Average Revenue Per



User (ARPU) to Rs 215.8. The brokerage anticipates retail EBITDA to remain somewhat under pressure at around Rs 6,870 crore, a 5.6% year-on-year growth. RIL earnings expectationsAccording to a latest preview note by Systematix Institutional Equities, Reliance is expected to post a steady quarter. The brokerage estimated RIL’s consolidated revenue to grow by approximately 8% year-on-year to Rs 2.82 lakh crore. Meanwhile, consolidated EBITDA is expected to climb 8.5% year-on-year to Rs 47,600 crore, it said. However, the brokerage estimated the net profit at Rs 19,217 crore, marking a 1% decline from the same period last year. Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), India’s most valued listed firm, is scheduled to announce its financial performance for the fourth quarter next week. According to the BSE results calendar and the company’s recent exchange filing, the RIL board would meet on Friday, April 24, 2026, to consider and approve the company’s audited financial results for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2026. On Friday, shares of the oil-to-telecom conglomerate, which currently has a market capitalisation

of Rs 18,47,317.84 crore, settled 1.61% higher at Rs 1,365.10 apiece on the BSE, up from the previous close of Rs 1,343.45. RIL Q4 results date, time According to a latest preview note by Systematix Institutional Equities, Reliance is expected to post a steady quarter. The brokerage estimated RIL’s consolidated revenue to grow by approximately 8% year-on-year to Rs 2.82 lakh crore. Meanwhile, consolidated EBITDA is expected to climb 8.5% year-on-year to Rs 47,600 crore, it said. However, the brokerage estimated the net profit at Rs 19,217 crore, marking a 1% decline from the same period last year.

While the Mukesh Ambani-led firm hasn’t announced an official time for the earnings release, historical trends over the past three quarters indicate that RIL has announced earnings after market hours, setting expectations for a late-afternoon or evening announcement on the upcoming Friday, April 24. Reliance dividend 2026Beyond the quarterly scorecard, during the April 24 meeting, the board will also recommend a dividend on equity shares of the company for the financial year ended March 31, 2026.

In India, Tesla is getting ready to introduce a six-seater Y version

New Delhi: Tesla Inc. is preparing to introduce a new, larger version of its global best-selling electric SUV in India as early as next week, according to people familiar with the matter.

The Model Y L — a six-seat, long-wheelbase configuration that made its global debut in China last year — will be Tesla’s first new product in India since the Elon Musk-led carmaker’s tepid market entry in the South Asian nation. The variant features a three-row seating layout for families seeking more space than the standard five-seat Model Y, which Tesla began selling in India last July.

The new addition will be shipped out of China’s Shanghai gigafactory — the only site making this SUV so far and from where Tesla also imports the Model Y standard and long-range variants for India.

The expanded lineup is part of a oader effort at Tesla to refresh its portfolio without launching entirely new platforms as well as bolster its underwhelming sales in India, where imported cars face tariffs ranging from 70% to 110%.

Tesla representatives in India and China did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment on the new car launch. Tesla registered only 227



cars in the country for all of 2025, according to India’s official vehicle registration data. The weaker-than-expected demand forced the carmaker to offer discounts of as much as 200,000 rupees (\$2,153) as it tried to offload the vehicles it had imported to India, Bloomberg News reported in January. The company had originally aimed to utilize its full 2,500-car annual quota last year. Globally, Tesla has been leaning on incremental upgrades and new variants like the Model Y L to sustain demand in an increasingly challenged electric-vehicle market. Its worldwide sales fell in 2025 for

a second consecutive year, losing the No. 1 EV-seller spot to China’s BYD Co.

Tesla unveiled the Model Y L in China in August, where it is priced from about 339,000 yuan (\$49,679), positioning it above the standard Model Y in the world’s largest electric-vehicle market.

The company has signaled that the Model Y L is not a China-only product. The vehicle has already been confirmed for markets such as Australia and New Zealand, and Tesla has indicated other regions could follow. That have weighed on travel demand.

200-DMA, the analyst selects three midcap companies for a potential 40% gain

New Delhi: The Nifty MidCap index has surged 14 per cent its April low of 19,218 to 21,900 levels in the last 10 trading sessions. In the process, the index now quotes above its long-term 200-day moving average (200-DMA), which stands at 21,620, for the third straight day. Muthuselvaraj M, technical analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan highlights that the MidCap index has retraced 78 per cent of the fall, and is trading positively, signaling a bullish reversal towards 26,800 and 31,000 in the medium and long term, respectively. “Significant buying opportunities are present at its key support level of 17,590, which aligns with the 50-Monthly Exponential Average - a classic Golden Crossover indicator. This points to a strong positive trend, where overcoming the previous resistance at 22,650 could propel the index towards the 31,000 mark,” explains the analyst. Among individual stocks, Muthuselvaraj is upbeat on the prospects for - Waaree Energies, BSE and Phoenix Mills. Waaree Energies has experienced a triangle breakout on the weekly timeframe. This indicates potential positivity, leading towards ₹3,640 and ₹4,400 in the short and medium term, respectively, said the analyst from Mirae Asset Sharekhan. “The price is supported by the 20-weekly exponential moving average. Furthermore, both MACD and RSI indicators are showing strength. Thus, we believe the upward trend will continue, with key support at ₹3,000,” said Muthuselvaraj.

The analyst highlights that the BSE is trading above all exponential moving averages, and has broken out of a flag pat-



tern with a strong green candle, thus indicating potential rally towards ₹3,650 - ₹3,900 levels RSI and MACD indicators are showing an upward trend and positive crossover on a weekly basis. Thus, we believe that the rally will continue towards ₹3,900, with ₹3,000 acting as a key support, he said.

After hitting a peak at ₹2,068, Phoenix Mills underwent a period of consolidation, forming a flag pattern. Muthuselvaraj notes that the stock is currently trading positively after turning from a swing low. “The price is also trading above the 50-EMA and 20-SMA. Considering these factors, the upward rally is expected to continue towards ₹2,100 and ₹2,500 levels, with key support at ₹1,515,” said the analyst. This translates into an upside potential of 40.3 per cent from the last close.

Buyouts accelerate as PE looks for control

Mumbai: Private equity investors in India are increasingly favouring buyouts as they seek greater control and operational influence, driving a sharp rise in both deal value and volume. According to a recent EY report, average annual buyout investments rose 52% to \$14.2 billion during 2021–2025, compared with \$9.3 billion in 2016–2020. The average number of transactions also increased 30% to 56 deals from 43 over the same period. The shift reflects a maturing market where a growing pool of cash-generative businesses is becoming available for full or majority

from an exit standpoint,” Soni said. Despite the rise, India’s buyout model differs from developed markets where leverage plays a central role. “Unlike the western PE buyout playbook, the India strategy isn’t underpinned by debt within a perfectly oiled leveraged buyout (LBO) machine. Deals are largely equity funded and returns here have to be earned the hard way — through governance reform, operational improvement, systematised growth, and less from financial engineering,” Nruhya Madappa, partner at 3one4 Capital, said. She added that the continued acceleration of buyouts



stake sales. EY said that founders, families and early investors are increasingly open to meaningful exits, often linked to succession planning, portfolio restructuring or professionalisation. This is creating a pipeline of assets where promoters are willing to cede control. “Private equity investors are also increasingly prioritising control as returns from minority growth investing have become harder to deliver in a high-valuation environment,” Vivek Soni, partner and national leader, private equity services, EY India, told Fe. He added that buyouts offer scope for deeper operational value creation and tighter governance. Global capital dynamics are also contributing to the trend.

Large international funds, with record levels of dry powder, are deploying capital through control transactions. “They are bringing not just capital but battle-tested operational playbooks: 100-day plans, Ebitda engineering, and exit discipline that transforms good businesses into institutional-grade assets,” Sunil Thakur, partner and investment committee member at Quadria Capital, said. Improving exit visibility is another factor supporting buyout growth. “Sponsor-to-sponsor deals, strong strategic interest and a resilient IPO market have made buyouts more predictable

despite lower leverage highlights both asset quality and a shift in how global investors view India. “That supply of high-quality, under-managed assets, combined with a maturing IPO market providing credible exit pathways, is what’s drawing the world’s best capital allocators,” Madappa said.

Maturing MarketOver 2016–2025, buyouts accounted for 25% of total PE/VC investments by value and 5% by volume, making them the third-largest strategy after growth investments (\$136.5 billion) and startup investments (\$121.9 billion), according to EY. Industry participants expect the momentum to continue. “Over the long term, as India’s startup and mid-market ecosystem continues to mature, buyouts will become a more mainstream investment strategy, with stronger exit visibility and more predictable return profiles,” said Vikram Gupta, founder and managing partner at IvyCap Ventures.

While global buyout activity has softened in recent quarters, the impact on India is expected to be limited. “In such an environment, investors often prefer control-oriented strategies like buyouts, which provide greater visibility and the ability to drive operational improvements,” Gupta said.

Olympic cyclist Rohan Dennis criticizes the media's "false narrative" and claims he never intended to harm wife Melissa Hoskins



Australia: Following the death of his wife in 2023, Olympic cyclist Rohan Dennis attacked journalists on social media, claiming they fabricated a “false narrative” about him. The former professional cyclist posted on Instagram late on Monday night, saying, “The narrative which the media ran with was clear.” “They wanted me to resemble the abusive husband.” Dennis received a 17-month suspended sentence in May of last year after his automobile struck and killed his wife, fellow Olympic cyclist Melissa Hoskins, in the vicinity of their suburban Adelaide home. Despite entering a guilty plea to an aggravated act likely to cause harm, he was not prose-

cuted for Hoskins’s death. Dennis made a comeback on Instagram in March of this year, posting a picture of a black Porsche along with the words, “What an absolute weapon.” Sarah Quick, the commissioner for victims’ rights in South Australia, described the tweet as “deeply offensive.” Later, Dennis shared a photo of his two kids on social media with the message, “Two absolute weapons.” The world champion has expressed disapproval of how his case has been covered by the media. When a journalist reached out to him in mid-March on his social media remarks, he said, “Didn’t take these rats long.” Dennis wrote on Monday that he loved Melissa and that hurting her

was the last thing he ever wanted. “In my entire life, I have never considered using physical force to argue with Melissa. I have always opposed all forms of mistreatment of women, particularly those who bear my children.” According to Dennis’ Instagram post, following Hoskins’ funeral, reporters questioned him about whether he was a murderer and how he felt about killing his children’s mother, whom they would never see again. He wrote this week, “The media talk about the kids and how sad they are for the kids.” “Yet they happily stalk, follow and harass not just adults in my family but even when the kids are involved.” “They know I never intentionally or unintentionally

used a vehicle as a weapon. Yet they come after me for cheap clicks. Pathetic journalism.” “Time for all you so called journalists and media outlets to back off and leave my family alone.” South Australia’s district court heard Dennis and Hoskins had argued about kitchen renovations before Dennis got in his car and drove away in late December 2023. Hoskins jumped on to the bonnet and Dennis continued driving before Hoskins got off and opened the car door. Dennis closed it but she held on. During sentencing in May 2025, judge Ian Press said it was important to acknowledge Dennis was not charged with causing Hoskins’ death. “Unbeknownst to you, your wife held on to the car as you accelerated down the street. It was then that she fell and lost her life,” he said. Dennis agreed to a \$100, two-year good behaviour bond, and had his licence suspended for five years. During his competitive career, Dennis won two world titles in the road time trial, as well as silver in the team pursuit at the 2012 Olympics and bronze in the road time trial at the Tokyo Olympics. Hoskins competed at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics on the track in the team pursuit and was in the squad that won the 2015 world title.

False-flag allegations about the Hungary pipeline circulate as JD Vance intervenes in the election

Europe: The prime minister, Viktor Orbán, announced that Hungary has put the gas pipeline that crosses the Serbian border under military guard as allegations of a false-flag operation persisted ahead of a crucial election this weekend and an official visit by US vice president JD Vance on Tuesday. One day after Serbia claimed to have discovered “explosives of devastating power” close to a pipeline that transports Russian natural gas to Hungary and abroad, Orbán traveled to Hungary’s southern border with Serbia on Monday. Days before a fiercely contested election in which Orbán is lagging in the majority of



hands amid the volatility, is falling flat as he faces an unprecedented challenge from Péter Magyar, a former top member of Fidesz. Magyar described on Monday on social media Orbán’s remarks regarding the pipeline as “nothing more than the cheap theatre of a fearful regime”. That the backdrop of Orbán’s remarks included a poster that read: “Comrades, it’s over,” was just a funny coincidence, he added. Speaking late on Sunday, Đuro Jovanić, the director of Belgrade’s counterintelligence Military Security Agency (VBA), countered Fidesz’s suggestion that Ukraine was responsible for the incident, saying it was “not true”. The markings on the explosives, while not indicative of those who organised the plot, were American, he added. While most countries did not comment on the incident, the Kremlin said on Monday, without evidence, it believed that Ukraine had planted the explosives.

“And prior to this, as we know, the Kyiv regime was directly involved in such acts of sabotage against critical energy infrastructure,” the Kremlin’s spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, told reporters. “It is highly likely that signs of the Kyiv regime’s involvement will be found this time too,” he added. On

Monday, after several journalists said they had heard rumblings that something might happen around Easter involving a gas pipeline and Serbia and Russia, a former senior counterintelligence officer, Peter Buda, said the potential plans had been an open secret among many. “Plans for this false-flag attack had been circulating since February,” he told the Guardian. The uncertainty hovering over Hungary that Orbán could use the incident to prevent the election from going ahead as planned on 12 April – concerns voiced by Magyar – comes as the US vice-president and the second lady land in Hungary for a two-day visit. The visit has sparked questions over why Vance and his wife, Usha, are carving out time to visit Budapest as the US administration faces a threat of escalation in its five-week war on Iran. Since returning to power, Trump and his government have broken with the principle among western democracies – to which past US presidents have adhered – of not taking sides in foreign elections. Instead, the Trump administration openly shows support for leaders it sees as compatible with MAGA ideology and foreign policy priorities – regardless of their democratic credentials. “Hungary is their El Dorado,” said Jacob

Heilbrunn, the editor of National Interest. “Vance has always been besotted with Hungary for political and religious reasons.” The veneration spans across much of the current US administration. Orbán has been lauded by Trump’s former adviser Steve Bannon as “Trump before Trump”, while Kevin Roberts, the head of the Heritage Foundation thinktank that produced Project 2025, a far-right blueprint for Trump’s second term, once said: “Modern Hungary is not just a model for conservative statecraft, but the model.” While Trump has repeatedly endorsed Orbán, describing the rightwing populist leader as a “fantastic guy” and a “strong and powerful leader”, Heilbrunn saw Vance’s visit as a hint that Trump believed Orbán could lose the election. “Trump hates to be associated with a loser, so he is sending Vance to be the fall guy,” he said. The visit, during which officials have said Vance will hold a joint press conference with Orbán before the US vice-president speaks at a mass rally “on the occasion of Hungarian-American friendship day”, underscores the symbolic consequences the election will have for far-right movements. In January, nearly a dozen rightwing leaders came together to endorse Orbán in a video.

Politicians in Spain argue over a request to relocate Picasso’s Guernica



Europe: In order to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the bombing of the Basque town, the Basque regional government in Spain has requested that Guernica, perhaps Picasso’s most famous painting, be temporarily displayed in the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. This request has sparked a dispute between the Madrid and Basque regional governments in Spain. Since 1992, the piece has been on display at the Reina Sofia museum in Madrid; numerous efforts to have it relocated to the Basque Country have been turned down. Aitor Esteban, the chairman of the Basque nationalist party, and Isabel Díaz Ayuso, the vocal conservative president of Ma-

drid, have been insulting each other in the most recent request, accusing each other of being “provincial.” Ayuso stated, “It makes no sense to return everything to its origin.” “In that case, we should send all of Picasso’s works to Málaga,” he said, making reference to his birthplace. Reina Sofia warned that transferring Guernica would jeopardize the art, saying, “It represents a provincial mindset when culture is universal.” Ayuso’s idea of national identity “is to drink beer on the terrace of a bar,” Esteban shot back, alluding to the Madrid president’s insistence on keeping bars open during the pandemic. Imanol Pradales, the Basque president,

asked, “Does the Spanish government have the courage to move Guernica? They dragged Franco out of his tomb and aren’t capable of moving a painting from Madrid to Euskadi [the Basque region]? The ball is in their court.” The Basque government wants the painting to be hung in the Guggenheim from 1 October until 30 June to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the bombing of Guernica. Picasso’s black-and-white masterpiece depicts the violence of the attack carried out by the Italian air force on April 26, 1937, during the Spanish civil war. Italy was an ally of the Spanish general Francisco Franco and the attack was an early experiment in what would soon become a commonplace of warfare: the aerial bombardment of civilians. Estimates of the number killed in Guernica vary widely, from 126 to 1,654, but in any case Picasso’s work became an international symbol of the horrors of war. He painted it shortly after the event and it was exhibited at the Paris International Exposition in 1937. After that it toured Europe and the US and, as Picasso opposed its return to Spain during the Franco dictatorship, for many years it was hung in the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. In 2000, the Reina Sofia turned down a request from MoMA to borrow Guernica, saying “the great icon of our museum must remain, without exception, separate from the policy on lending works to other museums”.

Before Orthodox Easter, Zelenskyy reiterates his offer of a truce

Europe: The president of Ukraine has extended his proposal to Russia for a mutual cease-fire on attacks on energy facilities. “We will retaliate in kind if Russia is prepared to halt attacks on our energy infrastructure,” he declared. “The Americans have communicated this proposal to the Russian side.” Last week, Volodymyr Zelenskyy volunteered to maintain a ceasefire for Easter, which Orthodox Christians celebrate in Russia and Ukraine on Sunday, April 13. Zelenskyy stated that Russia seemed unlikely to accept the truce in his remarks on Monday following an overnight attack on the Black Sea port of Odesa that left three people dead and at least sixteen injured. He declared, “We have repeatedly proposed to Russia a cease-fire at least for Easter.” However, everything is the same for them. Nothing is considered sacred. According to the Russian defense ministry, Ukrainian drones targeted the Caspian Pipeline Consortium’s oil shipping facility in southern Russia early on Monday, causing damage to a mooring point and igniting four oil tanks. The CPC did not immediately respond when the Ukrainian army claimed to have targeted another terminal in the port of Novorossiysk. The CPC pipeline handles about 1%



of the world’s oil supplies, as well as about 80% of Kazakhstan’s oil exports. A reserve in the Australian army has been accused of operating drones for Ukraine. The Australian Federal Police accused the 25-year-old Felixstow resident of Adelaide, South Australia, of working for a foreign military without authorization, according to the AAP news agency. This is the first time someone has been charged with the crime, and if proven guilty, the man may spend up to 20 years behind bars. Australian law restricts the amount of work defense personnel can do without permission with a foreign military, govern-

ment, or business. According to reports, the man left for Ukraine in May 2025 and returned to Australia in January 2026. A Russian ship carrying wheat believed to have sunk in the Sea of Azov after a drone attack has been found and towed to shore, Russia’s state news agency Tass said on Monday. The death toll has risen to three, it added. Crew abandoned the ship last Friday and made it to shore on Monday, according to Russian reports. Russia jailed on Monday a former governor of the Kursk border region, where Ukraine’s army broke through in 2024, for 14 years over alleged kickbacks for gov-

ernment contracts related to the construction of fortifications. Since August 2024, the Kremlin has gone after top regional and military officials for failing to stop the incursion – a massive embarrassment for Vladimir Putin. Smirnov, the former Kursk governor, was “sentenced to 14 years in prison and a fine of 400 million rubles [£3.8m/US\$5m]”, a court statement said. Another former Kursk governor, Roman Starovoyt, who led the region until just before the Ukrainian breakthrough, died last year by alleged suicide – a fate that regularly befalls officials who run foul of the Russian president.

Fearing an energy crisis, the PM of Thailand encourages working from home



Asia: Anutin Charnvirakul, the prime minister of Thailand, has warned of the effects of the Middle East conflict and urged people to conserve energy by working from home and carpooling. Anutin stated in a social media message that Thailand’s reliance on imported gas and oil made it vulnerable to the issue and that the nation could

not afford to be complacent. He added, “I also ask for the cooperation of all citizens and the private sector to conserve energy in the same way, whether it’s through WFH (work from home) or WFA (work from anywhere), reducing the use of personal cars and switching to public transportation, carpooling, and using electricity responsibly.” “We remain vulnerable as a country that imports a large volume of oil, even though Thailand has high oil reserves compared to other countries,” he continued. “We can’t continue to be complacent and handle our oil resources the way we have in the past.” The administration pledged to do everything within its ability to protect the people from the situation, he said, and addi-

tional steps might be forthcoming. Governments around Asia have taken action to try to save energy. For example, the Philippines and Sri Lanka have implemented four-day work weeks for many public sector employees, and Vietnam has called for workers to work from home. The Thai government had already suspended most overseas trips for its workers, and instructed officials to wear short-sleeved shirts without ties, except during ceremonies, to reduce the need for air conditioning. The Thai commerce ministry has announced it will tighten crude palm oil exports and control bottled palm oil prices, starting from Tuesday, to protect domestic supplies as demand for biodiesel increases. Diesel prices in Thailand

rose above 50 baht (about £1.15) a litre this weekend, up from about 30 baht a litre in late February. The soaring energy costs have caused misery for farmers as well as the transport and travel sector, which is gearing up for Songkran, Thailand’s traditional new year holiday. People often travel back to their home provinces for the holiday, which is also a draw for tourists who take part in water fights in the streets. However, some tourism businesses fear this year’s festivities will be quieter due to the rising cost of flights and disruption to aviation. On Monday, Indonesia announced a 28 percentage point rise in the surcharge on jet fuel and said it would allow airlines to raise domestic ticket prices by up to 13%.

How Safe Is Your Milk? A Candid Look At Quality, Adulteration And Trust

Milk sits quietly at the centre of Indian households, poured into morning tea, stirred into children’s routines, and trusted almost instinctively as a source of nutrition. But that trust, increasingly, is being questioned.

According to Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, milk continues to be one of the most frequently adulterated food products in the country. And while the word “adulteration” often feels abstract, its implications are anything but. Ravin Saluja, Director, Sterling Agro Industries Limited (NOVA Dairy), points out that the issue is not limited to dilution. “Adulterants such as water, starch, detergent, and synthetic substances not only reduce nutritional value but can also irritate the digestive system,” he notes. Over time, this can disrupt gut health and impair nutri-

ent absorption, particularly concerning for infants and the elderly, who rely heavily on milk as a primary nutritional source.

What makes the issue more complex is that milk safety is not determined at a single point, it is a chain of decisions and practices. From the moment milk is collected to the time it reaches a consumer’s home, every stage matters. Hygiene during milking, temperature control during storage, and the integrity of transportation systems all play a role. Pasteurisation significantly reduces harmful bacteria, but it is not a foolproof guarantee if the cold chain is broken or handling is compromised along the way.

Saluja emphasises that consumer awareness is becoming just as important as production standards. Checking packaging quality, certification marks, and expiry dates are no longer optional, they are essential habits. Increasingly, transparent supply chains and improved testing technologies are helping rebuild trust, but they also highlight how much responsibility now rests with both producers and consumers.

From a medical standpoint, the stakes are even clearer. Lt. Col. Dr. Sumit Lavania, Consultant and Head of Internal Medicine, Yatharth Super Speciality Hospital, reinforces that milk, when sourced and processed correctly, remains a highly valuable part of the diet. Rich in protein, calcium, and essential vitamins like B12 and D, it supports everything from bone health to overall metabolic function.

But when compromised, the same food can become a health risk. Dr. Lavania warns that adulteration with substances such as detergent, urea, or starch can lead to serious con-

sequences from digestive distress to toxicity and, in severe cases, long-term organ damage. Vulnerable groups, including children, pregnant women, and older adults, are particularly at risk.

He also highlights a critical distinction that often goes overlooked: pasteurised milk is significantly safer than raw milk, which can carry harmful bacteria if not handled properly. The assumption that “fresh” automatically means “safe” can, in many cases, be misleading. So where does this leave the everyday consumer?

Perhaps in a more active role than before. Buying milk today is no longer just a routine purchase, it is a decision that requires a degree of scrutiny. Choosing reputable brands, ensuring proper refrigeration, and paying attention to packaging and expiry details are small but crucial steps.



Trust, in this context, is no longer blind, it is informed. And that may be the real shift. Milk, once considered unquestionable in its purity, now reflects a broader truth about modern food systems: safety is not guaranteed, it is managed. Through better regulation, improved technology, and more aware consumers, that management is improving.

But the question, how safe is your milk? remains worth asking. Because the answer, increasingly, depends on how closely we are willing to look.

DIY Skincare In The Age Of Reels: What’s Safe, What’s Risky

DIY skincare is not new to Dr Blossom Kochhar, Aromatherapist & Author; it is, in fact, where her journey began. Long before social media and reels turned it into a trend, Dr Kochhar was deeply connected to nature, studying ingredients, understanding their therapeutic properties, and using them to create simple yet effective skincare solutions. That foundation eventually shaped Dr Kochhar’s approach to aromatherapy and natural beauty.

However, what concerns DrKochhar today is not DIY skincare itself, but the way it is being consumed. In the age of reels, information is quick, visual, and often incomplete. As Dr Kochhar emphasises, skincare is not a trend you can replicate in 30 seconds. It requires understanding, patience, and a deep awareness of your own skin. What works for one person may not work for another, and blindly following viral hacks can lead to more harm than good. Dr Kochhar frequently observes the misuse of strong kitchen ingredients such as lemon, baking soda, and even undiluted essential oils. While these are natural,



they are also highly potent. Dr Kochhar cautions that without the right knowledge of dilution, combinations, and skin compatibility, these ingredients can disrupt the skin’s natural pH, weaken its barrier, and trigger sensitivity, dryness, or pigmentation. It is important, as Dr. Blossom Kochhar notes, to remember that “natural” does not automatically mean “safe.” Another key aspect often overlooked, according to Dr Kochhar, is formulation.

Professionally developed skincare products undergo extensive research, testing, and stabilisation. They are designed to deliver consistent results while maintaining the skin’s health. DIY mixtures, on the other hand, lack preservation, precision, and long-term reliability, something Dr Kochhar believes consumers must be more mindful of.

That said, Dr Kochhar continues to believe in the power of nature. Simple,

mindful DIY practices, when done correctly, can complement a skincare routine. For Dr Kochhar, the focus should always be on balance, blending traditional wisdom with modern science, and most importantly, listening to your skin. In the end, as Dr Kochhar concludes, skincare is not about chasing every trend you see online. It is about building a routine that nurtures, protects, and respects your skin over time.

Is it true that ... only overweight people are at risk of high cholesterol

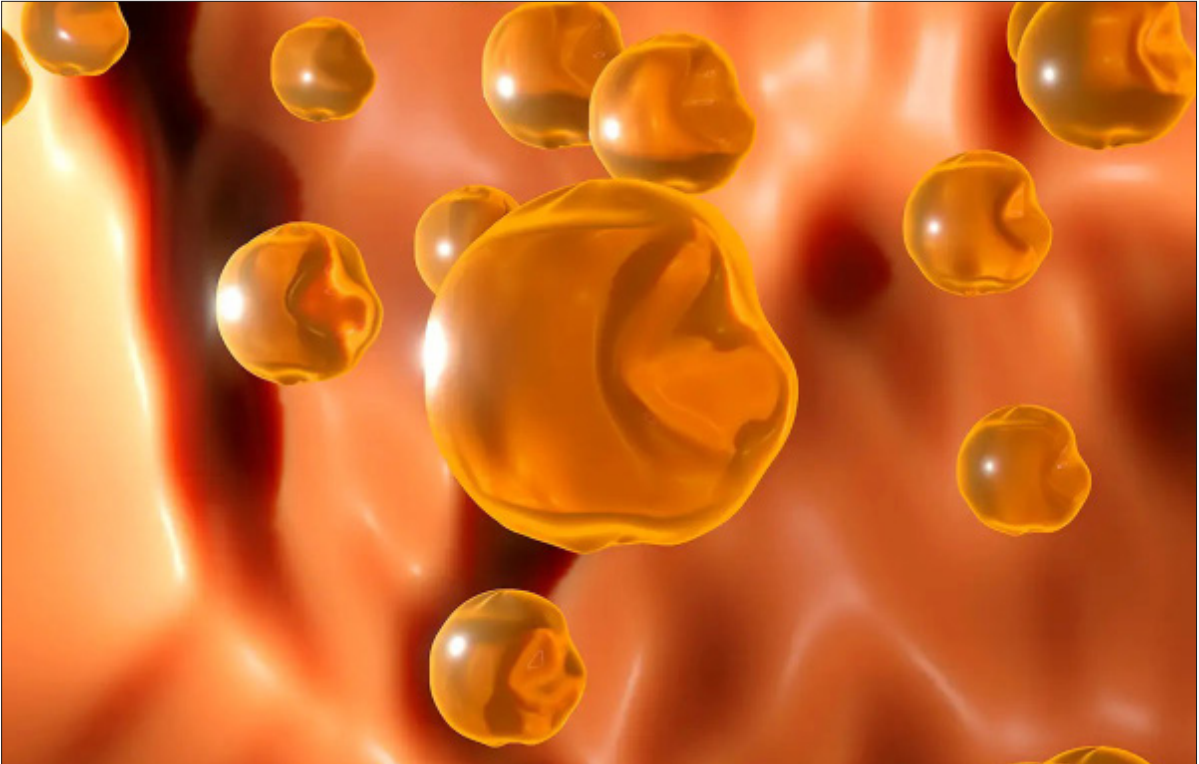
Cholesterol, a fatty substance mostly made by the liver and used by the body to build cells and produce hormones, has become a heart-health bogeyman. There are several types, but high levels of LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Often labelled “bad” cholesterol, LDL builds up over time on artery walls, narrowing them and restricting blood flow.

High LDL cholesterol is not confined to people who are overweight. “Genetics are the main driver of higher LDL cholesterol levels,” says Naveed Sattar, professor of cardiometabolic medicine at the University of

Glasgow. “Diets have smaller effects and it’s not necessarily the total calories that count; it’s the amount of saturated fat.” (Found in cakes, biscuits, chocolate and many ultra-processed foods, saturated fat can raise LDL levels.) All of this means someone relatively lean can still have high cholesterol, either because of their genetic profile or dietary pattern. “Obesity per se has minimal effect on LDL cholesterol levels,” says Sattar. “But it affects other blood lipids [types of fatty substances, including cholesterol] much more.” In particular, excess body fat is linked to higher levels of triglycerides and remnant

cholesterol, both of which increase the risk of cardiovascular disease. Obesity is also closely tied to conditions such as type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure, which can also make LDL more harmful.

Worried about cholesterol? From the age of 40, people in the UK are eligible for an NHS health check, which includes a cholesterol test. “Your GP can easily assess your overall cardiovascular risk,” says Sattar. “Because it’s not just about LDL – factors such as diabetes, weight and blood pressure all play a part.” Before then, it’s worth finding out if you have a family history of early heart disease.



Why Strong Skin, Not Just Younger Skin, Is The New Anti-Aging Goal For Indian Women

For years, the anti-aging conversation has focused almost entirely on one goal, looking younger. But for Indian women, it is time to rethink that approach. Healthy aging is not just about achieving flawless skin; it is about building stronger, healthier skin that can age better over time.

As experts often observe, many women begin their anti-aging journey only after visible signs appear. These typically include fine lines, dullness, dryness, pigmentation, uneven texture, or loss of firmness. However, the reality is that skin aging begins much earlier, often in the late 20s to early 30s and is influenced by multiple internal and external factors. We spoke to Dr Sandeep Aroa, Senior Consultant, Dermatology, Apollo Spectra

Hospital, Delhi who shares key insights on the subject. Indian skin has unique needs. Constant exposure to sun, pollution, heat, hormonal changes, and lifestyle habits significantly influences how the skin ages. It is also more prone to pigmentation and tanning, which become more noticeable over time. This is why anti-aging for Indian women cannot be limited to wrinkle correction alone. It must also focus on strengthening the skin, maintaining hydration, and protecting against everyday environmental damage, while preserving luminosity and an even skin tone. Sensitive skin tends to age faster due to repeated barrier disruption. Strong skin, on the other hand, is better equipped to retain moisture, defend against external stressors,



and recover from daily damage. When the skin barrier is compromised, it

becomes more vulnerable to dryness, irritation, and premature aging. In many

cases, this damage does not initially appear as wrinkles. Instead, the skin begins to

look tired, dehydrated, and less radiant, often the earliest signs of declining skin resilience. In this context, skin strength becomes a key foundation for graceful aging, directly impacting hydration, elasticity, and overall skin quality.

Strengthening the skin begins with reinforcing the skin barrier. A healthy barrier helps lock in hydration and protects against irritants and pollutants, allowing the skin to function optimally. One of the most important steps in any anti-aging routine is the daily use of sunscreen, particularly in India, where ultraviolet exposure remains high throughout the year. Without adequate sun protection, collagen breakdown, tanning, and textural changes can accelerate significantly. The next step is choosing skin-

care that supports the skin rather than overwhelming it. Ingredients such as ceramides, hyaluronic acid, and squalene help restore and maintain hydration, while niacinamide supports barrier repair and reduces inflammation. Pro-vitamin B5 further aids in soothing and healing the skin.

Ingredients like purified peptides are now gaining recognition as a gentler alternative to traditional actives such as retinol. These chains of amino acids support collagen production and improve skin firmness and elasticity over time, while remaining well tolerated, even by sensitive skin. Unlike stronger actives that can sometimes cause irritation, purified peptides work in harmony with the skin’s natural repair processes, making them suitable for long-term

use. Clinical observations have also shown visible improvements across multiple signs of aging, including enhanced radiance, improved firmness and elasticity, and a reduction in fine lines. When combined with antioxidants such as Edelweiss extract, known to reduce oxidative stress and soothe the skin, these formulations offer a balanced approach that prioritises both efficacy and comfort, supporting healthier and more resilient skin over time. Today, one of the biggest challenges is the over-treatment of skin. Using too many active ingredients or blindly following trends can disrupt the skin barrier and trigger sensitivity. Healthy skin is not built through aggressive routines, but through consistency, protection, and mindful, long-term care.

ENTERTAINMENT

Atlee and Priya receive a baby girl and share the wonderful news of Atlee’s return to fatherhood



Mumbai: Filmmaker Atlee had a celebration of his own to share, only one day after his Raaka lead actress Deepika Padukone revealed her second pregnancy. The director announced on social media that he and his spouse, producer-actor Priya Atlee, had welcomed a baby girl as their second child. Atlee and Priya shared the happy news with their followers on Instagram on Monday. In January 2023, Atlee and his spouse Priya had their first baby, Meer. Atlee posted the

note along with the remark, “Feeling blessed.” Additionally, the couple released a cute poster that showed a drawing of their son Meer, expressing his enthusiasm for being a big brother. Fans and colleagues in the industry instantly sent their well wishes in response to the announcement. They expressed their excitement in the comment area. Ananya Panday replied “Biggest congratulations,” while actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu posted “Congratulations.” “Yayyy big congrat-

ulations... lots of love to the little baby girl, parents, grandparents, and most of all Meer,” said actor Kajal Aggarwal. “Congratulations,” said Huma Qureshi. Atlee and Priya revealed that they were expecting their second child back in January.

The couple posted a lovely photo of their expanding family, which included their son Meer and cherished pets, on Instagram to announce the good news. “Our home is about to get even cosier with the addition of our newest member!” was the caption. Indeed! Once more, we are expecting. I need all of your prayers, love, and blessings. Love to Atlee, Priya, Meer, Becky, Yuki, Chocki, Coffee, and Goofy. Eight years after being married, in December 2022, Atlee and Priya made their pregnancy public. Meer was born on January 31, 2023. After dating for years, the couple were married in 2014. Atlee is now

working on his upcoming film, Raaka, which will star Deepika Padukone and Allu Arjun.

The filmmakers presented Allu Arjun’s first look from the movie on his 44th birthday. It was an intense close-up that showed the actor in a striking bald avatar with a strong and rough countenance. In the meantime, Deepika and her husband Ranveer Singh announced to their followers on Instagram on Sunday that they are prepared to welcome parenthood once more. She intends to continue filming the project during her pregnancy, it was later disclosed.

According to an industry insider, Deepika Padukone is filming difficult action scenes for Raaka while she is pregnant. Throughout her pregnancy, she will keep filming the movie. Atlee is the director and Sun Pictures is the producer of Raaka. In 2027, the movie is anticipated to be released.

In Ridley Scott’s Alien, Adarsh Gourav will play Slightly once more



Mumbai: In the first season of Alien: Earth, actor Adarsh Gourav received recognition for his portrayal of Slightly. Season 2 of the show, which will be executive produced by renowned director Ridley Scott, will see the actor return to the role. Actor Peter Dinklage, who won an Emmy for his role in Game of Thrones, has joined the cast of Alien: Earth. Adarsh will appear on television alongside an ensemble cast that includes Sydney Chandler, Alex Lawther, Essie Davis, Samuel Blenkin, Babou Cee-say, Timothy Olyphant, and Peter Dinklage in Noah Hawley’s second season. Adarsh Gourav stated, “Being a part of Alien: Earth has been an incredibly special experience for me,” in reference to returning to the series. The reaction to Season 1 has been incredibly positive and overwhelming, particularly for my character. I’m particularly excited about the chance to go deeper into Slightly’s path in Season 2 because he’s such a distinctive and emotionally complicated character. Being surrounded by such brilliant co-actors encourages you to continuously improve, and working with a team led by visionaries like Noah Hawley and Ridley Scott is encouraging in every way. I can’t wait to return

to the set and explore this universe once more. The show takes place in 2120, when five corporations—Prodigy, Weyland-Yutani, Lynch, Dynamic, and Threshold—control the planet. These days, humans coexist with synthetics (humanoid robots with artificial intelligence) and cyborgs (people with both biological and artificial elements). But when the CEO and founder of Prodigy Corporation unlocks a new technical development—hybrids, or humanoid robots with human consciousness—a significant plot twist occurs. The second season will follow Sydney Chandler’s

character Wendy as she deals with the fallout from ousting Boy Kavalier in her new position as head of the hybrid-controlled Neverland. Adarsh’s Hollywood debut in The White Tiger was widely praised. He received international praise for his performance as Balram Halwai in the Netflix release, and he was nominated for both the Independent Spirit Award for Best Male Lead and the BAFTA Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role. Tu Yaa Main, a survival thriller starring Shanaya Kapoor, was his most recent Bollywood production. Netflix is currently offering the movie for viewing.

According to Archana Puran Singh, Kapil Sharma Display the cost of her movies

Mumbai: Archana Puran Singh’s relationship with success has been everything but simple for an actor who has worked in Indian cinema for more than forty years.

The seasoned actress disclosed in a recent interview with News18 how her tremendously successful television run unintentionally became a barrier to the very industry she had built her reputation on. After replacing Navjot Singh Sidhu on the show in 2019, Archana immediately won over fans. She didn’t have much time for cinematic ventures, though, because of the rigorous shooting schedule. She revealed that because of her broadcast schedule, she had to decline several offers over the years, including one for an international production that would have required her to be away for about a month. She eventually received fewer film offers as a result of these frequent rejections. Archana

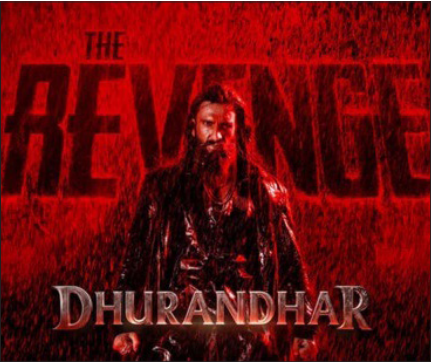


expressed sadness at being stereotyped when considering how she is viewed in the industry. “Despite my best efforts, I am unable to persuade filmmakers. I’m not getting any roles. They don’t really think

I’m an actor. They still believe that I’m just someone who laughs while sitting in a chair,” she remarked. In Toaster, Archana Puran Singh just joined Rajkumar Rao, who has also become the project’s producer,

in a quirky but significant part. She revealed that he saw her work in Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video, which was their first professional collaboration, and that’s how the movie came to her. Archana added that she hopes this production opens doors to other opportunities in the future and leads to further films, explaining that their previous relationship was crucial to her casting in Toaster. She believes her reputation as a humorous personality has eclipsed her acting versatility despite having a lengthy and diverse career. Before moving into supporting parts, Archana made a big impression in Jalwa, when she starred opposite Naseeruddin Shah. Over the years, she made appearances in well-known movies like Bol Bachchan, De Dana Dan, and Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, frequently in humorous roles that strengthened her on-screen presence.

The third-highest-grossing Indian movie ever is Dhurandhar 2



Mumbai: On Saturday, Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar: The Revenge achieved a gross worldwide total of ₹1750 crore, marking a significant moment as it surpassed Sukumar’s Pushpa 2: The Rule, now ranking third among India’s highest-grossing films. The film’s collections include ₹1111 crore net in India, the second-highest for any Indian film domestically, and \$46 million internationally, positioning it just outside the top 10 highest-grossing Indian films overseas.

As a comparison, Pushpa 2 earned ₹1742 crore, with a domestic net of ₹1234 crore and \$32 million overseas. Dhurandhar 2 aims to

challenge the second place held by SS Rajamouli’s Baahubali 2, which grossed ₹1788 crore.

The film earned ₹6.70 crore globally on Saturday and is projected to bring in approximately ₹7 crore more on Sunday, bringing its global total to ₹1755 crore, leaving it just ₹33 crore short of Baahubali 2’s record. Despite projected declines in earnings starting Monday, the absence of significant competing releases and the film’s continued theater presence due to no immediate streaming options may help maintain its revenue momentum.

However, Dhurandhar 2 is expected to fall short of Dangal’s record of ₹2070 crore and might not reach ₹1800 crore. Notably, missing out on a Gulf release has likely cost the film an estimated \$12-15 million (₹110-140 crore), which could have substantially increased its gross. In contrast, Dangal’s major earnings stemmed from its success in China, where it has remained a top international feature.

Additionally, it is unlikely that Dhurandhar 2 will surpass Pushpa 2’s domestic record of ₹1234 crore due to its current deficit of over ₹120 crore and insufficient momentum to close the gap.

On Nysa’s 23rd birthday, Tanuja, her daughters, and her granddaughter were included in a million-dollar photo

Mumbai: Nysa Devgan, the daughter of Kajol and Ajay Devgn, turns 23 today. It goes without saying that the birthday lady is receiving sincere well wishes from friends and relatives. In the midst of all, her adorable moniker was disclosed by her aunt Tanishaa Mukerji. Tanishaa Mukerji, Kajol’s younger sister, shared an old photo with her niece, Nysa Devgan, on her Instagram stories. The picture also included Kajol and her mother, Tanuja. Three generations of the Mukerji family came together in the unique photo. They were all four observed grinning broadly. Tanishaa wrote a brief wish for the birthday girl next to the endearing photo. “Happy birthday, darling Nyskins!” she wrote. “Baby, keep shining!” To commemorate the day, Nysa’s parents also posted. Kajol shared two pictures of herself and her kid on Instagram from last year’s Bijoya Dasami celebration during Durga Puja. Despite being surrounded by people in the background, the

actress was spotted giving Nysa a close hug. In the photos, Nysa wore a bright orange ethnic attire with white embroidery, while Kajol looked gorgeous in a classic cream-colored saree. The actress said, “I am so blessed.. she was born, and the world changed,” referring to her baby as a blessing. My sweetheart, I give thanks to God every day for you. You are flawless and will always be mine. I wish you and I a very happy birthday. Ajay Devgn shared old photos of Nysa Devgan. In another photo, his wife Kajol was seen taking a selfie with their princess. “When I look at you, I always think of that smile, and it’s the version of you that sticks with me forever. I hope you always have this kind of joyful smile.

The side letter said, “Happy birthday, my little girl.” In 1999, Ajay Devgn and Kajol got married. In 2003, Nysa Devgan was welcomed. Yug Devgan, the couple’s kid, was born in 2010.

Mukesh Khanna Explains Why Ranveer Singh, the Dhurandhar 2 Star, Is Unable to Play Shaktimaan



Mumbai: In both his personal and professional life, Ranveer Singh is at an all-time high. The actor will have his second kid with Bollywood star and wife Deepika Padukone if Dhurandhar 2 is on its path to becoming India’s highest-gross-

ing movie ever. However, one of the Dhurandhar 2 star’s wishes is still unmet. His aspiration to become Shaktimaan, the adored superhero first portrayed by Mukesh Khanna in the Doordarshan serial of the same name, which ran from 1997 to 2005. Mukesh Khanna discussed who could portray Shaktimaan and why Ranveer Singh wasn’t a good fit for the part in a recent interview. In the Zoom interview, Mukesh Khanna stated, “He’s a terrific actor, terrific guy, terrific energy man, he can do Dhurandhar, Gully Boy, and Khilji (in Padmaavat),” without mentioning Ranveer Singh by name. However, the face is just as important as the actor. “Uske chehre par shaleenta dikhni chahiye... Masti nahin, scheming face nahin hona chahiye jo sahab inka hai... inka face aisa hai, ‘Chal dance karte hain aaja...’ Shaktimaan ye nahin bolega. (The actor must have a certain level of decency on his face in order to play Shaktimaan. He shouldn’t have such a cunning look, but he does. His expression is like “let’s dance.” The issue is that Shaktimaan won’t say anything like this,” he continued. Mukesh Khanna claimed last year that Ranveer was “desperate” to play Shaktimaan, but he never gave the actor the go-ahead to portray

the Indian superhero. I’ve spoken a lot of positive things about him.

Ultimately, though, I had to make it clear that I never said he was Shaktimaan. He spent three hours with me and was really enthusiastic about the role, so I commended his performance and spirit. However, I want Shaktimaan to be Shaktimaan. That figure has been a part of my life for thirty years. He had stated, “I can’t tell you whether Shaktimaan is coming or even if it should come today.” Mukesh Khanna recently criticized Akshay Kumar for mistreating Prithviraj Chauhan in the 2022 period play of the same name. “When standing, Prithviraj Chauhan ought to appear like Prithviraj Chauhan. It didn’t appear to be Akshay Kumar. He made the error. Just donning a wig—no, not in this manner... “During the Mahabharat era, it took me 1.5 hours to dress like Bhishma,” he continued. Mukesh Khanna gained notoriety after comedian Samay Raina criticized the elder actor for targeting him and other comedians during the India’s Got Latent scandal in his recently released stand-up special Still Alive. “Kutte ki dum tedhi rehti hai” is how the Shaktimaan star-producer responded to the humor.

Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh have revealed their second pregnancy

Mumbai: Actor-husband Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone are expecting their second child. On Sunday, the actors revealed the wonderful news. Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone posted together on Instagram. Dua, their daughter, is shown in the photo clutching a positive pregnancy test kit.

The actress included two emoticons of an evil eye in the caption. On November 14, 2018, Deepika and Ranveer tied the knot in a lavish ceremony in Lake Como, Italy. Two ceremonies honoring Deepika’s Konkani ancestry and Ranveer’s Sindhi ethnicity were part of their wedding. After dating for a number of years, the pair secretly got engaged in 2015 before announcing their marriage to the public in 2018. Their relationship started on the sets of their movie Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela in 2013. On September 8, 2024, Deepika and Ranveer welcomed their first child, Dua. Deepika Padukone talked on how having a kid changed her priorities at the WAVES 2025 event, moving her focus from years of a career-driven existence to taking care of “another human being.” She claimed that becoming a mother had been profoundly emotional, grounded, and life-changing, increasing her awareness of and appreciation for ordinary moments. “I’m discovering this new life post-embracing motherhood,” she remarked. You become accountable for another human being the moment you have a child, and in my case, it has been all about me—leaving home, my aspirations, my profession, and everything else I desired for me. And all of a sudden, you’re taking care of this person who depends on you for everything.” According to Padukone, she wants her daughter to grow up normally and securely, free from the heavy scrutiny that comes with being a member of a film family. She has frequently given credit to her own parents, particularly her mother, for imparting the morals and emotional fortitude that now serve as her compass. She claims that parenting has given those lessons a fresh sense of purpose.

With Dhurandhar 2 still dominating the box office a month after its debut, Ranveer is riding high professionally. Deepika has an amazing future ahead of her as well. In Siddharth Anand’s King, she will next be seen with Shah Rukh Khan. In Atlee’s AA22xA6, the actress will co-star with Allu Arjun.

Pinkvilla claims that Allu Arjun will receive about ₹175 crore for Raaka in addition to a backend agreement that will give him a 15% share in the company’s earnings. In contrast, Atlee plans to demand ₹100 crore for the film. The report further states that the film’s total budget is ₹800 crore, of which ₹200 crore is set aside for production and ₹250 crore for visual effects. King, which was co-written and directed by Siddharth Anand, is another film in which Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone work together. Suhana Khan, Abhishek Bachchan, Anil Kapoor, Jackie Shroff, Arshad Warsi, and Rani Mukerji are the main actors in the movie. King will be released in theaters on December 24, 2026.

Fadnavis announces drive to collect signatures in support of women’s quota



New Delhi, Apr 20: Devendra Fadnavis, the chief minister of Maharashtra, called April 17 “a black day for democracy” and began a campaign on Monday to gather over 10 million signatures from women in favor of a 33% reservation for women in legislative bodies. He claimed that on April 17, the opposition parties betrayed women by opposing a bill to modify the Constitution to increase the size of the Lok Sabha and expedite the reservation. Fadnavis promised to exert enough pressure on the opposition’s female members to force them to approve the bill. In order to guarantee women’s reservation by 2029, he said, the ruling alliance in Maharashtra will not stop till the bill is passed.According to Fadnavis, the resistance to the Constitution amendment by the Congress, Trinamool Congress, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Nation-

alist Congress Party – Sharadchandra Pawar or NCP – SP, and Shiv Sena (UBT) is indicative of an anti-women mentality. He referred to it as an insult to the approximately 700 million women in India. According to Fadnavis, the opposition opposed the principles of social reformers like Bhimrao Ambedkar and Mahatma Jyotirao Phule. Any opposition leader of his caliber, he said, was free to debate the bill’s purported shortcomings and provisions in any public venue. The Nationalist Congress Party, Shiv Sena, and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party of Maharashtra have announced that a special awareness campaign will begin on Tuesday throughout the whole state. On Tuesday, a rally in Mumbai will mark the conclusion of a women’s march. All three of the ruling parties will run separate and joint campaigns throughout Maharashtra. NCP-SP legislator Supriya Sule declared she was prepared for a public debate after accepting Fadnavis’ offer. She requested that Fadnavis provide the time and location. Sule promised to address the accusations made against the opposition and give her party’s perspective.Fadnavis dismissed the criticism on the attempt to connect delimitation with the Women’s Reservation Bill as he presented the plan of action at a press conference in Mumbai on Monday. “The Modi administration chose to expand the number of seats in the states by 50% and was adaptable enough to prevent a north-south split. According to Fadnavis, the opposition saw a chance to forward their anti-women agenda, which is why they opposed the measures in the Lok Sabha last week. Since the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) held a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha at the time, the 2023 bill was unanimously approved.

India’s first cutting-edge 3D glass chip factory opens in Odisha

Bhubaneswar, Apr 20: With Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Majhi laying the foundation stone for the nation’s first glass substrate-based advanced chip packaging facility in Bhubaneswar on Sunday, India took a step closer to reducing its reliance on imported chip packaging technology.

This facility is expected to bring state-of-the-art semiconductor packaging capability onshore for vital industries like artificial intelligence and defense. The plant, which will be built at Info Valley in Bhubaneswar by US-based 3D Glass Solutions Inc. (3DGS) for an estimated ₹1,943 crore, will use cutting-edge 3D heterogeneous integration (3DHI) packaging technology that India has previously relied on imports to obtain.Attending the groundbreaking with state IT Minister Mukesh Mahaling, Union Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw referred to it as “a historical day” for Odisha. Vaishnaw stated, “The state is diversifying from metals and minerals to many

new industrial bases,” citing Odisha’s rise as a hub for information technology and a location for the production of electronics. It is a source of pride for Odisha to welcome a high-tech industry. This technique is really sophisticated. The first significant facility utilizing innovative 3D glass substrate technology has been established in Odisha. Traditionally, silicone substrates are utilized in the production of chips. After the plant’s initial phase is finished, we will also strive to double its capacity,” Vaishnaw stated. Semiconductor chips for high-stakes applications including artificial intelligence, 5G networks, defense systems, data centers, and high-performance computing will be packaged by the vertically integrated company.

The factory can create 50 million complete units, 13,200 3DHI modules, and 69,600 glass panel substrates a year at scale. More than 2,500 direct and indirect jobs are anticipated.Compared to traditional organic packaging, the technology

stack centered on glass interposers and embedded glass substrates offers superior thermal performance and increased integration density, which are essential for AI-grade devices.

The 3DGS plant is the second semiconductor facility to be built in Odisha in a matter of months. At the same Info Valley campus, SiCSem Private Limited and UK-based Clas-SiC Wafer Fab Ltd. are already constructing India’s first commercial silicon carbide fabrication facility with the goal of producing 60,000 wafers and 96 million packaged units annually for use in electric vehicles, railroads, defense, and renewable energy. As part of a larger initiative that has approved ten semiconductor projects nationally with total expenditures over ₹1.6 lakh crore, the union cabinet approved both Odisha projects in 2025.

India’s broader goal to create a self-sufficient semiconductor ecosystem and lessen reliance on chip imports includes the 3DGS and SiCSem approvals.

After three missed catches, Shreyas Iyer attempts to save Shashank Singh from Ricky Ponting

New Delhi:During Punjab Kings’ 54-run victory over Lucknow Super Giants on April 19, it was tough to ignore Ricky Ponting’s rage. However, the PBKS head coach’s true message was revealed when he gave Shashank Singh a hug following a challenging fielding performance in Mullanpur. In order to remain undefeated in IPL 2026 with five victories and one no-result from six games, PBKS produced 254/7 and then held LSG to 200/5.The scene turned into one of the most memorable images from Punjab’s most recent victory. As Shashank Singh had a bad evening in the field, missing opportunities and misjudging a crucial ball in the deep, Ponting cut a disgruntled figure in the dugout throughout the pursuit. However, after the game was over, the legendary Australian put aside his obvious rage and embraced the all-rounder, transforming a tense image into a supportive one.Nicholas Pooran mishandled a shot that went down in the deep, which was Shashank’s first significant mistake.

Afterwards, he misread a smash from Aiden Markram close to the boundary, allowing the ball to fly over him for six, and another opportunity from Mukul Choudhary was lost. The Punjab dugout’s responses to the repeated errors were evident, and Ponting looked shocked on camera as the errors accumulated. However, the post-match scene added a cozier touch to the narrative. Captain Shreyas Iyer made a lighthearted attempt to cover Shashank’s face with his cap as the Punjab players approached Ponting for a handshake, seemingly acknowledging the fielder’s shame following a difficult evening. What came next was much more important. Ponting grinned and gave Shashank a hug instead of escalating the conflict, highlighting the harmony Punjab seems to have achieved this season between strict standards and popular support. That picture perfectly captured the attitude that Ponting and Shreyas are attempting to establish: players are not left hanging once a job is completed, but mistakes are acknowledged. That kind of moment was made possible for PBKS by the outcome itself. Shashank contributed with a brief cameo of 17 from only six balls, including a four and a six, after Punjab’s hitters had already overwhelmed Lucknow with a massive total. Punjab had a tight grip on the game, so the fielding errors remained a talking point rather than a significant factor in the outcome.That likely made it simpler for Ricky Ponting to convey the idea. Throughout the chase, his looks made it clear how dissatisfied he was with the field’s standards. However, the last embrace demonstrated the second part of coaching: fix the mistake, hold the player close, and move on.

Cracks start to show for RR when Riyan Parag was criticized for abusing Ravindra Jadeja

New Delhi: Rajasthan Royals (RR) experienced a second consecutive defeat following a strong start to their season, becoming the first team to lose to Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on Sunday. Despite an initial advantage in the match, where KKR found themselves struggling at 81/6, RR could not secure victory. The Royals set a target of 156, and although they managed to push the game to the final over, a late surge from Rinku Singh and Anukul Roy enabled KKR to clinch the win at Eden Gardens.

Ravindra Jadeja had impressive bowling figures of 2/8 after three overs but was not brought back into the attack due to the presence of two left-handed batsmen, which led to criticism of RR captain Riyan Parag’s tactical choices. Ravichandran Ashwin, Jadeja’s former teammate, expressed his discontent regarding Parag’s decision to under-utilize Jadeja despite his effective performance, implying that it demonstrated a lack of trust in his bowling unit. Ashwin highlighted that successful execution could have changed the dy-



namics of the match, noting that if Jadeja had bowled over Rinku Singh, it could have shifted RR’s fortunes and potentially earned him the Man of the Match distinction. Ultimately, Ashwin argued that the decision not only affected the game but also posed a long-term impact on team dynamics, emphasizing the need for trust in established players like Jadeja. He concluded that RR’s team composition could have significantly strengthened with a Jadeja-led performance.

After igniting the IPL 2026, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi delivers a loud “message” about India’s selection

New Delhi:At the top of the batting order for the Rajasthan Royals, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has amassed 246 runs in 6 games, making him a contender for the Orange Cap in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season. Due to his explosive start to the campaign, the 15-year-old has also gained significant attention on the international scene. According to some reports, he is already scheduled to make his Team India debut in the shortest format. In the midst of this controversy, a video of the left-handed opening batsman has surfaced, in which he expresses a clear desire to perform equally well for the Indian side. The young player stated that, regardless of the outcome, he wants to spend as much time in the middle as possible. He genuinely thinks that his team has a chance to win the game as long as he is

in the middle.In a Doordarshan video, Sooryavanshi stated, “Main jitni der bhi ground pe hoon, utni der mein dominate karke agar khelu, to match unke haath se chheen sakta hoon (For whatever duration I am on the ground, as long as I am using my skills, dominate and play, I can snatch the match from opponents’ hands).”

According to the young batter, he has already begun to concentrate on his international future. Playing in the IPL fulfilled half of his desire, but he hasn’t yet participated in a World Cup with the senior India team, thus the other half is still unfulfilled.I talked to my dad as well. He claimed that although I had achieved half of his dream, the other half was still unfulfilled. I have to represent the senior Indian team in the World Cup. Abhi mera pooro focus isi par hai ki se-



nior India ke liye jitna ho sake utna contribute karun (Obviously, every player has the same dream: to play

for the seniors and win for their nation, India). “I’m concentrating on that for India,” he stated.

A Haryana couple’s 3-year-old daughter was discovered dead at home, and a suicide note was found

Kurukshetra, Apr 20: According to authorities, a couple and their 3-year-old daughter were discovered dead inside their Prem Nagar Colony home in the Kurukshetra region of Haryana on Monday. Examined is a suicide note that was found in the house.Because of the child’s protracted illness, police stated the family was experiencing serious emotional distress. According to preliminary investigations, both the parents and their daughter committed suicide. Around 6:30 am, the Subhash Mandi Police Post was notified, according

to officials, that three individuals had allegedly committed suicide by hanging themselves inside a Prem Nagar Colony home.

A man, a woman, and a child were hanging from a ceiling fan when police arrived on the scene. The three were hauled down right away and transported to a hospital, where medical professionals pronounced them dead.Jatinder Kumar (30), his wife Manju (28), and their daughter Advika have been identified. Jatinder Kumar was employed by the Railway Mail Service.Accord-

ing to the police, Jatinder’s father, retired officer Mahendra Singh, passed away around half a year ago. His mother, Bimla Devi, is the sole surviving member of his immediate family. Prateek, Jatinder’s brother, and his family reside in Canada. The bodies have been taken into custody and sent for a post-mortem examination, according to Baljit Singh, Station House Officer of the Krishna Gate Police Station.

A suicide note that we found at the scene is being investigated.”More research is being done,” he stated.

Char Dham Yatra Starts With the Opening of Gangotri and Yamunotri Temple Portals

New Delhi, Apr 20:After a six-month winter break, the Gangotri and Yamunotri shrines in Uttarakhand opened its portals on Sunday in honor of Akshaya Tritiya, marking the start of the Char Dham Yatra.

Amid the chanting of Vedic hymns, the gates of the Yamunotri temple opened at 12.35 pm and the Gangotri temple at 12.15 pm.The doors were flung open, and hundreds of followers sung holy hymns. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was honored at the opening prayers at both temples in the Uttarkashi district. At the Gangotri shrine’s opening ceremony, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami offered prayers for the nation’s prosperity.According to Dhami, the state government has put in place strong measures to guarantee a secure and easy pilgrimage. He asked followers to participate in a clean, green yatra. First, non-Hindus are no longer allowed to enter

three shrines: Badrinath, Kedarnath, and Gangotri. In order to enter the premises, non-sanatanis are required by the Gangotri temple committee to ingest “panchgavya,” which is a mixture of cow pee, dung, milk, curd, and ghee.For admission, non-Hindus must provide an affidavit attesting to their faith in Sanatan Dharma, according to the Shri Badrinath Kedarnath Temple Committee. On April 22 and 23, respectively, the gateways of Kedarnath and Badrinath will open.

However, the Yamunotri Temple Committee has made the decision to accept all devotees, regardless of their religious beliefs.Additionally, cell phones and cameras are not permitted on any temple property.So far this year, almost 19 lakh people have signed up for the pilgrimage. Last year, around 51 lakh pilgrims participated in the Char Dham Yatra.

Sonia and Rahul Gandhi’s plea in the National Herald case will be heard by the court



New Delhi, Apr 20: On Monday, the Delhi High Court will hear a plea from the ED contesting the trial court’s decision to reject its chargesheet against Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and others in the money laundering case connected to the National Herald.Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma is scheduled to hear the case. The Gandhis and others received notice from the high court on December 22 regarding the main petition and the ED’s request for a stay of the trial court order dated December 16, 2025, which stated that the agency’s complaint in the case was “impermissible in law” because it was not supported by a formal complaint. In addition to Gandhis, the high court had sent notices regarding the ED’s case to

Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda, Young Indian, Dotex Merchandise Pvt Ltd, and Sunil Bhandari. Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, late Congressmen Motilal Vora and Oscar Fernandes, Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda, and a private business called Young Indian have all been charged by the ED with conspiracy and money laundering. It has been alleged that the Gandhis acquired properties valued at approximately Rs 2,000 crore belonging to Associated Journals Limited (AJL), publisher of the National Herald newspaper. They reportedly hold 76 percent of Young Indian, which allegedly usurped AJL’s assets in return for a Rs 90 crore loan. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Enforcement Direc-

torate (ED), argued in court that the refusal of the trial court to take cognizance of the case was flawed and that the legal question at hand should focus on law rather than facts. The trial court had determined that an investigation and corresponding prosecution complaint related to money laundering were “not maintainable” without a First Information Report (FIR) linked to the offences outlined in the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The court noted that the ED’s investigation originated from a private complaint and not an FIR, despite BJP leader Subramanian Swamy’s complaint in 2014.

The ED contended in its high court plea that the trial court’s ruling effectively allows money launderers to evade scrutiny simply because a scheduled offence was reported through a private individual. They criticized the trial court’s interpretation that prosecution complaints under the PMLA cannot arise from private complaints and highlighted that cognizance of such complaints is as significant as an FIR, raising concerns over the legal precedents cited to justify the court’s dismissal of the case.

A passenger bus rolls down a gorge, killing 14 and injuring 18

Udhampur, Apr 20: In the Udhampur area of Jammu and Kashmir, a passenger bus fell down a canyon on Monday, killing at least 14 passengers and injuring 18 more.

The bus, which was traveling from Ramnagar to Udhampur, lost control and fell into a gorge close to Kanote hamlet. Local authorities quickly began rescue efforts. When the driver lost control of the bus while it was making a tight turn on a hilly route, it rolled down a steep, rocky slope for almost 100 feet before coming to rest on a lower road. Soon after the incident, Union Minister Jitendra Singh claimed to have had a conversation with Udhampur Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa.”I just spoke with DC Udhampur, Minga Sherpa, after learning of a tragic road accident that occurred at hamlet Kanote less than an hour ago involving a public transport bus traveling from Ramnagar to Udhampur. The rescue effort has been started right away. There will likely be significant casualties.

We’re doing everything we can to help. The wounded will be moved in order to receive medical attention. Plans are underway to transport the critically injured.

In a post on X, he stated, “I am in constant contact with the local administration as well as our local workers team led by Rajinder Sharma.” ”The tragic road accident in Udhampur is heartbreaking,” stated J&K LG Manoj Sinha. I send my sincere condolences to the families who have lost a loved one. May God give them courage. I’m praying for the injured to heal quickly.

I’ve instructed the district administration, police, SDRF, and health department to help people impacted in any way they can.”Dr. Sanjeev Gupta, medical superintendent of Government Medical College (GMC) and Associated Hospitals, Udhampur, stated that while efforts are being made to recover the corpses of those killed in the accident, injured people are being transported to GMC Udhampur.

Shreyas Iyer hails RR’s spectacular star Vaibhav Sooryavanshi as a future talent

Shreyas Iyer hails RR’s spectacular rising star

New Delhi: Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer did not hold back in his admiration for Rajasthan Royals’ teenage prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, calling him a “spectacular talent” and tipping him as “one for the future” after his impressive start to the Indian Premier League 2026 season. At just 15, Sooryavanshi has emerged as one of the most exciting stories of the tournament, scoring 246 runs in six innings at a staggering strike rate of over 236.

His fearless approach at the top has not only set the tone for Rajasthan but also drawn attention from opponents across the league. “He is a spectacular talent, and all the adjectives would be pretty much less for him,” Iyer said. “The way he has that bat flow, the rhythm and momentum he creates before the de-



livery, I think he is one for the future.” Iyer’s praise carries added weight given his own strong form this season. The Punjab skipper has amassed 208 runs in six innings and has led from the front while emphasising a philosophy built on self-belief and individuality, traits he believes define Sooryavanshi’s rise. Whenever I speak to players, my only message is just be yourself. Don’t try to emulate or mimic anyone,” Iyer said. “When you are fearless and

flamboyant in your own way, you don’t have to copy anyone.” That approach, Iyer added, has also played a key role in the success of Punjab’s top order, with Prabhsimran Singh and Priyansh Arya both crossing the 200-run mark this season. “When you tell these guys they are match-winners, it instils confidence in them,” he said. Such has been Sooryavanshi’s impact that few in the IPL ecosystem have remained untouched by his exploits. From teammates to rivals,

the young opener’s stroke-play and composure have marked him out as a rare talent, with Iyer admitting that conventional praise barely does justice to his ability. The Punjab captain also reflected on his own journey, recalling a stand-out moment from IPL 2025 when he took on Jasprit Bumrah in a high-pressure encounter.

He pointed to clarity of mind and emotional control as key differentiators at the highest level. “If you show too many emotions, your heart rate fluctuates. When you are in control, you can stay clear and decisive about your goal.” In many ways, that clarity and fearlessness are already visible in Sooryavanshi, a teenager playing with the confidence of a seasoned professional and, as Iyer suggests, a name destined to shape the future of Indian cricket.

Hockey India names thirty-six probables for the senior men’s national coaching camp

New Delhi: Hockey India on Monday named a 36-member core probable group for the upcoming senior men’s national coaching camp, scheduled to be held at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Centre in Bengaluru from April 20 to May 9, according to a release. The coaching camp will focus on tactical cohesion, conditioning, and match-simulation sessions as the team aims to fine-tune its preparations in the lead-up to a busy international season, which includes the European leg of the FIH Pro League 2025-56, World Cup, and Asian Games. Also, the squad will look to build rhythm, refine combinations, and strengthen depth across all departments, it added.

The goalkeeping unit features experienced names, including Krishan Bahadur Pathak, Suraj Karkera and Pawan, alongside emerging talents such as Mohith Honnenahalli Shashikumar and Prinedeep Singh, it added. In defence, the team will be anchored by stalwarts like Harmanpreet Singh and Amit Rohidas, supported by Jarmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Sanjay, Sumit, and a promising pool comprising Poovanna Chandura Boby, Yashdeep Siwach, Nilam Sanjeev Xess, and Amandeep Lakra. The midfield sees a strong blend of experience and youth, with Manpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, and Vivek Sagar Prasad leading the charge.



They will be joined by Rajinder Singh, Manmeet Singh, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh, Vishnu Kant Singh, Raj Kumar Pal, Nilakanta Sharma, and Rosan Kujur, it added. The forward line features an exciting mix of proven performers and rising stars, including Mandeep Singh, Dilpreet Singh, Abhishek, and Sukhjeet Singh. They will be supported by Shilanand Lakra, Arajjeet Singh Hundal, Angad Bir Singh, Uttam Singh, Selvam Karthi, Aditya Arjun Lalage, and Maninder Singh. During a chase of 176 runs, Bhuvneshwar took down DC batting in the power play and reduced them to 18/3. He ended his spell with three wickets, conceding just

26 runs in four overs. During this IPL, Bhuvneshwar has been sensational for the defending champions, taking 10 wickets in six matches at an average of 20.00 and an economy rate of 8.33. “There are moments when one gets emotional. Watching Bhuvu bowl so beautifully today brought back memories of the days when he was just 17. I was the UP captain, and was impressed by his control and swing. But selectors said he was too young. I insisted. Bhuvu made his Ranji debut, got Sachin Paaji for duck in the final. He’s 36 now, still troubles the best of batsmen with his swing. India comeback? Why not, Bhuvu still has it in him,” he posted.

Roman Reigns Wins Title; Femi Shocks

Las Vegas: Roman Reigns outclassed defending champion CM Punk to capture his maiden WWE World Heavyweight title and his seventh-overall world title in a hard-fought main event on day two of Wrestlemania 42 at Allegiant Stadium on Sunday. The other highlights included rising Nigerian powerhouse Oba Femi shocking multi-time world champion Brock Lesnar and an action-packed six man ladder match for the WWE Intercontinental title. The main event saw Roman dominating Punk for a good chunk with his sheer power, but it was the determination, heart and resilience of the Chicago wrestling star that kept him going, getting a sizable amount of offence, even giving Roman a taste of his own medicine with a Superman Punch and also unleashed a jaw-dropping elbow drop to Roman through the announce desk as both men unleashed their greatest hits during this slugfest that went over 30 minutes. However, Punk, left bloodied earlier after being hit on his head with steel steps by Roman move.

RR Coach Backs Skipper Riyan Parag to Find Form Following a String of Batting Struggles



Kolkata: Riyan Parag continues to back himself through a difficult phase, with Rajasthan Royals’ batting coach Vikram Rathour expressing confidence that the skipper will soon return to form. Despite a string of low scores, the Royals camp remains optimistic about their captain’s ability to bounce back. Parag’s struggles continued in the clash against Kolkata Knight Riders, where he managed just 12 runs as Rajasthan Royals slipped to a four-wicket defeat at Eden Gardens. Speaking after the match, Rathour downplayed concerns, insisting it was only a matter of time before Parag rediscovered his rhythm. As far as I am concerned, it is just a matter of time. Not everyone makes runs every time. Teams run in such a way that some stay in form, some stay out of form. There is no doubt that he will come back and win us a few games on his own as a batter,”

Rathour said in the post-match press conference. He has a lot of potential. There is nothing going wrong with him. One thing is he has come back from an injury. He has played less competitive cricket before getting into IPL. And IPL is a tough tournament. It is not an easy tournament,” he added.

While Rajasthan have enjoyed a solid start to their IPL 2026 campaign, Parag’s form has remained a concern. The skipper has also faced criticism, including from former India chief selector Kris Srikanth, who questioned both his consistency and some of his captaincy calls, particularly around bowling changes. The defeat itself was a dramatic one. Rajasthan Royals posted 155/9 after a flying start led by 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (46 off 28) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (39), reaching 81 without loss. However, the innings lost

momentum as Varun Chakravarthy (3/14) and Sunil Narine (2/26) triggered a collapse. In reply, KKR stumbled early but recovered through Rinku Singh’s unbeaten 53 and Anukul Roy’s 29*, stitching a crucial 76-run stand. Despite a late fightback from Kartik Tyagi, KKR chased down the target with two balls to spare, ending their losing streak. Parag’s numbers so far reflect his struggles with the bat this season. In six innings, the Rajasthan Royals skipper has scored just 61 runs at a strike rate of 122, with a highest score of 20.

The dip in form has come despite his growing role within the team, both as a batter and a leader. While the returns have not matched expectations yet, the management’s backing suggests they are willing to give him time to find his footing. With the tournament entering a crucial phase, Rajasthan will be hoping their captain can turn things around quickly. A return to form from Parag could not only ease the pressure on the middle order but also strengthen their push in the race for the playoffs. A major issue you should understand better is the escalating conflict between the United States and Iran, which has significantly impacted the global economy and triggered a new international nuclear arms race. Following the start of a bombing campaign on February 28, the war has seen the assassination of Iranian leaders and a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 percent of the world’s oil passes.

ICC Investigates Canada Captain Dilpreet Bajwa for Alleged Match-Fixing in Clash Against New Zealand



Chandigarh: Dilpreet Bajwa, Canada’s T20 World Cup 2026 captain, is under investigation by the International Cricket Council’s Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) over suspected corruption during a match against New Zealand. Bajwa, a 24-year-old cricketer born in Batala in Punjab, is under investigation over alleged suspicious activity during the 2026 T20 World Cup. The ACU is examining events from a T20 World Cup 2026 match between Canada and New Zealand. Originally from Batala in Gurdaspur, Bajwa moved to Canada after failing to break into the Punjab domestic circuit.

He gained recognition in the Global T20 Canada league, becoming the first Canadian to score a century in the tournament while playing for the Montreal Tigers. In January 2026, he was named captain

of Canada’s national team, making history as the first turban-wearing Sikh cricketer to lead the side. Prior to the controversy, Bajwa had spoken about the challenges faced by associate cricketing nations, emphasising the need for greater opportunities and exposure rather than sympathy.

The cricket world has been shaken by explosive allegations involving Dilpreet Bajwa, the 24-year-old Punjab-born captain of the Canadian national team. A major investigation by the International Cricket Council (ICC) Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) is currently underway, examining claims of spot-fixing and gang-related coercion during the 2026 T20 World Cup. The scandal, brought to light by a documentary from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) titled “Corruption, Crime and

Cricket,” paints a dark picture of intimidation, questionable on-field tactics, and the alleged involvement of the notorious Lawrence Bishnoi gang. Perhaps the most chilling aspect of the investigation is the alleged role of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. According to whistleblower testimonies in the CBC documentary, gang members allegedly used threats and coercion to influence the Canadian team’s operations.

An anonymous source revealed that gang members met at a restaurant in Surrey, British Columbia, where they reportedly threatened a prominent player. The message was clear: certain players—including Bajwa—were not to be dropped from the squad under any circumstances. The investigation suggests that Bajwa’s “eleventh-hour” appointment as captain just three weeks before the World Cup may have been forced upon the board by external pressure. A leaked audio recording from 2025 allegedly captures the former coach claiming that senior board members pressured him to select specific players and even asked him to “fix the match” by following a predetermined batting order.

Hardik Pandya faces mounting pressure as MI brace for GT test



Mumbai: Indians have been all over the place in IPL 2026, with skipper Hardik Pandya under immense pressure. With four defeats already, they are languishing at the bottom of the table. Known to be slow starters, MI still have everything to play for when they take on the Gujarat Titans on Monday, April 20 at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. The Titans, meanwhile, are on a roll, having won three matches on the trot. In fact, ever since Shubman Gill unveiled his new

beard look, the team seems to have found its rhythm. Historically strong against MI, the Titans will look to capitalise on their opponent’s struggles, aiming to secure another win and reclaim a place in the top four. As per the latest update, Rohit has resumed batting in the nets in Ahmedabad and is being closely monitored by the medical team along with head coach Mahela Jayawardene. A final call on his availability is yet to be made. While MI are sweating over Rohit’s fitness,

they have other pressing concerns. Jasprit Bumrah is enduring a rare rough patch, yet to claim a single wicket in IPL 2026. Having bowled 114 deliveries, the speedster has looked well below his best for the five-time champions this season. If Rohit does return, Ricketon could be the one to make way, especially after de Kock’s match-winning performance the other night. Meanwhile, Will Jacks is also expected to link up with the squad soon, adding further options to the lineup.

Brock Lesnar fuels retirement rumors after leaving his gear in the ring at WrestleMania

Chandigarh: Brock Lesnar has set the wrestling world abuzz after a highly emotional moment following his loss to Oba Femi at WrestleMania 42 in Las Vegas on Sunday, with speculation mounting over whether the WWE veteran has quietly stepped away from in-ring competition. As per WrestleMania 42 broadcast footage, the 48-year-old suffered a quick defeat to rising star Oba Femi in just under five minutes. The match saw Oba Femi control key portions of the contest, even absorbing Lesnar’s signature finisher ‘F5’ before sealing victory with a ‘chokeslam’ and a ‘Fall From Grace’ for a decisive pin. However, the aftermath of the match became the centre of attention rather than the result itself. Following the loss, Lesnar appeared visibly emotional. He removed his gloves and placed them in the centre of the ring, followed by his boots.

The gesture, often interpreted in professional wrestling as a symbolic farewell, immediately triggered retirement speculation. The crowd responded with chants of “Thank you Brock” and “Thank you Lesnar” as the former champion soaked in the reaction. Lesnar was later seen embracing long-time associate Paul



Heyman inside the ring before waving to the audience and exiting. He briefly turned back to acknowledge the crowd once more, while Heyman was seen visibly emotional during the moment. The sequence of events led many to assume that the ‘Beast Incarnate’ had ended his in-ring career.

However, WWE has not issued any official confirmation regarding his retirement. Ahead of WrestleMania 42, Heyman had already played down retirement rumours while speaking to TMZ news agency. When asked about Lesnar’s future, he said, “What’s my vision? Another 15 years of dominance by Brock Lesnar.” Responding to re-

tirement talk, Heyman added that online speculation should not be taken seriously and insisted Lesnar would continue to dominate for years to come. Lesnar’s legacy in professional wrestling remains one of the most dominant in WWE history. Debuting in 2002, he became the youngest WWE Champion at the time and went on to headline multiple WrestleManias, win Royal Rumbles, and capture numerous world titles across several runs. Outside WWE, Lesnar also built a high-profile combat sports career. As per his UFC record, he competed between 2008 and 2011 and briefly returned in 2016, finishing with a 3-3 record (including one no-contest) and hold-

ing the UFC Heavyweight Championship during his run. Brock Lesnar shares an emotional hug with Paul Heyman after his loss to Oba Femi at WrestleMania 42 in Las Vegas on Sunday. Video grab via X@WWE The main event saw Roman dominating Punk for a good chunk with his sheer power, but it was the determination, heart and resilience of the Chicago wrestling star that kept him going, getting a sizable amount of offence, even giving Roman a taste of his own medicine with a Superman Punch and also unleashed a jaw-dropping elbow drop to Roman through the announce desk as both men unleashed their greatest hits during this slugfest that went over 30 minutes. However, Punk, left bloodied earlier after being hit on his head with steel steps by Roman was physically a spent force towards the end, with two back-to-back spears from Roman ending the match just when it seemed Punk could retain with two back-to-back ‘Go To Sleep’, his finishing move. The day 2 started with a match between two gigantic athletes, Brock Lesnar and rising Nigerian star, Oba Femi. Oba dominated the proceedings early on, left totally unfazed by Lesnar’s offence. But Lesnar took the action.