

Sikkim CM Attends State-Level Education Conference, Emphasizes Skill-Based Learning

Gangtok, Mar 01: At the State-Level Education Conference held at Chintan Bhawan, Gangtok, Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang delivered a powerful mandate for the future of Sikkim: the total transformation of its academic landscape. Addressing the theme “Developing Human Capital for Viksit Sikkim,” Tamang called for an urgent departure from traditional education models toward a system that prioritizes real-world impact and global competitiveness. Revitalizing the Public School Core The Chief Minister emphasized that the true measure of an education system is not its enrollment figures, but the lives it transforms. He laid out a vision to make government schools the “preferred

choice” for families across the state. Pedagogical Shift: Strengthening infrastructure is only half the battle; the CM urged a focus on pedagogy that fosters trust and quality. Accountability: By placing innovation at the forefront, the state aims to rebuild the public’s confidence in government-run institutions, ensuring they compete with, and eventually surpass, private alternatives. The Pivot: From Degrees to Skill-Based Mastery In a significant policy steer, Tamang advocated for a move away from degree-focused rote learning. To align with international standards, Sikkim will pivot toward: Vocational Excellence: Integrating skill-based learning into the core curriculum to boost student confidence

and entrepreneurship. Technological Integration: The CM stressed the adoption of emerging technologies to ensure Sikkimese students are not just locally relevant, but globally competitive. Empowering the Backbone: Teacher & Institutional Growth Recognizing that no reform succeeds without its executors, Tamang highlighted continuous professional development for teachers. He called for: Institutional Strengthening: Turning schools and colleges into hubs of research and innovation. Equitable Access: Ensuring that modernization



reaches the remotest corners of the state to maintain an inclusive educational environment. The 2047 Vision: Human Capital as a State Asset Concluding his address, the Chief Minister reminded stakeholders—educators, parents, and administrators—that human capital is Sikkim’s most valuable

resource. He asserted that refining this capital is the only viable path to achieving the “Viksit Sikkim 2047” goal. The conference marks a strategic pivot for the new academic session, signaling a move where employability and innovation will finally take precedence over mere graduation.

Bimol Akoijam Blames BJP for Manipur Unrest, Campaigns in Assam

Guwahati, Apr 01: Manipur MP Bimol Akoijam on April 1 blamed the BJP for the recent incidents in Manipur, making it a central theme of his campaign while canvassing for Congress candidate Shanti Kumar Singh in Lakhimpur, Assam. Speaking at the Congress office in Silchar, Akoijam said, “Due to the BJP, all the incidents that happened in Manipur in recent days occurred,” directly attributing the unrest to the ruling party’s policies. He argued that the situation reflects a broader governance pattern that, according to him, fosters division. He emphasised that Manipur must be viewed within the national framework. “Don’t think of Manipur as separate from India—it is an integral part of India,” he said, adding that the implications of the crisis extend beyond the state.



Expanding further, Akoijam alleged that the BJP had “divided Manipur by labelling people as tribal and non-tribal” and warned that Assam, given its diverse social fabric, could face similar divisions. He said such strategies risk deepening societal fault lines for political gain. Positioning the Congress campaign as a response to this, he stressed the importance of unity. “We are all one,”

he said, urging voters to reject divisive narratives and support the Congress in the upcoming Assam election. Akoijam also criticised the BJP’s campaign messaging in Assam, remarking that “the BJP is promoting an Assam video like an April Fool’s joke,” and claimed that people have already recognised it as such. He expressed confidence that this perception would benefit Congress candidates.

Strong Public Backing Puts BJP-Led Alliance on Track for Third Term in Assam: Sonowal

Digboi, Apr 01: Union Minister and senior BJP leader Sarbananda Sonowal claimed that the scale of public support witnessed during the election campaigns in Assam indicates that the BJP-led alliance is “firmly on course” to secure a third consecutive mandate in the state. Campaigning for BJP candidates Suren Phukan in Digboi and Sanjoy Kishan in Makum, Sonowal said the response from voters reflected “continued trust and confidence” in the NDA’s governance. “The scale of public participation and enthusiasm clearly indicates that we are moving towards a decisive mandate for a third term,” Sonowal said.

Addressing a rally at Balijan in Digboi, Sonowal thanked voters for their support in the previous Lok Sabha elections and appealed for a “record margin” victory for Phukan. Sonowal cited infrastructure expansion — including roads, bridges, healthcare, education, electricity and drinking water — along with central schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Ujjwala, as markers of development over the past decade.

The Dibrugarh Lok Sabha MP also



pointed to the increase in production at the Digboi Refinery, describing it as a “significant achievement” of the BJP-led alliance government, and contrasted it with what he termed as inaction during earlier Congress regimes. Sonowal added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership had helped position Assam more prominently at the national and global levels, while also strengthening its cultural identity.

Later, campaigning in Makum, Sonowal urged voters to elect “a committed and accessible representative,” backing BJP candidate Sanjoy Kishan. Sonowal said coordination between the Centre and the state government had accelerated development across Assam, citing improved rural connectivity, better access to tea garden areas and expanded transport infrastructure. Stepping up his attack on the Con-

gress, Sonowal alleged that corruption, mismanagement and leakages had undermined welfare delivery in the past. Sonowal claimed that benefits meant for the poor often failed to reach intended recipients under earlier schemes, including Indira Awas Yojana. In contrast, the Union Minister said, the current government’s welfare initiatives — including free foodgrain distribution — had ensured wider coverage, while targeted schemes had contributed to women’s economic empowerment. “The Direct Benefit Transfer initiative of Modi Government routed the perennial challenge of middlemen loot perpetuated by an incompetent governance by Congress for decades, robbing people of the fruits of welfare state,” Sonowal said. Describing Kishan as a “grassroots leader with a social connect,” Sonowal said electing him as the first MLA of the newly formed Makum constituency would “strengthen its development trajectory.” Senior BJP leader also expressed gratitude to voters for their support in the last Lok Sabha polls and appealed for similar backing for BJP candidates in the assembly elections.

Manipur University hosts exhibition of value-added products

Imphal, Apr 01: An exhibition of value-added products derived from soft-shelled Job’s Tears “Chaning Athotpa” (Coix lacryma-jobi L.) was successfully held on Tuesday at the Manipur University canteen premises, highlighting innovative efforts to enhance the socio-economic prospects of farmers in Manipur. The exhibition was inaugurated by Prof. N. Loken-dra Singh, Vice-Chancellor of Manipur University, in the presence of Prof. N. Mohilal Singh, Dean, School of Life Sciences; Prof. Kananbala Sarangthem, Head, Department of Botany; Dr. Thangjam Robert Singh, Principal Investigator of the project; Thangjam Joykumar Singh of Thangjam Agro Limited; and representatives from Machang Bakery, Thaddeus Nutraceuticals, and PB Enterprises, along with other invited guests and delegates. The event was organised under the sponsored project of the ICAR-National Institute for Plant Biotechnology (IARI Campus, New Delhi) titled “Processing and Product Formulation of Job’s Tears (Coix lacryma-jobi L.) for Socio-economic Benefit of Farmers in Manipur.” This marked the second phase (2025-26) of the initiative, following the successful establishment of a Job’s Tears village seed bank during 2024-25. The ongoing phase focuses on developing diversified, value-added products from Job’s Tears to promote its commercial utilization. Over the past year, extensive trials have resulted in a variety of innovative products, including cookies, muffins, buns, doughnuts, bread, nutri-meal, puff, herbal drinks, alcoholic beverages, porridge, and mushroom spawning substrates. The project is led by Dr. Thangjam Robert Singh, Associate Professor, Department of Botany, Manipur University, with Dr. Tapan Kumar Mondal of ICAR-National Institute for Plant Biotechnology serving as Co-operating Centre Principal Investigator. The initiative has been implemented in collaboration with Thangjam Agro Limited, Machang Bakery, Thaddeus Nutraceuticals, PB Enterprises, and the villagers of Khurkhul, emphasizing a strong partnership between academia, industry, and local communities. The exhibition provided a platform to demonstrate the potential of Job’s Tears as a versatile crop, paving the way for entrepreneurship development and sustainable livelihood opportunities for farmers in the region.



MCJCC stages protest, demands NRC before census

Imphal, Apr 01: A large number of people staged a protest demonstration at Babu Keithel, demanding that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) be implemented before conducting any new census exercise in the State. The protest was organised by the Meitei Community Joint Coordinating Committee (MCJCC) representing Waihou, Kiyam, Kiyam Siphai, Haokha, and Thoubal Khunou. Participants gathered at the market area and voiced strong opposition against conducting a census without first identifying illegal immigrants. Speaking at the protest site, Women’s Wing Secretary Pebam Indirani stated that the government’s attempt to conduct a census in the current situation is unacceptable. She pointed out that since the last census in 2011, there has been a significant and unexplained increase in population in Manipur. She further noted that even Union Home Minister Amit Shah has acknowledged the issue of illegal immigration in the state. Indirani emphasised that conducting a census without properly identifying and segregating illegal immigrants would not yield accurate data. Highlighting population trends, she questioned the abnormal growth rate, citing that while the population in valley areas increased by around 18 percent, hill areas saw an increase of about 60 percent—



raising concerns over demographic imbalance. She also mentioned that ongoing ethnic tensions over the past three years have displaced many families, making it difficult for internally displaced persons (IDPs) to return to their homes. Under such circumstances, conducting a fair and accurate census is not feasible. The protestors demanded that NRC must be implemented before conducting the census and illegal immigrants must be identified and removed from the records. They also demanded that internally displaced persons should be rehabilitated in their original homes and free movement along the National Highways must be ensured. Placards carrying slogans such as “Census After NRC,” “Identify Illegal Immigrants,” “Rehabilitate IDPs,” and “Ensure Free Movement on National Highways” were displayed during the demonstration.

A step forward in advanced railway healthcare NFR hosts Annual National Medical Conference successfully

Maligaon, Apr 01: The North-east Frontier Railway (NFR) successfully hosted and concluded the 31st Annual National Conference of the Railway Association of India (RAISA), along with the NFR Zonal Medical Conference, on 28th March 2026 at Luitgarh Railway Officers Club, Nambari. The two-day event brought together eminent medical professionals from across Indian Railways, centred on the theme “Evidence Based Practice.”

The conference was inaugurated by Director General of Railway Health Services, Dr. Jagdish Chandra, who emphasized the importance of standardized, data-driven medical protocols in improving healthcare delivery for railway employees and passengers. The event was also

graced by the General Manager of N. F. Railway, Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava and the Principal Chief Medical Director of N. F. Railway, Dr. Swapna Boro Daimari, underscoring NFR’s commitment to advancing medical excellence. Approximately 150 doctors from various railway zones and leading medical institutions participated actively in the conference. The sessions, coordinated by Scientific Secretary Dr. Somnath Saha, focused on translating clinical research into practical healthcare applications. The event also featured notable contributions from the Railway Society of Anaesthesiologists, setting new benchmarks in perioperative care and pain management.

The event was efficiently organized under the leadership of the



Medical Director of Central Hospital, Maligaon, Dr. B.P. Deka, along with a dedicated team from the hospital. Their efforts provided a seamless platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration among medical professionals. Concluding the conference, Dr. Pijush Sarkar, of Central Hospital, Maligaon expressed gratitude

to all participants and emphasized that the insights and knowledge shared during the event will significantly contribute to improving healthcare services across Indian Railways. The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks, marking the successful completion of this significant national medical conference.

Art exhibition to showcase works of Sapha Yumnam in Washington DC

Imphal, Apr 01: The Kolorbox, in association with the Advanced Research Consortium Library & Archives, will organise “The Revival of the Forgotten Art of Manipur: An Exhibition of Modern Subika Art” from May 9 to May 19, at Gallery 16Ten, Washington, D.C in United States. The exhibition features more than 20 works by artist Sapha Yumnam. Subika art is a rare and endangered manuscript painting tradition from Manipur. Subika paintings are known today through surviving traces preserved in a small number of 18th and 19th-century manuscripts on themes of astronomy, divination, cosmology, and ritual practices, held in museums

and private collections. They were painted on handmade paper and agarwood bark manuscripts, known as korbek or puya, and written in the Old Meitei script, the indigenous script of Meiteirol, one of the few Tibeto-Burman languages within the Sino-Tibetan family to have developed its own script. The exhibition reintroduces Subika art as a cultural expression for a modern audience. While rooted in historical manuscript practices, modern Subika art reinterprets the form through new techniques, materials, and narrative approaches. The artworks expand the traditional visual vocabulary to engage with indigenous mythology, cultural memory,

and significant events in the history of Manipur. Artist Sapha Yumnam plays a central role in this revival. He has transformed the form from manuscript painting into a contemporary art practice. He developed modern Subika art through two illustrated books on Manipuri mythology and folktales. By drawing from Subika paintings in early manuscripts and working through a contemporary approach, the artist demonstrates how the form continues to evolve while remaining connected to its cultural and visual foundations. The exhibition is curated by Wangam Somorjit, historian and Director of the Advanced Research

Consortium Library & Archives (ARCLA), which is currently developing a digital repository of early Manipuri manuscripts, including Subika paintings, to make them accessible in the public domain. “Subika art reflects a layered cultural history shaped by exchanges across regions and time,” Somorjit said. “What survives today are fragments preserved in manuscripts, yet within them exists a complete visual language. This exhibition brings that language into the present as a continuation.” Priyananda Soubam, co-founder of The Kolorbox, said, “Through this exhibition, we continue our effort to amplify the voices of artists and place

their work within a wider cultural dialogue. Subika Art remains lesser known, even within Manipur. This exhibition is an attempt to bring attention to the practice and open it to engagement.” The exhibition is presented by The Kolorbox, an art initiative that works with artists through exhibitions and collaborations, creating contexts where their work can be encountered with attention and engagement. Dr. Yumnam Sapha Wangam Apanthoi M, born in Langmeidong village, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Fine Arts at Manipur University, specializing in Printmaking.

Fierce contest for downfall between rupee and BJP’s image: Akhilesh Yadav

Aizawl, Apr 01: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Monday said there is a fierce competition between the rupee and the BJP’s image to fall lower

The leader of the third-largest party in the Lok Sabha also said that as cases of alleged corruption and misconduct involving BJP leaders and their associates continue to come to light, the party’s image is worsening.

Yadav’s attack came a day after the rupee breached the 95 USD-mark in intra-day trade before regaining some lost ground to settle at 94.70 against the greenback, as the Iran war escalation jolted global markets, fuelling rupee volatility and risk-off sentiment. ”In the race to fall lower, there’s a fierce contest underway between the



rupee and the BJP’s image,” the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister posted on X in Hindi. “As the misdeeds, scandals and corruption of BJP members are being increas-

ingly exposed, the BJP’s image keeps plummeting further,” he claimed. “Revelations about BJP members and their associates are indeed happening, but no resigna-

tions are forthcoming,” Yadav said without elaborating. The SP chief said the BJP has always “suffered from moral bankruptcy”, but now it has reached its “absolute peak”.

Communal undercurrents shape poll battle in Murshidabad’s violence-hit seats West Bengal polls: SIR deletions,

Kolkata, Apr 01: In West Bengal’s Murshidabad, a district where Muslims constitute roughly two-thirds of the population, communal undercurrents and deletion of names from the electoral rolls under the SIR are seen as major factors that would decide the fate of the Assembly poll candidates. After the electoral rolls were published on February 28, post-Special Intensive Revision (SIR), over 11 lakh voters were kept under adjudication in Murshidabad. This was around 20 per cent of the 55 lakh voters in the district. Political analysts believe that even though the SIR deletions might put the Trinamool Congress in a tight spot, voters who passed the filter are likely to rally behind the incumbent party against the BJP. Apart from this, the recurring

communal violence in the district since 2025 has dominated the political discourse, and that might be a clincher.

On April 12, 2025, a mob broke down the main door of 72-year-old Harogobinda Das’s house in Samsergunj, dragged him and his son Chandan (42) out, struck them with axes and stood guard till they bled to death. What began as protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, earlier that week, quickly turned Protestors blocked national highways and torched police vehicles. Houses were set ablaze, while reports of the mob cutting off the water supply to prevent fires from being extinguished also poured in. It took the Calcutta High Court’s intervention, ordering the deployment of

armed central forces, the state issuing prohibitory orders, and the temporary suspension of internet to stem the violence. Nearly 60 FIRs were lodged, and about 300 people were arrested.

Hundreds of victims fled their homes and crossed the Bhagirathi river to take shelter in the adjacent Malda district. Even almost a year after the incident, the wound festers. The Trinamool Congress won the Samsergunj, Suti and Jangipur seats in the 2021 polls with comfortable margins. The hydra heads of communal tumult popped up again on March 27 in Jangipur’s Raghunathgunj area when a Ram Navami rally turned violent. TMC’s two-term MLA from Jangipur, Jakir Hossain, who is seeking reelection, saw the unrest as the BJP’s design.

Indian Army neutralizes explosives from World War II in Guwahati

Guwahati, Apr 01: The Indian Army successfully neutralized World War II-era unexploded bombs in Assam’s Tinsukia district, averting a potential threat to civilian lives, officials said on Tuesday. According to officials, the unexploded ordnance, comprising a General Purpose bomb and an incendiary bomb, was discovered at Ledo’s Burma Camp area in Lekhapani after a civilian unearthed the munitions while digging a pit. The presence of the explosives posed a serious risk to life and property in the densely inhabited area. Acting swiftly on inputs from the civil administration, the Indian Army’s Red Shield Division mobilised a specialised Bomb Disposal Team to the site on Tuesday. Upon arrival, the team immediately evacuated civilians from the vicinity



and established a secure perimeter, ensuring strict adherence to standard safety protocols. “The situation was handled with utmost urgency and care. All necessary precautions were taken to prevent any untoward incident,” an official said. The unexploded bombs were carefully secured and later trans-

ported to a designated safe location away from residential areas. Officials said the munitions were then neutralised through a controlled operation, eliminating the threat without causing any collateral damage. “The operation was conducted in a highly professional manner, ensuring the complete safety

of civilians and the surrounding environment,” another official added. Such unexploded ordnance from World War II occasionally surfaces in parts of Upper Assam, particularly in areas like Ledo and Lekhapani, which were historically significant during the war due to military activities and supply routes. Officials noted that the prompt response and coordinated effort by the Army helped avert what could have been a major disaster. The safe disposal of the explosives has brought relief and reassurance to local residents. The incident once again highlights the Indian Army’s preparedness and commitment to safeguarding civilian lives while maintaining peace, security and stability in the region, officials said. — IANS tdr/uk

Congress candidate attacked in Assam



Guwahati, Apr 01: Congress candidate from Assam’s Naduar assembly constituency, Sunil Kumar Chetry, was attacked by miscreants, allegedly backed by the ruling BJP, during the campaign for the upcoming state polls, a party leader said.

The candidate’s convoy was attacked in the Napalm bypass of the assembly segment on Monday evening, he said. Chetry, who is pitted against senior BJP leader Padma Hazarika, fell on the ground and was seen groaning before he was taken to a private hospital for treatment. Assam Pradesh Con-

gress president Gaurav Gogoi alleged that the supporters of the ruling party had carried out the attack, and demanded that those involved be arrested immediately.

He said, “All are equal under the law”, and urged the administration to treat members of both the ruling and opposition parties equally. Gogoi alleged that the attack on a candidate speaks volumes about the law and order situation in the state. The elections to the 126-member Assam assembly will be held on April 9. Votes will be counted on May 4.

Meghalaya launches ‘Mission 1000 Days’ to boost child nutrition and development

Shillong, Apr 01: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Tuesday launched “Mission 1000 days” to improve nutrition and early childhood development outcomes for growth and development of a child. Conrad said through the programme, the government will provide support to a mother from conception to two years of age. Launching the “Mission 1000 days”, the Chief Minister said the initiative is part of a broader effort to address core human development challenges through a targeted and evidence-based approach. “When I took office in 2018, one of the first issues that deeply concerned me was the high maternal mortality rate in Meghalaya. It troubled not only me but the entire team, and we resolved to do everything possible to bring it down,” he said. Noting that targeted interventions and improved access to services played a key role in achieving results, Sangma said, “Through sustained efforts over three years, we were able to significantly reduce maternal mortality—by nearly 50 per cent.”

Underscoring that governance requires prioritisation, particularly when addressing complex and widespread challenges, the Chief Minister said, “What we are trying to do instead is focus on resolving 60–70 per cent of the most critical issues. He said addressing challenges at scale can lead to broader improvements. Highlighting socio-economic realities, Sangma pointed out that vulnerability in rural areas continues to be a major concern. “Many mothers, due to extreme poverty, are forced to return to work within a month or two after childbirth. They do not want to leave their infants, but they have no choice,” he said, adding that the government is exploring ways to support

such mothers. Placing the initiative within the state’s broader development vision, he referred to the economic growth roadmap under Mission 10, noting the state’s progress from a \$4.4 billion economy in 2018 to nearly \$7 billion today, with future growth targets already outlined. On the programme, the Chief Minister informed that Rs. 127 crore has been earmarked for “Mission 1000 Days”. “This is a mission mode programme. We will continue to refine and improve it based on feedback, with the goal of eliminating stunting and malnutrition,” he said. Calling for collective action, he added, “This mission cannot succeed through the efforts of a single department or individual. It requires collective participation from the entire society,” he said, exhorting citizens to contribute: “Do not think that you cannot contribute. Every individual can make a difference. This must become a people’s movement.” He also stressed the role of fathers in caregiving. “Fathers must participate actively in caregiving. Spending 20–30 minutes a day with a child—talking, playing, simply being present—can significantly influence their development,” he said. Addressing frontline workers, the Chief Minister urged them to view their role beyond routine responsibilities. “Do not treat this as a job or duty. Measure your success by the lives you improve—by every mother saved and every child given a healthier future,” he said. Additional chief secretary and development commissioner, Sampath Kumar described the initiative as a focused intervention targeting the first 1,000 days of life. “Nearly 75–80 per cent of brain development occurs by the age of two, with children achieving almost



half of their adult height during this phase, underlining the long-term importance of early interventions,” Kumar informed. He said the mission will include capacity building of frontline workers, large-scale engagement with mothers for behavioural change, community-based nutrition initiatives using local foods, and technology-driven tracking for timely intervention. Experts at the event also highlighted persistent challenges in child nutrition, including gaps in breastfeeding practices and early feeding, stressing the importance of awareness and correct practices to prevent long-term health risks. “Mission 1000 Days” is supported by multiple partners, including the Meghalaya Early Childhood Development Mission (MECDM), Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS), National Health Mission, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), State Capability Enhancement Project (SCEP), Har Ghar Jal – Jal Jeevan Mission, and other collaborating institutions.

Manipur to receive Rs, 2400 cr under ‘Pride of Hills’ scheme

Imphal, Mar 01: Manipur will receive Rs. 2400 crore out of the Rs. 25,000 crore allocation made by the Centre under the newly launched ‘Pride of Hills’ component of the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) scheme for 2026-27.

Chief minister Y Khemchand Singh expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman for the initiative, stating that the support would ease the state’s financial constraints while catalyzing inclusive growth and infrastructure development. “This thoughtful initiative reflects a deep and empathetic understanding of the unique developmental challenges faced by the North Eastern region, where progress is often constrained by limited capital investment, low returns on public enterprises, and restricted revenue generation capacity,” Singh wrote on his social media platforms. According to official documents shared by the chief minister, the ‘Pride of Hills’ component

is designed to address fiscal and developmental challenges of hill states, including difficult terrain, inaccessibility, low population density and limited revenue-generating capacity. These states typically show weaker fiscal indicators such as higher debt-to-GSDP ratios, relatively low own tax revenue and greater dependence on central transfers. The Centre has earmarked Rs. 25,000 crore under this component for 2026-27, in addition to allocations under other parts of SASCI. State-wise distribution includes Rs. 4,900 crore for Arunachal Pradesh, Rs. 3,920 crore for Himachal Pradesh, Rs. 2,400 crore for Manipur, Rs. 2,070 crore for Meghalaya, Rs. 100 crore for Mizoram, Rs. 3,880 crore for Nagaland, Rs. 820 crore for Sikkim, Rs. 3,450 crore for Tripura and Rs. 3,460 crore for Uttarakhand. Singh termed the intervention “timely and impactful,” adding that it strengthens the aspirations of the people of Manipur towards sustainable progress.

14% candidates face criminal cases, BJP tops ‘crorepati’ list

Guwahati, Apr 01: Fourteen per cent of the April 9 Assam election candidates have declared criminal cases against them, an analysis by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said. The ADR analysed the self-sworn affidavits of all 722 candidates. Altogether 102 or 14 per cent of them have declared criminal cases against them. The report, released on Tuesday, stated. It was marginally higher in the 2021 polls. Of the 941 candidates, 138 or 15 per cent had declared criminal cases against them. According to the ADR report, 28 of the 99 Congress candidates have criminal cases against them.

Similarly, eight of the 90 from the BJP, 11 of the 30 from the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), six of the 26 from the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), two of the 13 from the Rajior Dal, two of the 10 from the Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) and one of the three from the CPI(ML) have criminal cases against them. Altogether 82 candidates (11 per cent) have declared serious criminal cases against them. The candidates include 20 from the Congress, eight from the BJP, nine from the AIUDF, five from the AGP, two from the Rajior Dal and one each from the AJP and the CPI(ML). In the 2021

polls, 109 (12 per cent) had declared serious criminal cases against them. Altogether 323 candidates have declared their educational qualifications to be between 5th and 12th standard, while 384 have declared having an educational qualification of graduate or above. literateTwo candidates have declared cases related to crime against women, while eight have declared cases related to murder (IPC Section-302) and (BNS Section-103) against them. Nine candidates have declared cases related to attempt to murder (IPC Section-307) and (BNS Section-109) against them.

Prime Minister accuses Cong of ‘allowing’ land grabbing

Guwahati, Apr 01: Accusing the Congress of “allowing” land grabbing by infiltrators, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday that infiltration into Assam is not just an election issue but is about safeguarding the identity of the state and national security.

Addressing virtually the BJP’s booth-level workers in Assam ahead of the April 9 assembly polls, Modi said that the state saw a long span of instability but things changed over the past decade as the party’s double-engine government made every thing that even the smallest mistake can push the state back, he said, noting that the BJP members were working hard to ensure a hat-trick for the party in the state. “Infiltration is not just an election issue. It is an issue to safeguard the identity of Assam and national security. Congress allowed illegal land grabbing by infiltrators. “Wherever infiltrators settle, they capture small businesses and the livelihoods of local people,” he said during the ‘Mera Booth, Sabse Mazboot Samvaad’ initiative

by the ruling BJP that is aimed at connecting directly with party activists in poll-bound states. The prime minister said the BJP workers must be fully aware of illegal land grabbing cases and the problems faced by local people, and the ordeal of those who have suffered due to illegal infiltrators must be known. People must know that Congress allowed encroachment, but the BJP is protecting rights,” he said. Modi noted that 12 peace agreements were signed by the government with different organisations in the Northeast. He said the BJP workers must remind people how the Congress “used to make agreements only on paper to create headlines and mislead people” we can see a new confidence as the BJP’s double-engine the Congress, peace agreements were pushed aside and the youths were left to suffer and drift towards unrest, Modi alleged. “No agreement with insurgents and student organisations worked during the Congress rule in Assam. The Congress betrayed the Bodo cause.

Priyanka Gandhi Says Bharatiya Janata Party Failed to Grant Status to Six Communities in Assam

Guwahati, Apr 01: Kickstarting her election campaign in As-sam, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has accused the BJP of failing to fulfil the long-pending demand for ST status to six communities of the state.Addressing a poll rally in Nazi-ra, she alleged that the BJP has also failed to fulfil its promise of increasing daily wages for tea garden workers.Launching a scathing attack, the Congress leader criticised both the state and central governments, urging the people to reject what she described as a “government of double-slavery” and vote for a Congress-led alliance, which is prioritising public welfare.

Addressing the public meeting, Gandhi stated, “They only work for you when they see some benefit in it for themselves. This has not been the tradition of this country. Even today, we want a government in Assam which doesn’t scare you, doesn’t threaten you, doesn’t serve its own selfish interests, but serves you, works honestly for you, advances and strengthens your culture and your civilisation.”She targeted Prime Minister Nar-endra Modi and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, criticising the BJP’s “double-engine government” slogan as a failure. She accused the BJP of suppressing the people of Assam

and urged voters to reject politics based on fear. Gandhi said, “They had spoken of a double-engine government. Didn’t they say so in the last election? Modi ji used to come and say that now they will run a double-engine government. But they have run a government of double-slavery. Modi ji has become a slave to America and because of his policies today the entire country is in crisis. And Hemanta ji is Modi ji’s slave. And on top of that, they want this government of double-slavery to make the people of this beautiful and self-respecting state of Assam slaves, keep them suppressed.”

Meghalaya starts Project Inclusion

Shillong , Mar 01: The State Education Mission Authority of Meghalaya has entered into a partnership with the Sri Au-robindo Society to implement ‘Project Inclusion’ in government schools across the state. According to officials, the initiative is planned as a five-year programme aimed at integrating children with diverse learning needs into the mainstream education sys-tem.

As part of the project, teachers will undergo specialised train-ing and use digital tools, including the Project Inclusion App, to identify and support students with conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder. The programme also provides professional development oppor-tunities for special educators, including access to digital mod-ules that offer Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI)-approved Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) points.

12 IEDs recovered, destroyed in Tengenoupal

Imphal, Apr 01: In a significant drug seizure, security forces on Tuesday recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition, includ-ing 12 IEDs in a search operation carried out in the forest area of Saivom Ridge under Tengenoupal Police Station, Tengenoupal district. The recovered arms include four 9 mm pistols, four 9 mm pistol mag-azines, 12 IEDs, (destroyed in situ), clothing items and uniforms, includ-ing a combat shirt, two pairs of com-bat pants, two combat jackets and a combat cap, and one combat handbag. On the other hand, security forces arrested an active cadre of KCP (Apunba), identified as Urikhinbam Bijeshranjan Meitei alias Abaich-a (24) of Yourabung Khunou from Pungdongbam Makha Leikai un-der Lamlai Police Station, Imphal East district on the same day. A mo-bile phone was seized from him. Security forces also arrested an active cadre of KCP (Apunba), namely Thokchom Tompok Singh (27) of Chana Mayai Leikai from his residence under Lamlai Po-



lice Station, Imphal East district. Meanwhile, security forces contin-ued to conduct search operations and area domination in the fringe and vulnerable areas across districts. Movement of 140 vehicles carrying essential items along NH-37 was en-sured. Strict security measures were

taken up in all vulnerable locations and security convoy was provided in sen-sitive stretches in order to ensure free and safe movement of the vehicles. A total of 114 Nakas/Check points were installed in different districts, both in the hills and the valley, and five persons were detained.

Kuki militants issued threats over Hun-Thadou Cultural Festival: TIM

Imphal, Apr 01: Thadou Inpi Manipur (TIM) has claimed that it has received widespread reports that cer-tain individuals, allegedly identifying themselves as Thadous as well as Kuki or just Kuki, are issuing threats to willing Thadou community members who wish to attend the 8th Ma-nipur State-Level Hun-Thadou Cultural Festival, 2026, scheduled for April 7 (Tuesday) in Imphal. In a press release, TIM al-leged that the individuals are reportedly using the name of armed Kuki militants to in-timidate and discourage par-ticipation, expressing deep regret and disappointment over such divisive actions. Asserting that every Thadou has the fundamental right

to life, liberty, and cultural expression; it strongly con-demned any attempt to create fear, panic, or division with-in the Thadou community through false threats or mis-information. Such campaigns undermine Thadou unity and cultural pride, and risk fur-ther worsening relations be-tween the Thadou people and the Kuki subscribers, it stated. TIM stated that no individ-ual or group has the right to obstruct Thadous from par-ticipating in this legitimate cultural event through coer-cion or intimidation. If these activities continue, Thadou Inpi Manipur will not re-main a mute spectator due to their social media activities, personal calls, messages, or any other means, it vowed. It called upon all Thadou

brothers and sisters to re-main united, exercise re-straint, and participate freely in the festival as per their wish. It also called upon them to focus on preserving and promoting their culture rather than allowing divi-sive forces to weaken them. Mention may be made that this year’s celebration as-sumes added significance as it returns to its home State. The 2024 edition was observed in Delhi and the 2025 edition in Guwahati due to prevailing circumstances in Manipur. The festival homecoming to Imphal is seen as a sym-bol of renewed hope and a reaffirmation of the Thadou community’s indigenous identity within the State. Organizing Committee of 8th State Level Hun-Thadou

Cultural Festival, 2026 had announced that prepara-tions for the upcoming festi-val are in full swing, with all necessary arrangements underway for a successful and meaningful celebration. Initiated in 2016 following a resolution of the Thadou Conclave, Delhi – 2015, the festival is celebrated annu-ally on April 7 as a symbol of cultural unity and identity for Thadou people world-wide. It has been officially recognized as a Restricted State Holiday since 2023 by the Government of Manipur. The festival commemorates the sacred “Hun” season — a period of thanksgiv-ing for the germination and sprouting of seeds sown and prayers for a bountiful har-vest.

Indian National Congress Moves Election Commission of India Against Sonitpur SP After Candidate Attack

Sonitpur, Apr 01: The Congress has filed a complaint with the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) against Sonitpur SP Barun Purkayastha over attack on its Naduar candidate Sunil Kumar Chetry.The Opposition party has accused the SP of wilfully failing to prevent the brutal assault on Chetry.

In a letter to the CEC, Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Gaurav Gogoi has sought appropriate di-rections from the Election Commission to the Assam Police for strict compliance with the Model Code of Conduct and prevent recurrence of such incidents.

Chetry, a former president of the All Assam Gorkha Stu-dents’ Union, was attacked by a group that the Congress alleged comprised BJP workers while he was campaigning on Monday. The Congress candidate’s convoy was allegedly attacked at Napalm Bypass of the constituency followed by a scuffle.Chetry fell to the ground and was seen groaning be-fore he was rushed to a private hospital for treatment.

Senior Congress spokesperson Rupa Kalita and other party workers were also injured in the incident.

“As of the filing of this complaint, no FIR has been regis-tered against the named perpetrators, nor have any concrete steps been taken to apprehend them, despite the incident oc-curring in broad daylight during active election campaign. Notwithstanding the Model Code of Conduct being in full force and prior warnings of heightened political tensions in Sonitpur district (including an earlier clash on or around March 28), the SP did not deploy adequate preventive mea-sures or provide security to the Congress candidate, despite formal requests for enhanced protection. This constitutes a violation of the duty to ensure free and fair elections under Article 324 of the Constitution of India, the Representation of the People Act, 1951,” Gaurav Gogoi said in the letter to the CEC.

Kohima Faces Environmental Degradation, Reveals Nagaland University GIS Study

Kohima, Apr 01: Researchers from Naga-land University and PNG Govt PG College Ramnagar, Nainital, have used advanced Geographic Information System (GIS) modelling and remote sensing techniques to investigate environmental change and degradation in Kohima district, providing important scientific insights into the fragile geo-ecological conditions of India’s North East Hill (NEH) region.

The research addressed growing concerns about environmental degradation in the Hi-malayan and North East Hill regions caused by both natural processes and human activ-ities.

These include rapid urbanisation, defor-estation, shifting cultivation practices and climate change, which together contribute to increasing risks such as landslides, floods, droughts and extreme weather events.

The findings were published during De-cember 2023 in the Environmental Monitor-ing and Assessment, a peer-reviewed journal that publishes research on monitoring, as-sessment and management of environmen-tal quality, brought out by the prestigious Springer Nature.

The paper was co-authored by Khrieke-touno Belho and Prof. M. S. Rawat from the



Department of Geography, School of Sci-ences, Nagaland University, along with Pradeep Kumar Rawat from the Uttarakhnad Open University Study Centre.

The research was supported by Nagaland University through a Non-NET Fellowship awarded to Belho and by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.

Elaborating on the research signifi-cance even now in 2026, Prof. Rawat said, “Geo-environmentally and anthropogeni-cally, the region is highly fragile owing to continuous seismotectonic activities, land-slides, slope failures, fragmented unstable

geology, geomorphology and steep rugged topography as well as very high frequency of natural hazards and disasters. The region is passing through alarming and threatening conditions due to a high rate of land use degradation which is accelerating other associ-ated global environmental problems such as climate change and its adverse impacts. It is therefore, essential to mitigate the cur-rent environmental change and degradation. If necessary measures are not taken as soon as possible, it may lead to severe subsequent impacts. This study contributes a holistic ap-proach to tackling such kind of environmen-

tal issues.”

Highlighting the steps needed to be taken up now to arrest the environmental degra-dation, Prof. Rawat added, “It has been the need of the hour to adopt the most effective and reliable geospatial technology and ac-tion-oriented management strategy so that the risk of environmental degradation could be mitigated.”

Using an integrated GIS database model-ing system, the researchers analysed en-vironmental change through three major modules — Geodiversity Informatics, Land Use Informatics and Climate Informatics. This approach allowed the team to exam-ine multiple interconnected environmental parameters, including geological structures, land-use patterns, vegetation cover, rainfall, temperature and ecological habitats.

In addition, the study highlighted the re-gion’s geological fragility. Analysis of earth-quake records from 1982 to 2022 revealed that more than 1,100 seismic events occurred in Kohima district, averaging around 27 mi-cro earthquakes per year with less than 4 to 2 magnitudes. Most of these were linked to tectonic faults and geological lineaments that contribute to landscape instability, ero-sion and landslides.

Deputy IGAR chairs security meeting in Ukhrul

Imphal, Apr 01: In a decisive step towards strengthening the regional security architecture, Assam Rifles convened a district-level security meeting on Tuesday at Somsai Gar-ri-son, Ukhrul. Building on the momentum of recent com-munity engagement initiatives, this forum brought together a unified contingent of officials and personnel to conduct a comprehensive review of the prevailing security environ-ment in the district and adjoining areas. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Inspector General of Assam Rifles, Ukhrul, with the participation of key civil authorities, in-cluding the District Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police, Ukhrul, alongside intelligence representatives, informed a press release of IGAR(S) issued by its PRO.

The deliberations focused on the evolving law-and-order situation and border vulnerabilities, with a specific empha-sis on intensifying surveillance along the International Bor-der and the hinterland. Participants highlighted the impor-tance of sharing real-time intelligence and executing joint operations through seamless coordination between security forces and the civil administration. Assam Rifles reiterated its role as an impartial and professional force dedicated to safeguarding national interests and maintaining communal harmony. By prioritising firm action against anti-national elements through sustained operations, all stakeholders re-solved to intensify actionable efforts for a stable and secure district.

PM visits tea garden in Dibrugarh, interacts with women workers and clicks selfie with them

Guwahati, Apr 01: Prime Minister Narendra Modi vis-ited the Manohari Tea Estate in Dibrugarh district of As-sam and plucked tea leaves alongside women workers on Wednesday morning.

Modi also interacted with a group of women workers at-tired in traditional white and red bordered sarees and took a selfie with them.Modi is on a day-long visit to the poll-bound state to address two campaign rallies for BJP can-didates.The PM described



his tea garden visit as a “very memorable experience”.“At a tea garden in Dibrugarh this morning, got a glimpse of the culture of tea garden families.Their contribution

to Assam’s progress is unpar-alleled,” the PM wrote on his X handle after the visit.“We are very proud of the efforts of each and every tea garden family. Their hardwork and

perseverance have enhanced Assam’s pride.

The plucking of tea leaves was followed by the women talking about their culture and of course a selfie!” he said.“The women at the tea garden in Dibrugarh sang a song, which pays homage to Jagat Janani Maa. It is amazing how they remain so connected with their culture and roots. Tea is the soul of Assam! The tea from here has made its way across the world,” he added.

CNG to get cheaper in Meghalaya as Cabinet approves VAT reduction

Shillong, Mar 01: Con-rad Sangma on Wednesday said that a Cabinet meeting of the Meghalaya govern-ment approved multiple policy decisions, includ-ing employee service con-ditions, a provident fund scheme, tax revisions, and new service rules.Regional news updates The Cabinet approved the service con-ditions of regularised ad hoc employees, including pro-visions related to seniori-ty and promotion. Ad hoc appointments made prior to 2007 had been regula-rised earlier, with several employees subsequently promoted. However, issues arose during pension pro-cessing, particularly for re-tired employees, regarding whether benefits should be calculated based on regu-larised or promoted posts. To address this, the Cab-inet approved a one-time condonation to recognise



promotions made as per prescribed rules, enabling eligible employees to re-ceive salary and pension benefits based on their pro-moted posts.

The Cabinet also ap-proved the implemen-tation of the Meghalaya Non-Government School and College Employees Centralised Provident Fund Scheme, 2026. Officials stated that while employ-ees had been contributing under existing provisions,

there was no structured government mechanism to manage these funds. The approved scheme aims to provide a formal frame-work for managing contri-butions and ensuring access to provident fund benefits. In another decision, the Cabinet agreed to reduce the Value Added Tax (VAT) rate on methane gas used as Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) from 14.5% to 5%, aligning it with rates in other states. The move is

intended to support a com-petitive environment for agencies operating in the sector. The Cabinet further approved several regula-tory frameworks, including the Meghalaya State Al-lied Health Council Rules, 2026; Meghalaya Science and Technology Cell Ser-vice Rules; Meghalaya Integrated Economics and Statistics Service Rules, 2026; and the Meghalaya Subordinate Integrated Economics and Statistical Service Rules, 2026.India news analysis Additionally, approvals were granted for the naming and renaming of various roads and local-ities. These include renam-ing “Blessed Mother Tere-sa” road to “Saint Teresa Road,” “Rev Nichol’s Roy Road” to “Rev J.J.M Nich-ols Roy Road,” and naming roads such as “Utpal Rabha Road” and “Dr. Friday Lyn-gdoh Road,” among others.

North East Chronicle

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The Importance of Personal Accountability

Personal accountability is the willingness to take responsibility for one’s actions, decisions, and outcomes. It is a key factor in personal growth and success. Individuals who practice accountability are more likely to learn from their experiences. Instead of blaming external factors, they reflect on their actions and seek ways to improve. This mindset encourages continuous development. In education, personal accountability helps students manage their responsibilities effectively. Completing assignments, preparing for exams, and maintaining discipline all require a sense of ownership. In professional environments, accountable individuals contribute to reliability and trust. Employers value employees who take responsibility for their work and address challenges proactively. Personal accountability also strengthens relationships. Being dependable and honest builds trust and respect among others. Developing accountability requires self-awareness and discipline. Individuals must recognise their role in outcomes and be willing to accept consequences. Families and educational institutions play an important role in fostering accountability. Encouraging responsibility from an early age helps individuals develop this quality. A society that values personal accountability becomes more organised and responsible. By taking ownership of their actions, individuals contribute to a culture of integrity and progress.

How China can survive without the Strait of Hormuz

The world’s largest importer of oil through the Strait of Hormuz is, paradoxically, also one of the best placed to weather the waterway’s closure. China consumes oceans of oil from the Gulf and imports roughly, as much from the region as India, Japan and South Korea combined. In response to the closure of the Strait, officials across Asia are asking citizens to take shorter showers or work from home to save energy. In China, the ruling Communist Party’s flagship newspaper is instead telling readers the country holds its own “energy rice bowl.”

While the editorial does not mention that Beijing has unofficially banned fuel exports to conserve supplies, the country is nonetheless more insulated than many of its neighbours thanks to years of policy measures that have reduced its vulnerability to energy shocks.

China boasts an electric vehicle fleet about as large as the rest of the world’s combined, vast and growing oil stockpiles, diversified supplies of oil, and gas and an electricity grid that is almost insulated from imports thanks to domestic coal and renewables.

“The current situation is really close to what Chinese planners have had in mind for decades,” said Lauri Myllyvirta, co-founder of the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air in Finland.

“It validates the drive to reduce reliance on seaborne fossil fuels.” In late 2020, Beijing issued a goal for electric vehicle purchases to hit 20 percent of new sales in 2025. By last year, sales hit half of all new vehicles. That unexpected boom in EVs means China’s fuel consumption has topped out after decades of breakneck growth. The country is burning and importing less oil than it was expected to just a few years ago.

Oil displaced by EVs last year was roughly equal to what China imported from Saudi Arabia, according to estimates from the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air. China’s electricity grid is powered almost entirely by coal and rapidly growing renewable energy. The boom in clean energy, which has exceeded Beijing’s own targets, is such that almost all the extra power the economy requires each year is met with new solar or wind. That means fewer coal imports and less liquefied natural gas (LNG) imported into the handful of coastal provinces where it is part of the electricity mix. China imports lots of oil, but in contrast to other major Asian importers, it is careful to stay independent of any one supplier.

Take Japan: Tokyo normally buys nearly 80 percent of its oil from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. China bought the same share of oil from eight countries, including large amounts of discounted oil from Russia, Venezuela and Iran, which US sanctions place off limits for most buyers.

Crude oil import volumes by origin for major importers. Less than 20 percent of China’s oil imports are from any one source.

China also funnels a share of those imports into the storage tanks of its secretive strategic petroleum reserve. No one knows exactly how big the reserves are, but combined with stocks held by commercial refiners, China has enough oil in storage to replace imports via the Strait of Hormuz for perhaps seven months by some estimates. China produced 4.3 million barrels per day of oil last year, a new record that was equal to about 40 percent of all oil imports. However, oil reserves are drying up and China is unlikely to replicate the US shale oil boom. Gas, however, is another story. Domestic production is growing fast enough that, combined with gas imported via pipeline, China is actually importing less LNG than it did in 2020. China’s pipeline network allows it to diversify away from seaborne imports and source oil and gas from Russia, central Asia and Myanmar. Ambitious plans have been proposed for another Russian-China pipeline, the Power of Siberia 2, however, it remains years from completion. For decades China’s growth has been fueled by fossil fuels imported from overseas, in particular crude oil. But thanks to the EV boom, China is unhitching its growth engine from foreign oil.

“China’s oil demand is likely to peak this year and decline thereafter,” said Chen Lin, vice-president of oil and gas research at Rystad Energy. “So although the import share will remain high, the situation is unlikely to worsen.”

The Iran War and the paradox of post-modern warfare

The US and Israel appeared almost poised to declare “mission accomplished,” recasting a protracted and indeterminate conflict as victory, even as they sought an expedient offramp from a preemptive war that had already exceeded the temporal and strategic horizons of its hubristically conceived inception—much to their peril. Israel, however, stopped short, arguably vindicating its maximalist approach in a putative existential struggle it questionably felt compelled to pursue conclusively, even if that required a unilateral double-down. The chemistry between this performative duo masked an incipient divergence: Washington’s growing inclination toward de-escalation—driven as much by systemic pressures in energy markets and financial volatility as by strategic recalibration—sat uneasily alongside Israel’s continued commitment to decisive degradation of Iranian capability. This parting of ways exposed fractures within what had been presented as a unified strategic front, further entrenching Iran’s strategy of endurance while simultaneously ramping up its deterrent leverage.

At this critical juncture, any negotiated offramp would differentially redistribute the optics and substance of defeat—if not render such an exit increasingly politically off limits—commensurate with the layers of disinformation and narrative management through which all sides have sought to obscure battlefield realities. For the US, it could be framed as pragmatic retrenchment within a broader global calculus, but for Israel, such an exit risked appearing as a more immediate and unambiguous setback, thereby amplifying the asymmetry of perceived defeat even within a shared de-escalatory outcome.

Yet the very desperation of finding themselves on the receiving end of a war that had outrun the logic of its own projection, much to their chagrin, has begun to generate an inverse dynamic. What initially appeared as strategic divergence is increasingly giving way to an inseparable convergence, as Washington and Tel Aviv, caught alike in the compulsions of escalation management, discover that the chemistry of collaboration—and the capacity to shape a prevailing narrative that masks the underlying reality—now binds them more tightly than the earlier choreography of victory ever envisioned. Iran’s leverage rests on a simple yet brutal economic equation: it costs Tehran pennies to launch a drone, but it costs the US and Israel millions to intercept one. As the war grinds on into its second month, Israel’s interceptor stockpiles are steadily thinning, compelling the US to shift from a mobile force of regional projection into a static guarantor of Israeli airspace. Beyond Israel’s losses, the US faces mounting financial, logistical, and reputational costs: forward-deployed forces experiencing heightened operational risk, expenditures on missile defense surge, and the strain on rapid deployment and force readiness reverberates across other theaters.

Meanwhile, the true measure of Iran’s leverage lies in the proximity of its surgical strikes to Tel Aviv, Dimona, and Arad, systematically degrading Israel’s radars and sensors. That Iranian missiles can reach the vicinity of Israel’s most sensitive nuclear facilities—despite their status as the highest-priority defensive targets—lays bare the unraveling of Israel’s vaunted air-defense doctrine. If the nuclear heart of the state can be placed under threat, no city can plausibly be considered secure, and the psychological collapse of Israel’s deterrent credibility becomes nearly total.

This desperation has inverted the regional order. The Gulf states, home to critical US bases, now find themselves reduced to hostages of escalation. They cannot refuse American requests without risking strategic abandonment, yet any cooperation in Israel’s defense exposes their oil infrastructure and urban centers to Iranian retaliation. Their pre-

war détente with Tehran has thus been rendered effectively meaningless.

Iran has, in effect, achieved strategic paralysis. By prosecuting a war of industrial attrition, it compels its adversaries to hemorrhage resources—Israel through direct missile defense expenditure and infrastructure degradation, and the US through operational overextension, deployment costs, and political exposure—while holding the entire US-allied architecture—from Israel’s nuclear core at Dimona to Gulf energy exports—as collateral against further escalation. In this configuration, Iran turns endurance and attrition into strategic instruments, converting both adversaries’ strengths and vulnerabilities into leverage. Iran derived strategic leverage from endurance, turning the protraction of conflict into a distinct form of victory—not through conquest, but through attrition, defiance, and the denial of any decisive pivot, such that apparent triumphs by adversaries risked collapsing into pyrrhic outcomes. The US implemented a selective pause of attacks on Iranian oil and energy installations, advancing negotiations under duress rather than from a position of strategic leverage, while submitting a fifteen-point peace and mediation proposal through intermediaries including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. Tehran publicly rejected the plan as one-sided and unacceptable, leaving the status of negotiations unclear and undercutting any claim of coordinated de-escalation.

Adding to the strategic confusion, President Trump simultaneously signaled increasingly aggressive force options while touting the possibility of a diplomatic settlement with Iran. Thousands of soldiers from the US Army’s 82nd Airborne Division have arrived in the Middle East as part of a broader buildup that includes roughly 2,500 Marines and sailors from Marine Expeditionary Units, amphibious assault forces, and elements of Special Operations and support units, all positioned to expand US operational capacity across the Gulf. Trump publicly entertained the idea of seizing control of Iran’s oil-rich Kharg Island or “obliterating” key Iranian energy infrastructure if Tehran failed to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, even as negotiations for a potential settlement appeared imminent.

This juxtaposition—threatening massive destruction and potential ground operations while insisting that an offramp was within reach—reveals a marked cognitive dissonance in US policy: one foot engaged in escalating coercive military pressure, the other projecting imminent diplomatic resolution, a mixed signal that compounded strategic uncertainty and left adversaries unsure of which course of action would prevail.

Amid ongoing escalatory maneuvers, the targeted decapitation of an IRGC navy commander continued unabated, underscoring the persistent kinetic dimension of the conflict. These strikes, alongside attacks on civilian infrastructure and Gulf shipping, inflicted casualties on US personnel—including up to 20 service members injured—and damaged allied assets, amplifying regional instability and global energy market shocks.

Simultaneously, the life insurance for Iran’s Foreign Minister and the Speaker of its Islamic Consultative Assembly was reportedly brokered through Pakistani intermediaries with the Trump administration—a pre-emption should they need to represent Iran in future negotiations with the US, particularly after the targeted killings of an array of senior religious and political leaders, a move not without quiet dismay from Israel, still hellbent on regime change in Iran. The development underscored the intricate interplay of coercive action, diplomacy, third-party mediation, and international necropolitics—a constellation of forces defining an increasingly complex and multilayered theater of war. This dynamic resonates with a striking literary analogue

in Moby-Dick. Captain Ahab’s monomaniacal pursuit of the white whale transforms a commercial voyage into a singular, self-destructive quest, subordinating prudence and collective survival to the compulsive logic of pursuit. As Herman Melville renders it, obsession distorts judgment, narrowing the strategic horizon until the object of pursuit becomes indistinguishable from the conditions of ruin. A similar pattern can be discerned in Donald Trump’s fixation on Iran, where strategic calculation risks being subsumed by an overriding imperative to confront a singularly constructed adversary. The danger, as Melville’s narrative makes clear, is that such fixation does not produce resolution but entrapment—drawing not only the pursuer but the entire enterprise into a vortex where victory, even if claimed, collapses into something indistinguishable from defeat.

Yet the conflict operates as Umberto Eco’s Foucault’s Pendulum—an oscillating system set in motion by the initial forces of escalation and hubris. Once set swinging, the pendulum traces a trajectory dictated by initial momentum, yet its consequences reverberate across time and space in ways that are both inevitable and diffuse. In this war, the initial preemptive logic—Trump’s obsession with neutralizing Iran, the maximalist ambitions of Israel, and the systemic pressures driving US decision-making—has generated oscillations affecting the Middle East, energy markets, global financial systems, and regional alliances. The pendulum continues its arc independently of the desires of political actors, imparting effects far beyond the intentions of its initial movers.

The search for an elusive, singular enemy—whether a white whale, a presumed interlocutor in Iran, or a “hidden threat” to US interests—produces a network of signs, actions, and reactions that can be read as meaningful but are only partially tethered to reality. In this sense, post-modern warfare becomes not merely a struggle of arms but a contest of narrative, perception, and interpretive construction, where every move is both sign and signal, and the stakes of misreading are amplified across geopolitical, financial, and technological domains. While the US and Israel continue to operate within the inherited logic of modern warfare—presuming linear escalation, coherent strategy, and the possibility of decisive outcomes—the broader historical and systemic context transforms the conflict into a distinctly post-modern condition, confounding precisely those expectations. On the ontic plane, this transformation is visible in the proliferation of drones, precision strikes, interceptor depletion, volatile energy markets, emergency mediation channels, and the oscillation between military escalation and diplomatic signaling. Yet beneath this ontic surface lies a deeper ontological mutation, a transformation not simply in how war is fought but in what war itself now is. Conflict no longer unfolds as a bounded event moving toward resolution but as a managed condition of fragmentation, simultaneity, and indeterminacy, subsuming many moving parts that befuddle all parties—both directly involved and indirectly affected. De-escalatory gestures coexist with renewed deployments; mediation unfolds alongside targeted decapitation; and alliances oscillate between divergence and renewed collaboration through the very narrative management that masks underlying realities.

The battlefield is no longer confined to the kinetic domain but dispersed across technological, financial, informational, and interpretive arenas, where performative declarations of victory compete with unresolved facts on the ground. It is at this ontological level that the boundaries between victory and defeat themselves begin to blur. Triumph compounds into exhaustion, and survival into narrative authorship. What appears as tactical success

on the ontic plane may simultaneously generate strategic entrapment on the ontological one, such that the categories of winning and losing lose their older fixity. Iran’s denial of any decisive pivot locks its adversaries into this altered being of conflict, where endurance and adaptability—not territorial dominance—become the decisive forms of leverage. The ramifications of this mutation are no longer merely regional. What begins as a theater of war in the Middle East compounds outward into global financial volatility, energy insecurity, alliance destabilization, maritime disruption, and even planetary consequences through supply-chain shocks, inflationary cascades, and technological militarization. War thus ceases to be an event among states and becomes a planetary condition of systemic interdependence, where every tactical move reverberates through layered regional, global, and civilizational architectures. It is precisely this displacement of war from decisive event to ontologically transformed managed condition that unsettles inherited zero-sum assumptions and prepares the ground for a broader rethinking of strategic payoff itself.

This scenario exemplifies a critical paradigm shift. Traditional zero-sum assumptions—where one actor’s gain is necessarily another’s loss—are being upended. Boundaries between zero-sum and positive-sum dynamics blur. One can win by losing and lose by winning. Victory is no longer simply material; it is performative, contingent, narrative-driven, and often open to ontological relativity. Game theory provides a lens for understanding this evolving landscape. In a conventional zero-sum framework, preemptive action is designed to secure a decisive outcome: to compel capitulation or degrade a rival irreversibly. Yet systemic uncertainty disrupts these assumptions. Iran’s resilience has prolonged the conflict beyond its initially overwhelming phase, demonstrating that endurance—more than momentum—constitutes strategic leverage. The act of refusing to capitulate converts apparent weakness into legitimacy and a platform to influence negotiations, shape regional dynamics, and complicate adversaries’ calculations. Public signaling by the US and Israel—framing operations as successful and displaying military precision—aims to maintain domestic political support and international credibility. Yet these signals simultaneously create constraints: overt victory claims heighten expectations, risking backlash if conflict continues or unintended consequences emerge. The narrative of victory becomes both tool and liability, shaping the conditions under which an offramp can be credibly pursued. Iran’s conduct illustrates the complementary dynamic. Rather than seeking decisive engagement on conventional terms, Iranian strategy leverages asymmetry—often perceived by adversaries as weakness—to its advantage: delaying tactics, irregular operations, cyber and proxy actions, and selective engagement designed to preserve capability while imposing maximal costs. Prolonged conflict becomes a strategic asset. Iran also implicitly adopts a mosaic defense approach. Targeted strikes designed to disrupt command structures—misrecognized as a veritable house of cards—produce only localized disruption within a resilient, distributed architecture. Authority is diffused, redundancy is built in, and operational continuity is preserved through overlapping layers of command. The system absorbs shocks, reorganizes, and fortifies long-term resilience.

What appears as tactical success for the US and Israel may paradoxically reinforce Iran’s strategic position: a decapitation strategy intended to weaken or overthrow the regime instead strengthens the leadership structure from the bottom up, as decentralized command and resilient institutions persist amid external pressure and help unify supporters against a common ad-

versary. Decisions about an exit or “offramp” defy linear logic. Declaring victory is simultaneously symbolic and pragmatic: it signals a withdrawal while maintaining political and strategic credibility. Circular causality—resonating with the pendular dynamics described earlier—governs this process: actions and narratives co-construct outcomes, emergent patterns materialize and dissipate, and the initial preemptive logic continues to reverberate across the strategic system.

Victory is neither absolute nor singular; it is contingent, performative, and interpreted through multiple registers. Success manifests politically, psychologically, and symbolically, often diverging from tactical or battlefield outcomes. Hybrid dynamics dominate: endurance, defiance, asymmetric adaptation, and narrative management all constitute forms of success alongside conventional military achievements, underscoring the profound transformation of warfare from a linear pursuit of resolution to a sustained, post-modern condition of managed complexity. What returns us to the opening tensions—the US-Israeli divergence, the asymmetry of perceived defeat, the life insurance brokered through Pakistani intermediaries—is precisely this condition. The US, entangled in systemic pressures and seeking a managed exit, finds itself increasingly at odds with an Israeli partner still committed to a logic of decisive degradation. Iran, for its part, has transformed endurance into a strategic asset, ensuring that even an offramp negotiated under duress will carry the texture of defeat for some and survival as victory for others.

The life insurance arrangement—a precaution against further decapitation strikes—is not merely a grim detail but a synecdoche of the broader predicament: negotiations now proceed under the shadow of targeted killing, and diplomacy itself has become another domain of coercive signaling. In this theater, we witness the emergence of post-national necropolitics—the sovereign right to kill no longer tethered to territorial defense or conventional statecraft but exercised transnationally, through targeted strikes and proxy networks, against political figures whose very capacity to negotiate becomes contingent on survival. The Iran conflict underscores the inadequacy of conventional strategic frameworks, revealing the indeterminacy, oscillation, and systemic interdependence that define contemporary warfare. Zero-sum and positive-sum logics coexist in uneasy tension: actors may win by enduring, lose by ostensibly triumphing, or find both outcomes intertwined. Encumbered by maximalist ambitions, hubristic preconceptions, and a spiral of escalation, the United States faces a war of choice animated by anachronistic objectives—relics of a unipolar strategic imagination—misaligned with an emergent, multipolar reality, and conceptually undone from the outset. In the absence of any exit strategy, the war of choice has ceded the endgame to the pendulum, not the clockwork. The clockwork logic of linear strategy—where victory is a fixed endpoint—has yielded to the pendular dynamics of post-modern conflict, where some consequences are foreseeable, while others are not, and every action resonates beyond immediate intent. Power now resides less in domination than in endurance, adaptation, and the capacity to navigate complexity, uncertainty, and narrative. In this transformed theater, victory is no longer a terminus but a provisional construct, and war itself has become a managed condition without finality, oscillating between perception and reality, action and consequence, across a web of interdependent domains. It is endurance, flexibility, and interpretive authorship that constitute leverage; it is narrative as much as ordinance that determines strategic effect; and it is the capacity to coexist with indeterminacy that now defines the art of modern warfare.

FY27 IPO pipeline swells to ₹1.75 trn will it materialise Experts examine

Mumbai: India’s primary market, which clocked record fund-raising in 2025-26 (FY26) despite persistent volatility, is gearing up for another potentially strong FY27, backed by a deep pipeline of companies planning to go public. Analysts, however, caution that the fund-raise in FY27 will largely depend on how the secondary markets perform in the next few months. Among the most closely tracked issues for FY27, analysts said, is Jio Platforms - the holding company for Reliance’s telecom business, which is expected to file its draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with Sebi soon, reports suggest. Another 63 companies, targeting about ₹1.37 trillion, are still awaiting regulatory clearance. Additionally, several firms are preparing to file draft papers, including 83 new-age technology companies (NATCs) seeking to raise approximately ₹1.38 trillion.In FY26, as many as 112 companies raised a record ₹1.78 trillion through mainboard initial public offerings (IPOs), about 10 per cent higher than the previous peak of ₹1.62 trillion mobilised by 78 IPOs in FY25, according to Prime Database. Waning interest from foreign institutional investors (FIIs) as regards the Indian markets as a concern.Analysts believe the of-

fering could whet the appetite for fresh issues at a time when most other companies are preferring to stay on the sidelines in the backdrop of volatile secondary markets. Meanwhile, 144 companies are collectively aiming to raise around ₹1.75 trillion from the markets and have already secured approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), data from Prime Database suggests. The key question is whether this strong pipeline will translate into actual fund-raising in FY27. Analysts remain divided, though there is broad consensus that a revival in primary markets will depend stability in the secondary markets.Deepak Jasani, an independent market expert, noted that the success of the primary market depends largely on secondary market conditions and the returns earned by recent IPO investors. “Many of these approvals could lapse if market conditions remain un conducive or if valuations sought by promoters are not accepted by investors,” he said.Jasani also adds that the trajectory of the primary market could be heavily influenced by the Jio IPO, particularly in terms of timing and execution. A substantial portion of next year’s fund-raising could hinge on the success of this offering.

In Delhi, the cost of a commercial LPG cylinder increased by Rs 195.50

Mumbai: On Wednesday, the price of commercial LPG cylinders was increased by Rs 195.50, according to a report by Press Trust of India. The hike comes at a time when global oil prices are climbing due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia. In Delhi, the price of a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder has now reached Rs 2,078.50, as per state-run oil companies. In Kolkata, the jump is even higher at ₹218. The new rates have come into effect from April 1. The cost of a 14.2-kg cooking gas cylinder, which most households use, remains unchanged at Rs 913 in Delhi. The last revision for domestic LPG was on March 7, when prices were increased by Rs 60 per cylinder.Since the conflict in West Asia began to intensify, oil prices have surged nearly 50 per cent, as supply chains have been disrupted. This rip-



ple effect is now being felt in every-day expenses back home. This isn’t the first increase in recent weeks. Just last month, on March 1, commercial LPG prices were raised by Rs 114.50 per cylinder. The latest jump adds more pressure, especially on hotels, eateries, and small vendors who rely heavily on these cylinders for daily operations. While businesses are feeling the pinch, there’s been no change in domestic LPG prices this time.

State-owned companies like Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum revise LPG and aviation fuel prices on the first day of every month. These changes depend on global oil rates and currency fluctuations, which have been quite unstable lately. Despite all this, petrol and diesel prices have not moved. They have remained steady since March last year, when prices were cut by Rs 2 per litre. At present, petrol costs Rs 94.72 per litre in Delhi, while diesel is priced at Rs 87.62 per litre. The rise in LPG prices comes amid the Iran war involving the US and Israel in the Middle East. It has shaken the oil market, with supply chains getting hit and fears of shortages growing. Because of this, oil prices have been rising sharply.

Sensex soars 2,000 pts, Nifty near 23,000: Key reasons for today’s rally

Mumbai: Indian benchmark indices, the Sensex and Nifty, rallied on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, buoyed by signs of de-escalation in the West Asia conflict. BSE Sensex gained 2,017.03 points or 2.8 per cent to touch the day’s high at 73,964.58, and the National Stock Exchange (NSE) Nifty50 traded higher by 609.9 points or 2.7 per cent, logging an intra-day high at 22,941.3. Simultaneously, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signaled Tehran’s willingness to end hostilities. According to reports, Pezeshkian stated that Iran is ready to halt its response to “US-Israeli aggression,” provided it receives “firm guarantees” that no further strikes will be conducted within its borders. In a Tuesday phone call with European Council President Antonio Costa, the Iranian leader emphasized that the key to “normalising the situation” lies in an immediate end to attacks by opposing forces. Wall Street indices also closed with strong gains on Friday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 2.49 per cent, the S&P 500 gained 2.91 per cent, and the Nasdaq Composite jumped 3.83 per cent. Analysts believe several stocks that experienced a sharp sell-off on March 30 due to tax-loss harvesting are poised for a rebound. From a technical perspective, Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money sees 23,000 as a crucial psychological resistance level, having transitioned from a previous support to a key supply zone. A decisive and sustained move above 23,000 is essential to extend the recovery toward 23,200, supported by strong follow-through buying. In the absence of such momentum, the index may face profit booking at higher levels, leading to a potential pullback. He added: On the downside, 22,650–22,500 serves as an important support zone. A break below this range could reintroduce selling pressure and reinforce the underlying weakness. Overall, while the opening bias remains cautiously positive, the broader structure continues to appear fragile. A sell-on-rise strategy is likely to persist unless the index sustains above the 23,000 level



with conviction.“Many stocks across sectors were marked sharply down on March 30th due to selling triggered by tax harvesting. These stocks are due for a rebound today,” said VK Vijayakumar. Tax harvesting is a strategic investment move where investors intentionally sell securities currently trading at a loss. By realizing these “paper losses,” investors can offset capital gains from other profitable investments, thereby reducing or eliminating their overall capital gains tax liability and maximising after-tax returns. “Global markets rallied strongly as reports indicated that Iranian leadership may be open to ending hostilities, subject to certain assurances. While these developments remain unconfirmed, they have significantly shifted market sentiment from risk aversion to cautious optimism. Further support has come from comments by Trump suggesting that the conflict could see resolution in the coming weeks, with a broader diplomatic framework likely to emerge,” said Hariprasad K, Research Analyst and Founder of Livelong Wealth.“There are indications of de-escalation of the war from the statements issued by the Iranian authorities. The Iranian president’s open-

ness to ending the war and confirmation from the Iranian foreign minister that ‘messages were exchanged with the US’ indicate that the war might end soon. This view is getting reflected in declines in crude prices and US bond yields,” said VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services.Global markets surgeAsian markets rallied on Wednesday following US President Donald Trump’s statement on the Iran conflict. At the last check, China’s CSI 300 was up 1.43 per cent, Hong Kong’s Hang Seng rose 1.96 per cent, Japan’s Nikkei gained 4.35 per cent, and South Korea’s Kospi advanced 7.2 per cent.Crude oil prices eased slightly after closing at \$118 per barrel on Tuesday. In early trade, Brent crude oil futures were trading near \$105 per barrel.Market sentiment improved after US President Donald Trump indicated that the military engagement with Iran could potentially conclude within the next two to three weeks. Speaking from the Oval Office, Trump expressed strong confidence in the current military trajectory but noted that an even faster resolution is possible should a diplomatic breakthrough occur.

Stock market rules changing STT on F&O, algo, buyback

New Delhi: Stock market rules changing from April 1: Starting April 1, 2026, several key changes will come into effect across the stock market ecosystem. These reforms, introduced or amended by the capital market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), are aimed at enhancing transparency, tightening risk controls, and supporting long-term stability.

Sunny Agarwal, head of fundamental research at SBI Securities, said that the new measures reflect a calibrated effort to curb excessive speculation and enhance the overall quality of market participation. 2. 50:50 margin rule: Sebi has mandated that brokers should maintain a minimum of 50 per cent of the margin in cash, with the remaining 50 per cent in non-cash collateral (such as pledged shares) for all the positions in the F&O. This means that a higher cash amount is required to execute a trade. Cash margin (what is allowed): Free cash in the demat account, liquid mutual funds, and overnight funds. Stocks and equity mutual funds are not allowed as cash margin.

“Market hopes for a gradual shift from trading to investing, disciplined capital allocation and better stability of markets. Regulatory tightening may cause short-term friction, but the broader direction remains constructive for long-term investors, with an emphasis on quality, transparency, and sustainable growth,” he said. 3. 12% surcharge on share buyback: A flat 12 per cent surcharge will be levied on capital gains from share buybacks. The 12 per cent surcharge will be applicable to individual or corporate shareholders making profits by selling shares in the buyback offer. RBI has tightened the rules for banks lending to stock brokers. As per the new rule, all such credit should be collateral in nature, and stricter monitoring will be carried out on a daily basis.



As per the new rule, in the case of bank guarantees issued to exchanges, a minimum of 50 per cent of such guarantees must be backed by collateral. Of this, at least 25 per cent must be in cash. This means that cash blockage for brokers will increase. RBI has introduced higher haircuts on equity collateral, to 40 per cent. This means that pledged shares worth ₹100 will be valued at ₹60 by banks. As a result, brokers will need to pledge a larger number of shares or assets to increase the value. RBI has prohibited bank funding for proprietary trading. In other words, banks can no longer fund stock brokers’ own trading books, although there are a few exceptions. Earlier, stock brokers were heavily dependent on bank funding for proprietary trading. The new rule will raise the tax cost, because a lower surcharge structure was applied on buybacks earlier. Before this, no surcharge was levied on taxable income up to ₹50 lakhs, while taxable income between ₹50 lakhs and ₹1 crore attracted a 10 per cent surcharge on capital gains from buybacks. 4. Strict lending norms for brokers: The RBI has introduced a set of new lending rules for stock brokers.

Focus issue record date for IRB Infrastructure shares



Mumbai: The share price of IRB Infrastructure would come into high focus tomorrow as the company will ascertain shareholder eligibility for its bonus issue. IRB Infrastructure: Bonus issue key details In February, the infrastructure firm announced a 1:1 bonus issue, for which it fixed the record date as April 1. The company will issue one equity share of Re 1 each to its eligible shareholders for every one existing equity share of Re 1 held by them. On its ex-bonus date (March 30), the stock rallied by more than 10% from its adjusted opening price of Rs 20.5. The company’s shares rose to an intra-day high of Rs 22.7 before closing at Rs 22.14, nearly unchanged from its high. Domestic equity markets are closed on March 31 on account of Shri Mahavir Jayanti. Over the past one month, the company’s stock has climbed by nearly 9%, and looking at the bigger picture, over the past six months, the stock has delivered a return of more than 5%. However, over the past one year, the stock has declined by over 5%.The deemed date of allotment for this issue is April 2, and the bonus equity shares will

be made available for trading on the next working day. April Dividend calendar: From Vedanta to Crisil, key payout dates you need to know For the quarter ended December 31, 2025, the infrastructure company’s net profit was posted at Rs 210 crore as it witnessed a whopping 95% YoY decline against Rs 6,026 crore reported for Q3FY25.The company’s revenue from operations too fell 16% YoY, as it was pegged at Rs 1,489 crore for Q3FY26 in comparison to Rs 1,780 crore posted for the same quarter last year.The construction engineering company paid out its third interim dividend of Rs 0.07 per equity share of face value Re 1 each in March.“With reference to above and in furtherance to our disclosure dated February 13, 2026, we wish to inform that the shareholders of the Company have, through Postal Ballot on March 23, 2026, inter alia approved the issuance of Bonus Equity Shares in the proportion of 1 (one) new equity share of Re. 1/- each for every 1 (one) existing equity share of Re. 1/- each fully paid up,” the company said in its regulatory filing.

Prior to Q4 results, Infosys to Mphasis JM Financial’s top IT choices

Mumbai: Indian IT firms are set to release their Q4FY26 results over next few weeks amid concerns about AI disruption and global uncertainties. JM Financial believes while the “sector rerating is unlikely to happen if concerns over the impact of Gen AI continue” investors are likely to focus on FY27 guidance and orderbook.JM Financial said it prefers Infosys among large cap IT companies, citing potential upside from improving guidance. In the mid-tier space, Mphasis is favoured due to its relatively better growth outlook. Among BPO players, Sagility stands out for its consistent performance. “We remain selective and prefer stocks underpinned by reasonable operational visibility,” JM Financial added. However, they noted that the depreciation of the Indian rupee has offered some relief. “Rupee depreciation is the only relief for Indian IT—it is likely to support margins in the near term,” they said. Cognizant has guided for 4% to 6.5% revenue growth in CY26, with organic growth expected between 2.5% and 5%, indicating a modest improvement over last year.Conclusion: Valuations under pressure, rerating unlikely Despite recent corrections, the sector continues to face valuation pressures. NSE IT is currently trading at around 18 times FY27 estimated earnings, but a rerating appears unlikely if concerns around Generative AI persist.Ana-



lysts have slightly revised earnings estimates for FY26–FY28 to factor in exchange rate changes and operational adjustments. They have also lowered valuation multiples across the sector due to continued uncertainty.JM Financial expects investors to focus on FY27 revenue guidance and order books as key indicators of future growth IT sector: FY27 guidance in focus Guidance for FY27 will be closely tracked by investors. Infosys is expected to project revenue growth of 2% to 4%, with margin guidance in the range of 20% to 22%. “Infosys had indicated earlier that financial services and Europe, which make up 40% of the revenue portfolio, will likely do better in FY27 versus FY26. For the March quarter, analysts expect mixed performance across the sector. Revenue growth for top IT com-

panies is likely to range between a decline of 0.7% and growth of 7.4% year-on-year, impacted by fewer working daysMid-tier IT firms are expected to perform bter, with revenue growth projected between 3% and 22% year-on-year, led by strong momentum in select companies. The ER&D segment is alsolikely to remain resilient, with steady growth driven by both organic and inorganic factors.The BPO segment is expected to be the most stable, with companies like Sagility likely to report strong double-digit growth. Meanwhile, rupee depreciation of around 2.7% quarter-on-quarter is expected to partially offset margin pressures from wage hikes and slower growth.Global peers signal steady demandGlobal IT companies have offered a relatively stable outlook. Accenture has revised its FY26 revenue growth guidance

to 3% to 5% in constant currency, while maintaining its assumptions around the Middle East situation. The company noted that client spending in calendar year 2026 is likely to remain similar to 2025.Infosys, TCS to Coforge: CLSA says AI disruption fears overblown; sees over 100% upside potential-Wipro is likely to guide for flat to marginally negative growth in the June quarter, mainly due to delays in deal ramp-ups. HCLTech, on the other hand, is expected to guide for 4% to 6% growth in its IT services business and 3% to 5% growth overall, with margins seen between 17.5% and 18.5%.GenAI fears, Middle East tensions dent IT sector outlookJM Financial noted that the Q4 (February- April) season started on a positive note following the Q3 earnings season, optimism faded in February and March due to rising concerns around Generative AI and geopolitical tensions. In January, IT stocks outperformed, with NSE IT beating the Nifty by around 4%. However, sentiment turned negative in February and March, leading to an underperformance of nearly 15%. “On top of this, the emerging Middle East crisis introduced an additional layer of uncertainty for IT Services companies. While Generative AI represents a structural concern for investors, the Middle East crisis has raised questions on near-term risks,” JM Financial noted.

Pakistan and China proposed a five part peace plan for the Middle East



Iran: Pakistan and China have announced a joint five-part plan for Middle East peace, following Pakistan's foreign minister's visit to Beijing on Tuesday to seek Chinese assistance for the country's stalled efforts to put an end to the conflict. The one-day meeting between Ishaq Dar and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, took place as Pakistan continues to strive for the position of peacemaker between the United States and Iran, despite the fact that the war shows no signs of abating. According to a statement from China's foreign ministry, the trip was designed to "strengthen" China-Pakistan cooperation on the current crisis in Iran and "make new efforts toward advocating for peace". So far, China has kept a strategic distance from the current war in the Middle East and Gulf, despite having links to the Tehran regime and being the major consumer of Iranian oil. While Beijing criticized the initial US and Israeli assaults on Iran, it has subsequently remained fairly neutral, focusing its efforts on calling for a cease-fire and negoti-

ating directly with Tehran for the safe passage of its own oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz. Following the discussion on Tuesday, Pakistan and China issued a joint statement calling for an immediate cease-fire and the protection of waterways, including the blockaded strait, as well as a five-part peace effort. The joint statement agreed that dialogue and diplomacy were "the only viable option to resolve conflicts" but there appeared to be little substantive progress in bringing the significant participants to the table to end the war. This week Trump claimed that negotiations with Iran were going "extremely well" while Tehran has maintained there are no direct talks happening at all. In recent weeks, Pakistan has put itself at the centre of efforts to bring about a ceasefire to end the war with Iran and has been pushing for Islamabad as the location for peace talks. Playing on its relationships with both sides, Pakistan's prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif, and army chief, Syed Asim Munir, have been commu-

nically Washington and the Gulf states." Yet as analysts and political figures have emphasised, Pakistan also has its own significant stakes in ending the conflict, and has already been paying a heavy economic price for the blockade on fuel and gas through the strait of Hormuz. Pakistan shares a 560-mile (900km) land border with Iran, and there are fears that the conflict could spill over into the restive region of Balochistan, which is already battling a violent insurgency. It is also home to the world's largest population of Shia Muslims outside Iran and there are fears the conflict could stir up sectarian tensions if it continues to drag on. Dozens were already killed in protests that broke out when the US and Israel began bombing Tehran. The country also has a freshly signed defence pact with Saudi Arabia, which could threaten to drag a reluctant Islamabad into the war if countries in the Gulf decide to shift to an offensive tack and fight back against Iran's missile and drone strikes. Kakar said Pakistan's strong interest in de-escalating the conflict in Iran reflected both geopolitical and domestic concerns, with fears it could further undermine the country's already highly unstable security situation. "Pakistan remains economically dependent on the Gulf monarchies, particularly Saudi Arabia, and seeks to preserve stable relations with the United States – yet it also shares a long and sensitive border with Iran," he said. "Serious instability in Iran would have direct implications for Pakistan's security. Escalation risks placing Islamabad in a very difficult position."

Moira Deeming might continue on the Liberal ticket the preselection, as members make 'stitch up' claims



Australia: Moira Deeming might secure the top slot on a Victorian Liberal ticket - if she still wants it - after possible competitors were given only 36 hours to submit nominations for a repeat preselection poll, in what some insiders describe a "stitch up". It happened after Dinesh Gourisetty dethroned Deeming as the top contender for the Western Metropolitan Region on Sunday. But by Monday night, the Victorian Liberal Party executive had decided to hold a new preselection after Gourisetty was ruled unsuitable to run as a candidate in the November state election owing to a character reference he supplied for a friend convicted of sexually abusing a child. The party's president, Philip Davis, wrote to members at about 11.10pm on Tuesday, advising that nominations would open that night and close at midday on Thursday. Liberal members, who asked for anonymity so they could speak freely,

said the short nomination period looked to be intended to discourage fresh candidates from nominating. Deeming and colleague upper house MP Trung Luu, who also ran in Sunday's election, are not required to renominate. "What they [the executive] want is for no one else to nominate, so Moira gets it by default without a preselection convention," one moderate Liberal member said, adding that the same delegates from Sunday's vote, the majority of whom supported Gourisetty, will participate. "If it gets to a convention, she may lose again. So this whole thing has been made up to make things easier for her. Another member said the timeline forced prospective candidates to "work all day and all night" to pull together a highly detailed application that generally takes up to a week to compile. This includes getting references from at least two people, 10 signatures from eligible party members, a

national police check and a credit report. Candidates also have to complete an 18-page questionnaire designed to unearth anything that could embarrass the party, such as past drug use, dating app activity, or visits to brothels or strip clubs. They must also pay a \$5,000 application fee, most of which goes to an external consultancy responsible for vetting – though the process is now under review after it failed to flag Gourisetty's character reference. One member said the paperwork could technically be completed in a day, but the fee could be a barrier. "There's no doubt the short timeframe favours Deeming," they said. A party figure, who was unauthorised to speak publicly, said there was an initial push for a 24-hour nomination window, but it was extended to 36 hours to ensure there was enough time to complete the application. They said candidates would only need

Petrol and diesel prices in Australia decrease as Labor's fuel tax reduction takes effect



Australia : Fuel prices in Australia began lowering immediately following the government's fuel excise cut, speeding the delivery of the Albanese government's cost-of-living assistance. Prices in capital cities stopped before plummeting on Wednesday, as the prime minister announced that the fuel and diesel tax will be reduced by half to 26.3 cents per litre. Unleaded prices fell 16 cents a litre on average across the country on Wednesday, with prices sitting between 243 and 245 cents a litre on average in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, NRMA data showed. Diesel fell from 323.5 cents to 311.1 cents on average across the country. Adelaide saw the biggest falls, with diesel down 21.3 cents and unleaded down 24.9 cents – almost equal to the entire fuel excise cut. The duty was only reduced on Wednesday and was expected to take days or weeks to affect retail

pricing since gas stations would have to unload their supplies of more costly fuel purchased previous to the reduction. Instead, gasoline stations have instantly reduced prices, on average, even for goods purchased at the full 52.6 cent per litre rate. Ampol announced that it has opted to pass on the entire 26.3 cent drop to some of its stations beginning Wednesday morning, with the other Ampol stations passing on the cut throughout the day. According to Informed Sources statistics, petrol prices in Australia's big cities have been climbing virtually daily since the beginning of March. From Friday to Tuesday, unleaded held steady in Adelaide at about 259 cents a litre and in Darwin at 264 cents, and fell in Hobart, from 260 cents to 257.5. It fell in Perth from 258.3 cents to 251.7 from Thursday to Tuesday. Fuel shortages have also eased, with the number of service sta-

tions out of at least one fuel type falling on Wednesday, reversing a persistent rise, according to Guardian Australia analysis of state government data. In New South Wales, 30 stations were out of all types of fuel on Wednesday, while 207 had no diesel, the state premier, Chris Minns, said. There had been 75 stations out of all fuel on Monday, which had fallen to 61 by Tuesday, and 247 with no diesel on Tuesday. "My strong suspicion is that that's as a result of consumers waiting for the excise to be cut before they fill up their tank," Minns told reporters. "It's come at a good time in the run-up to the Easter long weekend, it says to me that there'll be fuel available and that you shouldn't cancel your plans." Thousands of vehicles had disappeared from Sydney's roads over the month of March, suggesting motorists had started to cut back on buying petrol. NSW government data shows Pennant Hills Road traffic in the last full week of March fell 2.6% from late February, before war in Iran sent petrol prices surging, or 5% from the same week in the prior year. Compared to the previous year, traffic fell by 4.4% on Victoria Road, 2.3% on Parramatta Road and 1.8% on Military Road. On Anzac Parade in Sydney's east, traffic had been elevated in late February, 5% higher than the year before but by the end of March it was running 1% lower. The streets around Sydney airport have also emptied out. Traffic counts fell down 9% on Airport Drive and 5% on Qantas Drive from the last week of February to the last full week of March. Public transport usage has barely changed in NSW, with just under 2.38m average weekday Opal network trips in the last full week of March – the same as in 2025.

Charts depict Australia's gasoline problem, with empty petrol stations and unpredictable pricing

Australia: Hundreds of service stations around Australia have run dry, petrol prices have risen, and oil supplies have been halted. Australia is experiencing a petroleum crisis as Iran's shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz continues to bite. The federal government has released gasoline reserves, reduced fuel excise costs, and implemented a national fuel security strategy. While we are aware that there have been outages and price hikes, it can be difficult to have a whole picture of what is going on, due in part to the number of individual firms and governments participating. We have compiled the most recent data on pricing, outages, and oil tanker deliveries. Looking at the averages for petrol and diesel across Australia, we can see how much prices have risen since the US and Israel's war on Iran began in late February. There can be a huge variation in price

and availability, even across a relatively small area. Fuel outages aren't static – stations can run out and regain stock as governments and companies race to fill gaps in supply chains and release more fuel. The map below shows the number of fuel outages across Australia, day by day. You can hover over the stations for a macro view, and click through the dates where data is available. Since we began collecting data on 27 March, you can see a spike in outages in New South Wales and Victoria on 30 and 31 March. The next chart shows the total number of stations out of at least one kind of fuel on each day. This is an estimate and may be an undercount given the different timescales that each state reports data. At least six fuel shipments to Australia have already been cancelled or deferred, and experts say there will probably be more delays or cancellations. The



next chart shows the total number of "port calls" – or stops – at Australian ports by tankers with shipments of fuel and crude oil, which is refined to make fuel. Chart showing monthly tanker arrivals at Australian ports from January 2020. Latest data as of 27 March 2026. The data does not distinguish between imports and exports, but it does

show a slight decline in the number of tankers in February and March compared with the last six years. The same dataset shows a complete collapse in tankers travelling through the strait of Hormuz in the first weeks of March. Before the war, about a fifth of global oil and a third of fertilisers were shipped through the strait.

'Get your own oil' Trump begins diatribe on Europe for not supporting the Iran war

Europe: Donald Trump has started a diatribe against European countries that have refused to join his war against Iran, specifically targeting the United Kingdom and France, as transatlantic ties deteriorate due to the spiraling crisis that has caused havoc on the world economy. On his Truth Social website, the US president advised nations concerned about gasoline costs to "go get your own oil" by force from the Gulf, which pushed oil prices even higher. Later on Tuesday, Trump stated that US military will halt operations in Iran "very soon," citing a two to three-week schedule while his administration seeks discussions with Iranian officials. Trump also told reporters that the duty for maintaining the Strait of Hormuz open will fall on the countries who rely on it. "That isn't for us..." That will be for anyone uses the strait. The White House press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, stated on Tuesday that Trump will address the US to "provide an important update on Iran". On

Tuesday, France reported that it had barred Israeli planes from flying weapons via its airspace, while Italy rejected last-minute permission for US bombers to land in Sicily, indicating a more assertive European response to the war. Spain has already banned the US use of its bases and airspace for the battle, and Madrid's defense minister declared on Tuesday that the country will not "accept lectures from anyone". Meanwhile, the UK has permitted the US to use its bases for an unlawful war, despite Trump's public admonishment. In his Tuesday posts, Trump stated "all of those countries that can't get jet fuel because of the strait of Hormuz, like the United Kingdom, which refused to get involved in the decapitation of Iran" could purchase US oil instead. He suggested they should also "build up some delayed courage, go to the Strait, and just TAKE IT". The US secretary of defence, Pete Hegseth, repeated the call, saying there were countries that "ought be prepared

to step up on this critical waterway as well". "Last time I checked, there was supposed to be a big, bad Royal Navy that could be prepared to do things like that as well," Hegseth said calling out the UK during a press conference on Tuesday morning. Plans to control the strait of Hormuz by force are widely considered high risk and unrealistic, and European countries have been working for years on plans to buy more US oil. In a separate post, Trump criticised France because it "wouldn't let planes headed to Israel, loaded up with military supplies, fly over French territory", writing that the country had been "VERY UNHELPFUL". The office of the French president, Emmanuel Macron, said it was "surprised" by Trump's tweet, saying Paris "has not changed its position since day one" of the war. The US secretary of state, Marco Rubio, said that after the war, Washington would look at whether Nato has "served this country well", or whether it has become a "one-way street

Spring Wellness Escapes In India: 7 Luxury Retreats To Rejuvenate Body And Mind

As the season shifts and nature begins to bloom anew, spring presents the perfect moment to pause, reset, and realign. Embracing this spirit of renewal, wellness-led escapes offer immersive experiences designed to restore balance, rejuvenate the senses, and reconnect with oneself. Rooted in holistic wellbeing, these sanctuaries invite guests to embark on a mindful spring reset, nurturing both body and mind amidst serene, nature-led surroundings.

Six Senses Vana, Dehradun
Tucked away in the tranquil foothills of the Himalayas, Six Senses Vana offers a deeply immersive wellness experience rooted in Ayurveda, Tibetan healing, and holistic therapies. This spring, the retreat invites guests to embrace a mindful reset through personalised wellness journeys, nourishing cuisine, and serene forest surroundings—creating the ideal environment to restore balance, rejuvenate the senses, and reconnect with oneself.

Jim Corbett Marriott Resort & Spa, Uttarakhand
This spring, escape to Jim Corbett Marriott Resort & Spa, set between the Malani Hills and the tranquil Kosi River. Indulge in restorative Ayurvedic therapies at Quan Spa and riverside yoga sessions, savour Kumaoni flavours at The Corbett Kitchen, followed by Chowkdi, a rustic high tea served in earthen kulhads and unwind in the evening



with cocktails at Sal Bar. For adventure seekers, sunrise safaris, guided nature trails, and birdwatching at the Kosi Deck make for unforgettable moments. Whether with family, friends, or solo, it's the perfect getaway for a rejuvenating reset.

Six Senses Fort Barwara, Rajasthan

Set within a beautifully restored 14th-century fort, Six Senses Fort Barwara blends regal heritage with contemporary wellness. This season, guests can indulge in a spring reset with curated spa therapies, yoga, and meditation, complemented by the fort's tranquil setting and signature hospitality. The experience is designed

to harmonise body and mind while offering a unique sense of place steeped in history and luxury.

Holiday Inn Resort Goa, Mobor Beach
Set along the serene Mobor Beach, Holiday Inn Resort Goa offers a refreshing coastal escape ideal for a laid-back spring reset. Blending Go-

an-Portuguese architecture with lush gardens and tranquil sea views, the resort invites guests to unwind with rejuvenating spa therapies, leisurely beach walks, and wholesome dining, perfect for restoring balance while soaking in the calm of the ocean.

Ananda in the Himalayas, Rishikesh

Nestled in the Himalayan foothills overlooking the Ganges, Ananda in the Himalayas is one of India's most renowned wellness retreats. Combining Ayurveda, yoga, and Vedanta with international wellness therapies, it offers highly personalised programmes focused on detox, stress management, and holis-

tic healing. Surrounded by lush forests and spiritual energy, it's an ideal destination for a transformative spring reset.

Atmantan Wellness Resort, Mulshi

Overlooking the tranquil Mulshi Lake near Pune, Atmantan Wellness Resort blends modern luxury with holistic healing. Its integrated wellness programmes focus on fitness, nutrition, physiotherapy, and mental wellbeing. With curated retreats for detox, weight management, and stress relief, the property offers a structured yet serene environment to restore balance and recharge.

Soukya Holistic Health Centre, Bengaluru

Founded on the principles of integrative medicine, Soukya offers a unique blend of Ayurveda, homeopathy, yoga, and naturopathy. Set within a peaceful organic farm environment, the retreat focuses on long-term healing and preventative care.

Guests can experience personalised treatments, mindful living practices, and nutrient-rich organic cuisine, making it a deeply restorative escape for spring. From Himalayan sanctuaries to coastal retreats and forest hideaways, spring wellness escapes are all about slowing down and reconnecting. Whether you seek structured healing programmes or simply a tranquil pause, these destinations offer the perfect setting to reset your body, mind, and spirit, just as nature begins anew.

From Mountain Calm To Regal Grandeur: Luxury Stays For The Good Friday Long Weekend

Choosing activities that feel rejuvenating, immersive, and well-paced is becoming increasingly important on long weekends. Travel connoisseurs today are seeking destinations that offer a true shift in atmosphere, places where the setting itself enhances the experience, rather than simply going farther. The Good Friday long weekend is the perfect time to pause, recharge, and retreat into spaces that strike a balance between comfort and indulgence. From the serene charm of the hills to the timeless grandeur of heritage-inspired escapes, these luxury stays offer an inviting way to make the most of the break.

The Oberoi Sukhvilas Resort & Spa: Make the Most of the Upcoming Good Friday Long Weekend in the Lap of Nature

Enjoy the perfect Good Friday long weekend opportunity to unwind with your loved ones amidst spacious accommodation, exquisite cuisine, and relaxing experiences set against the backdrop of the 8,000-acre Siswan Forest Range and the foothills of the Himalayas. The Oberoi Sukhvilas Resort & Spa offers a seamless blend of luxury and nature, making it an ideal choice for families and couples seeking a refreshing getaway. Guests can enjoy a range of thoughtfully curated experiences, including an outdoor pool, dedicated children's facilities, and holistic wellness offerings—each complemented by the warm, personalised service that defines Oberoi hospitality. Listed as 'One of the World's Greatest Places' by TIME Magazine in 2018, The Oberoi Sukhvilas Spa Resort, New Chandigarh, has been meticulously designed with comfort at its core. Whether it's a weekend retreat or a longer detox stay, personalised Ayurvedic and wellness programmes are complemented by spacious villas and luxury tents, fine seasonal cuisine, and mindfulness activities set within the surrounding forest. The resort harmonises traditional Indian architectural elements with landscaped gardens and serene water features, creating an atmosphere of refined tranquillity. Accommodation options include the palatial Kohinoor Villa, Luxury Villas with Private Pools, Royal Forest Tents with Private Pools, Royal Tents with Gardens, and spacious Premier Rooms. Each space is thoughtfully designed to maximise natural light and uninterrupted forest views, offering a heightened sense of privacy and understated luxury. The resort's culinary offerings are crafted to suit every palate, featuring international and Indian cuisine at the all-day dining restaurant, as well as traditional Punjabi flavours at its speciality restaurant. The specially curated menu at Anant Mahal showcases dishes prepared using local, seasonal produce, herbs, and spices grown on the resort's on-site farm or sourced from nearby growers. Surrounded by 8,000 acres of forest, Kaanan, meaning 'forest' in Sanskrit stands elevated with views of the lake and offers both

alfresco and indoor dining. The restaurant presents dishes inspired by age-old recipes from domestic kitchens and royal traditions. Raunaq Bar, with its grand décor inspired by Sikh warriors, offers an elegant setting for aperitifs or nightcaps, paired with eclectic snacks. The Spa at The Oberoi Sukhvilas Spa Resort is a tranquil, light-filled sanctuary spanning 1,115 square metres, set alongside a natural forest. Designed to restore balance and wellbeing, it offers a range of signature therapies that relax, refresh, and rejuvenate both body and mind. Guests can experience the Turkish hammam for deep-cleansing rituals that reveal radiant skin, as well as the Roman tepidarium, an ideal space to unwind and absorb therapeutic benefits before or after treatments. Enhancing this holistic journey, the spa also offers the exclusive ASMI by Oberoi experience, a personalised wellness programme that integrates bespoke therapies, mindful practices, and immersive rituals to nurture inner balance in a serene, nature-led setting. From guided nature walks to mindfulness sessions, the resort ensures a well-rounded stay defined by privacy, comfort, and intuitive service.

Jaypee Residency Manor, Mussoorie: A Hill-top Retreat Framed by Himalayan Views

Perched high above the Doon Valley, Jaypee Residency Manor offers a long weekend escape defined by alpine tranquillity, crisp mountain air, and sweeping views of the Himalayas. Its elevated setting naturally encourages slow, restorative travel, making it ideal for those looking to step away from the city's bustle. Set across beautifully terraced landscapes, the property blends modern comfort with classic charm. Valley-facing rooms, expansive patios, and scenic vantage points create a stay that feels both spacious and intimate. Over a long weekend, guests can ease into leisurely lunches, misty evenings, wellness-led downtime, and unhurried mornings, where the landscape becomes an integral part of the experience.

Jaypee Palace Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra — A Grand Escape Rooted in Timeless Elegance

For those drawn to heritage and scale, Jaypee Palace Hotel & Convention Centre offers a contrasting yet equally compelling experience shaped by regal architecture and expansive landscaped grounds. Located close to the Taj Mahal, the hotel draws inspiration from Mughal design, combining the grandeur of a palace with the comforts of a modern luxury resort. Marble detailing, intricate interiors, and vast open spaces create an atmosphere of understated opulence. Guests can balance exploration and relaxation, spending mornings visiting Agra's iconic landmarks and the rest of the day unwinding with indulgent dining, wellness experiences, and moments of leisure within the property's palace-like setting.



Long weekends offer a rare opportunity to slow down, and Aahana Resort creates the perfect setting for it. Located near Jim Corbett National Park, the resort feels gently removed from the outside world, surrounded by lush forested landscapes. Spread across 13.5 acres of greenery, Aahana is designed to be immersive yet effortless. Mornings begin with fresh, seasonal breakfasts sourced from organic gardens, followed by unstructured days shaped by nature walks, poolside relaxation, or quiet moments in between. Private villas with personal pools offer a more secluded experience, while spa therapies and guided forest walks deepen the sense of calm. Blending sustainability with understated luxury, Aahana delivers a stay where nature sets the rhythm. Taj Palace, New Delhi — A Grand Urban Escape Set across six acres of lush greenery, Taj Palace offers a refined city escape for the Good Friday long weekend. An enduring landmark in the capital, the hotel blends palace-style hospitality with contemporary comfort. Guests can relax in elegantly appointed rooms with views of the ridge forest, explore award-winning dining across global cuisines, and unwind at the spa, fitness centre, or pool. With its central location and timeless appeal, it offers a seamless mix of accessibility and indulgence.

Taj Mahal, New Delhi — A Timeless Address with Signature Suites

Located in the heart of Lutyens' Delhi, Taj Mahal, New Delhi offers a sophisticated stay defined by heritage and elevated luxury. Its Signature and Grand Signature Suites stand out for their refined interiors, curated art, butler service, and sweeping city views. From iconic dining experiences at Machan, House of Ming, and Varq to indulgent moments at the spa and pool, the hotel blends old-world charm with modern comfort, making it ideal for a refined long weekend escape.

Taj Damdama Lake Resort & Spa, Gurugram — A Nature-Led Retreat

Set at the foothills of the Aravallis, Taj Damdama Lake Resort & Spa offers a tranquil escape just outside the city. Spread across 20 acres, the property combines natural beauty with contemporary luxury. Guests can choose from rooms, suites, and private villas, some with plunge pools and enjoy immersive dining, spa experiences, and slow moments by the pool. The setting makes it an ideal choice for those seeking a peaceful, nature-driven reset.

Della Resorts & Adventure, Lonavala — Where Thrill Meets Luxury

For those looking to combine relaxation with high-energy experiences, Della Resorts & Adventure in Lonavala offers a dynamic long weekend escape. Conceptualised by designer Jimmy Mistry, the property goes beyond a traditional resort stay,

From unique dining experiences including a sky-high restaurant to a 24-hour spa and India's largest extreme adventure park, Della blends indulgence with excitement. Whether it's bungee jumping, ATV rides, or simply unwinding in the hills, the experience caters to both thrill-seekers and leisure travellers. The Leela Palace New Delhi — A Luxurious Staycation Escape The Leela Palace New Delhi offers a refined staycation experience designed for indulgence without travel. Blending grandeur with warmth, the property invites guests to slow down and reconnect. From elegant rooms and award-winning dining to bespoke wellness experiences, every detail is thoughtfully curated. A culinary journey across its signature restaurants, paired with impeccable service immersive long weekend. Set in Lutyens' Delhi, the property is known for its expansive rooms, many with private plunge pools. Guests can unwind at the spa, stay active at the Athletic Club, or enjoy curated dining experiences across its signature restaurants. The Lodhi delivers a calm, contemporary escape that feels both intimate and indulgent. Whether it's the stillness of the mountains, the richness of heritage stays, or the ease of a city escape, this long weekend is about choosing spaces that allow you to slow down and reset. Because sometimes, the most memorable journeys are not about distance but about how deeply you unwind.

ENTERTAINMENT

Sanjay Dutt faces off against Abhishek Bachchan and Riteish Deshmukh

Raja Shivaji teaser

New Delhi: On Tuesday night, JioStudios released the Raja Shivaji teaser. JioStudios released a two-minute film on its YouTube account that offered the first glimpse of the historical action drama's characters. In the video, Riteish Deshmukh's Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Abhishek Bachchan's Sambhaji Shahaji Bhosale battle Sanjay Dutt's Afzal Khan for "swaraj (self-rule)". Vidya Balan, Geneelia Deshmukh, Mahesh Manjrekar, Sachin Khedekar, Boman Irani, Bhagyashree, Fardeen Khan, and Amol Gupte were included in the teaser. The Marathas are depicted in the film during a tumultuous time in Indian history. A fan said, "I'm 100% sure Ritesh Deshmukh will nail the role because he comes from a Marathi background," in response to the video. "No one can defeat Vicky Kaushal as Chhaava,"



someone wrote. "Ajay-Atul's music is the best thing about the teaser," someone commented. One commenter on YouTube said, "It reminds me of the backstab mechanism of Dark Souls." "No one can match Shrad Kelkar, sir,

as Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj," a social media user commented. The historical drama, directed by Riteish, is slated to open in theaters across the globe on May 1. Prominent figures from the film business are involved in

the project. Cinematographer Santosh Sivan is in charge of the visuals, and Ajay-Atul is responsible for the music. Under the auspices of Mumbai Film Company, Jyoti Deshpande and Geneelia Deshmukh produced the movie, which is presented by Jio Studios. The movie is being produced in Telugu, Hindi, and Marathi and is intended for viewers throughout India. Raja Shivaji recounts the early travels of Shivaji Maharaj, emphasizing his vow to construct Swarajya and the Maratha warrior king's resistance to the era's strong rulers. He is shown in the movie not just as a king but also as a leader who valued bravery over fear and as a son. In February of this year, on the occasion of Shivaji Jayanti, the first-look poster for the forthcoming historical drama was revealed.

Before Bhooth Bangla is released, Akshay Kumar and Dimple Kapadia visit the Mahakaleshwar Temple



Mumbai: With his next movie, Bhooth Bangla, Akshay Kumar is sure to wow audiences. The horror comedy, which Priyadarshan is directing, is scheduled to open in theaters on April 10. The actor went to Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga Temple with his mother-in-law, Dimple Kapadia, to ask Lord Shiva for blessings prior to the film's release. The celebrity and the seasoned actress can be seen praying at the temple in videos that are doing the rounds on the internet. Dimple Kapadia is seen wearing a pink saree, while Akshay is clad in a traditional all-white ensemble. In one of the videos, the two are

seen performing the jal abhishek ceremony while holding a metal pot filled with water. In another, Akshay Kumar is seen whispering his wishes into the ears of Nandi Dev's idol while bowing before it. Dimple Kapadia and Akshay Kumar have a close relationship. However, few people are aware that things weren't always this easy. At first, Dimple had doubts about Twinkle Khanna, her daughter, getting married to Akshay. "I had my reservations about my daughter getting married to him earlier," she stated. Thank heavens, she did. In terms of discipline, he is what any aspiring actor would like to be. What a wonderful man he is. He seems to enjoy playing cards or basketball with you, and I see him connecting with a lot of people. He only needs to sit down and talk to you to make you feel wonderful. He finds me to perform these things on and is quite mischievous. Twinkle Khanna and Akshay Kumar tied the knot in 2001. Aarav, their son, and Nitara, their daughter, make them proud parents. Returning to Bhooth Bangla, the movie also stars Wamiqa Gabbi, Jisshu Sengupta, Rajpal Yadav, Pareeh Rawal, and Tabu. Cape of Good Films and Balaji Motion Pictures have contributed to the project's funding.

At first, Ranbir Kapoor objected to playing Lord Rama in the Ramayana

Mumbai: The anticipation surrounding Ranbir Kapoor's big-screen adaptation of Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana, which tells the account of Lord Rama, is at an all-time high. At one point, though, the actor turned down the part right away. Ranbir has now acknowledged that he was initially afraid to take it on and disclosed what finally made him decide otherwise. Ranbir, producer Namit Malhotra, and director Nitesh Tiwari attended an event in New York on Tuesday for their upcoming movie Ramayana. It followed the release of the movie's first trailer in Los Angeles. In an interview during the event, Ranbir disclosed that he had originally declined the project and then explained what finally convinced him to accept it. Ranbir reflected on his reluctance, saying, "I remember when Namit offered me this part around 4 years ago, my instant reaction was 'No', I'm not fit enough, not good enough, and I won't be able to do full justice." He continued by considering how the news of becoming a father for the first time coincided with the movie offer. "That fear very quickly turned into gratitude because opportunities like this were very much needed in my life," Ranbir said. I was going through a time in my life when I needed to make changes to my way of living. It was my first time becoming a father. I believe that a pivotal moment in my life required the wonderful coincidence of portraying Lord Rama and becoming a father. Ranbir married Alia Bhatt in April 2022 after a number of years of dating. November of that year saw the birth of their first child, Raha. On Christmas 2023, Ranbir and Alia

made their first public appearance with Raha, shocking their admirers. The actor also talked about how he trained to play the part well. "I believe that the day I saw Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana marked the beginning of my preparation. We are so proud of the story and Lord Rama's journey because it is so ingrained in our consciousness and deeply ingrained in us. When I had the chance to write an essay about him, of course, there was a lot of preparation—not just physical, but also emotional and spiritual—in order to fully comprehend it and be completely honest. "Everything falls into place when you have that inbuilt because I have a lot of love and respect for this part and the Ramayana story," he said. One of the most anticipated movies of the year is Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana. On July 3, 2025, a three-minute preview of Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana was released. Ranbir climbing a tree and brandishing a bow and arrow were among the striking images in the video. Yash plays Ravana, Sai Pallavi plays Sita, Ravi Dubey plays Lakshman, and Sunny Deol plays Lord Hanuman. AR Rahman and renowned composer Hans Zimmer collaborate on the musical score. In October 2026, just before Diwali, Ramayana Part One is scheduled to be released globally. The movie's second installment will be released in 2027. Producer Namit Malhotra recently disclosed that a preview of the movie would be released on April 2, the auspicious day of Hanuman Jayanti. Viewers are expected to get a glimpse of Ranbir Kapoor, Sai Pallavi, Ravi Dubey, Sunny Deol, and Yash's appearances in the movie.

At a wedding, Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda fulfilled important relationship goals



Mumbai: Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda, a newlywed pair, recently attended a wedding with Anand Deverakonda, and it was impossible to overlook their endearing chemistry. As they posed together in sophisticated traditional attire, the three of them appeared happy. Anand posted a number of photos from the event on Instagram, including himself with Rashmika, Vijay, and the newlyweds. "Favorite people and their own forever together!" he wrote beside the pictures. I'm wearing this incredibly comfortable dress. I'm wishing the sweetest pair the best Sancharam in life together. One candid photo that caught Rashmika and Vijay in a carefree and

lighthearted atmosphere, with Rashmika perched on Vijay's lap while they posed with friends and family, stood out among the many moments. Vijay chose a cream-colored kurta with elaborate tonal embroidery and draped

dhoti-style pants for the event. A well-groomed moustache, dark aviator sunglasses, and a scarlet sacred thread (mouli) on his wrist completed his ensemble. In contrast, Rashmika looked stunning in a peach-pink sequined saree

with subtle tassel and sheen. She accessorized with layered traditional gold jewelry, wore it with a sleeveless mustard-yellow top, and put her hair up in a sleek bun. Anand kept his appearance traditional and modest by matching them with a white, embroidered kurta with a beautiful yoke and collar. Anand has been entertaining fans on social media by posting old photos from his brother's wedding. He previously shared a wonderful dance video from the festivities, in which the couple can be seen dancing to the song Sancharam from the movie Epic with friends and Anand, perfectly encapsulating the happy atmosphere of their special day. On February 26, 2026, close family

and a small handful of friends attended Vijay and Rashmika's small, low-key wedding in Udaipur. With two ceremonies—a typical Telugu wedding in the morning and a Kodava ceremony in the evening—the couple honored both of their traditions, making the party extremely intimate and culturally significant. Following their return from Udaipur, the newlyweds threw a lavish event in Hyderabad that was attended by close friends and prominent figures in the industry. This was their first significant public celebration as a married couple. In terms of their careers, the two will co-star in Ranabaali, a highly anticipated historical action drama that has already generated excitement among viewers.

Raghav Chadha's Call for "Legal" Paternity Leave in Parliament: Parineeti Chopra's Response



Mumbai: Recently, AAP MP Raghav Chadha called for paternity leave in Parliament. He advocated that paternity leave should be legalized in India, citing the need for both parents to share caregiving duties. On social media, Parineeti Chopra, a proud wife, gave Chadha's demand a loud shout-out. "I demanded in Parliament that PATERNITY LEAVE should be a legal right in India," Raghav Chadha said, sharing a video from Parliament. Both parents get congratulations upon the birth of a child. However, it is the mother's job to provide care. A parent shouldn't have to decide between continuing to work and taking care of his newborn. Additionally, a mother shouldn't have to endure

childbirth and recuperation without her husband's assistance." "The woman needs her husband's presence the most right after childbirth," Raghav continued. It is equally necessary for the husband to provide care for his wife. Because providing

care is a shared responsibility, I brought up this problem in Parliament. That must be reflected in our legislation. I am proud to announce that my spouse and the father of my child is this kind leader that solves problem after problem for

the public. I understand how personal this is for you because I see you every day as a hands-on dad! I'm proud of you. Every mother who feels abandoned and alone will feel heard and recognized today. In the comments section, Parineeti wrote. On October 19 of last year, Raghav and Parineeti welcomed their first child, a boy. He was given the name Neer. The pair shared the name with their Instagram family, writing, "Jalasya rupam, premasya svarupam—tatra eva Neer." An endless trickle of life brought serenity to our hearts. We gave him the name "Neer"—pure, holy, boundless. In 2023, Parineeti Chopra and Raghav Chadha tied the knot at the charming Leela Palace in Udaipur.

Divya Dutta says families should watch her marital rape drama Chiraiya

Mumbai: Discussions surrounding Divya Dutta's upcoming JioHotstar series, "Chiraiya," center on its exploration of consent in marriage and its challenge to the legal stance on marital rape. In an interview with Hindustan Times, Divya expresses that the show is not solely aimed at women, urging everyone to view it due to the significant roles men play and the universal issues it addresses. The series, created by Divy Nidhi Sharma, captivated Divya with its narrative style and relatable message, which she believes is essential to share without being preachy. Divya portrays Kamlesh, a small-town housewife confronted with her own family issues when her sister-in-law speaks out

about her abusive marriage. Initially lacking an understanding of marital consent, Kamlesh's journey represents the struggles faced by many women. Divya emphasizes that the series, touching on sensitive subjects like abuse, should be viewed by families together to foster conversation and awareness, particularly in a society where such topics are often taboo. She argues that cinema and television have the power to drive societal change by encouraging discussion on important issues. The cast also includes Sanjay Mishra, Prasanna Bisht, Siddharth Shaw, Faisal Rashid, Tinnu Anand, and Sarita Joshi, enhancing the series' breadth and appeal.

Salman Khan receives death threats while being surrounded at an event

Mumbai: Superstar Salman Khan took a break from his busy schedule to go to an event in Mumbai, but people are talking about more than just his appearance. A number of the outing's films have appeared online, but one in particular has drawn notice for an unsettling reason. The actor is seen in the footage trying to navigate through the mayhem as a throng of enthusiastic fans mob him. On social media, the excitement has raised new worries about Salman's safety. Salman was present at the President Cup 2026 event on Tuesday at Thane's Dadoji Konddev Stadium. Salman wore a casual outfit for the event, choosing black pants and a brown top. Salman can be seen in the films arriving to the event in a security convoy, but his crew seemed to have trouble managing the sizable crowd that had come to see the celebrity. Images of him being mobbed by a swarm of admirers as he left the stage are making the rounds on social media, with many of them trying to come up close and take pictures

with him. In the video, security guards are seen fighting to keep the mob in check and make room for Salman to move. As excited fans attempt to get in touch with the actor, the team is seen pushing them aside. Salman was spotted trying to find a place to leave while remaining composed and grinning in the middle of the tumultuous scene. The actor is seen leaving the event in a convoy of police cars in several videos, but even in those instances, the security staff seemed to be having trouble controlling the crowd. As Salman was leaving, a number of fans were seen attempting to take pictures with their phones; some even leaned over his car window to get a closer look. Many people started to doubt the plans in place and expressed worries about Salman's safety when footage of the mayhem appeared on social media. Since Salman received several death threats, his security has become a topic of conversation. Salman is currently waiting for Maatrubhumi, his next movie, to be released. The film, which



was directed by Apoorva Lakhia and produced by the celebrity under the Salman Khan Films banner, features an Indian Army colonel played by the actor from Ek The Tiger. The film's makers claim that despite depicting the conflict between China and India in the Galwan Valley, it also wants to demonstrate bravery and sacrifice.

The movie's April 17 theatrical release date was rescheduled. There is yet no formal confirmation of a new date. Salman has revealed his upcoming movie, an action drama helmed by Vamshi Paidipally. Producer Dil Raju will support it. Later this month, the movie will begin production.

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Amid Oil Shocks from the Middle East War, India's Power Sector Aims for Self-Reliance

New Delhi, Apr 01: The oil markets have been rocked by the conflict in the Middle East, and India is also feeling the heat. Whether it's LPG, PNG, gasoline, or diesel, the scarcity is obvious and the issue is genuine. Thanks to India's yearly production of more than one billion tons of coal, the power sector has so far escaped the instability in the energy sector. With increased coal output and the diversification of green energy, India's power sector is becoming more self-sufficient. Almost three-fourths of India's electricity is still produced using coal because it is an extremely efficient fuel. The need for coal has increased due to the growing demand for electricity. To meet the increased demand, India has increased output, though. Imports have not changed in the interim. In the fiscal year 2016, India imported 204 MT of coal and produced 639 MT. This indicates that 32% of production came from imports. Production increased to 731 MT in the fiscal year 2020, with imports accounting for 249 MT, or 34% of total production. However, production exceeded one billion MT in the fiscal year 2025, with imports accounting for only 244 MT, or 23% of total production. "With the sustained and coordinated efforts across the coal sector and the invaluable contribution of all stakeholders, the country has successfully achieved the landmark of 1 billion



tonne (BT) coal production on 20.03.2026 for the second year in a row," stated the Ministry of Coal. The International Energy Agency has described the current conflict's disruption as "unprecedented" due to its extreme severity. On March 26, 2026, the IEA stated, "The Middle East conflict has caused an unprecedented disruption to global fuel markets, tightening supply and placing significant pressure on consumers and economies worldwide." This makes it imperative to reduce reliance on non-renewable resources and increase green energy as much as feasible. Though there is still a long way to go, India has already achieved significant progress in the shift to green energy. Although they made up 47.4% of India's installed capacity, thermal sources—which include coal, gas, lignite, and diesel—accounted for over 74% of the country's power generation in February 2026. On the other hand, according to the

Central Electricity Authority, renewable sources produced about 23% of India's power during the month, despite accounting for approximately 51% of installed capacity. Green energy generation is limited by its intermittent nature, as noted by Vinay Rustagi from Premier Energies Ltd, particularly in solar and wind power which depend on natural resource availability. While solar plants reach peak capacity mainly during summer midday, their output diminishes during other times.

Despite these challenges, the global shift towards green energy is advancing, with countries like Vietnam and China generating 42.3% and 33.7% of their power from green sources, respectively. In contrast, South Korea, Singapore, and Bangladesh contribute less than 10%. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized India's swift adoption of solar energy and encouraged public participation in the clean power movement.

Uttarakhand CM Dhami announces a crackdown on state criminals following the death of a former Army brigadier



Dehradun , Apr 01: The Uttarakhand police said on Tuesday that they will begin a special crackdown called "Operation Prahar" to improve law and order in the state capital, one day after a 74-year-old retired brigadier was murdered by a stray gunshot. MK Joshi, a retired Army brigadier, was shot and killed in Dehradun on Monday morning after a car's passenger opened fire on another vehicle during a fast-paced pursuit that started after a late-night altercation at a local club. Push-

kar Singh Dhami, the chief minister, declared earlier in the day that "law and order in Uttarakhand will not be compromised under any circumstances." Additionally, he instructed DGP Deepam Seth to conduct a specific campaign against people with criminal tendencies and requested police to begin a thorough checking effort. "Every necessary step will be taken to ensure public safety and security, which is the state government's top priority," Dhami continued, cautioning that

officials who are found to be careless "will face strict action." Anand Bardhan, the chief secretary, met with high-ranking authorities to discuss the state of law and order. Road rage was ruled out by SSP Pramendra Dobhal, who stated that the case originated from a quarrel at the club. The Scorpio's passengers pursued the Fortuner after waiting outside the club until the wee hours of the morning.

The brigadier was for a morning stroll when he was shot in the chest during the gunfire. According to SP (city) Pramod Kumar, "seven teams have been formed to capture four absconding accused, while four accused have been arrested." According to authorities, Ashok Kumar, the sub-inspector in charge of the Kuthal Gate outpost, and Soban Singh, the deputy excise inspector, have been suspended.

NHAI Requires All Users to Make 100% Digital Payments Starting Today: No More Cash at Toll Plazas

Kanpur, Apr 01: The National Highways Authority of India has taken a major step toward completely cashless highway travel by enforcing 100% digital payments at toll booths nationwide as of today, April 1.

The decision intends to improve transaction transparency, ease traffic, and expedite toll collection. According to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), all toll payment plazas will henceforth only be handled digitally via FASTag or Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Authorities are pushing for rigorous compliance, and vehicles without a valid digital payment method or FASTag may be subject to penalties or double the toll



rate. According to a source, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways officials think that a totally digital system will speed up vehicles' passage through toll plazas, cutting down on long lines and travel time. The action is anticipated to reduce revenue leakages

and boost toll plaza operational efficiency in addition to reducing traffic. By producing a transparent audit trail, digital payments reduce the possibility of inconsistencies and improve toll collection systems' accountability. It is also anticipated that

Jet fuel prices quadrupled to rs. 2 lakh, while commercial LPG rates increased by rs. 195

New Delhi, Apr 01: State-run oil marketing firms increased the costs of commercial LPG and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) on Wednesday amid a worsening global energy crisis. The latter was first increased by more than 100% before being partially reduced after government intervention. A 19 kg commercial LPG cylinder used by hotels, hostels, and restaurants in Delhi now costs ₹2,078.50, up 10.4% from ₹1,883 on March 7. Depending on municipal levies, rates differ between cities. In less than a month, this is the second rise. Commercial LPG prices increased from ₹1,768.50 to ₹1,883 per 19 kg cylinder on March 7, bringing the total increase to almost 17.5% in only one month. State-run oil marketing companies (OMCs) raised the price of home cooking gas (14.2 kg cylinder) by ₹60 nationwide on the same day, bringing its retail price in Delhi to ₹913, the highest since August 2023. Three state-owned OMCs, Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, control the majority of the domestic gasoline retail market. OMCs currently update the prices



of non-sensitive petroleum products, including ATF, on a monthly basis using global benchmarks. As a result, in Delhi, ATF for domestic flights was first increased by 114.55%, from ₹96,638.14 to ₹207,341.22 per kilolitre. According to the Indian Oil Corporation website on Wednesday morning, ATF rates for international aircraft increased by 107% from \$816.91 per kilolitre to \$1,690.81 per kilolitre starting April 1. One kilolitre is equivalent to one thousand liters.

"They moderated ATF prices on domestic routes later in the day after the government intervened and directed them not to fully pass on the ATF rates to airlines," an OMC executive who wished to remain anonymous stated. According to another OMC executive who wished to remain anonymous, private jets, chartered aircraft, and unscheduled domestic flights will pay higher rates of ₹207,341.22 per KL starting on Wednesday, even though the government has lowered ATF costs

for scheduled domestic airlines (₹1,04,927 per KL starting on April 1). The ATF pricing for domestic routes in Delhi was then updated on the IOC website to ₹1,04,927 per kilolitre, with effect from April 1. However, the website no longer offered access to additional pricing information, such as historical rates. The petroleum ministry later stated in a post on X that "ATF prices in India were deregulated in 2001 and are revised on a monthly basis based on a formula of international benchmarks." The price of ATF for domestic markets was predicted to rise by more than 100% on April 1st due to the closing of the Strait of Hormuz and the exceptional circumstances in the world's energy markets. "PSU oil marketing companies of the Ministry of Petroleum, in consultation with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, have only passed a partial and staggered increase of 25% (only ₹15/litre) to the airlines in order to protect domestic travel costs from the significant increase in international prices." It further stated, "Foreign routes will cover the entire increase in ATF prices in line with what they pay in other parts of the world."

After months of hostility between Digvesh Rathi and Nitish Rana, Rishabh Pant acts as a mediator

New Delhi: Even its most devoted supporters would acknowledge that the Indian Premier competition (IPL) is no longer quite the same, despite the fact that it is still the most thrilling Twenty20 competition in the world. Compared to the fierce battles and on-field altercations of the past, the relationship between teams and players has become much more friendly and calm. Do you recall the time Kieron Pollard almost threw his bat at Mitchell Starc? Or when MS Dhoni confronted the umpires by storming onto the field? Or the intense confrontations between Virat Kohli and Gautam Gambhir—twice? Or even when Ambati Rayudu became enraged with Harbhajan Singh, his own Mumbai Indians teammate? I sigh. As we

stated. The wonderful old days. Fans were excitedly anticipating this IPL season after another altercation last year. Digvesh Rathi and Nitish Rana fought and almost got into a fight during the Delhi Premier League. During a West Delhi Lions vs. South Delhi Superstarz game, Rathi became enraged with Rana's rendition of the notebook celebration and yelled insults. As a result, excitement was high for the much-anticipated matchup between the Delhi Capitals and the Lucknow Super Giants. To the dismay of the crowd, however, Rishabh Pant was the one who defused the situation. Before Wednesday's match at the Ekana Stadium, cameras showed Rathi and Rana seeming to get along. After a brief conversation in which

Rana patted Rathi on the shoulder, Rathi had started to go, but Pant felt that there was still work to be done.

The captain of the Lucknow Super Giants summoned Rathi back, pleading for him to come back and finally make amends with Rana. Kuldeep Yadav, who was standing close, felt compelled to intervene as the scene became so heated. He joked, "Bohut gyaan de diya," and gave Rishabh Pant a cozy embrace. The friendship between Pant and Kuldeep is not new. This was just another example of their comfortable camaraderie. Pant is frequently heard chatting away behind the stumps while Kuldeep is bowling as part of India's Test setup. "This is the problem with both," Pant continued. In terms of interesting individual



match-ups, Kuldeep steaming in to Pant is not far behind the possibility of Rathi bowling to Rana, which is still an intriguing subplot. Both the Delhi Capitals and the Lucknow Super Giants, who finished fifth and seventh, respectively, after disappointing seasons the previous year, will be eager to start over this year.

After taking a severe hit against the Gujarat Titans, Shreyas Iyer is cautious about his injury

New Delhi: After suffering a severe injury during Tuesday's IPL match against Gujarat Titans, Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer provided an important update. Cooper Connolly hammered a shot straight back down the ground, striking the right-hander on the hand at the non-striker's end. In an attempt to defend himself out of instinct, Iyer was struck hard. He was clearly uncomfortable after the incident, so the physiotherapists had to hurry onto the field to treat him. Punjab's flow appeared to be halted at a pivotal point by the brief pause, and Iyer struggled to regain his rhythm after returning. The frustration after the injury scare increased when he eventually fell shortly after the pause, edging a wayward shot.

In the end, though, PBKS was able to maintain composure and win by three wickets with five balls remaining. Iyer was first questioned about the injuries following a significant victory to start the season. He was cautious not to say too much and tempt fate,



but he stated he's feeling OK for the time being. It's lovely, that's all I can say. It is exactly the same as it was. I do not wish to bring up any bad luck. During the post-match presentation, Iyer stated, "I just want to stay positive and hopefully everything comes out right." Punjab collapsed after Iyer was removed, falling from 110/2 to 144/7 as Prasidh Krishna tore

through the middle order. In retrospect, Iyer stated that he was inside receiving treatment for his injury when the wickets fell in a heap, but he emphasized the significance of maintaining composure and having faith in the set batter to finish. "To be honest, I was concentrating on icing my hand inside when all of a sudden we lost two wickets in a row. These incidents occur in the IPL, and you must maintain your composure under pressure.

Thus, the message was really straightforward. Cooper was there to see the game through to the end, the PBKS captain remarked. Iyer went on to commend Connolly in particular, emphasizing his awareness and poise and expressing confidence in his ability to keep the same form. He was all set. Additionally, he has a high level of awareness as a player. I've also seen him play for Australia in the past. He has a positive outlook, and I hope he keeps up the good work," he continued.

Shubman Gill dispels the "ifs and buts" argument over Prasidh Krishna's delayed debut



New Delhi: Gujarat Titans' IPL 2026 campaign got off to a rough start on Tuesday night as they lost to Punjab Kings in a close match. The visitors were forced to settle for a meager 163 since they never really got going with the bat and lacked a significant contribution at the top or in the middle. The bowling unit reacted with determination, but it left them with little room for error. After being introduced as the Impact Player, Prasidh Krishna had a significant impact by scoring three goals and extending the game. Gujarat lost the match by three wickets in the final over despite Punjab's late effort and a few anxious moments. After the game, captain Shubman Gill was questioned about his decision to hold Prasidh Krishna back until the thirteenth over. Gill explained the Impact Player decision, saying that after

weighing the circumstances and Krishna's previous performance, the squad decided to introduce him at the ideal moment. "Krishna entered at the perfect moment, took wickets, and kept us in the game until the 17th and 18th overs, even though I could have brought him into the attack earlier. There will always be ifs and buts, but at the time, we reasoned that since the wicket was moving a little slowly, perhaps a quick, thin bowler could take a few wickets for us. Additionally, he was bowling fairly well in the nets. Thus, it was the reasoning behind it." Gill stated during the presentation following the game. Pace leader Mohammed Siraj finished his period with two overs unused, while Krishna finished with figures of 3 for 29 from his four overs. With one over left, Kagiso Rabada was also held back. When evaluating the areas where things went wrong, Shubman noted a slow bat finish and thought the surface prevented a much larger total as the ball aged. "We bowled very effectively, but I believe that in the final five or six overs, we simply didn't get going. It never appeared to be a 210-220 wicket during batting. However, I believe that the middle aim would have been 180 if we had perhaps 175. It became challenging to hit the ball down the ground as it became older," he continued.

Lionel Messi Breaks Down In Tears During Emotional Final Career Match In Argentina

Tearful Messi Leads Argentina To Victory Over Zambia

New Delhi: Lionel Messi gave football fans across the world an unforgettable and emotional moment as he was seen in tears during what is widely expected to be his final match on Argentine soil for the national team. The legendary forward struggled to hold back his emotions before Argentina's friendly clash against Zambia at La Bombonera in Buenos Aires, as supporters created a heartfelt atmosphere for their beloved captain. The 38-year-old Inter Miami star was visibly emotional while standing with his teammates before kickoff, soaking in the chants, songs and love pouring in from the home crowd. A viral video from the stadium showed Messi wiping away tears as he became emotional during what could be his farewell match in front of his home fans.

Messi made sure the night remained memorable on the pitch as well, producing a goal and an assist in Argentina's emphatic 5-0 win over Zambia on Tuesday night in a farewell friendly ahead of the World Cup. The veteran forward set up Julian Alvarez for the opening goal in the fourth minute before getting on the scoresheet himself in the 43rd minute in Buenos Aires, de-



lighting the packed crowd. Apart from Messi and Alvarez, Valentin Barco and Nicolas Otamendi were also on the scoresheet for Argentina. The emotional occasion became even more special as fans rose to their feet to give Messi a standing ovation. Chants echoed around the stadium as supporters urged their captain to lead Argentina to another World Cup triumph. The tournament is scheduled to begin on June 11 in the United States, Canada and Mexico, and with Messi expected to play a key role once again, the farewell atmosphere in Buenos Aires felt like a tribute to one of football's greatest icons. Ahead of

the Zambia friendly, head coach Lionel Scaloni had issued a strong warning, saying he was prepared to make major decisions regarding his 26-man World Cup squad, which must be finalized by May 30 if the team failed to show improvement.

Those concerns stemmed from Argentina's underwhelming display in last Friday's 2-1 win over Mauritania, a performance that raised questions despite the result. "We have already submitted the 55-man list to the AFA, which they will then have to pass on to FIFA. As for the final 26, in terms of percentages, we are over the lim-

it. We'll have to start cutting players based on performance," Scaloni had said in a press conference on Monday. But Argentina returned to their best with an impressive performance against Zambia. For their final home match before the World Cup, Lionel Scaloni named a lineup largely similar to the one that defeated France in the 2022 final. The most notable change was the absence of midfielder Rodrigo De Paul, who is recovering from a muscle injury and had also struggled in the win over Mauritania.

Argentina, champions of the last World Cup as well as the 1978 and 1986 editions, will begin their Group J campaign against Algeria on June 16, before facing Austria on June 22 and Jordan on June 27. Lionel Messi contributed a goal and an assist during Argentina's 5-0 victory over Zambia at La Bombonera in Buenos Aires. The friendly match was an emotional occasion, widely regarded as the captain's final appearance for the national team on Argentine soil before the 2026 World Cup. The 38-year-old forward provided the assist for Julian Alvarez to open the scoring in the fourth minute. Messi Argentina's 2026 World Cup.

Glenn Maxwell Dropped From Cricket Australia's New Central Contract List



New Delhi: Veteran all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has been omitted from Cricket Australia's central contracts list, raising fresh questions over whether the 37-year-old still fits into the team's long-term plans in international cricket. Cricket Australia announced a 21-player list with a clear focus on Test regulars.

Maxwell has been left out of Australia's 2026-27 central contracts list. Maxwell last played a Test match in 2017 and has not been in red-ball plans. Australia all-rounder

Maxwell has been left out of Cricket Australia's central contract list for the 2026-27 season, as the board opted for a group largely built around its Test core ahead of a packed red-ball calendar. Cricket Australia on Wednesday, April 1, announced a 21-player list, with the selections reflecting the team's priorities over the next 12 months, which include multiple Test series against Bangladesh, New Zealand, India and England. Maxwell's omission was among the More notable decisions. The

37-year-old retired from ODI cricket last year and has not featured in Tests since 2017, having gradually moved out of contention in the longer formats. His absence from the contracts list suggests that Australia have continued in that direction.

While he remains available for T20Is, his position there is also not entirely secure. Maxwell did not have a significant impact in Australia's T20 World Cup 2026 campaign, where the team failed to progress beyond the group stage.

Tiger Woods Leaves Golf Seeking Help

New Delhi: American golf legend Tiger Woods on Tuesday said that he will be stepping away from the sport for a period of time to focus on his health, days after being arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence following a car crash in Florida. Woods, a 15-time major champion, was involved in a rollover crash near his home in Jupiter Island last week. The 50-year-old was taken into custody and later released on bail. No injuries were reported in the incident.

In a statement posted on social media, Woods said that he understood the seriousness of the situation and would take time away to address it. "I know and understand the seriousness of the situation I find myself in today. I am stepping away for a period of time to seek treatment and focus on my health," Woods said. "This is necessary in order for me to prioritise my well-being and work toward lasting recovery." Court documents filed on Tuesday showed that Woods has pleaded not guilty to the DUI charges and has requested a jury trial. His next court appearance is scheduled for May 5, although he is not required to be present for proceedings before the trial. Details from the investigation report suggest that Woods had told authorities he was looking at his phone and adjusting the radio at the time of the crash, failing to notice a vehicle slowing down ahead of him. Officers at the scene observed signs of impairment, with the report noting that Woods appeared lethargic and unsteady. Authorities also said that prescription medication was found on him, and that he admitted to taking medication earlier in the day. The development comes at a time when Woods had only recently returned to competitive golf after a prolonged injury layoff. He had featured in the TGL Finals last week, a format that requires significantly less physical strain compared to regular tour events. Woods had been targeting a return at the upcoming Masters Tournament, scheduled to begin next week at Augusta National Golf Club. However, following his announcement, the club confirmed that the five-time champion will not be present at the event in any capacity.

IPL 2026: After Seasons Of Missed Opportunities LSG And DC Chase An Opening Punch In Lucknow



Lucknow: In the City of Nawabs, where tradition and grace have long dictated the pace of life, the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium prepares to host a spectacle that demands a different kind of poise. On Wednesday, as the dust settles on the opening exchanges of the 2026 Indian Premier League, the Lucknow Super Giants and Delhi Capitals meet in a fixture defined by a shared, nagging sense of what if. For both franchises, the 2025 campaign was a study in squandered momentum. They began like sprinters in a 100m dash, dominating the early stages of the tournament, only to fade like tired mar-

athoners, finishing fifth and seventh respectively as the playoff spots slipped away.

Yet, as they step onto the red soil of Lucknow on Wednesday, the narrative has shifted from post-mortem to possibility. Having spent the auction cycle surgically addressing the structural gaps that led to their mid-table slump, both teams now appear remarkably well-rounded. They boast an array of superstars, from Rishabh Pant and KL Rahul to promising domestic talents like Auqib Nabi, but what could truly set them apart this season is the balance within their squads. If the opening week of the IPL has exposed teams like

Chennai Super Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad for their lack of balance, Delhi Capitals and Lucknow Super Giants seem far less vulnerable on that front.

The most dramatic transformation lies in Lucknow's bowling room. In 2025, an injury-laden pace attack let the side down; even as the batting clicked, the inability to field a consistent seam unit cost them dearly, particularly in the death overs. Fast-forward to tonight, and LSG boast perhaps the most enviable pace battery in the competition. The headline is the return of a fully fit Mayank Yadav, whose raw pace remains the tournament's most discussed X-factor. He is joined by the veteran guile of Mohammed Shami, whose inclusion provides the tactical leadership this young group lacked. With a fit-again Avesh Khan and the left-arm variety of Mohsin Khan also available, Lucknow finally has the well-rounded attack head coach Justin Langer has long craved.

Italy Miss Third Straight World Cup Following A Dramatic Penalty Shootout Loss To Bosnia



Zenica: In a stunning turn of events during the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers final, Italy suffered a heartbreaking exit from the World Cup qualification race after losing to Bosnia and Herzegovina in a tense penalty shootout (4-1), marking their third consecutive failure to reach the global tournament. Italy, a four-time World Cup champion, once again found itself on the wrong side of fortune, extending a disappointing run that has raised serious questions about the team's consistency and ability to perform in crucial matches.

Having already missed the previous two editions of the tournament, the latest setback further compounds the nation's prolonged footballing struggles on the international stage. Italy began the match on a positive note, with forward Moise Kean putting his side ahead in the 15th minute, giving hope to the visiting side.

However, the momentum shifted significantly before the halftime break when centre-back Alessandro Bastoni was shown a direct red card, reducing Italy to 10 men and

putting them under immense pressure for the remainder of the contest. In the second half, Bosnia and Herzegovina capitalised on their numerical advantage and gradually increased the intensity of their attacks.

Their persistence paid off in the 79th minute when Haris Tabakovic found the back of the net to bring the hosts level, sending the home crowd into celebration and pushing the game into a tense finale. With the score tied at 1-1 at the end of regulation time, the match proceeded to extra time. Despite both teams creating opportunities, neither side was able to break the deadlock during the additional 30 minutes, forcing the outcome to be decided by a penalty shootout. In the shootout, Italy faltered under pressure as Pio Esposito and Bryan Cristante missed their spot kicks. Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, held their composure, with U.S.-born Esmir Bajraktarevic calmly converting the decisive penalty to seal a famous victory for his side.

Reacting to the loss, Italy defender Leonardo Spinazzola expressed disbelief and disappointment. "We still don't believe it -- that we're out and that it happened in this manner," he said, as quoted by ESPN. "It's upsetting for everyone. For us, for our families, and for all the kids who have never seen Italy at a World Cup." Meanwhile, the upcoming FIFA World Cup, featuring an expanded format of 48 teams, is scheduled to take place from June 11 to July 19 across the United States, Mexico and Canada. In Mexico, the co-hosts are set to play South Africa in the tournament opener in Mexico City. Therefore, we certainly cannot have such a presence," Don-yamali said, according to Al Jazeera report, citing Reuters. United States will co-host the 2026 FIFA World Cup alongside Canada and Mexico. The tournament will feature 104 matches, beginning at Mexico City Stadium on June 11 and culminating at New York New Jersey Stadium with the final On 19 July.

Azzurri Apocalypse 3.0: Italy Misses World Cup Shortly After Historic Cricket Success



New Delhi: In a twist of sporting fate that defies logic, Italy has become a nation of contradictions. Just weeks after the Azzurri cricketers celebrated a historic maiden appearance at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka, even securing a landmark win over Nepal, the country's footballing heart has been torn out once again. On Tuesday night, the unthinkable became reality in Zenica. Italy, the four-time world champions, fell to Bosnia and Herzegovina in a gut-wrenching penalty shootout, ensuring they will miss the FIFA World Cup for a record third consecutive time. The 4-1 defeat on penalties followed a 1-1 draw after extra time, extending Italy's World

Cup exile to at least 16 years. Italy now holds the unwanted distinction of being the only former champion to fail to qualify for three consecutive tournaments. Since lifting the trophy in 2006, Italy has not won a single knockout match in the competition.

As the footballing world prepares for a 48-team tournament in North America, Italy, the land of Baresi, Maldini and Totti, will once again be watching from the sidelines. Ironically, the only Italian World Cup highlights in 2026 may come from Wayne Madsen's cricketers in Kolkata, a small consolation for a nation mourning its footballing identity. The qualifying play-off final at

the Bilino Polje Stadium began with a deceptive sense of hope. Moise Kean silenced the raucous home crowd in the 15th minute, curling a sublime finish into the bottom corner after a defensive lapse from the hosts. For 40 minutes, Gennaro Gattuso's side looked composed, finally appearing ready to exorcise the ghosts of 2018 and 2022. However, the match turned in the 41st minute. Alessandro Bastoni, caught out by a quick Bosnian counter-attack, hauled down Amar Memic as the last man.

The referee showed no hesitation, producing a straight red card that forced Italy into a defensive shell for the remainder of the contest. Gattuso sacrificed his attack to preserve the lead, but the pressure eventually told. In the 79th minute, Haris Tabakovic pounced on a loose ball following a corner, poking home the equaliser and sending the stadium into a frenzy. Despite a heroic effort from 10-man Italy during extra time, anchored by several outstanding saves from Gianluigi Donnarumma, the shoot-out felt like an inevitable tragedy. Italy's composure deserted them from the spot. Francesco Pio Esposito blazed the first kick over the bar, and Bryan Cristante saw his effort strike the woodwork. Bosnia, clinical and composed, converted all four of their penalties, with Esmir Bajraktarevic slotting the winner to book their place in Group B of the 2026 finals. Italy failed to qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup after losing a penalty shootout 4-1 to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The decisive match, held in Zenica, ended in a 1-1 draw after extra time before the Shootout determined the final result.

ITTF World Cup: Manika Batra, Sreeja Akula Show Contrast



Macau: The Indian table tennis stars Manika Batra and Sreeja Akula had contrasting outings on day two of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) World Cup 2026 in Macau on Tuesday. Manika, the world number 47th in women's competition, secured a 3-2 (11-7, 11-2, 14-16, 5-11, 11-6) win over world No. 42 Lily Zhang of the USA. Manika was dominant, looking on track to seal the match in straight games, but Lily produced a brilliant comeback to enforce a tie-break in the third game and won the fourth game as well to take the game to a decider fifth game, as per Olympics.com. The class of three-time Olympian Batra shone un-

der pressure as she finished with a win in her final group stage match of the tournament. On the other hand, the 44th-ranked Akula did make a promising start against Portugal's Fu Yu by winning the first game, but she went down 1-3 (8-11, 11-9, 15-13, 11-8) against the world number 48. Sreeja's final group stage match will come on Wednesday against world number two and Olympic gold medalist Wang Manyu of China. Manav Thakkar, who lost to South Korea's Park Gang-hyeon in his campaign opener in the men's singles' competition, will face Olympic silver medalist world No. 2 Truls Moregardh of Sweden on Wednesday.