

Indian Army and NDRF conduct joint flood relief training ‘Exercise Jal Raksha-II’ at Sivasagar

Guwahati, Apr 21: The Indian Army’s Red Shield Gunners, under the aegis of Spear Corps, conducted Exercise Jal Raksha-II, a joint flood relief training exercise with the NDRF on 20–21 April 2026. The exercise aimed at enhancing operational preparedness and strengthening inter-agency coordination for effective response to flood-related emergencies. The training commenced with briefings on the composition and operational capabilities of Flood Relief Columns, followed by inputs from NDRF on disaster response procedures. Practical demonstrations of rescue equipment and techniques enabled participants to familiarise themselves with standard flood relief protocols. On the second day, activities included ground and drone-based reconnaissance, establishment of a Joint Command Post, and execution of integrated rescue and casualty evacuation drills simulating realistic flood scenarios.



NDRF teams demonstrated boat capsize and swift water rescue techniques, while Army medical teams showcased first aid and emergency response procedures. The exercise also witnessed participation from members of the local community, enhancing awareness of disaster management and coordinated response mechanisms. Such initiatives strengthen

inter-agency synergy and preparedness, ensuring swift and effective response during natural disasters. Senior officials from both the Army and NDRF emphasized that such joint initiatives not only sharpen technical skills but also foster trust and synergy between agencies. By integrating modern technology, local knowledge, and inter-agency expertise, Ex-

ercise Jal Raksha-II underscored India’s commitment to building a robust disaster management framework. The successful conduct of the exercise reaffirmed the readiness of the armed forces and NDRF to respond swiftly and effectively to future flood emergencies, ensuring safety, resilience, and confidence among vulnerable communities.

5.2 magnitude earthquake hits Manipur’s Kamjong

Imphal, Apr 21: A moderate earthquake measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale struck Kamjong in Manipur early Tuesday morning, officials said. According to the National Center for Seismology, the tremor occurred at around 5:50 am IST on April 21. Data shared by the agency showed that the earthquake originated at a depth of 62 kilometres beneath the surface, making it a moderately deep seismic event. The coordinates of the epicentre were recorded at latitude 24.703 N and longitude 94.415 E. Residents in several parts of the region reported feeling the tremors, which were strong enough to wake people from their sleep. However, there were no immediate reports of any major damage to property or loss of life at the time of filing this report. Officials said the situation is being closely monitored, and local authorities are on alert to assess any possible impact in remote areas. Earthquakes of this intensity are not uncommon in the Northeast region, which falls under a high seismic zone. The development comes at a time when the state is already facing disruption due to ongoing unrest. On Monday, normal life was affected in several districts due to shutdowns called by different organisations. Markets, schools and public transport services remained closed in parts of the Imphal valley and some hill districts, including Ukhrul and Senapati.

Indian Army Celebrates World Heritage Day with Tribal Cultural Programme at Tuting



Tuting, Apr 21: In a vibrant celebration of cultural diversity and heritage, the Spearhead Division of Spearcorps organized a Tribal Cultural Programme at Solung Ground, Tuting, on the occasion of World Heritage Day. The event showcased the rich traditions of Arunachal Pradesh, with captivating performances by members of the Adi, Mema-Khamba and Idu Mishmi tribes. Participants across all age groups,

from young children to elders, took part enthusiastically, adorned in their colourful traditional attire. Their performances highlighted the unique customs, music and dance forms that have been preserved through generations. The programme was conducted under the aegis of Operation Sadbhavna, reinforcing the Indian Army’s commitment towards fostering cultural awareness, strengthening bonds with lo-

cal communities, and preserving the region’s invaluable heritage. The event witnessed an overwhelming response from the local populace and served as a platform to celebrate unity in diversity, while encouraging the younger generation to take pride in their cultural roots. Through such initiatives, the Spearhead Gunners continue to promote community engagement, cultural preservation and social harmony in the region.

Chakmas Seek Governor’s Help Over Illegal Pillars

Aizawl, Apr 21: Representatives of several civil society organisations under the Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) have submitted a joint memorandum to Mizoram Governor Vijay Kumar Singh, seeking immediate intervention over the alleged illegal erection of a boundary pillar at Parva-I by the Central Young Lai Association.

The submission follows a joint meeting held on April 18 under the banner of the Central Young Chakma Association, which was attended by representatives of political parties within the CADC as well as organisations including the Mizoram Chakma Students’ Union, Chakma Mahila Samiti, and teachers’ and employees’ associations. Participants unanimously termed the erection of the boundary pillar on February 13 as “unwarranted, unauthorised, and highly provocative”, warning that such actions could disrupt the long-standing peaceful coexistence between the

Lai and Chakma communities. The organisations reiterated that the boundary between the Chakma Autonomous District Council and the Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) is clearly defined under the Pawi-Lakher Region (Re-Organisation) Order, 1972. According to the provisions, the boundary runs from the source of the Sanghatuilo Lui stream to its confluence with the Tui-chawng Lui. On this basis, they asserted that villages including Parva-I, Parva-II, Parva-III, Bundukbanga, Gavasury, and Siminesora fall within the jurisdiction of the CADC. The memorandum urged the Governor to direct the immediate removal of the pillar, citing growing unrest among local residents. It noted that while some residents have expressed willingness to dismantle the structure themselves, elected members from the Parva and Devasora South constituencies have appealed for official action.

CM Unveils Memorial, Initiates Women’s Market Shed Construction

Imphal, Apr 21: Chief Minister Shri Yumnam Khemchand Singh today unveiled a memorial stone erected in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the bombing by Japanese forces that occurred on 20th April, 1943 during the World War II at Khurai Chingbambam Leikai in Imphal East. It was the 83rd Commemoration of the tragic incident which is known as Khurai Chingbambam Mandop Aerial Bombing (1943). While paying tribute to the innocent civilians who lost their lives during World War II, Shri Khemchand Singh reflected on the painful memories associated with the historic event. He noted that the aerial bombing of Khurai Chingbambam Mandop was a tragic chapter in the history that took the lives of more than hundred innocent people and left a deep impact on the Manipuri society. He also led the others in offering Tarpan to the departed souls. The Battle of Imphal in 1943-44 was one of the fiercest and most important battles of the Second World War between the Allied forces and Japanese Army resulting loss of more than 20,000 lives. Such commemoration reminds the tragic chapter in our history. Regarding a proposal put forward to recognize the historic bombing site as a heritage site, the Chief Minister stated that the government would look into the matter.

During the programme, a commemorative souvenir was also released to mark the occasion. Speaking in connection to recent tragic incident of Tronglaobi, the Chief Minister said that the Government takes the incident seriously and had held meetings with the Joint Action Committee on two occasions. He continued that the Government had acknowledged the concerns raised by the public and the demands put forward, including support for the bereaved family. He informed that the Government had even proposed providing suitable state government jobs to both the parents of the deceased kids.

Gauhati High Court Reserves Order on Pawan Khera’s Anticipatory Bail Plea

Guwahati, Apr 21: The Gauhati High Court on Tuesday reserved its order on the anticipatory bail plea filed by Congress leader Pawan Khera in connection with a case registered by the Crime Branch of Assam Police in Guwahati. The matter was heard by Justice Parthivjyoti Saikia, who is expected to pronounce the order either later today or on Wednesday. A criminal

case has been filed against Khera on charges of defamation, forgery, and criminal conspiracy. The case stems from his recent allegations that Himanta Biswa Sarma’s wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, possesses multiple foreign passports and undisclosed assets abroad. Earlier, Assam Police had visited Khera’s residence in Delhi on April 7, but he was not present at the time. Sub-

sequently, he approached the Telangana High Court seeking transit anticipatory bail, which was granted on April 10 for a period of one week to allow him to approach courts in Assam. However, on April 15, the Supreme Court of India stayed the Telangana High Court’s order following an appeal by the Assam government. Khera later challenged the Supreme Court’s

ex-parte stay, but the apex court declined to vacate the stay and also refused to extend the transit bail. Instead, it directed him to approach the Gauhati High Court. During the hearing, senior advocates Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Kamal Nayan Choudhury, along with advocates Shariq Ahmed Abbasi, Aman Wadud, and Aminur Rahman, appeared on behalf of Khera.

Assam BJP to stage statewide protest against ‘Congress’ anti-women stance’ on April 23

Guwahati, Apr 21: The Assam BJP will organize “Mahila Akrosh” protests across the state on April 23 against the Congress party’s “anti-women stance”.

The saffron party will be protesting against the non-passage of the Women’s Reservation Bill after Opposition parties led by the Congress voted against it in the Lok Sabha on April 17.

Party workers at all levels, district, mandal, and booth, have already mobilized themselves to ensure the resounding success of this agitation, a statement issued by the BJP stated.

To effectively implement the protest programme, the State BJP has entrusted special responsibilities to 26 leaders, including Member of Parliament from Guwahati Bijuli Kalita Medhi, BTC Executive Member Rekharani Das Boro, former MP Queen Oja, and party

General Secretary Anup Barman.

The State President, and MP from Darrang-Udalguri constituency, Dilip Saikia, has personally overseen the preparations by convening a crucial meeting with office-bearers of the Guwahati Metropolitan District at the party headquarters.

He has called upon all women to unite against the anti-women decisions of the Congress and has directed party workers to mount a strong and decisive resistance.

“The BJP will continue to work relentlessly for the upliftment of women and the protection of their rights.

The anti-women policies and posture of the Congress, he emphasized, will be remembered by the women of this nation for generations to come,” the statement said.

Aqua North East Expo 2026 announced to boost aquaculture growth in Northeast India

Guwahati, Apr 21: Following the success of the Aqua North East Summit 2025, the first edition of the Aqua North East Expo 2026, a dedicated platform for the aquaculture industry, will be held from September 17 to 19, 2026 at the Maniram Dewan Trade Centre in Guwahati. The expo aims to connect companies, technology providers, startups, government bodies, and stakeholders to explore growing opportunities in Northeast India, a region emerging as a key aquaculture market due to high fish consumption and strong development focus. Aqua North East Expo 2026 is designed to serve as a gateway platform connecting the region with national and global aquaculture stakeholders. The initiative is supported by institutions including the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce



& Industry (BCC&I), Kolkata, along with participation from fisheries departments across Northeastern states. The event is being organised by Aqua Doctor Solutions Pvt Ltd, led by Dr. Debanu Barman, in association with FisheryNews, founded by Induvardhan Reddy Putana. The three-day expo will

feature multiple segments, including an Ornamental Aquaculture Pavilion, a Startup & Innovation Pavilion, and an Industry Conference & Knowledge Summit, offering a mix of exhibitions, discussions, and networking opportunities. The announcement builds on the momentum gener-

ated by the Aqua North East Summit 2025, which brought together several policymakers, researchers, industry leaders, technology companies, startups, cooperatives, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), and progressive farmers from across the Northeast. The summit focused on ad-

ressing key challenges in the region’s aquaculture sector, including productivity gaps, limited scientific adoption, weak market linkages, value chain inefficiencies, and climate-related vulnerabilities.

Discussions covered areas such as species diversification, cold-chain development, the use of AI, IoT, and digital farming technologies, sustainability, and financial inclusion through government schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). With the Northeast possessing one of India’s richest aquaculture resource bases – including abundant water bodies and a rapidly growing market – stakeholders at the summit emphasised the need for technology-driven practices, improved coordination, and increased investment to unlock the sector’s full potential.

Assam Opposition Leader Moves Rights Panel Over Guwahati Floods, Woman’s Death

Guwahati, Apr 21: Leader of Opposition in the Assam Assembly, Debabrata Saikia has written to the Assam Human Rights Commission, seeking urgent intervention into the “continuing and systemic human rights violations affecting the residents of Guwahati,” after heavy overnight rain threw life out of gear in the city.

Amid rain-triggered flash floods in Guwahati, a woman, identified as Payal Nath, died after falling into an open inundated drain at Maligaon Chariali near the Northeast Frontier Railway headquarters on Sunday night.

In a letter to AHRC chairperson Justice Arup Kumar Goswami, Saikia, seeking suo motu action over flooding and a woman’s death, described the situation as a “continuing and systemic human rights violation” affecting residents’ right to life, livelihood, dignity and education.

“I respectfully submit this representation seeking the urgent intervention of this commission regarding the continuing and systemic human rights violations affecting the residents of Guwahati,” Saikia wrote, adding that the situation reflects a “multi-layered failure of governance”.

He argued that the recurring flooding is not a natural inevitability but a preventable hazard, pointing to incidents such

as people being swept into open drains, deaths linked to uncovered infrastructure, electrocution in waterlogged areas and widespread storm damage.

The Opposition leader also raised concerns over the impact on daily life, stating that repeated school closures have disrupted education, while “daily wage earners are losing vital income” and businesses are suffering economic losses.

Referring to the Silsako eviction drive, Saikia said floods persist even as around 1,200 houses were demolished in the name of flood mitigation.

He further alleged irregularities in public spending, claiming RTI findings show drainage equipment and “super sucker” machines were procured at higher-than-market rates.

Saikia urged the commission to call for compliance reports on Gauhati High Court orders issued between 2022 and 2024, conduct a comprehensive inquiry into drainage failures and fix accountability of officials. He also sought an independent audit of flood-related expenditure and recommended criminal or vigilance action where necessary. Calling the situation a “profound failure of governance”, Saikia sought urgent intervention, compensation for victims and time-bound corrective measures to prevent further loss of life and disruption.

Dergaon road accident



Shilong, Apr 21: Senior journalist of Dainik Asom and noted educationist Ratul Bora was killed on the spot on Monday morning after a truck allegedly ran over his motorcycle on National Highway 37 at Dergaon in Assam’s Golaghat district. Bora, 56, a resident of Kumar Gaon, served as the Dergaon correspondent of Dainik Asom and was also the headmaster of Lakheraj Janajati High School. According to reports, the accident took place around 8.30 a.m. when he was travelling from his residence to his workplace on a motorcycle. While passing through NH-37 at Dergaon, a truck bearing registration number RJ05GA7942 allegedly

ran over his vehicle, killing him instantly. CCTV footage reportedly showed Bora riding alongside the moving truck moments before the collision. Eyewitnesses said the truck was heading towards Jorhat at the time of the incident. Some Chariali. Police reached the site shortly after and initiated an investigation into the circumstances leading to the fatal accident. The body was sent for post-mortem examination. This is not the first fatal road accident reported on NH-37 in the region. In March, two women were killed in a similar incident near Teok in Jorhat district after a speeding truck hit their scooter.

LoP Debabrata Saikia moves AHRC, seeks suo motu action over Guwahati flooding

Guwahati, Apr 21: Leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia has written to the Assam Human Rights Commission, seeking suo motu cognisance of severe waterlogging in Guwahati following heavy overnight rain and alleging systemic governance failures. In a letter addressed to AHRC chairperson Arup Kumar Goswami, Saikia described the situation as a “continuing and systemic human rights violation”, impacting residents’ rights to life, livelihood, dignity and education. At least one person died and normal life was disrupted across the city on Monday as torrential rain submerged roads, inundated homes and paralysed traffic. The Assam State Disaster Management Authority confirmed that a woman, identified as Payal Nath, died after falling into a drain at Maligaon Chariali near the Northeast Frontier Railway headquarters. The Opposition leader urged the Commission to seek compliance reports

on orders issued by the Gauhati High Court between 2022 and 2024, conduct a comprehensive inquiry into drainage failures, and fix accountability of officials. He also called for an independent audit of flood-related expenditure and recommended criminal or vigilance action where necessary. Pending final disposal, Saikia sought immediate interim measures, including covering open drains and restoring normal civic life. Several areas of the city, including Zoo Road, Khanapara, GS Road, Hatigaon, Ganeshguri, Ulubari, Chandmari and Maligaon, reported flooding, with water levels ranging from knee-deep to chest-high in places. Saikia said the recurring flooding cannot be treated as a natural inevitability, but rather as a preventable hazard arising from administrative lapses. He cited instances of people being swept into open drains, deaths linked to exposed infrastructure, electrocution in water-



logged areas and widespread storm damage. He also flagged the broader socio-economic impact, noting that repeated school closures have disrupted education, while daily wage earners and small businesses have suffered significant losses. Referring to the Silsako eviction drive, Saikia

said around 1,200 houses had been demolished in the name of flood mitigation, yet flooding continues unabated. He further alleged irregularities in public spending, claiming that RTI findings pointed to drainage equipment and “super sucker” machines being procured at inflated rates.

IOCL guarantees a steady supply of LPG in Mizoram

Shilong, Apr 21: The Indian Oil Corporation Limited on Monday said the LPG supply across the country remained stable despite the West Asia crisis, assuring uninterrupted delivery and urging consumers not to indulge in panic booking.

Speaking at a press conference here, IOCL sales manager (Aizawl-II) Diganta Chaudhury said the corporation was prioritising domestic LPG requirements and was closely monitoring the supply chain to ensure uninterrupted delivery to consumers.

He said the corporation was catering to around 2.97 lakh households in the state and maintaining delivery of about 8,000 cylinders daily, which is consistent with pre-crisis levels.

Furthermore, total commercial LPG allocation has been increased to around 70 per cent of pre-crisis levels



to support local businesses, he said.

To streamline the refill process, officials of Indian Oil Corporation Limited said customers are encouraged to use digital booking methods such as SMS and IVRS. Currently, nearly 25,000 refill requests are being received through these channels, they

said. In addition, delivery authentication codes (DAC OTP) have been implemented to ensure cylinders reach genuine customers, they said. Multiple raids have been conducted across the state, and strict action is being taken against any errant distributors found engaging in malpractices.

CBI Arrests Key Conspirator in SIM Fraud Racket Under Operation Chakra-V

Shilong, Apr 21: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has intensified its nationwide crackdown on cybercrime infrastructure under Operation Chakra-V, arresting Ubaid Ullah, a key conspirator in Guwahati who had been absconding since August 2025. Ullah is accused of playing a central role in procuring and distributing nearly 10,000 fraudulently issued SIM cards, which were later used in scams such as “digital arrest” frauds, fake loan schemes, and bogus investment operations. Investigators revealed that he transferred around Rs 67 lakh through multiple bank accounts to Point of Sale (POS) agents in exchange for these SIM cards, and even relied on



courier services to transport them – pointing to a highly organised and structured network.

The CBI’s probe highlights how cybercriminals exploit weak verification processes at POS outlets to create anonymous communication channels, enabling large-scale fraud. These SIM cards formed the back-

bone of operations that targeted unsuspecting victims across India, draining them financially and eroding trust in digital systems. As part of the investigation, searches have been conducted at 45 locations across eight states, leading to the arrest of 10 POS agents allegedly involved in the racket. Officials believe this net-

work is a critical enabler of organised cybercrime, and dismantling it is essential to curbing the rise of digital fraud. Operation Chakra-V represents a strategic shift in India’s fight against cybercrime, focusing not just on perpetrators but on facilitators and logistics networks that sustain illegal activities. The CBI reiterated its commitment to coordinated, intelligence-driven action, stressing inter-agency collaboration as key to tackling the growing menace. With Ullah’s arrest, investigators are now working to identify and apprehend other conspirators linked to the racket, aiming to break the infrastructure that allows cybercriminals to thrive.

CJI to visit Sikkim on May 1, 2



Gangtok, Apr 21: Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant is scheduled to visit Sikkim to attend a conference on May 1 and 2, an official statement said on Monday. He would participate in the National Conference on Technology and Judicial Education, scheduled to be held in Gangtok. The conference is being organised by the High Court of Sikkim, and will also be attended by judges of the Supreme Court and several high courts, it said. In preparation for the visit, a high-level coordination meeting was held at the state secretariat on Monday under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary R Telang.

The meeting reviewed arrangements related to protocol, security, transportation, accommodation, and venue readiness to ensure a smooth and successful visit of the CJI and other distinguished guests.

Officials emphasised the importance of seamless coordination among departments, given the stature of the visiting dignitaries, the statement added. Organized by the High Court of Sikkim, this high-profile event will gather Supreme Court and high court judges to discuss legal technological advancements.

Aizawl Gears Up for Civic Polls: 2.39 Lakh Voters to Decide Fate of 68 Candidates

Aizawl, Apr 21: All preparations are in place for the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) elections, scheduled for Tuesday, April 21. Over 2.39 lakh voters, including 1.26 lakh women, will decide the fate of 68 candidates contesting for 19 seats in the civic body. Of these, 28 candidates are women, reflecting a notable presence in the electoral fray.

The Mizoram government has declared a public holiday in areas under AMC jurisdiction to ensure maximum voter participation. Government offices, schools, and public sector establishments will remain closed during polling. Officials from the Mizoram State Election Commission (SEC) confirmed that nearly 94% of senior citizens, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), and individuals



with chronic illnesses have already exercised their franchise through the home voting facility.

Candidates represent four major

political parties: the Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM), Mizo National Front (MNF), Congress, and BJP. ZPM, MNF, and Congress

have fielded 19 candidates each, while BJP has nominated 11. In the last AMC elections held in February 2021, MNF secured a majority with 11 seats, ZPM won six, and Congress managed two. The elections, originally due on March 1, were deferred because of the state Assembly’s budget session and ongoing Board examinations. The SEC enforced the Model Code of Conduct from March 18, which will remain in force until April 30. Under the code, recruitment or appointment processes in government departments and PSUs within AMC limits are prohibited without SEC approval. Votes will be counted on April 27, and the results will determine the composition of the 19-member civic body that governs Mizoram’s capital.

BJP to Form Govt in Bengal This Time, 100% Confirmed: Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

Guwahati, Apr 21: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, while campaigning in West Bengal’s Bardhaman district, declared that the BJP will “100 per cent” form the government in the state in the upcoming Assembly elections. His remarks come as West Bengal prepares for a streamlined two-phase election across all 294 constituencies – a departure from the multi-phase polling seen in recent years. Voting will take place on April 23 and April 29, with counting scheduled for May 4. The first phase will cover 152 constituencies across 16 districts, while the second will include 142 constituencies in seven districts. Sarma also reacted to the rejection of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha, which sought to provide women’s reservation. He said women were “very sad” and would “take revenge” on Mamata Banerjee, the DMK, and the Congress. The bill failed to secure the required two-thirds majority, with 298 MPs voting in favour and 230 against. Following this setback, two related bills – one on delimitation and another on increasing Lok Sabha seats – were not put to vote. The Centre had strongly advocated for 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and state Assemblies, but the defeat has added



sharp political undertones to the ongoing campaign in Bengal. With the West Bengal Assembly elections approaching, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday asserted that the BJP is set to form the government in the state this time. He expressed strong confidence

in the party’s prospects, stating that the outcome is “100 per cent confirmed”.

Speaking in Gaur Goubazar in West Bardhaman district, where he is campaigning for the BJP, CM Sarma said, “This time BJP is going to form a government, 100 per cent confirmed.”

Denial of receipts for complaints at police stations in AP draws

Guwahati, Apr 21: The widespread practice of police failing to provide acknowledgement copies for written complaints at police stations across the State is drawing criticism from the public, legal experts and human rights activists, who call the negligence a clear violation of established law and Supreme Court guidelines. As per the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), an acknowledgement copy is a crucial document ensuring accountability and transparency in police procedures, particularly regarding the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs) and service of summons. Accordingly, every complainant has the right to receive an acknowledgement copy, often referred to as a ‘complaint receiving’ copy, immediately after submitting a written complaint at a police station. This document typically records key details such as the complainant’s name, date of submission, police station details, and a brief description of the grievance. It serves as proof of submission and enables citizens to track the progress of their complaint, including whether an FIR has been registered. Despite these legal safeguards, the practice is reportedly absent in many of the State’s approximately 1,020 police stations. Activists argue that the absence of acknowledgement copies creates room for delays or denial in FIR registration, particularly in the sensitive cases “It is a violation of procedure established by law. Without an acknowledgement, complainants are often forced to run from pillar to post,” said Gutta Rohit of the Human

Rights Forum. He added that issuing such copies would ensure accountability and compel police to act within a stipulated time frame. In addition, experts insist that administrative convenience cannot override statutory obligations, warning that failure to provide acknowledgement receipts undermines transparency, weakens accountability, and ultimately denies timely justice to citizens, opined an expert, a retired police officer. Interestingly, the issue highlights a contrast with digital grievance systems such as Public Grievance Redressal Systems (PGRS), where complainants automatically receive digital acknowledgements for online submissions.

When TNIE contacted a senior police officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, he said many complaints are either resolved immediately or forwarded to the appropriate authorities, reducing the perceived need to issue acknowledgement copies. He also cited increasing workload on police personnel and procedural delays as key reasons for the declining practice. “With a large number of complaints now being received through PGRS and other online portals, issuing acknowledgement copies has become an additional burden on the police. But we are ensuring all complaints received at police stations are addressed within the stipulated time, giving relief to complainants,” he said. However, there are legal provisions mandating that police must register an FIR for cognisable offences and provide a free copy to the complainant.

Community Clashes During UNC Shutdown in Manipur

Imphal, Apr 21: Tensions escalated in parts of Manipur following a three-day shutdown called by the United Naga Council (UNC), supported by the All Naga Students' Association Manipur, which came into effect from midnight of April 20.

Clashes were reported between residents of Changoubung Kuki village and T. Khullen after attempts were made to enforce the shutdown in Naga-inhabited areas. According to initial reports, the situation turned tense when police tried to clear roadblocks set up by Naga volunteers.

The confrontation intensified as both Kuki and Naga villagers became involved, leading to stone-pelting incidents and raising fears of a wider inter-community conflict.

In a related incident, a vehicle belonging to the Senapati District Students' Association (SDSA) was vandalised amid the unrest. While

no confirmed reports of serious injuries have emerged, sources indicate that the situation in T. Khullen remains highly volatile, with security forces deployed to prevent escalation.

Separately, clashes also broke out in S. Changoubung Kuki village in Kangpokpi district on Monday. UNC volunteers, reportedly linked to a Tangkhul Kacha-Naga group, allegedly sealed the village gate and attempted to forcibly shut down local shops as part of the bandh.

Kuki residents resisted the move, stating that the shutdown should not be imposed in their village. The confrontation escalated when volunteers allegedly resorted to stone pelting, causing panic among villagers. Eyewitnesses said women and children took shelter indoors as tensions rose.

Police teams intervened promptly and managed to bring the situation under control. District authorities later confirmed that normalcy had



been restored and no major injuries were reported. However, security presence has been increased as a precautionary measure.

Community leaders in Kangpokpi have appealed for calm, stressing

that forcing a bandh or blockade on another community is unacceptable and could disrupt peace. They urged all groups to resolve differences through dialogue rather than confrontation.

VDF Personnel Critically Injured in Mob Attack Amid Shutdown Tensions in Thoubal

Thoubal, Apr 21: A Village Defence Force (VDF) personnel was critically injured after being brutally attacked by an unidentified mob, suspected to be shutdown supporters, at Wangjing Tekcham Leikai in Thoubal district on the night of April 20.

The injured personnel, identified as Takhelchangbam Romesh Sharma (32), was on duty guarding the Wangjing CD Block office, which was scheduled to be inaugurated by Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on April 21.

According to sources, a group allegedly backing the shutdown attempted to set fire to the Block Development Office. Security forces intervened, leading to a confrontation. To control the situation, police fired tear gas shells, rubber bullets, and smoke bombs.

During the clash, Sharma was severely assaulted, reportedly with an iron rod, and sustained serious head injuries. He was initially rushed for treatment and is currently in critical condition at Raj Medicity in Imphal. Sharma, son of late

Lolindro from Heirok Part (III), is posted at Wangjing Outpost and bears VDF number 1183.

The incident comes amid tensions over conflicting calls regarding the Chief Minister's scheduled visit. The Thoubal District Apunba Meira Paibis had called for a boycott of the inauguration, stating that "no festivals or inaugurations can be held while Manipur is burning," referring to the Tronglaobi killings and earlier CRPF firing incidents.

In contrast, organisations including Wangjing Apunba Meira Paibi Lup, the Women Coordinating Committee Wangjing, and the Youth Coordinating Committee Wangjing expressed support for the Chief Minister's visit, stating they would warmly welcome him and resist any attempts to obstruct the programme.

Meanwhile, shutdown supporters also blocked the Imphal–Moreh road near Thoubal Babu Bazar on Tuesday morning. Security forces later cleared the blockade, restoring normal traffic movement.

India And IFAD Sign \$46M Deal For Mizoram Climate-Resilient Farming

Guwahati,, Apr 21: The Government of India has signed a financing agreement worth nearly 46 million dollars with the International Fund for Agricultural Development to strengthen climate-resilient and market-driven agriculture in Mizoram. The project, titled Fostering Climate Resilient Upland Farming Systems in the Northeast (FOCUS 2.0), aims to expand sustainable farming practices across all 11 districts of the state between 2026 and 2032. It aligns with Mizoram's Bana Kaih policy, which promotes self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods, as well as India's broader goals of inclusive and climate-resilient growth.

Building on the success of its first phase (2018–2024), where participating farmers saw income gains of 43 percent, the new phase will scale up proven models. Around 150,000 people are expected to benefit from improved farming systems, better market access, and enhanced livelihood opportunities. The programme will focus on transitioning smallholder farmers from subsistence agriculture to market-oriented production. This includes strengthening

value chains through improved storage, aggregation and processing facilities, along with financial and capacity-building support for farmer producer organisations and rural enterprises. Highlighting the initiative, IFAD's India Country Director Marc de Sousa Shields said the programme will connect farmers to structured markets through aggregation systems, processing centres and formal partnerships with agribusinesses. In Mizoram, agriculture is largely characterised by small and fragmented landholdings, low productivity, and dependence on shifting cultivation. Increasing climate risks and limited market infrastructure have further constrained rural incomes. FOCUS 2.0 seeks to address these challenges by promoting climate-smart farming techniques, improving rural infrastructure resilient to extreme weather, and enhancing financial and digital inclusion. The initiative is also expected to strengthen self-help groups and farmer organisations, enabling them to better access markets and scale up agribusiness activities. India and IFAD have collaborated on 36 rural development projects over decades.

Assam Celebrates Civil Services Day, Stresses Integrity and Courage Among Officers

Guwahati, Apr 21: The Assam government on Tuesday observed National Civil Services Day 2026 at the Assam Administrative Staff College in Guwahati.

Assam Chief Secretary Ravi Kota, attended the programme as the keynote speaker.

In his address, the Chief Secretary highlighted the significance of Civil Services Day as an occasion for reflection on the role of civil servants in governance.

Calling upon the officers to uphold the values of integrity, impartiality, courage and character in the discharge of their duties, he said civil services were envisaged by the framers of the Constitution as an institution to ensure unity, integrity and continuity in governance.

Referring to the constitutional framework relating to civil services, Kota emphasised that the system is based on the principles of merit, neutrality, institutional integrity and accountability. He referred to the views of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the importance of an independent and impartial civil service for maintaining national unity.

The Chief Secretary also referred to the contributions of B. R. Ambedkar in establishing a rule-based and merit-oriented system through institutions such as the Public Service Commissions.



"In a democratic system, while governments may change, the role of civil servants remains constant," he stated, emphasising the need for professionalism, impartiality and adherence to constitutional values in the discharge of duties.

He further stated that civil services function as an integrated system in which all roles are interdependent. Effectiveness in public service, he noted, depends on meaningful contribution within the institutional framework.

On issues relating to postings and career progres-

sion, he advised officers to focus on service delivery and responsibilities rather than perceptions associated with postings. He observed that professional satisfaction is derived from meaningful engagement with work and commitment to public service. The Chief Secretary also highlighted that public service requires sustained effort and commitment, and that challenging assignments provide opportunities for learning and improvement. He emphasised the importance of maintaining focus on execution and outcomes.

Clashes, Curfew Breaches and Health Disruptions Fuel Manipur Tensions

Imphal, Apr 21: Tensions continue to rise across Manipur as clashes between protesters and security forces, curfew violations, and disruptions to healthcare services highlight a worsening situation in both valley and hill districts.

Violence erupted during a torch rally in Imphal on April 20, as public anger intensified over the killing of two children in a bomb blast at Tronglaobi on April 7. The rally, which covered nearly seven kilometres from Mayai Lambi to Keishamthong in Imphal West, turned confrontational when protesters attempted to move beyond the permitted route toward Keisampat, a sensitive administrative area.

Security forces used tear gas to disperse the crowd after demonstrators defied curfew orders. Officials reported that some protesters hurled stones and iron pellets using catapults, posing risks to personnel. Curfew restrictions remain in force across five valley districts, prohibiting movement between 5 pm and 5 am.

Police confirmed the arrest of 19 individuals across the greater Imphal area on April 19 for violating curfew norms and engaging in activities such as road blockades and damage to public property. Cases have been registered, and investigations are ongoing, with authorities stating that enforcement measures will continue.

Meanwhile, a separate candlelight vigil was held in Ukhrul district to mourn two civilians killed in an ambush in the TM Kasom area on April 18. Civil society organisations from both hill and valley regions condemned the killings, alleging the use of sniper fire by armed militants.

Amid the unrest, healthcare services have also been severely affected. The Association of Healthcare Providers India, Manipur Chapter, raised serious concerns over the impact of protests and security operations on hospitals and medical personnel.

Speaking at Mother's Care and Children Hospital, AHPI Manipur president Dr Kh Ratan Kumar said tear gas shells landed near the hospital gate during a protest on April 18, causing distress among patients. Some patients had to be shifted due to the effects of tear gas, leading to a traumatic experience, particularly for the elderly and critically ill.

The association stressed that hospitals must remain neutral and protected zones, urging authorities to prevent such incidents. It also reported cases of ambulances being attacked, emergency services obstructed, and healthcare workers facing harassment, intimidation, and even physical assault.

AHPI has written to the Home Commissioner seeking urgent intervention, stating that disruption of healthcare services directly endangers lives and violates humanitarian principles. Dr Ratankumar called on authorities to ensure safe and uninterrupted movement for patients, medical staff, and ambulances.

Concerns have also been raised over an incident on April 17 at Khurai Lamlong, where three ambulance drivers were allegedly assaulted by security personnel while transporting a patient.

The ongoing unrest in Manipur reflects deep public anger and growing instability, with law and order challenges now extending into critical sectors such as healthcare.

Man Declared Dead, Cremated—Returns Alive in Assam's Charaideo, Triggers Shock and Probe

Guwahati, Apr 21: In a bizarre and deeply unsettling incident from Sonari in Assam, a man who was believed to be dead and cremated has returned home alive, leaving his family and locals stunned.

The incident began when police informed Binod Kurmi that his younger brother, Bijoy Kurmi, had died at Charaideo District Civil Hospital. The grieving family rushed to the hospital, where, following what was described as a formal identification process, the body was handed over to them.

The family then performed the last rites the same day. According to reports, the body was taken to the banks of the Taukaka river in the Borahi Tea Estate area of Sonari, where it was cremated.

However, nearly 24 hours later, in a shocking turn of events, Bijoy Kurmi returned home alive and in

normal condition—reportedly arriving on a bicycle. His sudden return left the family in disbelief and the entire locality in shock.

While the family expressed relief upon seeing him alive, a serious mystery has now emerged: the identity of the body that was cremated remains unknown.

The incident has raised major questions about the identification process carried out by authorities. Local residents have demanded a thorough investigation into how both the police and the family misidentified the body.

Authorities in Charaideo are now facing a complex situation as they attempt to determine the true identity of the deceased and understand how such a grave error occurred.

IOCL Ensures Steady LPG Supply To 2.97 Lakh Households In Mizoram Amid Global Crisis

Aizawl, Apr 21: The Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has assured consumers in Mizoram that the supply of LPG remains stable despite disruptions in West Asia, urging households not to resort to panic booking. At a press conference in Aizawl, IOCL sales manager (Aizawl-II) Diganta Chaudhury said the corporation is prioritising domestic requirements and closely monitoring the supply chain to ensure uninterrupted delivery. He noted that IOCL currently caters to nearly 2.97 lakh households in the state, maintaining a daily delivery of around 8,000 cylinders—consistent with pre-crisis levels. Commercial LPG allocation



has also been raised to about 70 percent of pre-crisis levels to support local businesses. To streamline refills, officials encouraged customers to adopt

digital booking methods such as SMS and IVRS, which already account for nearly 25,000 refill requests. In addition, IOCL has introduced delivery authenti-

cation codes (DAC OTP) to guarantee that cylinders reach genuine customers. The corporation has also conducted multiple raids across the state, taking strict action against distributors found engaging in malpractice. At a press conference, MNF legal board vice-chairman Lalpianfela Chawngthu said the government's February 23 notification granting general consent for a CBI investigation was only procedural and had not been followed by any concrete action. He alleged that the move was "mere eyewash," stating that a consent notification alone does not trigger a CBI probe unless a formal request is sent to the required documents.

‘Exercise Jal Raksha-II’: Indian Army, NDRF Conduct Flood Relief Training in Sivasagar

Sivasagar, Apr 21: The Indian Army's Red Shield Gunners, under the aegis of Spear Corps, conducted Exercise Jal Raksha-II, a joint flood relief training exercise with the NDRF on 20–21 April 2026. The exercise aimed at enhancing operational preparedness and strengthening inter-agency coordination for effective response to flood-related emergencies. The training commenced with briefings on the composition and operational capabilities of Flood Relief Columns, followed by inputs from NDRF on disaster response procedures. Practical demonstrations of rescue equipment and techniques enabled participants to familiarise themselves with standard flood relief protocols. On the second day, activities included ground and drone-based recon-



naissance, establishment of a Joint Command Post, and execution of integrated rescue and casualty evacuation drills simulating realistic flood scenarios. NDRF teams demonstrated boat capsize and swift water

rescue techniques, while Army medical teams showcased first aid and emergency response procedures. The exercise also witnessed participation from members of the local community, enhancing awareness of

disaster management and coordinated response mechanisms. Such initiatives strengthen inter-agency synergy and preparedness, ensuring swift and effective response during natural disasters.

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Editorial

Twin Pillars of a Prosperous Nation

The vigour of the young and the wisdom of the old are not rival forces — they are complementary engines of national progress. A nation’s destiny is shaped not by any single generation but by the dynamic interplay of all its people. The energy, ambition, and innovation of the young must be harnessed alongside the experience, judgement, and foresight of the old. To treat these as competing assets is to misread the very grammar of national development. India today stands at a remarkable juncture. With over 65 per cent of its population below 35, the country possesses an unmatched demographic dividend. Young Indians are driving technological disruption, entrepreneurial growth, and social reform with a restless creativity that older institutions cannot replicate.

We need to address the causes of impunity as long as mob violence continues

Nearly every week, a new incident seems to rock the country. Shamim al-Jahangir, a Sufi pir, was shockingly lynched inside his shrine in Kushtia on Saturday, April 11. Following accusations on social media over an old film that allegedly contained disparaging remarks about religious beliefs, a crowd vandalized and set fire to the temple. The man was taken from the scene by police in severe condition and taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead upon arrival. These kinds of situations are no longer particularly novel in Bangladesh. A group going by the name “Azadi Andolon” attacked and harassed a number of persons, including women, in the Shahbagh neighborhood of the capital just one day prior to the Kushtia homicide. The group had accused the victims of being homosexual. The pattern is clear: attacks,

even deadly ones, can now be easily carried out against anyone for simply having or appearing to have different ideas, beliefs, or viewpoints. These incidents demonstrate how quickly collective violence can be executed, and how the perpetrators often get off scot-free. And if social media reactions are any indication, a sizable section of the population not only rationalises such incidents but also, in some cases, openly celebrates them. This is uncomfortable if not shocking. Incidents like these hardly ever occur in a vacuum. And, given the prevailing conditions, it would be naïve to assume we have seen the last of it. According to the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), at least 49 people were killed in mob violence and lynching incidents across Bangladesh in just the first three months of 2026, across 88 separate incidents. Some

of these incidents were triggered by accusations of theft or robbery, others by personal disputes, and increasingly, by allegations of religious insult circulated on internet platforms. In fact, the trend of mob attacks on shrines becomes more disturbing when viewed over a slightly longer timeline. A recent study by Maqam: Center for Sufi Heritage, disclosed in February, documented 97 attacks on shrines across the country between August 2024 and December 2025, leaving three people dead and 468 injured. Despite the scale of violence, only 11 cases were filed, and investigations in 10 of those cases showed “no progress.” In many instances, victims were beaten, displaced, or forced to abandon the shrines altogether, leaving them in no position to even pursue legal action. The study further found that most attacks were carried out by mobs under

banners such as “tawhidi jannata,” with alleged involvement of political activists. In some cases, attackers used bulldozers and loudspeakers to mobilise crowds and destroy shrine structures. Apart from shrines, Baul practitioners, cultural events, and artistic spaces have repeatedly been attacked in recent months and years. These are not random victims. They represent a long tradition of pluralism in Bengal’s religious and cultural life—spaces where faith, music, and local traditions have historically coexisted. What makes these spaces particularly vulnerable today is not just ideological hostility, but a growing sense of social permission allowing it. Over time, a form of collective consent has been manufactured—through sermons, online videos, informal local preaching networks, and social media bots—that frames

shrines and similar institutions as being anti-Islamic. Once that perception takes root, attacks are no longer perceived by some as violations, but as corrections. This sense of permissibility is reinforced in more subtle ways as well, including through the language of mainstream media. In the Kushtia case, many outlets were quick to describe the victim as a “so-called” or “self-proclaimed” pir, or to place the word pir within quotation marks. On the surface, this may appear as an attempt at neutrality or scepticism. But, in effect, it introduces a dangerous ambiguity: as if the legitimacy of a spiritual identity has any bearing on whether killing a person can ever be justified. There was, in fact, little journalistic necessity to foreground or question in headlines whether the pir was “legitimate” or not; careful wording could have

Inequality may be the cause of young men’s shocking opinions on women

Last week, results from a global survey signalled a rise in worrying attitudes towards women among young men. A team from the pollsters Ipsos and King’s College London found that nearly a third (31%) of gen Z men believe that a woman should always obey her husband, a fifth (21%) believe that she should never initiate sex, and 33% believe that women should let their husbands have the final word on important decisions. A global study that uses averages from widely disparate cultures and economies can only yield so much. We are unable to ask respondents what they meant by their responses or how they reconcile seemingly incompatible opinions. For example, younger males are more likely than previous generations to identify as feminists and find attractive successful women, but some nevertheless believe that women should be subservient. Furthermore, the data does not indicate if these opinions are held by

the same men. Other surveys show a more complex picture, where young men’s desires don’t necessarily align with traditional gender roles. One survey of young Americans found more men than women expressing a desire to be parents; another found adolescents of both sexes looking for more vulnerable depictions of fathers on screen. Young men talk about feeling that they live in a world of increased competition, while searching for the right role models. In a society that treats social position as a measure of personal worth, it is hardly surprising that many men compete for status. Yet inequality means that the rich are zooming away. In 2023, Oxfam found that the richest 1% of Britons hold more wealth than 70% of Britons. In the UK, young people have been hit hard: the average home in England now costs 7.7 times the average wage, compared with 3.5 in 1997. Unemployment is rising and young people bear the brunt of joblessness. University degrees no longer



pave a path to good wages or decent lives. When prospects shrink, status feels scarce and progress looks zero-sum. Under those pressures, some men turn their resentment to-

wards women, fuelling an anti-feminist discourse. Social media also plays a destructive role, offering the scapegoat of women’s rights rather than real solutions. The “manosphere”

offers little beyond bigotry dressed up as self-respect and get-rich-quick fantasies that prey on male anxiety. You don’t have to look far to see the effect. When asked by Ipsos/King’s

College, “When it comes to giving women equal rights with men, things have gone far enough in my country”, in the UK almost half of men agreed – just below the 29-country average. The poll also shows that Britain, along with other western countries, has seen the biggest rises since 2019 in support of the belief that on gender equality, things have “gone far enough”. Researchers contend that until there are more jobs, greater pay, and improved living conditions for young people, these sentiments won’t change. However, misogyny cannot be eliminated by riches alone. Additionally, a cultural change is required, but this cannot occur unless young males accept responsibility for their views toward women.

They also require empathy, to be reassured that riches do not define them and that they do not need to don the flawed armor of machismo. Above all, it is not women but growing inequality that prevents them from leading fulfilling lives.

Charities that provide homes could assist England’s “hidden children”



Everyone interested in social policy has a responsibility to focus on the children and youth who are most in need. When victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation slip through the cracks in the welfare state due to local authorities’ inability to provide for their needs, it reflects poorly on society as a whole and runs the danger of both immediate and long-term harm. It is common knowledge that the adult and child social care systems in England are severely strained. An disturbing sign of a larger failing is the increase in the number of kids placed in unregistered settings, where they are essentially invisible to Ofsted. According to a timely assessment from the policy firm Public First, the number of children increased from 144 in 2020–2021 to 680 in

2024–2025. The results are consistent with those of Dame Rachel de Souza, the Children’s Commissioner for England, who documented 669 such placements in September of last year. Even though these figures represent less than 1% of the more than 83,000 looked-after children in England, the sharp increase in the number of situations in which councils are unable to provide adequate care is concerning in and of itself because no child should be living outside of the regulatory framework, as well as because it shows how the sector is operating as a whole. These interconnected issues are widely known to ministers. Since Josh MacAlister, who published a review under the Conservatives, is now the minister in charge of implementing change, there has been an excep-

tional level of policy continuity in the field of children’s social care. While new rules governing supported housing were intended to provide a safe, legal alternative to foster care and children’s homes, especially for older teenagers, laws governing the use of unregistered accommodation—which has occasionally included caravans and vacation rentals—are currently being strengthened. But new rules do not resolve the question of what social workers should do with a child who neither foster carers nor regulated providers will accept. At the heart of the matter is a quandary: while councils have a legal obligation to place children, no organisation is obliged to accept them. Practical steps proposed in the report, which is titled Hidden Children and was commissioned by a charity, Commonweal Housing, include rewriting rules that incentivise providers to reject young people viewed as high-risk. The authors are also hopeful about the prospects for new regional care cooperatives, which are meant to reshape the market in the public interest. But while the excessive profits taken by some (but not all) children’s social care businesses have been rightly criticised – including by a Competitions and Markets Authority investigation in 2022 – there is no simple rule change that will put this dysfunction right. While profit caps ought to help ease the financial squeeze on councils, for whom emergency placements can be ruinously expensive, they will not solve the central dilemma of where these young people can go. Ministers have already spent £88 million on hiring foster caregivers. This research also raises the possibility of further involvement from the social housing industry. MPs should investigate if collaborations with housing associations could result in fresh, nonprofit options. It is necessary to discuss the difficulties that “hidden children” and those in charge of them encounter.

The moon’s light and dark sides as seen from Artemis II



Earth has everything we require. And that is a bit of a miracle, and you can’t really understand it until you’ve seen things from the other person’s point of view. Christina Koch, a US astronaut, described her journey to the moon’s far side on Monday as follows. Statements made by a previous generation of space travelers are reminiscent of the sense of a greater appreciation for home. The environmental movement has been attributed in part to the iconic Earthrise shot, which was captured during the Apollo 8 mission in 1968. The initial space photos of the “blue planet” had such impact. The prize-winning book Orbital, which is set in a space station among a multicultural crew, likewise focused on the hope that such travels can promote global collaboration and appreciation for life. However, if it was ever feasible to ignore the negative

aspects of space flight, it is most definitely not the case now. The Soviet and American programs of the 1960s were forecasts of their respective military might. As a post-terrestrial geopolitical conflict between the US and China develops in the 2020s, tech billionaires Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk play a major role in a drastically revitalized US industry. By 2030, NASA wants to have a nuclear reactor on the moon. Rather than serving to remind us of Earth’s preciousness, there is a risk that the £100bn Artemis programme is a dangerous distraction from the urgency of finding ways to live within the ecological limits of the world we already have. The US has undertaken its first moon voyage in half a century in the same year that Donald Trump withdrew it from the Paris climate agreement for the second time. Space-focused techno-optimism

shades into moral nihilism when it opts for fantasies of colonising new worlds in preference to policies aimed at protecting the one we already have. But the unquenchable human curiosity and remarkable science that have always underpinned space travel should not be dismissed out of distaste for its darker implications. The Artemis II launch last week only went ahead after a rare bipartisan display of support for Nasa in Congress saw off Mr Trump’s attempts to cut its funding. The credit for the past week’s experiences and discoveries belongs with the scientists, astronauts and support teams – not the White House. Mr Trump’s murderous bellicosity in recent days has been a horrifying contrast to the wonder of the astronauts. Their voyage to the fabled dark side of the moon will not solve the world’s problems. Much of the research is geared to-

wards future moon landings and the exploitation of natural resources that may be found there, as well as the impact of space travel on astronauts’ health, including the risks from dormant viruses. However, there are good reasons why so many people were enthralled with the image of the three Americans and one Canadian astronauts inside the Orion capsule, which is about the size of a camper van, taking pictures from the moon’s far side while communication with their mission control center in Houston was cut off for forty minutes. They were also thrilled to hear the astronauts’ voices from 250,000 miles away. They have traveled farther from Earth and seen more of the moon than anyone before them. They still have an adventure ahead of them when they return and land in the Pacific.

PPF for decoded: Limits, tax breaks

Mumbai: A child's Public Provident Fund (PPF) account comes with strict contribution caps, a long lock-in, and tax-free returns but missteps on limits and withdrawals can dilute its benefits.Why PPF for a child still finds favourPPF remains a low-risk, government-backed savings option with an interest rate currently at 7.1 per cent (reviewed quarterly). It falls under the exempt-exempt-exempt (EEE) category, meaning:Contributions qualify for deduction under Section 80C of the Income Tax ActInterest earned is tax-freeMaturity proceeds are fully tax-freeFor parents planning long-term goals such as education, PPF offers predictability, though returns may lag market-linked instruments over time.

Women-centric content platform sees rapid growth across Asian markets

Kohima: The global women-focused digital content segment is witnessing sharp expansion, with the platform led by Michael Evans emerging as a high-grwth case study. The platform scaled from 1,000 YouTube subscribers in August 2025 to over 2.5 million, generating more than 45 million views and adding approximately 10,000 subscribers weekly.



Audience analytics indicate a highly defined demographic, with over 97 per cent women users. Growth is increasingly concentrated in Asia, including Nagaland, South Korea, Hong Kong, Laos, Singapore, Cambodia, Thailand, Bhutan, and Indonesia, highlighting strong regional demand for emotionally driven, culturally relevant content.

Unlike entertainment-led platforms, engagement is being driven by thematic focus on identity, emotional well-being, relationships, and social expectations—particularly among women in traditional and community-centric societies. This positioning has enabled deeper user retention and repeat engagement. Core intellectual property includes The REAL Matrix and the “Elara” dual-format storytelling model targeting both adult women and young girls, now expanding through multilingual audio collaborations across Asia, including India. Evans' background in law enforcement and his role as founder of USPA Nationwide Security, along with over \$100 million invested in anti-trafficking initiatives via Kingsman, adds credibility, supporting long-term brand trust and market scalability.

HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank stable margins, benign asset quality

New Delhi: India's top two private sector lenders – HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank – reported robust quarterly earnings on Saturday, April 18. Key numbers point to strong profit growth, stable net interest margins (NIM), while asset quality has further improved, prompting analysts to remain bullish on the two lenders and, as such, the broader sector. Amid the current volatility in the stock market, in the wake of the US-Israel war on Iran, banking is one of the key sectors that analysts have had a positive view of. Generally, asset quality concerns have ebbed, although the impact of the conflict on certain sectors and small and medium industries will have to be watched for in the next quarter. Valuations have been reasonable as well. Growth in both deposits and advances has been good too; however, credit growth could see some slowdown should the war linger on for several months. HDFC Bank, the country's second largest lender, reported a 9% year-on-year increase in its January-March quarter net profit at Rs 19,221 crore, while net interest income rose 3.2% to Rs 33,082 crore. Meanwhile, ICICI Bank reported a standalone net profit



of close to Rs 13,702 crore, up 8.5%, while net interest income rose 8.4% to Rs 22,979 crore. More than the earnings, though, analysts have been hugely positive about the further improvement in asset quality and a sharp dip in provisions at ICICI Bank.ICICI Bank's “asset quality remained best-in-class with gross slippages (annualised) declining 37 basis points quarter-on-quarter, which led to credit cost falling by 24 bps to just 3 bps along with higher recoveries from written-off accounts,” pointed out analysts at JM Financial Institutional Securities. “Given its sector-leading loan growth, better NIM management

and strong asset quality trends, ICICI Bank shall continue to command a premium valuation among large banks,” the analysts felt.The performance was mixed on Monday. While ICICI Bank gained 1.7%, HDFC Bank shares opened lower compared to Friday's close, but recovered the early losses to trade up 0.1% in late morning trades. “ICICI Bank's stock performance has been tepid in the past year, reflecting the broader derating across banking stocks amid persistent FII selling in recent months. With operating performance holding strong and growth gaining traction, we expect the bank to rerate gradually,” said analysts at Motilal Oswal Financial Services.HDFC Bank shares were under pressure in March after its part-time chairman, Atanu Chakraborty, abruptly resigned, citing that certain actions were not in line with his values and ethics. Investors hope that the issue is behind them and would be looking forward to a new chairman's appointment as well as seeking clarity on the tenure of MD and CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan, which comes up for renewal later this year.

Weekly policy watch focus is on infrastructure production and US trade negotiations

New Delhi: India's policy and economic calendar for this week will be driven by a mix of global engagements and key domestic data releases that could shape near-term growth expectations. India's infrastructure output data is scheduled to be released on April 20. This data covers key sectors like steel, cement, coal, crude oil and natural gas.Recent trends show some moderation. Infrastructure output growth slowed to 2.3 per cent year-on-year in February, down from 4.7 per cent in January, though it marked the fourth straight month of expansion.

Core sectors such as steel and cement supported growth, but energy segments like crude oil and natural gas remained weak.As infrastructure makes up nearly 40 per cent of India's industrial output, the upcoming data will be important to understand whether

the slowdown is temporary or reflects weaker investment activityThe spotlight will be on India-US trade negotiations, flash PMI readings, and infrastructure output data -- all of which provide early signals on demand trends, investment activity and the broader policy direction. The importance of these indicators is higher this week due to continued global uncertainty, including volatile oil prices and West Asia crisis. In March, the HSBC India Manufacturing PMI declined to 53.9 from 56.9 in February, though it was slightly above the preliminary estimate of 53.8. The reading pointed to the weakest improvement in factory activity in nearly four years. On the services side, the HSBC India Services PMI was revised up to 57.5 from the initial estimate of 57.2. While this still indicates steady expansion, it marked the slowest growth since January



2025 and was lower than February's 58.1. The April numbers will help assess whether demand remains strong despite global challenges. Globally too, PMI data is being closely tracked as it gives early signals on economic momentum amid inflation concerns and geopolitical risks.

India-US trade talks The HSBC Manufac-

Google and Marvell will collaborate to create new AI processors

Mumbai: Alphabet's Google is reportedly in discussions with Marvell Technology to develop two new chips aimed at enhancing the efficiency of running artificial Intelligence (AI) models. According to The Information report, two individuals familiar with the matter suggested that one of the chips may consist of a memory processing unit intended to work alongside Google's tensor processing unit company seeks to demonstrate to investors that its investments in AI are yielding returns.

The Information's report also noted that the company aims to finalise the design of the memory processing unit by next year, before moving on to test production.Now, as Google scales its AI accelerators or TPUs efforts, the move may come as an emerging threat to Nvidia's long-term dominance in the market. Nvidia has been developing its own new AI inference chips using technology from Groq, and now another major player could intensify competition, potentially reshaping the AI chip landscape and challenging Nvidia's lead in high-performance computing.

Apple CEO Tim Cook to step down, John Ternus to take over on Sep 1

New Delhi: Apple Inc. Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook will hand the reins to hardware boss John Ternus later this year, capping a 15-year tenure that turned the company into a \$4 trillion business spanning watches, video streaming and financial services.Ternus will become CEO on Sept. 1, when Cook will transition to executive chairman, the company said in a statement Monday. Ternus, 50, has served as head of hardware engineering since 2021 and spent 25 years focused on product development at the iPhone maker. Bloomberg News previously reported that Ternus was Cook's heir apparent.The hardware engineering division will be taken over by longtime deputy Tom Marieb, according to people with knowledge



of the matter. He will report to newly named Chief Hardware Officer Johny Srouji. In that role, Srouji is gaining oversight of a freshly combined hardware engineering and hardware technologies group. Ternus must now chart a new path for one of Silicon

Valley's most storied businesses at a challenging moment. Though Apple's growth remains strong, the company has struggled to catch up in artificial intelligence — technology that promises to transform the way consumers use devices.

MCX gets SEBI nod for proposed Coal Exchange; plans Rs 100 cr capital commitment

New Delhi: The Multi-Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) has received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to invest in the proposed Coal Exchange company. This marks MCX's significant commitment to the energy sectorSubsidiary to be incorporated The proposed coal exchange will offer a digital platform for the buying and selling of coal, with an emphasis on physical delivery. As per the exchange filing, this is aimed at creating a more regulated, transparent and technology-driven market platform for buying and selling coal. At present, coal pricing in India is largely shaped by administrative and bilateral arrangements, with limited market-based benchmarks.

Following SEBI's approval on April 17, MCX plans to incorporate a wholly owned subsidiary to house the coal exchange. The entity is likely to be named MCX Coal Exchange or MCX Coal Exchange of India, according to the company's statement.MCX will initially hold 100% ownership in the subsidiary, with the option to bring in stra-



tegic partners at a later stage. The exchange had also launched electricity futures last year. With coal being a key input for power generation and industrial activity, the new platform could widen MCX's role across both derivatives and physical commodity markets. MCX,

which began operations in 2003, accounted for about 98% of the value of commodity futures traded in India in FY25, according to the company.

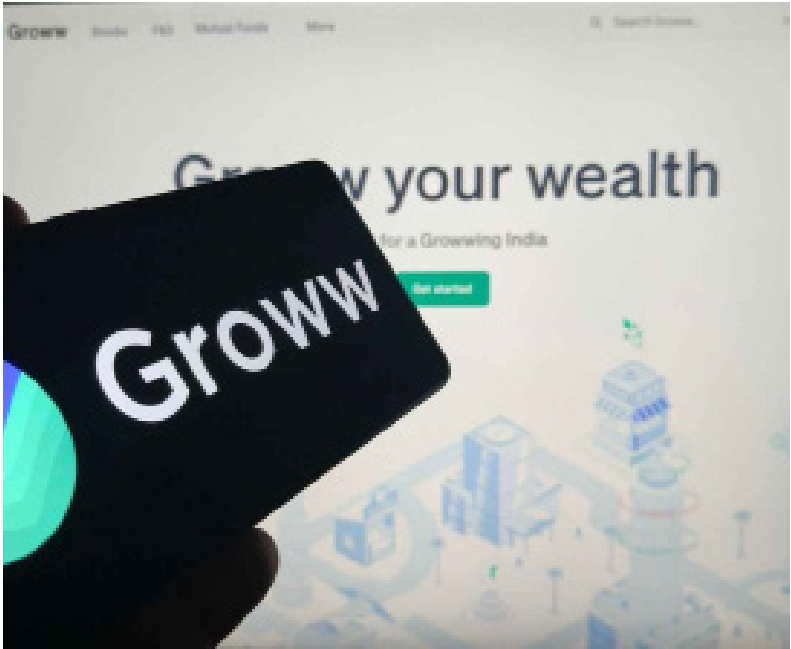
The exchange said it plans to commit up to Rs 100 crore towards the venture. This is

aimed at meeting the minimum net worth requirements outlined in the draft Coal Exchange Rules.The new entity will subsequently apply to the Coal Controller Organisation of India for regulatory approvals as and when the framework is notified.

Groww Q4 FY26 results: Net profit jumps 122% YoY to Rs 686 crore Groww's platform EBIDTA margin

New Delhi: Billionbrains Garage Ventures Ltd, the parent company of stock broking platform Groww, on Monday reported a sharp 122 per cent year-on-year (YoY) rise in its consolidated net profit for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2026 (Q4 FY26). The company's profit surged to Rs 686 crore in Q4 FY26, compared to Rs 309 crore in the corresponding period last year. Groww's total income rose 80.73 per cent YoY to Rs 1,536 crore, up from Rs 850 crore in Q4 FY25, reflecting strong business momentum despite a softer market environment.

Operating performance remained robust, with EBIDTA increasing by 141.81 per cent YoY from Rs 388 crore to Rs 939 crore. Groww's platform EBIDTA margin stood at 66.93 per cent during the quarter.The company highlighted continued user and asset growth, stating that despite de-growth in the market, its active user base grew 19.86 per cent YoY. Customer assets, including stocks and mutual funds, rose 34.7 per cent on a yearly basis. Mutual fund SIP inflows increased by 34.85 per cent, while mutual fund as-



sets under management (AUM) grew 38.91 per cent, even amid a declining market, the company added. Groww also pointed to diversification in its revenue streams, driven by margin trading facility (MTF) and commodity

trading. The share of equity derivatives in total income declined slightly to 55 per cent in Q4 FY26 from 57 per cent in the year-ago period. Meanwhile, shares of Groww were last seen trading 1.36 per cent higher at Rs 201.

ARR loses sheen AI startups shift

New Delhi: A debate triggered by aggressive revenue disclosures from a young AI startup has sharpened investor scrutiny of annual recurring revenue (ARR), with venture capital firms saying the metric may no longer be sufficient to judge the health of AI-native businesses. Traditionally, ARR, was anchored in predictable subscription contracts. “There was a consistency and normally these contracts stood for 12 months or at times 36 months or even longer. This is why the metric used to be called contracted annual recurring revenue (CARR).

But software is now based on usage,” said Alok Goyal, investor at Stellaris Venture Partners.The trigger came in February when Emergent AI, an eight-month-old vibe coding startup, said it had crossed a \$100 million annual recurring revenue, scaling from \$15 million in three months to \$50 million in seven months, before doubling within a month. The pace and the disclosure drew scepticism from founders and executives on X, who questioned both the legitimacy of the numbers and the methodology behind them. Founder Mukund Jha later shared a snapshot of weekly revenue to defend the claims.

Starmer accuses the Greens of endangering the rights of new workers by voting for Labour rivals

London: Keir Starmer has attacked the Green party using a number of new worker rights that go into effect on Monday, claiming that a vote for Labour’s competitors jeopardizes such advancements in maternity leave, sick pay, and zero-hours contracts.The prime minister dismissed “vested interests” that had cautioned against what he called the largest strengthening of workers’ rights in a generation, taking a jab at business leaders and opponents.However, Starmer stated that having “a serious, credible economic strategy” put Labour apart from others, indicating how he sees the challenge posed by the populism of Zack Polanski’s Greens and Nigel Farage’s Reform UK in the lead-up to local elections in May. In a piece for the Guardian, he stated, “No other party offers both the economic credibility and the political will to do this.”“Voting for any other party jeopardizes that progress, whether through decisions that would cause us to regress or strategies that just don’t meet the demands of governing.”One of the main demands of Labour MPs and child poverty activists is the easing of the two-child benefit cap, which will take effect on Monday. One of his government’s finest moments, according to Starmer, was the relocation.A 2.3% increase in the universal credit standard allowance and a 4.8% increase in the state pension to £241.30 per week are two further measures that will take effect on Monday. Statutory sick pay is now a right from the moment one becomes ill under the Employment Rights Act of 2025. Additionally, from the first day of work, employees will be eligible for unpaid parental leave and paternity leave.As it prepares to face challenges from Reform on the right and the Greens on the left in the English council and mayoral elections on May



7, Labour is keen to present the measures as noteworthy successes. Wales and Scotland also hold elections for their national legislatures. Since the general election, Labour has been worried about Reform, but since the Green party won the traditionally secure Labour bastion of Gorton and Denton, it has also been focusing more and more on them.The latest YouGov polling on Westminster voting intention had the Greens in joint second place, behind Reform. Polling released on Sunday by the former Tory treasurer Michael Ashcroft indicated a three-way split between the Greens, Conservatives and Reform. Each were on 21%, with Labour on 17%.A spokesperson for the Green party responded to Starmer’s comments by saying it was now the party of the working class. “This is desperate from our caretaker prime minister, who woke up to a poll this morning showing Labour in fourth place and the Greens in first.”The truth is that Labour had to be dragged into giving new workers rights which were watered down after corporate lobbying worked on them. The disgraceful two-child cap was only ended after Starmer was finally dragged into it by pressure from Green MPs and anti-poverty campaigners.”Starmer’s comments appear to affirm a

recent pivot to the left, amid pressure from potential leadership contenders including Angela Rayner and Andy Burnham.“At every stage, we faced those same voices of opposition,” the prime minister wrote of the measures, which had been met with resistance from some business leaders. That opposition had focused on so-called “day one rights”, which give more power to workers to claim unfair dismissal and request flexible working.Starmer said: “They warned of costs, of disruptions, and said the time was not right. But once again, we made a different choice. We chose working people.”Nothing Labour has achieved came easily. Every success was hard fought and hard won against the pull of vested interests. And each time, those warnings were proven wrong.”The prime minister presented the introduction of a series of measures in the tradition of the Blair government’s introduction of the minimum wage 27 years ago this week. At the same time, Starmer’s leadership has also continued to face trenchant criticism on the left from Unite, traditionally one of Labour’s largest trade union backers. Its general secretary, Sharon Graham, has described the Employment Rights Act as “a shell of its former self”. Last month, the union significantly cut

membership fees to Labour, mainly over the Birmingham bin strike.The scrapping of the two-child benefit cap, which was introduced in the 2015 budget by the then Conservative chancellor, George Osborne, was criticised by the Tories, who said it would cost billions and “reward worklessness”.The party published what it said was analysis showing that at least £1bn extra every year would go to 186,000 workless households, with a family of two unemployed adults and three children standing to receive a £6,400 income increase.It added that the gains were heavily concentrated in a handful of cities, with Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Bradford and Glasgow to receive more than £200m more annually.“While working people struggle with rising fuel costs and food prices, Keir Starmer is giving another handout to those on benefits,” said the Tory leader, Kemi Badenoch.Labour accused the Tories of issuing “bogus numbers” by using a family with two disabled adults as a case study and pretending they were unemployed. Both adults were listed as receiving the limited capability for work-related activity element of universal credit, meaning they had a disability or health condition limiting their ability to work.

Despite the F-15 crew rescue propaganda coup, the downing serves as a reminder to the US that Iran is capable of retaliation



Iran: The 48-hour drama serves as a warning that an unbeaten Iran can strike back and inflict costs on the United States, but Donald Trump will undoubtedly claim the recovery of the second crew member of the downed F-15 fighter as a propaganda victory.It should also serve as a warning to a White House that is still debating whether to conduct a ground operation in Iran to take control of an island in the Persian Gulf, especially if there is a genuine desire to remove Iran’s highly enriched uranium from underground. Five weeks into the conflict, a single shoot-down became a major issue for the Americans due to the extreme rarity and memorability of the US-Israeli bombing of Iran, which has been so severely biased in favor of the attackers. During the Iraq War in 2003, a US warplane

was last shot down by enemy forces.Even if the US and Israeli air forces attack Iran between 300 and 500 times a day, the fact that the F-15E was brought down serves as a warning that their air superiority is not totally absolute. The F-15E Strike Eagle costs \$31 million (but a full replacement might cost \$100 million), but the problems obviously started during the rescue, which is far riskier than the mission the US warplane was on.When two C-130 Hercules transporters—likely modified search and rescue versions—became trapped in the ground, the plan to exploit an abandoned Iranian airport south of Isfahan as a forward operating station went awry. According to US reports, the US destroyed them to keep them out of the hands of the Iranians, and additional transporters had to

be rushed forward in order to finish extracting the injured second crew member. The list price of each modernized Hercules is close to \$115 million. An HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter involved in the rescue was also damaged by gunfire on Friday—so it is easy to conclude that the cost in lost and damaged airframes exceeds \$250m, largely for the rescue of the second crew member.In military terms, a single episode like this does not matter much to the US. Losing aircraft, whether shot down or in accidents, is part of war. The US had 218 F-15E Strike Eagles and 55 C-130s in its special force command before it attacked Iran, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies.A full-scale US search and rescue operation was politically necessary to prevent Iran from capturing either member of the crew.

The capture of one or both would have been a coup for Tehran, reviving memories of the US embassy hostage crisis of 1979-80, which did so much damage to the then president, Jimmy Carter. The point was underlined by Trump, who emphasised in a social media post, using capitals, that the US would never leave an American warfighter behind. It is an attractive commitment, but one that means further cost and risk will be incurred each time it is called upon. On this occasion Iranian forces failed to locate either of the F-15E crew. They were not able to contest the US’s use of the abandoned airbase south of Isfahan, though this could have been because of Reaper drones loitering overhead, which, according to US briefings, were there to kill any Iranian males getting within 3km.But the enforced loss of the rescue C-130 transports is a reminder of the greater risks inherent in any US ground operation in Iran. Could it really be feasible for US special forces to seize the 440kg of highly enriched uranium thought to be hidden underground in canisters at Isfahan and fly them away without major incident?

There is no doubt that Iran – bombed in excess of 15,000 times so far – is being battered by the relentless US and Israeli airstrikes. But Tehran can still turn relatively small US or Israeli losses into a propaganda victory, whatever the state of its troops or air defences, precisely because they have been infrequent.

The PM of Hungary is accused of raising a “false flag” when Serbia claims explosives were discovered close to a pipeline

Hungary: The top opposition candidate in Hungary has accused Serbia of conducting a “false flag” operation to sway the country’s elections after Serbia claimed to have discovered “explosives of devastating power” close to a pipeline that transports Russian natural gas to Hungary and other countries.The discovery near an extension of the Turk-Stream pipeline, which carries Russian gas through the Balkans to central and eastern Europe, was reported by Serbia’s president, Aleksandar Vučić, according to Hungary’s prime minister, Viktor Orbán, on Sunday.Orbán said on social media that “an investigation is underway” and that he had called an emergency meeting of the nation’s defense council. The incident comes one week before Hungarians are due to cast their votes in a pivotal parliamentary election, in which Orbán’s 16-year hold on power is facing an unprecedented challenge from Péter Magyar, a former top member of the ruling Fidesz party. Orbán and Fidesz are trying to persuade voters that the war in Ukraine is a serious threat to Hungary and that Orbán is best suited to manage this risk. Meanwhile, Magyar and his Tisza party are urging voters to concentrate on economic stagnation, deteriorating social services, and corruption.In the northern Serbian municipality of Kanjiža, “a few hundred meters from the gas pipeline,” two backpacks holding “two large packages of explosives with detonators” were discovered by the Serbian army and police, according to Vučić on Sunday. He said he had informed Orbán of the initial results of the investigation into what he described as a “threat to the critical gas infrastructure”. The explosives could have “endangered many lives” and caused significant damage to the pipeline, Vučić added.He did not detail the origins of the explosives, saying instead that there were “certain traces” he could not disclose. “Our intelligence services did a good job,” he said. The incident, coming as Orbán trails in the polls, prompted political scrutiny across Hungary. On Sunday, Magyar said on social media that he and the Tisza party had been warned by multiple sources that something might happen in Serbia around Easter, “possibly involving a gas pipeline”, and allegedly carried out with Serbian and Russian assistance. “And now it has,” he said.He called on Orbán’s government to stop spreading panic and causing disruption. “Hungarians have every reason to fear that the outgoing prime minister, following the advice of Russian agents, is attempting to instil fear in his own people through false-flag operations,” he said. “I also want to make it clear that he will not be able to prevent next Sunday’s election.” The scepticism was echoed by Mujtaba Rahman, the managing director for Europe at Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy. “Looks like a seeming-



ly convenient threat of terrorist action,” he said on social media. “Designed to whip up further fear of military action against Hungary, for which Ukraine will no doubt be blamed.”The campaign heated up in February after Orbán claimed, without providing evidence, that Ukraine was plotting to disrupt Hungary’s energy system and said he had dispatched troops to safeguard the country’s energy infrastructure.Orbán has also repeatedly accused Ukraine of intentionally delaying repairs to the Soviet-era Druzhba pipeline, which brings Russian oil to Hungary and Slovakia via Ukraine, and blocked EU approval of a €90bn loan to Ukraine over the feud.Rahman said Brussels and EU capitals “have been expecting a false-flag operation by Orbán – citing a national security risk – as grounds to postpone next Sunday’s elections that he looks set to lose. Could this be it?”

On Sunday, Hungary’s foreign minister, Péter Szijjártó, singled out Ukraine but stopped short of blaming them outright for the latest incident. “In the past few days and weeks, the Ukrainians organised an oil blockade against us, and then tried to put us under a total energy blockade ... And now we have today’s incident,” he said in a post on Facebook. Orbán, posting on social media after the defence council meeting, said that what was so far known of the incident pointed to a prepared “act of sabotage”. While he did not directly blame Ukraine for the incident, he said: “Ukraine has been for years trying to cut off Europe from Russian energy.”Ukraine’s foreign ministry said on Sunday that it rejected any attempt to link Kyiv to the incident. “Ukraine has nothing to do with this,” it said on social media, adding that it had

most probably been “a Russian false-flag operation as part of Moscow’s heavy interference in Hungarian elections”.Akos Hadházy, a Hungarian independent MP and longtime critic of Orbán, cast doubt on the news from Serbia. “This is completely transparent and pathetic,” he wrote on social media. “But let’s not forget that propaganda still works,” he added. “Nor should we forget that next week, quite brutal things could come from the struggling regime.”Szabolcs Panyi, one of the country’s most prominent investigative journalists, also urged people to treat Sunday’s revelations with caution. Weeks earlier, he and other journalists had been told by sources in Hungarian government circles of a “Russia-backed false flag attack in Serbia targeting the gas pipeline to Hungary”, Panyi said on social media.The Serbian claims could rock the final days of the campaign, just as the White House gears up to have JD and Usha Vance visit the country in an apparent effort by the US vice-president to bolster Orbán in the polls. The US administration has long rallied behind Orbán, with Donald Trump repeatedly endorsing him and describing him as a “fantastic guy” and a “strong, powerful leader.”In recent weeks, questions have swirled about the US effort to keep Orbán in power, particularly as Russia appears to also be working to sway the election in Orbán’s favour.The Washington Post reported recently that Russian intelligence operatives had proposed staging an assassination attempt on Orbán to boost his chances of winning, while the Guardian found that disinformation networks with links to Russia were publishing content aimed at undermining Orbán’s main opponent.

The administration struggles to restart the White House ballroom project



Washington: In an emergency move to overturn the decision, the Trump administration claimed that a judge’s order to halt building on the White House ballroom presents security dangers.The US district judge Richard Leon’s ruling, according to the emergency motion, has left the White House “open and exposed” and is “threatening grave national-security harms to the White House, the President and his family, and the President’s staff.”

Leon decided on Tuesday to halt construction on the White House ballroom while a case is being heard by the courts. The plaintiffs in the complaint contend that Congress must approve the \$400 million project on the site

of the recently demolished East Wing in order for it to move forward. Trump officials claim that stopping the \$400 million White House ballroom renovation poses a national security danger. “Time is of the essence!” the administration’s attorneys said in the move, noting materials that will be put to create a “heavily fortified” facility.According to the file, bomb shelters, military stations, and a medical center are all part of the ballroom building. Trump’s promises to transform Washington include the ballroom. The second day of the search and rescue operations for the second crew member of the downed F-15E fighter jet has begun. The F-15E

Strike Eagle became the first US aircraft to be shot down over Iran during the five-week conflict, and a pilot was saved on Friday. However, the second member of the two-person crew is still missing.Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Houston Cantwell told the Associated Press that the US military had not had a jet shot down by enemy fire in almost 20 years, since a warplane was shot down during the 2003 invasion of Iraq. A federal judge stops the White House’s attempt to gather racial applicant data from universities.The Trump administration’s attempts to gather evidence that universities aren’t taking race into account when admitting students were put on hold by a

federal judge on Friday.The interim injunction was granted by a US district judge in Boston after a group of 17 Democratic state attorneys general filed a case earlier this month. Only public universities in the states of the plaintiffs will be covered. The federal judge stated that although the demand was made to institutions in a “rushed and chaotic” way, the federal government probably has the right to gather the data. How will US prices stand as war in Iran surges on?As consumers watch the price of gasoline and airline tickets rise, experts say that the war in Iran will continue to drive up prices across the economy.“The good old days are gone,” said Christopher Tang, a professor at the UCLA Anderson School of Management who studies global supply chain management. “Right now we see the gasoline prices going up, but that is only part of the story. Everything will be more expensive.”The price of oil has risen steadily since the war began at the end of February, with crude oil prices surging past \$110 per barrel, this week. Fuel prices have risen in part because Iran controls access to the strait of Hormuz, a narrow passageway between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman where about 20% of the world’s oil travels through.

Teep styles demonstrate that tradition can be stylish and enjoyable

Although the teep has a distinct cultural life in Bengal, it is frequently included in the broader South Asian history of forehead markings. Because of this, the item cannot be interpreted solely as a religious sign. It has also functioned as an artistic and cultural one for a long time. Wearing it used to be as commonplace in many Bengali homes as wearing bangles or combing one’s hair. A mother leaving for a visit, a teacher getting ready for class, a bride’s aunt getting ready for a wedding, or a university student getting ready for Pাহেলা Baishakh may all almost instinctively go for a sheet of bindis. “I have been a teacher for almost two decades now, and I cannot remember a single day I entered the classroom without wearing one. Without it, the face just does not feel complete,” says Runa Mehedi, a 48-year-old schoolteacher, voicing a feeling shared by many women

across generations. That sentence captures something important. The teep is not worn merely as an add-on. It often serves as the point that completes the face’s composition. **From sari to jeans: The changing life of the teep:** A teep can be the last thing someone puts on before leaving home, but it is often the first thing people tend to notice. Small, circular, elongated, matte, glossy, black, maroon, or bright red — it sits on the forehead with a presence larger than its size. In Bengali culture, the bindi has never been just a beauty accessory. It has functioned as a sign of style, ritual, memory, and, increasingly, self-definition. Today, it no longer belongs only to the familiar image of a woman in a white-and-red sari on a festival morning. It appears with cotton kurtas, office wear, handloom outfits, and just as naturally with jeans, shirts, crop tops, and sneakers. “I am not wearing it to look tradi-

tional,” shares Mrittika Saha, a 22-year-old university student in Dhaka, in a composite voice that captures a common sentiment among younger wearers. “I wear it because it feels like a part of my face now. Even with jeans, it does not feel out of place.” **From household habit to cultural marker:** The trend grew through repetition. It appeared in homes, festivals, theatre, films, literature, and everyday life until it became part of the region’s visual memory. The red dot on the forehead in particular became deeply tied to the cultural image of Bengali femininity. Paired with a sari, kajal, a loose bun, or fresh flowers, it became one of the most recognisable elements in Bengali dress. This is partly why it carries such weight in public culture. It can locate someone socially and culturally very quickly. It can suggest familiarity with a certain style world, a certain domestic rhythm, a

certain visual inheritance. “I don’t wear a sari every day, but I still wear a teep with my office clothes,” says Farzana Rahman, a 35-year-old bank executive. “Sometimes it is the smallest thing in the outfit, but it changes how polished I feel.” In that sense, the teep does not require a fully traditional look to make sense. It has learned how to travel. **Jeans, sneakers, and street style:** Perhaps the most interesting change is how the bindi has entered contemporary urban fashion. It is no longer restricted to sarees, shalwar kameezes, or festive attires. It now appears confidently with denim jackets, oversized shirts, tank tops, sneakers, and fusion wear. This shift matters because it shows that it is no longer only inherited. It is being reinterpreted. “I love to wear a black dot with blue jeans and a white shirt,” says Tania Haque, a 24-year-old graphic designer.



“Otherwise, the outfit feels too plain. The teep gives it a little sharpness.” Another composite voice, that of Tasfia Mumtari Kangkhita, a 28-year-old dancer, frames it differently: “I like mixing things. I can wear sneakers, a loose top, silver earrings, and a small maroon teep. None of those things cancel each other out.” These voices reflect how young people often style themselves now. They are not always interested in choosing between modern and traditional rigidly. They mix both. The teep becomes one of the easiest ways to do that.

Applying toothpaste to acne? A dermatologist identifies the safe and dangerous chemicals for skin at home

Do you make DIY face packs using common ingredients found in your kitchen? Let’s hear from a dermatologist to find out which ones get a green light. Homemade remedies made with kitchen ingredients have been deeply revered, passed down from mothers and grandmothers over generations. Even today, they are widely spotlighted on Instagram reels by influencers. These face packs, made with everyday cooking ingredients, may sound affordable and come with the appeal of being ‘natural.’ But is this really the right way to care for your skin? We spoke to Dr Kashish Kalra, hair transplant surgeon and founder of Dr Kalra Skin Clinic, who explained what’s safe and what’s dangerous when it comes to DIY skincare. **Why DIY skincare should be a matter of concern?**

The dermatologist urged people to exercise caution, even as these remedies become very popular. “While it may seem natural and harmless, dermatologists often strongly discourage these remedies,” he noted, adding that DIY skincare is not recommended by experts. “Many patients end up with damaged skin barriers, irritation, and worsening pigmentation,” Dr Kalra highlighted the risks. **Ingredients you should avoid**



completely: There are some ingredients that are a strict no-no. The dermatologist outlined a few based on how unsuitable they are for the skin, as they can trigger irritation, damage the skin barrier, and lead to long-term issues like pigmentation: 1. Lemon Highly acidic (pH ~2.) Can cause skin irritation and barrier damage. Leads to irritant contact dermatitis. Often results in post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (dark spots after redness heals.) Mixing lemon with honey,

rice water, etc., does not make it safe. 2. Toothpaste Contains fluoride, detergents, and chemicals. Causes chemical irritation. Can trigger perioral dermatitis (rash around the mouth.) Not a pimple treatment, avoid completely. 3. Baking soda Very alkaline (pH 9–10 vs skin pH ~5.5.) Destroys the skin barrier. Leads to dryness, irritation, and sensitivity. 4. Sugar scrubs (harsh physical exfoliation) Rough crystals cause micro-tears in the skin. Damages the barrier and worsens sensitivity. 5.

Raw egg masks Risk of allergic reactions Gives only temporary tightening (due to dehydration) No real anti-ageing benefits **Ingredients that may be used occasionally:** There are some ingredients that can be used for skin rejuvenation, but the dermatologist highlighted a rule set in stone: “Despite the ingredients being suitable in some form or other, they still are not a replacement for proper skincare.” Here are some of the ingredients which Dr Kalra approved of:

Allbirds shares soar after the wool sneaker manufacturer announces a shift to artificial intelligence

Allbirds, the maker of minimalist wool sneakers beloved by Silicon Valley, announced on Wednesday that it is leaving shoes behind and pivoting to artificial intelligence. The new focus and rebrand as “NewBird AI” sent the company’s stock up 582% as of mid-day during a flurry of trading. The surging stock price and new direction is a bizarre, rapid turnaround for a company that had fallen into disrepair in recent years. Once valued at \$4bn, Allbirds’ shares had lost 99% of their worth since 2021 and earlier this month the company announced plans for a \$39m sale to brand management firm American Exchange Company. Allbirds’ declaration that it will concentrate on acquiring graphics processing units to help support AI compute stands out as one of the most baffling pivots of the AI boom, a period in which many companies have tried to shoehorn in AI to appeal to investors and the market. The long-term viability of its plan is less clear than the immediate effect of turning Allbirds into something of a meme stock, with its value wildly fluctuating throughout the day. “The rise of AI development and adoption has created unprecedented structural demand for specialized, high-performance compute that the market is struggling to meet,” the company said in a statement. “NewBird AI is being built to help close that gap.” The company has secured \$50m in funding from an unnamed investor for its new AI operation, according to a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The filing also said that Allbirds would shift from its status as an eco-conscious public benefit corporation into a con-



ventional corporation, stating that the new company “would be less focused on the public benefit of environmental conservation”. Allbirds, soon to be NewBird AI, did not respond to a request for comment on its planned rebrand and pivot to AI. The company for years made sustainability central to its marketing, helping it court politicians and celebrities including Leonardo DiCaprio, who invested in the company in 2018 and touted it as a “model for the footwear industry”. Gwyneth Paltrow, Oprah Winfrey and Barack Obama were among the influential figures seen wearing, or advocating for, the brand. Despite its initial success, the brand struggled to sustain its momentum and large-

ly fell out of fashion. At the peak of Allbirds’ popularity, it had dozens of brick-and-mortar stores around the world but in recent years faced a drastic decline in sales and in the third quarter of last year declared a \$20.3m loss. Allbirds closed the last of its physical stores in the US in January. Allbirds is now waiting on shareholders to approve American Exchange Company’s purchase of the company in a vote next month. The company said in its statement that the sale will allow Allbirds “to pivot its business to AI compute infrastructure, with a long-term vision to become a fully integrated GPU-as-a-Service (GPUaaS) and AI-native cloud solutions provider”.

Reddit users Sara Ali Khan, Wamiqa Gabbi, and Rakul Preet Singh have questioned how and why these ensembles were ever shown in public

Reddit was unimpressed by the promotional outfits of Sara Ali Khan, Wamiqa Gabbi, Rakul Preet Singh for Pati Patni Aur Woh 2, describing them as ‘cheap’. Fashion is often about taking risks, but for the leading ladies of Pati Patni Aur Woh 2, a promotional appearance seems to have missed the mark. On April 20, the trio — Sara Ali Khan, Wamiqa Gabbi, and Rakul Preet Singh — stepped out in a series of high-contrast, animal-print, and metallic ensembles that have left the internet, particularly the eagle-eyed Reddit critics, in a state of collective shock. Also read | Reddit says Avneet Kaur’s white mini skirt doesn’t feel Wimbledon appropriate **What the actors wore: animals, metallic and mesh:** The theme for the night appeared to be a chaotic blend of wild-life prints and disco-era glitz, but the execution was widely panned as ‘dated’ and ‘cheap’.

Rakul opted for a heavy-handed leopard print ensemble featuring a sequined, gold-toned crop top and a high-waisted floor-length skirt. Her top featured dramatic, ballooning sleeves, creating a silhouette that many felt overwhelmed her frame. Generally known for her ‘regal’ aesthetic, Sara went for a futuristic, snake-skin inspired two-piece. The metallic silver set featured a halter-neck top with daring cut-outs and criss-cross straps, paired with a matching thigh-high slit skirt. The fabric’s reflective quality was a primary target for online criticism. Wamiqa rounded out the trio in a one-shoulder leopard print dress that leaned heavily into a monochromatic black-and-white palette. While slightly more traditional in cut than Sara’s, the high slit and heavy draping added to the group photo’s busy visual energy **‘Why is that fabric so cheap?’** The reaction on the r/BollywoodGossip subreddit



dit was merciless. For many, the outfits felt like a throw-back to a style of ‘flashy’ fashion that has long since been retired from the A-list circuit. “Seriously, who dressed them... people are talking more about the outfits than the movie, and that is not a good thing,” comment-

ed a Redditor, highlighting the distraction these sartorial choices created for the film’s promotion. The critique wasn’t just about the style, but the perceived quality of the garments. Comments ranged from calling them the ‘Holy tacky trinity’ to questioning the choice of fabrics, with one person asking, “Why is that fabric so cheap?” Perhaps the sharpest feedback was reserved for Sara. Redditors lamented her departure from her typical ‘classy’ style, with one fan writing, “Sara, why? You have the most naturally classy look of the ‘nepo kids’ and could look like royalty, literally.” The consensus was clear: while the stars themselves are stunning, the ‘Karol Bagh’ vibes of the wardrobe left much to be desired. Note to readers: This report is based on user-generated content from social media. HT.com has not independently verified the claims and does not endorse them.

Vijay Varma’s acting in Matka King is praised by Aamir Khan



New Delhi: Matka King is becoming more and more popular, and both viewers and a number of well-known figures in the film business are praising the series. Actors Aamir Khan and Vicky Kaushal, as well as director Karan Johar, have expressed their feelings on social media after the film’s April 17 release on Amazon Prime Video. Aamir Khan Productions posted a message on Instagram Stories praising the show’s main character and complimenting the crew behind it. Aamir stated in the message that he has

been hearing great things about the series and that he would have delighted to play Ratan Khatri. He added that he intends to watch the program shortly after Ek Din’s premiere. Vicky Kaushal, meanwhile, shared his response on Instagram Stories. He stated that Matka King is the next movie on his watchlist and that he is eager to see it, calling director Nagraj Manjule one of his favorites. Filmmaker Karan Johar added himself to the list of fans by posting a poster for the Vijay Varma-led series on his Instagram Stories. He was ob-

viously impressed and said the show was a must-see. “What a performance! The ideal BINGE! “You can’t miss it,” he added, congratulating the entire #matkaking squad. Kritika Kamra, Sai Tamhankar, Siddharth Jadhav, Bhupendra Jadawat, and Gulshan Grover are among the ensemble cast members of Matka King, which was conceived by Abhay Koranne and directed by Nagraj Manjule. The show has been popular on all platforms since its April 17 premiere. The story of Brij Bhatti, an ambitious cotton trader who hooks up with a disgraced former soldier and an upper-class widow to start a gambling game called “Matka,” is told in Matka King, which is set between 1964 and 1975. A generation navigating the early years of independent India is given a sense of possibility and escape when what begins as a small, covert operation gradually grows into a thriving parallel industry.

Deepika Padukone, who is expecting her second child, shoots with director Punit Malhotra



Mumbai: Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone are about to become parents once more. The pair recently revealed that they are expecting their second child after having their daughter Dua in 2024, throwing fans into a frenzy on the internet. Deepika is dedicated to her profession despite the excitement. For the first time since the

pregnancy news, director Punit Malhotra posted a photo of the actor from a shoot on Instagram. While Punit chose a more laid-back style, Deepika is seen in the picture gleaming in a white gown that keeps things simple yet lovely. Fans were intrigued by the actor’s decision to keep her baby bump a secret. Punit shared the photo on Insta-

gram and thanked Deepika for her professionalism and friendliness, describing the shoot as a “10/10” experience. Fans swamped the comments section shortly after he posted the photo. “She’s truly wonderful!!!” wrote an admirer. “Mrs. Dhurandhar is glowing,” said someone else. “Dhurandhar’s real life Yalina” was another comment, and

“Queen lady superstar” was another. A number of other responses included heart and fire emojis. Social media has already gone crazy over the pregnancy announcement. Fans and celebrities alike were thrilled when the couple shared a touching photo of their daughter Dua. In the comments, a number of prominent figures from the industry sent their congrats. In 2018, Deepika and Ranveer were married in Italy in rituals that respected their Konkani and Sindhi customs. After welcoming their first child, Dua, in September 2024, they kept her out of the spotlight for several months. They didn’t announce her to fans until Diwali 2025, when they shared glimpses of their family time and revealed her name. Regarding her career, Deepika Padukone will co-star with Shah Rukh Khan in King. Additionally, she will make her Telugu debut in the Atlee-directed film Raaka, which co-stars Allu Arjun.

Zeenat Aman reveals that Lata Mangeshkar and Usha Uthup intended for Dum Maro Dum to be a duet

Mumbai: Nine days after the passing of legendary singer Asha Bhosle, actress Zeenat Aman commemorated her through a heartfelt post discussing the iconic song “Dum Maro Dum.” This song, sung by Bhosle and composed by RD Burman for the 1972 film “Hare Rama Hare Krishna,” represents a significant cultural milestone in Indian cinema. In her post, Aman shared fascinating details, revealing that the song was initially conceived as a duet featuring Lata Mangeshkar and Usha Uthup, but RD Burman opted for Bhosle’s “sultry” voice instead, which ultimately defined the track.

Reflecting on her experience of filming the song, Aman described her youthful ambition and adventurous spirit during that time. She humorously reminisced about the haze surrounding her memory of filming “Dum Maro Dum,” which included her character’s drug-induced state.

Directed by Dev Anand and set in the vibrant surroundings of Kathmandu, Nepal, Aman recalled that to authentically portray her role as a drug-addled character, she participated in the hippie culture of the time, which included actually using cannabis during filming.

Aman recounted a specific incident where, after a long day of shooting, she found herself in a heightened state of euphoria and was driven to a scenic spot in the Himalayas by crew members to recover from her high. She astutely noted the concerned reaction of her mother, who was upset upon discovering her daughter’s experimentation with drugs for the role. “Dum Maro Dum” achieved spectacular success, topping the Binaca Geetmala Annual List of 1972 and becoming a Sartaj Geet by March 15, having maintained the number one position for 12 consecutive weeks. This song and the experiences tied to it not only spotlight the artistry of Bhosle but also the free-spirited essence of the era that Asha Bhosle and Zeenat Aman embodied.

In Yeh Prem Mol Liya, Ayushmann Khurrana plays Sooraj Barjatya’s new “Prem” opposite Sharvari

Mumbai: Filmmaker Sooraj R. Barjatya has secured his upcoming film, “Prem.” The director is now collaborating with Ayushmann Khurrana on Yeh Prem Mol Liya, his upcoming big-screen family film, after his planned reunion with Salman Khan did not materialize after Prem Ratan Dhan Payo. Sharvari plays a major part in the movie as well. The film’s official title and release date were revealed on Tuesday, and the producers confirmed that it will open in theaters on November 27. The announcement has already caused a great deal of enthusiasm, especially among fans who are anxious to see the cherished “Prem” persona return to theaters after more than ten years, even though first-look images of the starring couple are still under wraps.

Sooraj R. Barjatya and Himesh Reshammiya, who last worked together on Prem Ratan Dhan Payo, are also reuniting after more than ten years. Expectations for Yeh Prem Mol Liya’s



album are high because music plays a major role in Barjatya’s films, and their past performance produced a number of memorable tracks. Earlier, Ayushmann expressed his appreciation for Barjatya and his excitement about collaborating with him for the first time in an interview with News18 Showsha. “Working with Sir was on my bucket list.

He is an extremely honorable man. Every time I see him, I touch his feet. He exudes that kind of energy, and as a film student, I want

to return the favor. The best thing is that, despite being a master of film, he still thinks of himself as a student, which is quite lovely,” he remarked. In the meantime, Barjatya acknowledged in an interview that she gets anxious before every endeavor. “I get anxious before every movie shoot. This hasn’t changed since I created Maine Pyar Kiya, my debut film. He stated, “As a creator, it’s not about how much box office (numbers) it will do; it’s about whether or not you can connect

with that thought or scene.” Prior to being renamed Yeh Prem Mol Liya to reflect its romantic and family-focused theme, the movie was known as Prem Ki Shadi. Mahaveer Jain Films and Rajshri Productions are supporting it. Regarding his career, Ayushmann has a number of releases in various genres scheduled for the upcoming months. Meanwhile, Sharvari is working on a number of projects, including partnerships with filmmakers such as Imtiaz Ali.

Ranveer Singh was decided upon for Dhurandhar early on, according to Mukesh Chhabra

Mumbai: Actor Ranveer Singh is enjoying a lot of plaudits for his role in the spy thriller Dhurandhar, directed by Aditya Dhar. Casting director Mukesh Chhabra has now revealed some behind-the-scenes information amid the excitement around the franchise, admitting that the choice to cast Ranveer in the lead role had already been made before he joined the team. Mukesh Chhabra discussed the casting procedure for Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar franchise in an interview with Zoom. He disclosed that the option to cast Ranveer Singh in the lead role had already been made before he joined the team and added that he wholeheartedly supported the decision. “I believe Aditya (Dhar) believed that he would be ideal for the part. Check out how amazing he was in the movie. He performed so brilliantly and with such dedication! He praised the actor’s dedication, saying, “I’ve never seen a better performance than in recent time.” In addition to prais-

ing Ranveer’s performance, Mukesh emphasized the value of bringing in new talent for the movie, giving specific recognition to Sara Arjun. He disclosed that the group deliberately avoided assigning well-known actors to particular parts. “I think I’m going to show everyone Sara’s audition very soon,” he stated. Her audition was excellent. We made it quite clear that we desired a new strategy. We needed a completely new face, thus we didn’t want any well-known actors. A fresh face was crucial. Dhurandhar did incredibly well—not for me, but for every single actor, technician, and individual involved in the movie. I can only thank God and offer prayers for everyone. Ranveer is currently enjoying the success that came with the release of Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar. When the movie’s first segment opened in theaters in December, it made over ₹1300 crore worldwide. Since its March 19 release, Dhurandhar: The Revenge has earned over ₹1600

crore globally. R. Madhavan, Sanjay Dutt, Sara Arjun, Rakesh Bedi, and Arjun Rampal are among the other actors in the movie. The sequel explores the beginnings of Hamza, also known as Jaskirat Singh Rangi, played by Ranveer Singh, and discloses the reasons behind his goal. Additionally, it advances the plot by depicting him seizing control of Lyari’s power structure while attempting to destroy a terror network in Pakistan that poses a threat to India.

Ranveer and Deepika Padukone, meantime, seem prepared to welcome parenthood once more. Fans were thrilled when the pair revealed Deepika’s second pregnancy on April 19. A photo of their daughter Dua, who will soon become an older sister, clutching a pregnancy test with two pink lines, confirming the second pregnancy, was posted on Instagram. In November 2018, Deepika and Ranveer were married in a small yet lavish ceremony in Italy.

Izabelle Leite, the former girlfriend of Virat Kohli, responds to a post regarding his “taste”



Mumbai: Recently, Indian cricket player Virat Kohli made headlines once more for “liking” a German vlogger’s Instagram post rather than his score.

His ex-girlfriend, Brazilian model and actor Izabelle Leite, responded to a post about Virat’s “taste” in women as the internet did everything from make jokes to criticize him. Pictures of Izabelle with Anushka, German vlogger LizLaz, and Avneet Kaur were shared on an Instagram page. He once “liked” the picture of Avneet Kaur and attributed it to “algorithm error.” “Nobody can deny about Virat Kohli is that his taste in women is absolute elite,” the page stated after posting their photos.

The post also said, “From

Izabelle Leite to Anushka Sharma... elite taste is just part of the brand.” For those who don’t know, Virat allegedly dated Izabelle from 2012 to 2014 before meeting Anushka.

The actor was questioned about Virat dating Anushka during a 2014 press conference for her movie Purani Jeans. “That’s not the reason that I am here now,” she retorted. All I have to say is that I’m incredibly eager for my film. from now until May 1st, June 1st, or whenever. I no longer have anything to say about Virat Kohli. Now married, Izabelle, her spouse, and their two kids reside in Doha, Qatar. A fan of Avneet Kaur discovered in May 2025 that Virat had liked one of her photos on their Facebook.

The cricket player said in a statement that “the algorithm may have mistakenly registered an interaction” after the screen shot quickly went viral. Virat made headlines last week once more for “liking” LizLaz’s article. It appears that the cricket player decided to remain silent this time. Before getting married in 2017, Anushka and Virat dated for a few years.

Their son, Akaay, was born in 2024, while their daughter, Vamika, was born in 2021. Anushka last appeared in the Shah Rukh Khan co-starring film Zero in 2018. In the 2022 Netflix movie Qala, she made a brief appearance. Chakda ‘Xpress, her sports drama, is yet unreleased. She has not yet disclosed any forthcoming endeavors.

According to Rasika Dugal, protecting the environment is now a duty rather than an option

Mumbai: Actor Rasika Dugal is a fervent supporter of sustainable fashion and has spearheaded a significant push to combat air pollution, which affects us on a daily basis. The performer passionately expresses her beliefs on Earth Day on why everyone cannot choose to save Mother Earth. “I believe that in order to solve a problem, it must first be recognized—both by civil society and at the policy-making level.” The 41-year-old actor continues, “This isn’t as daunting as it might seem.” It might start with something as easy as delving a little farther into the headline you just read or the reel you just glanced over. I think this is now a duty rather than an option. Respecting environment and the earth is important in every aspect, but given the dangerously rising AQIs, it is imperative that we concentrate on air pollution. “I believe that we have had to deal with pollution for a very long time. However, given the substantial effects it has on public health, the numerous fatalities it has been connected to, and the danger it poses to economic activity, air pollution in particular feels especially urgent in the times we live in,”

the actor argues. By selecting sustainable apparel, she is personally changing her life as an artist. “I started intentionally wearing more sustainable products because fashion is frequently cited as one of the major polluters. However, I came to understand that simply reading the term “sustainable” wasn’t sufficient. “So I started trying to understand what actually goes into making fabric in a sustainable way, and then how I can be more sustainable about the way I care for my clothes,” Rasika says, adding that she makes an effort to maintain her curiosity and awareness. The actor who will appear in Kartavya and Mirzapur The Film discusses how movies can aid in the healing of the planet. “I don’t think movies need to have overt messaging. She lists Shaunak Sen’s Academy Award-nominated film All That Breathes as one of the most influential movies supporting the environment and all living things. “You can have an intention as a filmmaker but your audience will take something of their own from it and that is the beauty of filmmaking or any art.”

To carry out last rites, Asha Bhosle’s son Anand and granddaughter Zanai travel to Varanasi

Mumbai: On April 12, renowned singer Asha Bhosle passed away at the age of 92. At Mumbai’s Breach Candy Hospital, the singer—one of the most well-known and renowned in the Indian music industry—died. When the singer passed away, she was 92 years old, the same age as her sister, the renowned Lata Mangeshkar. Anand Bhosle, Asha’s son, and Zanai Bhosle, her granddaughter, arrived in Varanasi on April 20 to perform the asthi visarjan in the Ganges’ sacred water. Social media now features images and videos of Zanai and Anand doing the asthi visarjan. During the pooja, Zanai was clearly upset as she brushed away tears. She and Anand were spotted on a boat, carrying out the late singer’s wishes by adhering to rituals and praying on the banks of the Ganga. Zanai posted a heartfelt homage to Asha on her Instagram account and shared a number of photos with her a day ago. “After a lot of reflection I realise you taught us how to live, but not how to live without you... you are missed every second, every hour, every minute with every breath we take, but I also know that you live within me... till I hold you in my arms again this way.” she said. Asha was wrapped in an Indian flag as a sign of respect last Monday when she was held at her home for family

members to pay their respects. Videos showed the singer receiving state honors while cops draped her coffin with tricolor white lilies. After paying her last respects at her Lower Parel home until 3 PM, the funeral procession moved on to the Shivaji Park crematorium in Dadar. At 4 PM, the final rites were carried out. in the age of 92, Asha passed away in Breach Candy Hospital early on April 12 from multi-organ failure. She was admitted to the hospital because of a chest illness and excessive fatigue. Anand Bhosle, her son, and Zanai, her granddaughter, survive her. After the news surfaced on Sunday, many people expressed shock at her loss and sent condolences to the family. “As I wake up this morning, I realise I have lost my partner in crime, my best friend, a person who completed my entire world and the first person to hold me when I was born,” Zanai wrote in a video she shared on Instagram following Asha’s burial on Monday. Now what should I do? When I wake up in the morning, who should I hug and drink tea with? Who am I meant to joke around with or who will be waiting for me every day when I go home? At Asha’s funeral, she also appeared distraught and was comforted by Tabu.

As the Bhutan Customs Team Arrives in Kerala, the focus is on cross-border car smuggling

New Delhi, Apr 21: A group from Bhutan Customs traveled to Kerala as part of the ongoing investigation under Operation Numkhor, the multi-agency examination into alleged illegal vehicle imports from Bhutan that has previously garnered national attention. The Customs Preventive formation initiated Operation Numkhor to monitor allegedly illicit shipments that were passed via Bhutan and subsequently registered in other parts of India. At least 38 SUVs were seized throughout Kerala during earlier stages of the investigation, including those connected to stars Dulquer Salmaan, Prithviraj Sukumaran, and Amith Chakalakkal. In the steep area of Munnar, a ten-person team headed by Bhutan's Customs Commissioner is now collaborating with Indian Customs authorities. The purpose of the conference is to organize the next stage of action against tax evasion associated with cross-border car smuggling and to share the intelligence that has been obtained thus far. Over the years, about 15,000 cars



may have been smuggled into India from Bhutan, according to official estimates. It is believed that many of these cars were registered fraudulently in northeastern states. Authorities in Assam alone have found 464 cars that were purportedly registered fraudulently. According to investigators, the smuggling network encompassed expensive automobiles and motorcycles, which resulted in crores of rupees in tax avoidance. Customs had already confiscated over fifty automobiles in Kerala that were allegedly involved in the scheme, some

of which were connected to movie stars. Regardless of whether buyers were aware of abnormalities, officials had made it clear that automobiles were subject to investigation. The investigation also made its way to the Kerala High Court in September 2025, when a division bench made up of Justices K. Narendran and Murali Krishna questioned the Enforcement Directorate about the case's progress, pointing out that it concerned expensive cars bought by powerful people. Since the matter appeared to entail money laundering, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) told the court that it would investigate.

Customs officials had previously stated that the Central GST wing would look into potential aspects of tax evasion, while the Enforcement Directorate would receive details of Operation Numkhor. It is anticipated that the current Indo-Bhutan customs meeting will concentrate on coordinating future enforcement actions, verifying vehicle origin records, and exchanging intelligence.

GST Data To Gunshots: Inside the Digital Extortion Empire of the Lawrence Bishnoi Gang

New Delhi, Apr 21: What began as mundane data mining on government portals has escalated into a sophisticated extortion network orchestrated by the Lawrence Bishnoi gang in Madhya Pradesh, as uncovered by an investigation. This organized crime syndicate utilizes technology, targeting business people for extortion amounts ranging from Rs 5 crore to Rs 15 crore through a methodical approach: data mining, profiling, and orchestrated threats followed by violent enforcement if demands are unmet. Central to this operation is Rajpal Singh Chandrawat, an operative from Ujjain, who has attempted to expand his influence through extortion under the pretense of becoming an entrepreneur. Without the necessary capital to establish his business, he resorted to crime, linking up with international handlers to strategize extortion efforts and build a criminal empire. His links with Harry Boxer, believed to be operating from North America, highlight the global reach of this criminal network. Investigators reveal that gang operatives, often teenagers or school dropouts, exploit publicly accessible data from GST and RERA portals to identify potential victims. Their threats are highly personalized, utilizing encrypted communication channels like WhatsApp and Signal to avoid detection. Financial exchanges connected to Rajpal point to a well-structured operation with significant backing from international sources. A breakthrough in the investigation occurred with the recent arrest of Pradeep Shukla, a critical operative whose connections to Harry Boxer have made him a focal



point for unraveling the syndicate's operational dynamics. The gang's multilayered structure features Harry Boxer at the apex, mid-level coordinators like Rajpal and Pradeep, and an army of lower-level recruits drawn from social media and trained for various criminal acts, including violent assaults.

The conspiracy has already manifested in direct violence, with attempts on the life of a targeted businessman resulting in shootings and terroristic threats backed by substantial ransom demands. Despite over 24 arrests across Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the extensive network continues to operate, with potential "local Rajpals" populating various regions to feed data into this far-reaching extortion mechanism.

A top court chastises the Center for a logistical error in the private university audit

New Delhi, Apr 21: In a case involving an audit of private universities, the Supreme Court chastised the Center on Monday for failing to provide the necessary logistical support to a court-appointed committee. It also sent a notice of contempt to Union education secretary Vineet Joshi, stating that such behavior is a "affront" to the highest court. "Everyone is trying to delay because stakes in this matter are high," said a bench of justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and NV Anjaria, who were irritated by the Center's failure to comply with a February order to provide a respectable office space, support staff, and other logistics to assist a committee led by former Indian Legal Service officer RM Sharma in examining affidavits filed by states, Union Territories, and central government departments in a matter where the court ordered an audit of standards in private universities. Sharma told the court that his team was given a run-down office space in Shastri Bhawan, and he also learned that the building will be demolished and renovated in a month or two. "In the tentative view of the court, such conduct by Secretary, Education in failing to ensure adequate facilities and infrastructure to officers appointed by us is a direct affront to this court and amounts to contempt," the bench stated. The case has been rescheduled until April 27. The court's ruling was made in response to a petition submitted by an Amity University student who had been harassed for requesting a name change in her academic records.

When the UP teen refused to break up, her father killed her and doused her face with acid



New Delhi, Apr 21: The horrific murder of a sixteen-year-old girl in Lucknow by her father was discovered through what started out as a search for the missing girl. Because Vandana Chaubey refused to break up with her partner, she was strangled, had acid poured on her face to hide her identity, and had her body left on the side of

the road. The adolescent and her lover eloped in August of last year. The male was imprisoned for three months while the daughter was returned home. But even when her partner was released from prison in November, Vandana kept in touch with him.

The girl's father, Vijay Kumar Chaubey, allegedly

killed her because the girl's relationship embarrassed the family. According to reports, Chaubey, a bus driver at a university in Lucknow, had to transfer several times in order to avoid the social stigma. The minor reportedly refused to break off her amorous relationship despite being repeatedly persuaded to do so. Disappointed, Chaubey and his friend Abdul Mannan came up with a scheme. In order to transport the girl to Rajasthan for an exorcism or faith-healing rites, they rented a car on April 13. They arrived at Barabanki by nightfall and halted on an empty road. There, they covered the girl's face with acid to hide her identity and strangled her to death while she slept. The two men panicked when they saw cars approaching on the road,

even though the intention was to dispose of the body in the Sharda Canal. They left the body behind and ran away. Chaubey claimed his teenage daughter was missing and submitted a missing person's complaint through the Integrated Grievance Redressal System (IGRS) portal on April 16.

A startling discovery resulted from the police's analysis of call logs and questioning of suspects during the inquiry. The investigation revealed that Chaubey had plotted to kill his daughter out of distress. Fearing social shame, Chaubey later admitted to killing his daughter. The accused father, Chaubey, 34, and his accomplice, Abdul Mannan, 45, have been taken into custody by the police. There are ongoing legal processes.

Delimitation is unavoidable, and no state will experience injustice: Congress is criticized by CM Naidu



Mumbai, Apr 21: N Chandrababu Naidu, the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh and president of the TDP, attacked the Congress and DMK for opposing the proposed delimitation process on Tuesday, arguing that it is "inevitable" and won't harm any state. Speaking at a press conference here on the final day of election campaigning, Naidu questioned assertions made by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin and Rahul Gandhi that the opposition had "defeated" the proposal related to delimitation. "MK Stalin and Rahul Gandhi claim to have defeated the Delimitation Bill. The DMK and Congress must explain the nature of this win. Naidu declared, "They have deceived the women." The delimitation-related measures were essentially put on hold a few days ago when the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill failed to obtain the necessary two-thirds majority in Parliament. "I am an experienced politician

with nearly five decades in public life," he said, highlighting his many years of political experience. Since 1996, I have followed the Women's Reservation Bill's progress. It has been continually postponed. They are now opposing the introduction of a concrete structure. According to Naidu, the suggested paradigm guarantees equity among states. "Delimitation is unavoidable. Is there a better formula available? No state will experience injustice, as has been made quite obvious. He clarified that concerns about southern areas losing representation were unfounded. "There will be a 50% increase in seats across states, and within that, 33% reservation for women," he said. Naidu pointed out that while population differences have always affected seat distribution, the current proposal includes safeguards. Southern states would have lost seats if we had closely adhered to previous census trends. Balance and equity are guaranteed by this arrangement," he stated. Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu and Piyush Goyal, Union Ministers, attended the press conference as well. Naidu used the occasion to emphasize the cultural and economic connections between Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, referring to the latter as the "cradle of Dravidian culture" and highlighting the two states' common legacy and development objectives. He commended Prime Minister Narendra Modi for encouraging competitive federalism and reforms. India's economy is currently one of the fastest-growing. States must follow the Prime Minister's "Viksit Bharat 2047" growth trajectory, he stated.

The captain of the Mumbai Indians responds to those who doubt Jasprit Bumrah's first-over decision

New Delhi: In the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 match against the Gujarat Titans on Monday night at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, Jasprit Bumrah suddenly ended his streak of getting wickets. The ace speedster just needed to bowl the first over of the innings to turn things around. Bumrah had never bowled the opening over for the team in the 19th edition of the competition before the match against Gujarat, and captain Hardik Pandya was receiving a lot of flak for denying the world's best bowler a chance to make a huge impact. Bumrah frequently bowled the second over of the game or came in as the first change in the first six games. However, Pandya chose to send the ball to



Bumrah straight up because Mumbai was benching Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur, and Trent Boult. This had immediate results as Bumrah ended his dry spell and removed Sai Sudharsan. As the Mumbai Indians defeated the Gujarat Titans by 99 runs, Bumrah eventually made a comeback with figures of 1/15.

When questioned about not hand-

ing Bumrah the opening over prior to the match against Gujarat, captain Hardik responded angrily after getting back on track. The all-rounder claimed that it is not simply a "Hardik Pandya problem" because past captains have also been reluctant to give him the first over. It's really interesting. Many people ask why Jassi isn't bowled up front, yet in over 140 games, he has only been bowled the first over seven or eight times. At the post-match presentation, Pandya stated, "So it's not a Hardik Pandya problem, it's an everybody problem." The Mumbai Indians captain went on to explain why he had not given Bumrah the opening over earlier, stating that the pacer is exceptional and capable of making an im-

pression whenever he is asked to bowl. Simply put, Jasprit Bumrah is so exceptional that you utilize him when the team needs him, not right away. However, we realized today that no one is better than him and that we truly want to create an impact with the new ball," Hardik remarked. In reference to the match between Gujarat and Mumbai, the former was requested to bat first. The five-time champions scored 199/5 in the 20 overs thanks to an undefeated 101-run effort from Tilak Varma. Ashwani Kumar returned with four wickets as the Gujarat Titans were bowled out for just 100. With this victory, the Mumbai Indians improved their net run rate significantly and climbed to seventh place in the standings.

Shubman Gill blames the bowlers against MI despite the Gujarat Titans team being out for 100

New Delhi: In the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 match on Monday, Gujarat Titans (GT) captain Shubman Gill blamed his team's poor performance with the ball in the middle overs for the team's crushing 99-run loss against Mumbai Indians (MI). Tilak Varma's outstanding hundred helped MI to a total of 199, even though Kagiso Rabada took three wickets during the powerplay. Gill acknowledged that the pitch was a little slow and sluggish, something his squad had seen early in the game, but he also acknowledged that Gujarat were unable to hold MI to a competitive total. "To be honest, I believe we gave up too many runs in the middle overs. I believe 160-170 was a par score on a surface like that. However, I believe we can learn a lot from this game," Gill remarked. Even as they get ready for their next tournament away games, the GT captain stated that losing is a learning curve for the team. According to CricViz data, GT's previous worst results—an 83-run loss to Chennai Super Kings in 2025

and a 63-run loss to CSK in 2024—were surpassed by the 99-run loss, which also represented their greatest margin of loss in the IPL. "I mean, a small hiccup, but now we've got a couple of games on the road, so hopefully we will come back on the winning side again," he said. Gill also highlighted the bowlers' uneven performance, especially in the middle overs when Gujarat found it difficult to keep the opposition hitters under pressure.

The wicket was a little bit slower, in my opinion. We didn't hit the correct spots, in my opinion. Others balls were coming, others weren't, and some were staying low, but the length ball wasn't coming on as well. He stated, "I believe we could have hit that length in the middle overs a little more consistently, which we were unable to." When asked if the pitch had changed during the second inning, Gill said it had stayed mostly the same, if not a little bit easier because of the wetness. I believe it was somewhat similar. I believe there was a little more dew when we were batting, so

if anything, it could have gotten a little bit better," he continued. In the IPL 2026, MI defeated Gujarat by 99 runs because to a strong all-around performance. Tilak Varma's outstanding debut IPL century of 101 off 45 balls helped MI, batting first, post 199/5. MI made a tremendous comeback in the final overs despite taking early wickets. Gujarat's top order collapsed dramatically in the reply, losing Sai Sudharsan for a golden duck and falling to 45/3 in just six overs. Ashwani Kumar (4/24), Mitchell Santner (2/16), and AM Ghazanfar (2/17) swept through the batting lineup and bundled Gujarat out for 100, severely shattering the innings. Mumbai now stands in seventh place on the IPL 2026 points table after winning two of their previous six games and losing four.

With a Net Run Rate of 0.067, the five-time champions now own four points. Gujarat, on the other hand, dropped to sixth place after six games with three victories and three defeats. Their net run rate is -0.821, yet they are still on six points.

Sanjay Manjrekar downplays the excitement surrounding Hardik Pandya's captaincy



New Delhi: Three years have passed since Hardik Pandya was signed by the Mumbai Indians and replaced Rohit Sharma as captain. Given that the all-rounder won the Indian Premier League (IPL) in his first season as captain of the Gujarat Titans and then guided the same team to the final the following year, it is hard to blame the five-time winners for having faith in him. Since returning to the Mumbai Indians in 2024, Hardik hasn't been able to duplicate his quick effect.

The Mumbai Indians finished last in the standings in 2024, and the 32-year-old was jeered at every game since the supporters didn't like Rohit's replacement. The team got better in 2025 and advanced to

Qualifier 2. However, even though the Mumbai Indians defeated the Gujarat Titans on Monday at the Narendra Modi Stadium in the 2026 Indian Premier League, the squad has once again started poorly, dropping four of their first six games. Former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar questioned Hardik's leadership abilities in light of Mumbai's recent performance, attributing the majority of the Gujarat Titans' success to head coach Ashish Nehra.

He added that Mumbai ought to have included Nehra if they had taken Hardik. The choice to sign Hardik Pandya with the Mumbai Indians was highly intriguing. Since franchises are ultimately commercial brands, I believe that occasionally they make actions

that are noteworthy and place them in the spotlight. The kind of valuations that franchises are receiving are visible. Manjrekar stated on Sportstar's Insight Edge podcast that "it might not even be a sound cricketing call."

"Ashish Nehra played a major role in Hardik Pandya's success with the Gujarat Titans. So perhaps you could have gotten Ashish Nehra along with Hardik Pandya if you wanted him," he continued. The former Indian batter believes that Hardik's success as captain was also a result of having a proactive coach who managed the team from the sidelines."

Hardik Pandya, I believe, was brilliant because there was somebody next to him constantly with almost every move that he made on the field," Manjrekar added. "So, it's really not so much about Hardik Pandya, but the decision, whether it was a sensible decision or just somebody wanting to think outside the box a little bit and doing something a little sensational," he continued.

The Mumbai Indians now have four points from seven games, good for seventh place in the standings, after defeating the Gujarat Titans. After seven games in the IPL 2026 season, Hardik is still struggling with both the bat and the ball.

Goa Aces JA Racing Crowned Champions Of The Indian Racing League Current Season



Mumbai: Goa Aces JA Racing have been crowned champions of the Indian Racing League (IRL) 2025-26 season after the league announced that the Navi Mumbai leg of the Indian Racing Festival (IRF) will not be part of the 2025-26 calendar. Following the conclusion of the Goa Street Race - the fourth and final round, in which Goa Aces JA Racing emerged victorious, the Navi Mumbai race will now feature as one of the rounds in the upcoming season of the Indian Racing League, which will commence from August 2026 onwards. The season witnessed four rounds of ex-

Hilarating motorsport action - with two rounds at Coimbatore, followed by a visit to Chennai, before culminating in a memorable street race in Goa, each round building on the last to deliver a season of exceptional competition. Goa Aces JA Racing are crowned the Teams' Champions of Season 4 of the Indian Racing League, finishing at the top of the Teams' Championship table with 141 points from their five best results across seven races - six points ahead of Speed Demons Delhi, who finished second on 135 points. In the Cars' Championship, Car #5 duo Raoul Hyman and

Fabienne Wohlwend of Goa Aces JA Racing claimed top honours with 101 points, with Kolkata Royal Tigers' Car #24 of Sohil Shah and Thomas Canning finishing second on 81 points, and Speed Demons Delhi's Car #22 of Alister Yoong and Caitlin Wood rounding out the podium on 75 points. Akhilesh Reddy, Chairman & Managing Director, Racing Promotions Pvt. Ltd. (RPPL), praised this season of the Indian Racing Festival as a major success, highlighting the strong competition and growing stature of the league. He congratulated Goa Aces

JA Racing on their championship win and commended Raoul Hyman and Fabienne Wohlwend for their standout performances, adding that future editions aim to raise the bar even higher. "This edition of the Indian Racing Festival has been a tremendous success, showcasing the very best of Indian motorsport talent alongside some of the most recognisable names in Indian entertainment and sport. Congratulations to Goa Aces JA Racing on a well-deserved Championship win, and to Raoul Hyman and Fabienne Wohlwend on a stellar Cars' Championship -- they were outstanding throughout the season. The level of competition across all six franchises this season has been a true reflection of the growing stature of the IRL, and we are incredibly proud of what this league has become. We look forward to raising the bar even further in the next edition, which promises to be our most exciting edition yet," he said. The Goa Street Race delivered a dramatic contest in which Goa Aces JA Racing came out on top through victory from Raoul Hyman and Fabienne Wohlwend in the feature race.

Carlos Alcaraz Faces Medical Tests During Race To Be Fit For French Open Tournament

New Delhi: Carlos Alcaraz's French Open title defence has been thrown into doubt after a right wrist injury disrupted his clay-court preparations. With key tournaments missed and fitness concerns lingering, the Spaniard now faces a race against time ahead of Roland-Garros. The defending two-time champion confirmed that medical tests over the next few days will determine whether he can feature in the Grand Slam, which begins next month. Speaking at the Laureus Awards in Madrid, where he was seen with his wrist immobilised, Alcaraz admitted uncertainty over his participation. "We'll see," Alcaraz said when asked about his chances of playing the French Open. The next test will be crucial. We've been trying to do everything we can to make sure it goes well. I'm trying to be very patient. We have a few tests in the next few days and then we will see how the injury is, and what the next steps will be," he added. Despite the setback, the 22-year-old remains hopeful of recovery. "For now, I've been trying to stay positive, to stay upbeat, even though these days have become a bit too long," said Alcaraz, who was named Laureus World Sportsman of the Year. The timing of the injury has added to the concern. Alcaraz recently lost his world No.1 ranking to Jannik Sinner after his defeat in the Monte Carlo Masters final. His withdrawal from Barcelona also ended any immediate chance of reclaiming the top spot, making the upcoming clay season even more crucial. Alcaraz's



injury concerns surfaced during the Barcelona Open, where he required medical attention in his opening-round win over Otto Virtanen. Despite winning the match in straight sets, the discomfort forced him to withdraw from the tournament shortly after. The Spaniard also pulled out of the Madrid Open as a precaution, opting to prioritise recovery over risking further damage. With the Italian Open next on the calendar, his participation there remains uncertain as well. e French Open main draw is set to begin on May 24, but Alcaraz's involvement hinges on the results of upcoming medical evaluations. The next few days are expected to provide clarity on the severity of the wrist issue. While the injury is not being viewed as long-term at this stage, the tight schedule and importance of the tournament mean that caution will be key. A decision on his

participation is likely to be made closer to the event, depending on how well he responds to treatment. Carlos Alcaraz is scheduled to undergo medical tests over the next few days to evaluate the severity of a right wrist injury. These evaluations will be the deciding factor in whether he can participate in the French Open, which is set to begin on May 24. Carlos Alcaraz expressed uncertainty regarding his title defense at Roland-Garros while appearing at the Laureus Awards with his wrist immobilized. The Spaniard noted that the upcoming tests are crucial for determining the next steps in his recovery after he was forced to withdraw from the Barcelona Open and the Madrid Open. Despite the setback, the 22-year-old remains hopeful and is attempting to stay positive while prioritizing long-term fitness over immediate competition.

Army's First Woman Canoeist Secures India's Historic First International Gold In Canoeing



Chandigarh: The first woman canoeist to join the Indian Army has blazed a trail, bagging the country's first gold medal at an international event in the high-intensity paddling sport. Havildar Megha Pradeep clinched two golds in the C1 200-meters and C1 500-meters category, and a silver in the C2 500-meters category at 2026 Canoe Sprint Asian Games Test Event in Miyoshi City, the Army said on Monday. The event is a key qualifier for the 2026 Asian Games that are scheduled to be held in Japan, in which 45 countries are expected to participate. In 2025, Oinam Binita Chanu

From Odisha had won gold in kayaking at Canoe Sprint International President Cup in Uttarakhand, in which 21 countries had participated. Another woman kayaker, Prachi Yadav, won a gold in 2023 Asian Para Games for athletes with physical disabilities. Canoeing and kayaking are different in the sense that the design of the boats and the seating positions are different. Canoes are open and use a single-bladed paddle while kayaks are closed-top and use a double-bladed paddle. All these have a bearing on balance, speed and manoeuvrability. Besides Megha, two Army paddlers outshone at

The meet, with Naib Subedar Sunil Singh bagging the gold in C1 200-m and C1 500-m, and Subedar Raju Rawat getting the silver in C2 500-m. A C1 event is a high-speed flat-water race where one paddler kneels in a canoe and uses a single-bladed paddle to propel the boat, whereas a C2 event involves two paddlers in an open canoe, requiring synchronised power. Canoe sprint is an extremely intense discipline requiring elite cardiovascular endurance, explosive power and exceptional balance as the athletes have to kneel in a narrow, unstable boat and paddle on only one side.

Iran Continues Reviewing 2026 FIFA World Cup Participation Over Serious Security Concerns

Tehran: Iran's participation in the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026 remains uncertain, with the country's Sports Minister Ahmad Donyamali confirming that a final decision will depend on evolving security and political conditions in the ongoing tensions between US and Iran as per Iranian media. Addressing mediapersons on Tuesday, Donyamali said, "We had a discussion about the national team itself, the conditions of the national team, and we also formed a committee. Today we also have a meeting in the framework of this discussion, and we are fulfilling our legal duty. We must be prepared. In any case, it might be decided not to go. And if it is decided to go, we should be prepared anyway, so that our presence, if it is to be, is a strong presence. But again, I emphasise, in this area, the decision-making is anyway based on the conditions that exist today, with the government and probably the National Security Council."His



remarks come amid growing uncertainty over Iran's participation in the tournament, which is set to be co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico from June 11 to July 19 this year. Despite the concerns, FIFA president Gianni Infantino has publicly backed Iran's involvement, reiterating that the team remains part of the competition. Infantino recently met the Iranian squad in Turkey and praised their determination to compete on the global stage. Iran has

qualified for the expanded 48-team tournament and is placed in Group G, alongside Belgium, New Zealand, and Egypt. As per the current schedule, their matches are slated to be held in Los Angeles and Seattle. However, geopolitical tensions have cast doubt over their participation on US soil. Comments from former US President Donald Trump intensified the situation after he expressed reservations about the team's safety, suggesting it might not be

appropriate for Iran to play in the United States. In response, Mehdi Taj, president of Iran's football federation, indicated that discussions with FIFA are ongoing, including the possibility of relocating matches to Mexico if security guarantees are not met. The 2026 edition of the FIFA World Cup will be the largest in history, featuring 48 teams and 104 matches, with the opening game scheduled in Mexico City and the final to be held in New Jersey.

How Hardik Pandya's Mid Innings Charge Up Sparked Tilak Varma's Comeback Against GT Pandya's Talk Sparks Varma's Winning Century

Mumbai: Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya's mid-innings intervention proved to be the turning point as Tilak Varma scripted a stunning comeback for the side against Gujarat Titans in their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 clash on April 20. A moment that looked routine during the drinks break ended up changing the course of the match. The moment gained even more attention after a video of the exchange went viral on social media, showing an animated Pandya having a word with Tilak in the middle. At that point, MI were under pressure and Tilak was struggling at 19 off 22 balls, with wickets falling around him. The likes of Danish Malewar, Quinton de Kock and Suryakumar Yadav had already departed, while a set Naman Dhir also failed to convert his start. What followed was a complete shift. From a cautious 19 off 22,



Tilak exploded, smashing 82 runs off his next 23 deliveries. The innings transformed from a rebuilding effort into a statement knock, as he brought up his maiden IPL hundred and powered MI to a competitive 199 on what was a tricky Ahmedabad surface. Speaking after the match, Pandya revealed the essence of that conversation, emphasising the need for Tilak to trust his natural game. "The message I think, I realised that the kind of talent Tilak has, he really doesn't have to worry. So my message to him was just watch the ball And

Hit the ball. Was about time he came out and delivered. It was much needed for Tilak, the group and Mumbai Indians." Pandya said at the post-match presentation. The impact of that knock went beyond just the scoreboard. It lifted a side that had been struggling for momentum and injected belief into a campaign that was starting to drift. Tilak's unbeaten 101 off 45 balls came at a crucial juncture, when MI were placed at 103 for 4 after 14 overs. What followed was a calculated acceleration that completely altered the tem-

po of the innings, turning a modest total into a daunting one. That late surge carried into the second innings. Jasprit Bumrah struck with the very first ball, setting the tone early, while Ashwani Kumar dismantled the middle order with figures of 4 for 24. Gujarat Titans never found their footing and were bowled out for 100 in 15.5 overs, handing Mumbai Indians a commanding 99-run win and a much-needed turnaround. Hardik Pandya's mid-innings chat with Tilak Varma acted as a definitive turning point during the IPL 2026 match between Mumbai Indians and Gujarat Titans. The motivational talk sparked a dramatic turnaround for Varma, who transitioned from a struggling start to scoring a maiden century. According to the Mumbai Indians captain, the message was simply for Varma to trust his talent, watch the ball, and hit it with-out worry.

Juventus Bolster Top Four Hopes Following Crucial Victory Over Resilient Bologna Side



Chandigarh: Juventus tightened their grip on a top-four finish with a composed 2-0 win over Bologna at the Allianz Stadium, delivering a performance built on early control and defensive assurance. The hosts made an immediate impact, taking the lead inside two minutes. Jonathan David found space in the box and guided a header past the goalkeeper, capping a sharp attacking move and setting the tone for the evening. Juventus continued to dominate possession and territory in the first half, cre-

ating further chances while limiting Bologna to long-range efforts, including one that struck the crossbar. The game was effectively settled early in the second half. Kepren Thuram, introduced after the break, made his presence count by rising at the back post to head home and double Juventus' advantage. From that point, the hosts managed the contest comfortably. Bologna struggled to build sustained pressure and were largely contained by a disciplined Juventus backline. Their best opportu-

nity came later in the second half when a close-range effort struck the post, but it did little to alter the overall pattern of the game. The result marks another step forward for Juventus in the closing weeks of the season. Once under pressure in the race for Champions League qualification, they now appear to have momentum on their side, with a more balanced and controlled approach emerging at a crucial stage of the campaign. reviving the Mumbai Indians' campaign and injecting much-needed belief squad.

Bishnoi Gang Linked To T20 Fixing Scandal

New Delhi: Alleged links between the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and a match-fixing scandal have emerged as the central controversy surrounding Cricket Canada. According to a report by CBC News, threats and intimidation may have influenced team decisions during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026. At the centre of the issue is Canada captain Dilpreet Bajwa. His appointment has come under question, with claims that players were pressured to support him. Some were allegedly warned of serious consequences if they did not back certain players. "So they straight up said this wording to him, that 'You must take care of these guys. These guys should not get dropped from the team. If they do, you are in trouble.' Obviously that was very scary for him," a source identified as Noah said. The situation has now caught the attention of the International Cricket Council, which has started an investigation into possible breaches of its anti-corruption rules. One of the matches being looked at is Canada's World Cup game against New Zealand in Chennai. "We cannot comment on the substance of the allegations at this stage," said ICC interim integrity chief Andrew Ephgrave. The controversy began after a documentary highlighted issues within Cricket Canada, including poor governance, questionable team selections and possible match-fixing. One match under focus is Canada's loss to New Zealand, where they failed to defend 173. A particular over bowled by Bajwa, which went for 15 runs including a no-ball and a wide, has drawn attention. There are also claims from a leaked phone recording involving former coach Khuram Chohan, who allegedly said he was pressured by board members over team selection. The recording also mentions possible fixing attempts, but these claims are yet to be proven. Former coach Pubudu Dassanayake has made similar allegations and is currently taking legal action against the board.