

Mizoram Police Seize Heroin Worth 17.25 Lakh; One Suspect Arrested

Aizawl, May 02: A joint operation by the Assam Rifles and Zokhawthar Police led to the recovery of heroin in Mizoram's Champhai district. DigitalNews Platform The operation was conducted at General Area Crossing Point-3 in Zokhawthar, where security personnel seized 23 grams of Heroin No-4, valued at approximately ₹17.25 lakh. One person was apprehended during the operation. The seized narcotics and the apprehended individual have been handed over to Zokhawthar Police Station for further investigation and legal proceedings. In a significant blow to the illegal narcotics trade operating across the Indo-Myanmar border, the Mizoram Police, in a coordinated operation with specialized anti-narcotics units, successfully intercepted a major consignment of Heroin. The operation, which took place late Tuesday evening, led to the seizure of high-grade Heroin valued at approximately ₹17.25 Lakh in the international market. One individual has been taken into custody in connection with the haul.



The crackdown is part of the state government's ongoing "War on Drugs," an initiative aimed at crippling the supply chains that utilize Mizoram's porous borders as a transit point for contraband entering mainland India. The seizure was the result of actionable intelligence gathered by the Special Intelligence Wing of the Mizoram Police. Based on a confidential tip-off regarding the movement of a drug peddler traveling from the border areas toward Aizawl, a strategic mobile

check post (MCP) was established near the outskirts of a prominent village in the Champhai District. Around 8:30 PM, security personnel signaled a suspicious vehicle to stop for a routine inspection. Upon noticing the police presence, the driver reportedly exhibited signs of nervousness, prompting a thorough search of the vehicle. During the inspection, officers discovered several soap cases—a common method used by smugglers to conceal drugs—hidden within a modified of the vehicle.

Assam opposition alliance meets, rejects exit polls, claims majority

Guwahati, May 02:

With just a day left for the declaration of results, the Congress-led opposition alliance in Assam held a crucial strategy meeting at Hotel Ratnavali in Guwahati. Top leaders, observers, and candidates gathered to review the situation ahead of the May 4 vote counting and to plan their next steps. Rejecting exit poll projections that indicate an advantage for the BJP-led NDA, alliance leaders asserted that they are confident of winning at least 70 seats and forming the next government in the state. After discussions, senior leaders D. K. Shivakumar, Bhupesh Baghel, and Jitendra Singh said that the BJP has already begun contacting some opposition candidates in an attempt to poach them. They stated that protecting candidates and closely monitoring the counting process are now top priorities, adding that the central leadership will be present in Assam on May 4.



The meeting was attended by key leaders including Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, AICC General Secretary in-charge of Assam Jitendra Singh, and former Jharkhand Minister Bandhu Tirkey. Also present were APCC President Gaurav Gogoi, Rajior Dal chief Akhil Gogoi, Assam Jatiya Parishad president Lurinjyoti Gogoi, CPI(M) and CPI(ML) leaders, and APHLC president

John Ingti Kathar, along with several senior leaders such as Rakibul Husain, Debabrata Saikia, Suprakash Talukdar, and AICC secretaries Prithviraj Sathe, Manoj Chauhan, and Vikas Upadhyay. Leaders unanimously expressed confidence that the Congress-led alliance would defeat the NDA government. They discussed measures to prevent any irregularities during vote counting and emphasized vigilance at all counting centres. According to them, detailed

discussions were held with candidates and officials to ensure that no biased activities take place during the counting process. APCC President Gaurav Gogoi strongly dismissed exit polls, stating that such surveys are meant to create an atmosphere in favour of the ruling party and to put pressure on the counting process. He said that people from Upper Assam, Lower Assam, Barak Valley, and the hill regions have voted for change, and this will be reflected in the results.

Khandu showcases Arunachal's growth story at Delhi meet

Itanagar, May 02:

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu today addressed policymakers and academicians at the ICPP Growth Conference 2026 hosted by the Isaac Centre for Public Policy, Ashoka University in New Delhi, and showcased the state's growth story. He spoke about the incredible potential of the resource-rich state, and how initiatives like the Vibrant Villages Programme, expanded highways, and hydropower development are helping build stronger, more connected communities. Describing Arunachal Pradesh as a "powerhouse of India" in hydroelectricity generation, the Chief Minister said that improved connectivity and infrastructure development have helped the tourism, agriculture and horticulture sectors grow. He also spoke about investing in education, supporting tourism, protecting cultural heritage, and making it easier for people and businesses to grow and succeed. "Because when we invest in people, and in opportunity, we move forward, together," Khandu said. He said hydropower projects with a cumulative capacity of around 19,000 MW are currently under various stages of development in the state. A long-term target is to achieve 40,000 MW by 2047, contributing significantly to the vision of a developed India, he said.

Fresh flood warning issued for Northeast

Aizawl, May 02: The Central Water Commission has issued a fresh warning over the possibility of a flood-like situation developing in several parts of Northeast India as continuous rainfall is expected to raise water levels in major rivers across the region over the next few days. In an advisory issued recently, the commission said heavy and persistent rainfall forecast for the region could lead to a sharp rise in river water levels between May 1 and May 6. The warning comes after the India Meteorological Department predicted continued rainfall across several northeastern states till May 4. Officials said the situation needs close monitoring as many rivers flowing through Assam and neighbouring states are expected to swell because of continuous rain in upstream and downstream areas. According to the advisory, several districts in Assam may face rising river levels during the forecast period. The Jiaharali river in Sonitpur district is among the rivers that could witness a rapid increase in water level if rainfall continues in the catchment areas. The main channel of the Brahmaputra River is also expected to record higher water levels in districts such as Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Sonitpur and Dhubri. Officials said continuous rainfall in upper catchment areas could increase pressure on embankments and low-lying regions near the riverbanks. In the Barak Valley region, the Barak River is likely to rise in Cachar and Karimganj districts. Authorities are also keeping a close watch on rivers such as the Kushiara and Katakhal in Karimganj and Hailakandi districts, where water levels may increase significantly in the coming days. The warning has also been extended to Tripura, where authorities have been advised to closely monitor several rivers over the next two to three days.

Strong Response from Assam CM Over Arguments in Pawan Khera Case

Guwahati, May 02: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reacted strongly to senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi's arguments in the apex court in the Pawan Khera's defamation case, stating that he "does not need lessons on democracy, public discourse or decency from anyone".

The remarks came after Singhvi urged Sarma to reconsider his position in the case, citing observations made by the Supreme Court of India, which granted anticipatory bail to Khera on Friday in connection with an FIR registered by Assam Police over allegations concerning multiple passports purportedly held by the chief minister's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sarma.

"I don't need lessons on democracy, public discourse or decency from anyone, especially from Dr AM Singhvi. Decency and him

can never be in the same room," Sarma stated on his official X (formerly Twitter) handle.

"The real issue here pertains to a woman - who has nothing to do with politics - but has her character assassinated on national television using forged documents from other countries," the chief minister stated. "I am confident the courts will take note of this, sooner or later and the guilty will be punished for his brazen act of maligning a woman's character using false documents to influence electoral outcomes," Sarma stated. "Also, Dr Singhvi, it's easy to speak on a platform where I am not present to respond. That is not called a debate - it is simply avoiding a fair exchange, one which you were espousing. And let me be clear, this is just the beginning, not the end. Satyamev Jayate," he further stated.

Chief Secretary Reviews Assam's Poll Counting Arrangements

Guwahati, May 02: Assam Chief Secretary Dr Ravi Kota reviewed preparedness for counting of votes of Assam Assembly polls slated on May 4.

Dr Kota took stock of the arrangements in a video conference with the DGP, Additional Chief Secretary (Home), and other senior officers, all District Commissioners, Senior Superintendents of Police, and

Commanding Officers of battalions.

He reviewed security arrangements for strong rooms and maintaining post-poll law and order.

"The instructions of the ECI are clear and must be followed in letter and spirit. All districts have been directed to ensure foolproof security, continuous vigil over strong rooms, and strict adherence to counting

procedures," he said.

Post-poll directions emphasized mandatory visits to strong rooms/counting centres by concerned officials, deployment of adequate police and paramilitary forces for counting, ensuring the arrival of forces and strict enforcement of security protocols on counting day, declaration and enforcement of dry day on counting day, regulation/

restriction of victory processions to prevent clashes, robust arrangements to curb any post-poll violence, close monitoring of pending court cases and electoral offence cases, and zero tolerance for lapses.

All officers were instructed to ensure peaceful, transparent, and incident-free counting and a stable post-poll environment, Dr Kota mentioned.

In Brief

CEO Assam reviews vote counting preparations in Silchar

Silchar: To ensure smooth and hassle-free counting of votes for the Assam Legislative Assembly elections, the Chief Electoral Officer, Assam, Anurag Goel visited Cachar district and took stock of the overall preparedness ahead of the vote counting scheduled on May 4. During his visit, the Chief Electoral Officer carried out an inspection of the strong room established at ISTT, Ramnagar in Silchar, where Electronic Voting Machines have been securely kept. He also reviewed the robustness of security arrangements and adherence to established protocols to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process.

Bunkers Razed, Arms Seized in Manipur

Imphal: Security forces have destroyed 23 illegally constructed bunkers and recovered a cache of arms and explosives during separate operations in Manipur's Ukhrul district and Tengnoupal district, police said on Saturday, May 2. According to police, the bunkers were demolished on Thursday during coordinated operations in the hill villages of Mongkot Chepu, Shongphel, Mullam, Sirarakhong, and Ringue under Litan police station limits in Ukhrul district. During the operation, security personnel seized a 12-bore pump-action gun, 17 cartridges of different calibres, and 111 empty fired bullet cases from the area. Ukhrul district has witnessed recurring violence since February following clashes between the Tangkhul Naga and Kuki communities. At least seven people have been killed in separate firing incidents, and more than 30 houses have reportedly been burned during the unrest.

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Naga Militants Arrested in Arunachal Pradesh

Kohima: In a joint operation, the Assam Rifles and Arunachal Pradesh Police apprehended three alleged militants linked to the NSCN-K (Niki Sumi) faction in Tirap district on Friday, May 1. Acting on specific intelligence inputs, security forces launched a coordinated operation in the Wancho Colony area of Khonsa. The three suspects were arrested following a swift search and interception operation. The arrested individuals have been identified as Wingan Agan (33), Johnny Riba (21), and Rajapeyu Khechan Khetye (30). Officials stated that all three were allegedly associated with the NSCN-K (Niki Sumi) outfit.

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He also reviewed the robustness of security arrangements and adherence to established protocols to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process. The inspection was conducted in presence of the District Commissioner and District Election Officer, Aayush Garg, along with the Senior Superintendent of Police, Sanjib Kumar Saikia. The CEO closely examined the arrangements at the counting hall including access control, movement regulation and coordination among various agencies.

Namsai Marks 2570th Buddha Jayanti at Priyati Sasana Buddhist Vihara

Namsai, May 02: The 2570th Buddha Jayanti was observed with great devotion and enthusiasm at Priyati Sasana Buddhist Vihara at Namsai in Arunachal Pradesh on Friday.

A large number of devotees and monks gathered to pay homage to Lord Buddha on the occasion.

The celebration featured a vibrant procession, with devotees and monks taking part in a peaceful march, spreading the message of compassion, peace, and non-violence.

A key highlight of the celebration was the Khamsang (Pabbajja) ceremony, during which around 28 boys were ordained as novice monks.

The ceremony marked a significant spiritual step, symbolising their entry into monastic life and commitment to the teachings of Buddha.

Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein attended the celebration, adding significance to the occasion.

"Delighted to be part of the sacred celebrations of Buddha Jayanti and Samanera Pabajja (Poi Khamsang) at the Namsai Pariyatti Sasana Buddhist Vihara Complex," Mein later took to social media to state.

"The ceremony of Samanera Pabajja is a deeply meaningful tradition, symbolising a path of discipline, learning and spiritual awakening for the novice monks (samaneras) in Theravada Buddhism where they bow to give up worldly pleasures to live a monastic life," he stated.



"Witnessing this noble tradition under the guidance of Ven. Bhaddanta Agadhamma ji, President, Namsai Pariyatti Sasana Buddhist Vihara Society, was both humbling and inspiring," Mein stated.

"May the teachings of Lord Buddha continue

to illuminate our paths and strengthen the bonds of peace and unity in our society," he added.

The event concluded with prayers and blessings, reinforcing the values of harmony, discipline, and spiritual awakening among the attendees.

TMC alleges postal ballot irregularities at Kolkata strongroom; files complaint with EC

Kolkata, Apr 02: The Trinamool Congress (TMC) on Saturday alleged unauthorised sorting of postal ballot covers at an EVM strongroom in Kolkata and lodged a complaint with the Election Commission of India. Party workers, who have been camping outside the Khudiram Anushilan Kendra, claimed that eight trunks containing postal ballots were brought to the facility around 4 am and moved into a room without CCTV surveillance. "We have



been demanding that every single millimetre of space where EVMs and postal ballots be under CCTV surveillance. But as these trunks

were taken inside, it was clear that they were taken to a room not under CCTV cover. Why should this happen," a TMC member asked. Voting machines from several assembly segments of northern and eastern Kolkata are stored at the strongroom at Khudiram Anushilan Kendra. As TMC activists were demonstrating, BJP's Shyampukur candidate Purnima Chakraborty reached the spot with her supporters, escalating tensions. Both sides started shouting slogans as police

stood between them, attempting to bring the situation under control. Chakraborty claimed that sensing defeat, TMC workers were creating chaos outside the strongroom. Later, the TMC said it filed a complaint with the EC over the issue.

Similar scenes were witnessed outside the strongroom at the Barasat Government College in North 24 Parganas district, where TMC workers demonstrated, alleging that the CCTV was switched off for 17 minutes in the morning.

Rijiju arrives in Sikkim

Sikkim, Apr 02: Union Minister for Parliamentary and Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju on Thursday arrived in Sikkim on a three-day visit during which he is scheduled to hold meetings with state leaders and review ongoing projects, officials said. Rijiju was received by state minister Sonam Lama and other dignitaries at Rangpo. The Union minister is scheduled to offer prayers at a Buddhist monastery on May. "He will also hold meetings with local leaders and review ongoing projects under the Ministry of Minority Affairs," an official said. Upon his arrival, Rijiju underscored infrastructure progress in the Himalayan state, including improvements in road networks, rail connectivity, aviation, and digital access over the past 12 years. He said such developments have accelerated economic



growth and strengthened connectivity across the northeast region. Describing Sikkim as a "small yet prosperous" state, Rijiju said it continues to serve as a model of balanced development, expressing confidence that it will maintain the upward growth trajectory in the coming years.

Tinsukia administration finalises arrangements May 4 vote counting

Tinsukia, Apr 02: The Tinsukia district administration has completed all arrangements for the smooth conduct of vote counting for the 2026 Assam Assembly elections, scheduled to begin at 8:00 AM on May 4. District Election Officer and Deputy Commissioner Sumit Sattawan announced this at a press briefing on Friday, stating that comprehensive logistical and security measures have been put in place to ensure a transparent and orderly process. According to officials, the Election Commission of India has appointed six counting observers for the Tinsukia election district. IAS officer Abhinav Trikha will oversee counting for the 86 No. Tinsukia constituency, while Li-mawabang Jamir has been assigned to 85 No. Makum. Om Prakash Saharan will monitor 82 No. Doomdooma, A.G. Chinna Krishna will supervise 84 No. Digboi, Mitali Namchum will oversee 83 No. Margherita, and I. Kishore has been designated for 81 No. Sadiya.

The administration has designated two counting centres. Counting for 81 No. Sadiya and 83 No. Margherita will take place at Janata College, while 82 No. Doomdooma, 84 No. Digboi, 85 No. Makum, and 86 No. Tinsukia will be counted at the SAI Sarbananda Sonowal Stadium.

Elaborate table arrangements have been made at both venues. At Janata College, 14 tables have been set up for Sadiya along with four tables for postal ballots, while Margherita will have 11 tables and three tables for postal ballots. At the stadium, 10 tables each have been arranged for Doomdooma and Digboi, along with two tables each for postal ballots. Makum and Tinsukia constituencies will



have 11 tables each, along with two tables for postal ballots each.

To ensure efficiency, all personnel involved in the counting process, including micro-observers, counting supervisors, and assistants, have undergone training.

A total of around 600 officials have been deployed, supported by 79 micro-observers, 67 counting supervisors, and 67 counting assistants.

Officials have been instructed to report by 5:30 AM on counting day, while counting staff must arrive by 6:00 AM. Counting agents, candidates, and representatives of political parties have been directed to be present by 7:00 AM. The administration has emphasized that stringent security arrangements are in place to prevent any untoward incidents during the counting process.

Superintendent of Police Mayank Kumar Jha and Election Officer Mayurakshi Dutta were also present at the press conference.

Gaurav Gogoi targets Centre over fuel, LPG price hike, says 'election relief' over

Tinsukia, Apr 02: Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Gaurav Gogoi on Friday alleged that the country has entered a fresh phase of price rise following the end of election-related relief measures, targeting the Central government over fuel and LPG prices. In a Facebook post, Gogoi said, "Election relief is over, the real phase of price rise has begun," accusing the government of temporarily easing public burden during elections and later shifting the cost onto citizens. He referred to remarks by Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, who had warned that petrol, diesel and other fuel prices would increase after April 29. Gogoi alleged that despite

lower international crude oil prices earlier, the Centre had prioritised revenue collection through taxation instead of passing on relief to consumers. With crude prices rising now, he claimed the burden is being transferred to the public and small businesses. The Congress leader also pointed to the recent hike in commercial LPG cylinder prices, saying it has impacted small traders, shopkeepers, dhaba operators, and the hospitality sector.

He further termed the situation a result of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "policy of surrender," alleging that policy decisions have placed additional strain on common people and small businesses.

IIT study finds supportive workplace culture key to teacher well-being

Guwahati, Apr 02: A recent study by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati has revealed that school teachers experience higher stress and lower job satisfaction when their workplace does not allow them to be their true selves. The research was carried out by Abraham Cyril Issac and research

scholar M.A. Jayasankar from the institute's School of Business. According to Issac, authenticity plays a vital role in teaching. Teachers feel more engaged and alive in classrooms, but the lack of freedom in other workspaces can create stress and dissatisfaction. The research is based on interviews with 30 higher

secondary school teachers. The data was analysed using the Gioia method, which focuses on understanding real experiences instead of relying on fixed assumptions. Published in Qualitative Research in Organisations and Management, the study introduces a new framework called the Teacher Work-

place Authenticity Impact Model (TWAIM). The study highlights a clear contrast in teachers' experiences. While they feel most comfortable and genuine when teaching students in classrooms, this feeling often fades in staffrooms and administrative areas where hierarchy and pressure are stronger.

CWC flood alert raises alarm as Brahmaputra erosion



Doomdooma, Apr 02: A fresh flood advisory issued by the Central Water Commission (CWC), warning of rising river levels across Northeast India, has heightened concern in Assam's Tinsukia district. Severe erosion by the Brahmaputra is already endangering Dighaltarang and nearly 1,400 families dependent on the area. The alert comes in the wake of continuous rainfall predicted by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) until May 4. The advisory indicates a

possible rise in water levels in the Brahmaputra and its tributaries between May 1 and May 6. In upper Assam, the situation is especially critical as erosion continues to damage both inhabited and productive land. At Dighaltarang, the river flowing through the Dangari channel has already washed away more than 35 hectares of plantation land, severely affecting tea production and moving dangerously close to key infrastructure. Residential areas, particularly the 'Purana Line' locality,

are in a vulnerable condition, with families living under constant risk due to the advancing erosion. Workers and labour unions have alleged that a Rs 4 crore embankment project has failed to provide effective protection, leaving the estate exposed to further damage.

Following the flood advisory, labour organisations have urged immediate government action, warning that delays could escalate the situation into a major humanitarian crisis.

Meghalaya Introduces Digital Self Enumeration for the 2027 Census

Imphal, Apr 02: Meghalaya on Friday commenced self-enumeration for Census 2027, marking a milestone in India's first fully digital census. Director of Census Operations Biswajit Pegu described the exercise as historic, noting it will be the 16th Census overall and the 8th since Independence. Around 9,000 enumerators and supervisors will be deployed across the state, supported by a multi-layered supervision mechanism under Deputy Commissioners acting as Principal Census Officers.

Citizens can participate in self-enumeration through an online portal from May 1 to May 15, filling household details independently before verification by field staff. The census will be conducted in two phases:

Phase I includes self-enumeration and House Listing Operations (HLO) from May 16 to June 14, covering housing conditions, assets, and amenities. Phase II, the Population Enumeration, is scheduled for February 2027 with March



1 as the reference date. Officials emphasized that the entire process – from data collection to analysis – will be digital, using mobile apps and the Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS) portal.

Authorities assured stringent safeguards for confidentiality, with

individual data kept undisclosed and only aggregated results published.

A national toll-free helpline 1855 has been launched to assist citizens with queries. Officials stressed the importance of public awareness and cooperation, highlighting the role of media in dispelling miscon-

ceptions and encouraging participation.

The digital transformation, governed by the Census Act, 1948 and Census Rules, 1990, is expected to enhance transparency, accuracy, and timely publication of results, ensuring inclusive development and evidence-based governance.

CBI to meet Arunachal officials over SC-ordered inquiry into CM-linked contract irregularities

Itanagar, Apr 02: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will hold a coordination meeting with senior Arunachal Pradesh government officials on May 5 in connection with a Supreme Court-directed preliminary inquiry into alleged irregularities in government contract allocations in the state. According to an official notice issued by the Public Works Department (PWD), the meeting will be held at the Civil Secretariat in Itanagar at 4 pm and will be attended by CBI officials and nodal officers from multiple departments. The meeting is scheduled in connection with the case, Save Mon Region Federation vs State of Arunachal Pradesh & Others.

Senior officers, including chief engineers from departments such as PWD, Public Health Engineering, Urban Development, Water Resources, Rural Works, Hydropower and Power, have been asked to attend the meeting.



Officials have also been directed to furnish details sought by the CBI regarding several firms, including M/S Brand Eagles, M/S R D Constructions, M/S Alliances Traders, M/S Frontiers Associates, M/S Goleng Construction, M/S

Global Royal Constructions and M/S Khandu Construction. The notice stated that the required information must be submitted in the format prescribed by the investigating agency.

The Supreme Court had earlier

directed the CBI to conduct a preliminary inquiry into alleged irregularities linked to contract works in Arunachal Pradesh. The proposed inquiry is expected to examine the allegations and related records as part of the court-mandated process.

Nagaland Deputy CM unity for early solution to Naga political issue

Dimapur, Apr 02: Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton on Friday made a clarion call to Naga tribal leaders, civil society organisations and the Naga political groups to "I specifically urge the Naga political groups to unite and resolve the issue with the Government of India." Patton stated while addressing the Moatsü festival of the Ao Naga community at Chuchuyimlang village in Mokokchung district. Underscoring the urgency of resolution of the Naga political issue, Patton reminded the public that the current "oppositionless government" is specifically formed to expedite a resolution to the issue. He further appealed to church leaders to sensitise their members against election violence and to champion the cause of "clean elections". Patton paid glowing tribute to Ao pioneers such as P Shilu Ao, T Ao, and SC

Jamir, acknowledging their monumental contributions to the Naga society, Christianity, politics, and sports. Chuchuyimlang village erupted in vibrant festivity with deep cultural reverence during the celebration. Traditionally dedicated to honouring the gods of nature and seeking blessings for a bountiful harvest, this year's celebration served as a powerful platform for cultural exchange and a call for political solidarity. The festival witnessed a unique display of Naga brotherhood, with participation from 19 villages across the Mon, Tuensang, and Longleng districts. Patton expressed his delight at seeing these tribes celebrate together. The celebration featured a grand showcase of traditional dances and folk songs, concluding with a community feast that embodied the spirit of joy, unity and thanksgiving.

Padma Doree Launched Blending Northeast Eri Silk With Chanderi Weaving

Aizawl, May 02: TThe North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC), a CPSE under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), formally launched Padma Doree, a cross-cultural textile initiative blending the Eri (Ahimsa) silk traditions of Northeast India with the Chanderi weaving heritage of Madhya Pradesh. DigitalNews Platform The initiative was unveiled by MDoNER Secretary

Sanjay Jaju, who emphasized that the project reflects Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat. He noted that under the leadership of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, the collaboration has brought together two distinct textile traditions to create innovation alongside heritage. NewsContent Syndication The launch featured a fashion show highlighting the fusion of ethically produced Eri silk with the intricate motifs of Chan-

deri textiles. A curated exhibition walkthrough offered insights into the collaborative processes, positioning the initiative within the broader discourse on Indian textiles, indigenous knowledge systems, and sustainable luxury. The three-day exhibition, beginning today, has been designed as an interactive platform where visitors can engage directly with artisans, witness live demonstrations, and trace the journey from fibre to fabric. Artisans from

both regions are participating actively, sharing their craft traditions and enriching the showcase with regional culinary experiences. InspiringNortheast Stories NEHHDC Managing Director Mara Kocho described Padma Doree as an effort to integrate fibre traditions of the Northeast with Chanderi’s handloom heritage, thereby creating a sustainable textile ecosystem. The unveiling ceremony was attended by film director Muzaffar Ali, senior officials of MDoNER,

representatives from Madhya Pradesh Handloom, designers, and artisans. A central demand of the protest was for PM Modi to visit Manipur, a step they see as crucial to acknowledging the severity of the situation and initiating reconciliation efforts. “In nearly two years of unrest, the Prime Minister has not once visited the state nor expressed concern over the fresh wave of violence. He must be held accountable,” stated a leader from the bloc.

Naga Militants Arrested in Arunachal Pradesh

Kohima, May 02: In a joint operation, the Assam Rifles and Arunachal Pradesh Police apprehended three alleged militants linked to the NSCN-K (Niki Sumi) faction in Tirap district on Friday, May 1.Acting on specific intelligence inputs, security forces launched a coordinated operation in the Wancho Colony area of Khonsa. The three suspects were arrested following a swift search and interception operation.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Wingan Agan (33), Jhonny Riba (21), and Rajapeyu Khechan Khetey (30). Officials stated that all three were allegedly associated with the NSCN-K (Niki Sumi) outfit.During the operation, security forces recovered two 7.65 mm pistols with magazines, nine rounds of live ammunition, three mobile phones, three SIM cards, documents related to the GPRN, and suspected brown sugar valued at approximately ₹500.

Officials confirmed that the arrested individuals, along with the seized items, were handed over to the Arunachal Pradesh Police in Khonsa for further legal action and investigation.Security agencies have intensified counter-insurgency operations in Tirap and nearby districts in recent months to curb militant activities and strengthen regional security.

Indian Army Neutralises WWII-Era Unexploded Ordnance in Assam

Guwahati, May 02: A bomb disposal squad of the Indian Army on Thursday neutralised an unexploded ordnance (UXO - World War II vintage) after it was found in a civilian area at Ledo in Upper Assam’s Lekhapani, posing a potential threat to life and property.

The UXO measured approximately 12 inches in length and six inches in diameter.

Responding promptly to the information, Red Shield Sappers of the Indian Army swiftly mobilised a bomb disposal team to the site. The team immediately secured the area, evacuated civilians from the vicinity and established a safe perimeter, ensuring strict adherence to all safety protocols.

“The UXO was carefully handled and transported to a designated safe location away from civilian habitation. It was subsequently neutralised in a controlled manner, eliminating any risk without causing collateral damage,” defence sources said.

“The operation was executed with a high degree of professionalism, precision and adherence to established procedures. The timely and coordinated response ensured com-



plete safety of the local populace,” they said.

Notably, the Indian Army has shown unwavering commitment towards maintaining peace, security and stability in the region, while safeguarding civilian lives.

Illegal Influx Must Be Addressed to Protect Manipur’s Demography: Ex-CM

Imphal, May 02: Former Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh has underscored the need to maintain demographic balance and safeguard land rights and security of the State in a lawful and measured manner.“The situation unfolding in Manipur is often being portrayed as a conflict among its indigenous communities. This interpretation does not reflect the ground reality. The people of Manipur have a long history of coexistence, where recognised Scheduled Tribes (except for one tribe whose case is presently under review*), Meitei, Meitei Pangal, and individuals from other parts of India

have lived together with mutual respect and harmony,” Singh stated on his official X (formerly Twitter) handle.

“The present concerns arise from issues linked to undocumented and illegal infiltration from across international borders. It is important to clearly distinguish this from the settled and recognised communities within the State,” he stated.

“The challenge before us is not internal division, but the need to safeguard the demographic balance, land rights and security of the state in a lawful and measured manner. Once the issue of illegal infiltration is effectively addressed

through due process, many of the present tensions are expected to subside, restoring the natural equilibrium that has long defined Manipur’s society,” the former Chief Minister said.He however added that people who have come from within the country and have chosen to make Manipur their home need not feel apprehensive. “The Inner Line Permit system provides a structured and legal framework that governs entry and residence. With proper documentation and adherence to the law, every individual has the right to live, work, and contribute peacefully in Manipur,” he said.

Bangladesh raises concern over Assam CM’s remarks, summons Acting Indian Envoy in Dhaka

Guwahati, May 02: The Bangladesh government has formally expressed concern over recent remarks made by Himanta Biswa Sarma regarding the alleged deportation of undocumented migrants from Assam to Bangladesh, a development that has added strain to ongoing diplomatic discussions between the two neighbouring countries. According to reports emerging from Dhaka, Bangladesh on April 30 summoned acting Indian High Commissioner Pawan Badhe to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to register its protest over the comments made by the Assam chief minister earlier this week. Officials in Bangladesh reportedly conveyed their concern during the meeting and stressed that public statements on sensitive bilateral matters should be made carefully so that relations between the two countries are not affected. The Bangladeshi side is understood to have urged restraint in public communication, especially on issues linked to

migration and border-related matters, which remain politically and diplomatically sensitive for both nations. The diplomatic exchange came days after Sarma said that 20 foreign nationals had been caught in Assam and were later “pushed back to Bangladesh.” The statement triggered reactions in Bangladesh after the Assam chief minister also posted a remark on social media platform X saying, “Rude people don’t understand soft language,” while referring to action taken against alleged infiltrators. The remarks quickly drew attention on both sides of the border and sparked debate over the language used in addressing migration-related issues. Bangladesh reportedly described such statements as “counterproductive” and warned that comments made in public on delicate bilateral matters could create unnecessary tension between the two countries. India and Bangladesh share a long and complex border, and the issue of illegal immigration has remained a politically

sensitive subject in Assam for decades. The matter has often figured prominently in state politics, especially during election periods and discussions around identity, citizenship and border security. Assam, which shares an international border with Bangladesh, has witnessed repeated political debates over undocumented migration. Successive governments in the state have maintained that illegal infiltration affects demographic balance, land rights and access to government resources. The issue has also remained closely linked to the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) process in Assam. At the same time, Bangladesh has repeatedly maintained in the past that many individuals identified as illegal immigrants by Indian authorities are not necessarily Bangladeshi citizens. Dhaka has generally taken a cautious position on deportation-related claims and has often called for proper verification through diplomatic channels.

Bunkers Razed, Arms Seized in Manipur

Imphal, May 02: Security forces have destroyed 23 illegally constructed bunkers and recovered a cache of arms and explosives during separate operations in Manipur’s Ukhrul district and Tengnoupal district, police said on Saturday, May 2.According to police, the bunkers were demolished on Thursday during coordinated operations in the hill villages of Mongkot Chepu, Shongphel, Mullam, Sirarakhong, and Ringue under Litan police station limits in Ukhrul district.

During the operation, security personnel seized a 12-bore pump-action gun, 17 cartridges of different calibres, and 111 empty fired bullet cases from the area.Ukhrul district has witnessed recurring violence since February following clashes between the Tangkhul Naga and Kuki communities. At least seven people have been killed in separate fir-



ing incidents, and more than 30 houses have reportedly been burned during the unrest.

In another operation on Wednesday, security forces recovered arms and explosives from T Bongmol village under the Moreh police station area in Tengnoupal district.The recovered items included two single-barrel rifles, four 9mm pistols with magazines, and 18 improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The explosives were safely destroyed on-site following standard procedures.Security forces have intensified search and area domination operations across vulnerable and fringe areas of Manipur amid ongoing ethnic tensions and concerns over illegal arms and fortified positions in conflict-affected regions.

IIT-Guwahati Study Finds Work Culture Impacts Teachers

Guwahati, May 02: In a one-of-its-kind research conducted at Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati (IIT-G), Dr. Abraham Cyril Issac, Assistant Professor, School of Business at IIT-G, along with his research scholar, M.A. Jayasankar, has examined how workplace leadership and practices influence the emotional well-being and job satisfaction of school teachers.

The study highlights that when teachers are unable to be their true selves in the school, they feel stressed and dissatisfied at work.

The findings of this study have been published in the Qualitative Research in Organisations and Management journal, which explores “workplace authenticity”, the level to which teachers feel comfortable in expressing their true selves at work.

The research is notably relevant in the Indian context where hierarchical structures shape workplace environment.

The research team found that school teachers feel authentic when they interact with students, but under institutional pressure or in the presence of their senior colleagues, they may suppress their true identities. This imbalance contributes to lower job satisfaction and higher emotional strain.

Highlighting the key findings of the research, Dr Issac said, “In classrooms, authenticity breathes life into teaching; in corridors, its absence suffocates it”

To get first-hand insight for the research, the IIT-G research team conducted a detailed analysis of input from 30 teachers working in higher secondary school using open-ended essay questionnaires. By using a structured qualitative approach called the Gioia method, the research team identified key themes through iterative data analysis.



This approach reduced the IITG team’s dependency on pre-set assumptions and helped develop a “Teacher Workplace Authenticity Impact Model” (TWAIM) to demonstrate how teachers’ authenticity in the workplace shapes their professional experience.

The developed model found that teachers who report higher levels of authenticity also experience stronger organisational connection and improved resilience to challenges such as heavy workloads and criticism.

Contrary to this, work culture driven by organisational politics and pressure results in undermining authenticity, specifically for early-career teachers.

Speaking about the real-world application of these insights, Dr Issac said, “The most powerful reform in education isn’t structural — it’s cultural: let teachers be real, and performance will follow”

The researchers concluded that schools that promote authentic leadership and foster supportive peer environments could improve teacher well-being.

Further, initiatives such as leadership training, fair workload distribution and anti-bullying policies can elevate overall workplace culture and practices to build a holistic education hub for both teachers and students.

Thirteen Convicts Rearrested In Mizoram After Forged Release Orders Let Sixteen Escape From The Lunglei District Jail

Aizawl, May 02: Thirteen convicts have been rearrested after forged court orders were used to illegally release 16 inmates from Lunglei District Jail in Mizoram over four months, police said Friday. GeographicReference The fraud came to light when officials at the Lunglei District and Sessions Court found no records authorising the release of certain prisoners, raising doubts over the documents’ authenticity. According to Lalruatsanga, deputy superintendent of Lunglei District Jail, the illegal releases began in January and went undetected until last week.

A police complaint was filed by the presiding judge on April 25, triggering a large-scale search. “Thirteen convicts have been rearrested. Two others are still on the run, while one died after being released,” police said. Investigators said the forged release orders were convincing, with

fabricated seals and formats closely matching genuine documents. Police identified 22-year-old inmate Jeremiah Lalhangtura as the alleged mastermind, saying he ran the operation from inside the jail with outside help. Lalhangtura, who faces multiple cases including cheque fraud, cheating, and online scams, is being interrogated. Authorities are tracing his external collaborators who executed the forgeries. The case has flagged lapses in prison and judicial verification systems. Further investigation is underway. In a shocking breach of administrative and judicial protocol that has sent ripples through the Mizoram Home Department, police authorities have successfully rearrested 13 out of 16 convicts who were released from Lunglei District Jail based on forged judicial documents. The incident, described by officials as a sophisti-

cated “jailbreak via paperwork,” has exposed significant vulnerabilities in the communication channels between the judiciary and correctional facilities. The incident unfolded over several weeks, during which a series of meticulously crafted release orders, bearing the forged signatures and official seals of judicial officers, were delivered to the Lunglei Jail authorities.

These documents appeared to be legitimate court orders granting bail or commuting sentences for 16 inmates, most of whom were serving time for serious offenses, including theft, drug trafficking, and burglary. Unaware of the deception, jail officials processed the paperwork and released the inmates in batches. It was only during a routine cross-verification process between the court registry and the prison administration that the discrepancy was dis-

covered. To the horror of the district administration, the court confirmed that no such release orders had been issued. By the time the alarm was raised, 16 convicts had already walked out of the prison gates. Following the discovery, the Mizoram Police immediately launched a high-priority operation titled “Operation Integrity” to track down the escapees. Specialized teams from the Lunglei District Police, supported by intelligence units, fanned out across the state, focusing on the hometowns and known hideouts of the released convicts. The manhunt was complicated by the rugged terrain of southern Mizoram and the fact that several convicts had a head start of several days. However, through a combination of technical surveillance, community informants, and intensified border patrols, the police began closing in.

Assam Forest Department Officer Held in Corruption Case

Guwahati, May 02: Shivashis Shandilya, despite his name symbolizing blessings of Lord Shiva, could not escape the consequences of corruption. The forest officer, accused of taking bribes worth lakhs every month, has been caught by authorities.

Shandilya, who secured the top rank in the 2020 Assam Forest Service examination conducted by the Assam Public Service Commission, allegedly built a large fortune through corrupt practices soon after joining service.

On Friday, he was caught red-handed accepting a bribe of ₹12,000 from a dumper owner named Amrit Gogoi at his official residence in Lakhimpur. Officials from the anti-corruption branch arrested him on the spot.

Following his arrest, a raid at his government residence led to the recovery of ₹5.68 lakh in cash, found hidden inside an almirah and under a bed.

Serious allegations have emerged against Shandilya, including extorting money from dumper owners through threats. Reportedly, each dumper owner was forced to pay ₹2,000 daily. Even after issuing official challans, he allegedly continued demanding money and would stop vehicles on the road if payments were not made.

Further claims suggest a larger network of corruption within the forest department. Dumper owners allegedly had to pay around ₹40,000 monthly to the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) and ₹30,000 to the ranger.

In a shocking statement, a dumper owner named Indrajit Moran claimed before the media that over ₹3 crore had been paid as bribes to the Lakhimpur forest department over the past 25 years. Allegations also indicate involvement of multiple officials, including the DFO and other staff.

The anti-corruption team also conducted raids at Shandilya’s residence in Guwahati’s Japorigong area, seizing important documents.He was brought from Lakhimpur to Guwahati overnight and produced in court on Saturday. Investigations are ongoing.

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Editorial

The Unequal Access to Opportunities

Talent exists across regions and communities, but opportunities remain unevenly distributed. Students and job seekers from smaller towns often face disadvantages due to limited access to quality education, exposure, and professional networks.Urban centres continue to dominate in terms of resources and career opportunities, widening the gap between metropolitan and peripheral regions. Digital access has reduced some barriers, but disparities still persist.This imbalance affects social mobility and limits the potential of countless individuals who may never receive equal opportunities to succeed.Creating a more level playing field requires investment in regional institutions, skill development, and infrastructure. Opportunity should not depend solely on geography.

Bangladesh’s unfulfilled promise of decent work

May Day today is not just a commemoration. It is a checkpoint. It forces us to ask whether the country’s economic growth has translated into dignity for the common people, whether labour laws have become lived realities, and whether workers—especially women—are any closer to justice. Bangladesh stands as one of the world’s largest garment exporters, powered by over four million workers, the majority of them women. However, behind this rosy picture lies a complex reality where progress is constrained by resistance to change as well as deep inequalities. Over the past decade or so, Bangladesh has taken some important steps in labour governance.

The legacy of the Rana Plaza collapse remains a defining moment, one that forced both national and global actors to confront the consequences of weak regulation. Since then, there have been notable improvements in factory inspections, building safety, and compliance frameworks, due in large part to private initiatives like the Accord that pushed for meaningful changes. More

recently, Bangladesh under the interim government made a landmark move by ratifying three key International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions: Convention 155 on Occupational Safety and Health, Convention 187 on Promotional Framework for OSH, and Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment. These ratifications position the country as a regional leader in formal commitments to international labour standards. At the national level, ongoing labour law reforms and the work of the interim-era Labour Reform Commission have added momentum to discussions around decent work.

The commission emphasised strengthening labour inspection, expanding worker protections—including for domestic workers—and improving access to justice and social protection systems. These developments have created a framework for future progress, but frameworks alone do not change lives. If there is one issue that has persistently defined the gap between our reality and expectations, it is wages. The current minimum wage for

entry-level workers in the readymade garment (RMG) sector stands at Tk 12,500 per month. Set in 2023, this was an increase from the previous minimum of Tk 8,000, but it remains far below what workers need to sustain a basic standard of living.

Trade unions and labour rights groups have repeatedly called for a minimum wage in the range of Tk 23,000 to 25,000, based on basic cost-of-living calculations. The gap between the current and expected figures reflects, among other things, the imbalance of power in the wage-setting processes. Inflation further complicates this reality. In recent years, inflation in Bangladesh has hovered around 10-11 percent, eroding the real value of wages. Even with some recent easing in inflation as well as annual wage increments of around 9 percent, many workers find that their purchasing power has stagnated or declined. For many, survival still depends on overtime, debt, or cutting essential expenses. This raises a fundamental question: can an economy be considered successful if its workers re-

main trapped in a cycle of low wages?Labour rights are not only about wages, however.

They are also about voice. The labour law recognises the right to form trade unions, and recent reforms have attempted to ease some restrictions. However, in practice, challenges remain. Workers continue to report barriers to union registration, and cases of intimidation and retaliation are not uncommon. Without effective freedom of association, labour reforms risk becoming procedural rather than transformative. Workers, therefore, must be able to negotiate collectively, raise grievances, and participate meaningfully in shaping their working conditions.

The ILO has repeatedly emphasised the importance of social dialogue in wage-setting and labour governance practices. Without this, policies risk being disconnected from reality. There is no effective substitute for genuine social dialogue and collective bargaining through trade unions.We should also talk about workplace safety, which has improved since Rana Plaza, but risks

persist. Reports indicate that hundreds of workers still lose their lives each year due to workplace accidents across various sectors.

This highlights that compliance systems exist but enforcement remains inconsistent. Against this backdrop, ratifying all 11 ILO fundamental instruments as the first Asian country to do so is an important step, but as labour advocates often remind us, ratification does not automatically lead to protection. Implementation—through sustained inspections, accountability, and worker participation—is what ultimately matters.

Beyond the RMG and other industrial sectors, the majority of Bangladesh’s workforce operates in the informal economy. Domestic workers, construction labourers, transport workers, and agricultural workers often lack written contracts, social protection, and access to legal remedies. The Labour Reform Commission acknowledged the need to extend protections to these workers, but translating this into an enforceable policy remains a major challenge. A

labour system that protects only the formal sector, leaving millions behind, is not inclusive, and we must strive to change this reality.Another emerging reality is the intersection of labour and climate. Bangladesh is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. Heat waves, floods, and other extreme weather events are already affecting people’s productivity, health, and livelihoods. Workers in factories and informal sectors are increasingly exposed to dangerous conditions. Despite that, climate resilience has not been fully integrated into labour policies. Basic protections such as rest breaks, access to water, and safe working conditions during extreme heat are not consistently enforced. The future of work in Bangladesh will be shaped by how well our policymakers respond to the challenges of climate change, automation, and economic transitions. Let’s get back to women workers, who remain at the centre of Bangladesh’s economic success but continue to face structural inequalities. The ratification of ILO Convention 190 is

a significant milestone in addressing workplace violence and harassment, but implementation, again, has been a key challenge. Gender-based discrimination, unequal pay, and limited leadership opportunities persist.

Ensuring gender justice requires more than legal provisions; it requires institutional commitment, workplace accountability, and cultural change.So, what is the way forward for us? Bangladesh does not need to start from scratch. The foundations—laws, institutions, and international commitments—are already in place. What is needed is delivery.First, the wage-setting exercise must accommodate a living wage framework that reflects real costs of living. This will require not only national policy changes but also responsible purchasing practices from global brands. Second, freedom of association must be ensured on the ground; simplifying union registration and protecting worker leaders are critical steps. Third, labour protections must extend to all informal workers, supported by social protection systems and

legal recognition. Fourth, climate resilience must be integrated into labour policies, ensuring that workers are protected from emerging risks. Fifth, creating safe and women-friendly workplaces must be a priority. Women workers must be able to work free from harassment, discrimination, and insecurity.

This requires effective implementation of protections against violence and harassment, equal pay, access to functional grievance mechanisms, and real opportunities for leadership and advancement. Finally, proper enforcement of all policies and conventions must be a top priority. Without implementation, even the strongest laws remain symbolic.Over the years, Bangladesh’s workers have built industries, sustained families, and contributed to global supply chains. Their role in the country’s economic success is undeniable. The question is whether that success will translate into lasting gains. May Day reminds us that labour rights cannot be static; they must be continuously fought for, negotiated, and realised over time.

The luxurious retirement was invented in Britain, but this golden period is coming to an end

When you think of retirement, what comes to mind? Perhaps it is images of older people enjoying a well-deserved period of leisure and comfort in the final stretch of their lives. Cruise ships, garden centres, golf clubs and bungalows by the sea. The truth is that this image is now, in large part, the artefact of a bygone age. A long and comfortable retirement starting at 60 or 65 is beginning to look like a collective social experience whose moment has passed. The political and economic forces it relied upon appear to have run their course – and it’s time to start thinking about what comes next.Retirement in Britain has a surprisingly short history, underpinned by dramatic improvements in older people’s quality of life over the past 50 years. Large public and private bureaucracies first started to enrol long-serving employees into pension schemes from the mid-19th century. In 1909, Britain was the first country to pioneer an old age pension, funded by the state and targeting the poorest, who could claim it from the age of 70. But it was only after the second world war that a period of leisured old age become an ordinary expectation for most British workers.These aspira-

tional lifestyles had many sources. The state pension had been made universal by Clement Attlee’s Labour government, alongside expanding occupational pension schemes and rising home ownership. In the 1960s, retirees acquired a taste for travel through the explosion in cheap package holidays, and in the 1970s and early 1980s embraced lifelong learning by joining such bodies as the Open University and the University of the Third Age. As healthy life expectancy rose against a backdrop of full employment, high wages and free NHS care, older Britons enjoyed earlier and more active retirements. Gone were the days of working until your body gave out simply to make ends meet.Not everything was golden for the over-60s. As economic conditions worsened during the 1970s, some workers in declining industries felt moral pressure to accept redundancy and preserve jobs for the young. Income inequalities deepened during the 1980s as Conservative governments allowed the value of the state pension to fall and encouraged individuals to build private pension pots and invest them in volatile global equity markets. When these performed well, the rewards

could be substantial. But so were the risks, a fact brought home by the financial crisis of 2007-8, which saw the value of pension funds plunge.Yet viewed in the aggregate and over the longer term, older Britons became steadily wealthier. When the large postwar cohorts of baby boomers began to retire around the millennium, they formed the richest, fittest and best-educated generation of retirees yet. Those with inflation-proofed, final-salary pensions could exercise unprecedented choice over retiring early or staying in work, the latter path enabled by age-friendly employers and flexible modes of self-employment. This contributed to a movement away from ever-earlier retirements in the 2000s. Meanwhile, those with weaker pension rights, including many women and ethnic-minority citizens, alongside disabled and chronically sick people, benefited from New Labour’s minimum income guarantee, winter fuel allowance and free television licences. In 2003, for the first time in postwar history, the proportion of pensioners experiencing relative poverty dropped below the national average.Older people’s demands for better retirements have

forced successive governments to act, and kept these issues on the agenda. Pensioner organisations campaigned for more generous treatment since the 1930s, but only in the later 20th century did they become powerful advocacy bodies. One major voice was Age Concern, which merged with Help the Aged to become Age UK in 2010. Another was the National Pensioners’ Convention, founded in 1979 and with close links to the trade union movement. Both worked relentlessly to keep older people’s needs in the public spotlight and at the forefront of ministerial agendas.Moreover, when retirement dreams were imperilled, Britons were prepared to fight back, as exemplified by the angry Mirror Pensioners ripped off by Robert Maxwell’s crookery in the early 1990s, or the Waspi women who continue to press for financial compensation following the equalisation of men and women’s state pension age.Emboldened by the new language of “ageism” and, from 2006, legal protections against age discrimination, the over-60s argued for their rights. With strength in numbers at the ballot box, they discovered that they did not have to settle for less, simply because they were

old.All of this represents a remarkable social achievement. While many still experience financial hardship, the indignity of having to scrape by to keep yourself warm, clothed and fed in old age has diminished dramatically since the mid-20th century. Yet this historic improvement has attracted less celebration than might be expected. In recent times, the politics of ageing has taken a new turn.In the aftermath of the financial crash and under the sword of the coalition government’s spending cuts, debates on the economy and welfare state sharpened around questions of intergenerational fairness. Ageing boomers were reimagined in books such as David Willetts’s The Pinch: How the Baby Boomers Took Their Children’s Future and Why They Should Give It Back as a problem generation whose selfishness was destabilising public finances and fuelling social conflict. A narrative took hold in which younger Britons, saddled with student debt, dogged by sluggish wage growth and locked out of home ownership, were suffering in order to preserve the triple-locked state pension and boomer assets. With no guarantee of a similarly comfortable retire-

ment for themselves, the generational contract was broken. The Brexit referendum and Covid pandemic drove the wedge deeper.Much was left out of this account, not least the inequalities existing within generations, as well as the cross-generational solidarities of family. Nonetheless, governments need to wake up to the fact that generational politics will play a big part in shaping the future of retirement. When generation X, now in their 40s and 50s, begin to retire, pensioner incomes are likely to fall, drawing to a close the chapter that has seen every postwar cohort enjoy greater security in later life than the one that went before. This is because, as recent research by the Social Market Foundation reveals, generation X entered the labour market at a moment when generous defined-benefit schemes were being replaced by defined contribution, which were less costly for employers and riskier for workers. As a result, retirees of the 2030s and 40s will have smaller pension pots than the boomers, although they will leave work with more housing wealth than the millennials and gen Z coming behind them. Since 2012 firms have been obliged to enrol employ-

ees in pension schemes, meaning that those younger cohorts are now saving. But nowhere near enough.In short, we stand on the brink of a renewed era of old-age austerity. Much rests on how Britons respond. Some are already embracing the so-called FIRE movement, reducing their consumption in the hope that they can achieve Financial Independence, Retire Early. Others seem resigned to the prospect of working late into their 60s or 70s, forgoing the sunset years of leisure enjoyed by their parents and grandparents.Can anything be done to keep the dream of a comfortable retirement alive for future generations? Pensions reform might safeguard basic living standards, but in the longer term our ideas about later life need to change. There must be no return to the days when Britons retired into poverty after decades of hard manual labour. Instead, we should rethink how to blend work, care, learning and leisure across the life course, harnessing technologies and embracing ways of being that sustain rather than harm our planet. The right to retire was yesterday’s struggle. Today’s is the right to live a good, meaningful life, and to live it right to the end.

If I could vote in next week’s Senedd election, I’d choose Plaid Cymru. Here’s why

If I were living in Wales, next week I would vote Welsh nationalist, for Plaid Cymru. But I would do so for what its leader claims to support but doesn’t talk about enough: independence. Wales is where I have spent a fifth of each year for almost all of my life. Its natural beauty, the charm of (most of) its towns and the talents of its people should render it the richest place in the UK outside London.So why is it one of the poorest? The figures hardly bear reciting. Wales’s growth rate has limped at barely half of England’s for a quarter-century. Its GDP per head is lower than any region in the UK other than the north-east of England.

Wales comes bottom of almost every UK league table on healthcare. The median waiting time for elective treatment has almost doubled since before Covid – much higher than the current level in England. And waiting times in major A&E departments in Wales have worsened over the past two years, with almost half of patients waiting more than four hours for treatment.More than

a third of Welsh schoolchildren are persistently absent, according to an Institute for Fiscal Studies report, a figure that has more than doubled since 2019. In its programme for international student assessment (PISA) rankings – the global benchmark for education quality – Wales was below the OECD average and falling ever further behind the rest of the UK. The proportion of 18-year-olds progressing to higher education was only 29% in 2025, compared with 37% in England.This is not a matter of money. Wales spends more per head on health, education and social care than England.

The reality is that Wales is badly governed. Since devolution in 1999, the Labour party has been in power in Cardiff, with £21bn of its current budget covered in a subvention from the government in London. The national anthem of Welsh politics has always been that this is not enough. Yet Welsh Labour splurges money. For some reason, it is increasing its Senedd from 60 members to 96 after May’s election. The government building in Aberystwyth, which was

only built in 2009, may close due to low attendance, with only 15% of its staff turning up in March last year. Spending is reckless – witness the £46m recently blown on a quite unnecessary new River Dyfi crossing. The idea of Celtic independence from Britain has long seemed absurd – at least to many people in England – but after next week’s elections, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland may be represented by parties with separatist ambitions. Such is the obsessive centralism of successive Westminster governments that the UK could yet share with the former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia a failure to sustain a stable union.In the case of Plaid Cymru’s new leader, Rhun ap Iorwerth, Welsh independence is no more than an aspiration, perhaps worthy of a commission of inquiry.

This aspiration would carry more conviction were he not promising yet more spending with no suggestion as to its donor. As with all separatists, he seems to think independence would be painless. Yet there is no reason why Wales should be different

from other smaller European nations such as Slovenia or Luxembourg. It is bigger than them, and rejoining the EU would make borders with England permeable. As for dependency, the case of Ireland glares at us from across the Irish Sea.Ireland, on its departure from the UK in 1921, was desperately poor, defensive of its identity and hostile to newcomers.

It behaved much as Wales does today, with its hiked taxes on holiday homes, and a proposed new tax on overnight tourist stays. Ireland duly got poorer. Then, in the 1960s and with a population smaller than today’s Wales, it took a deep breath and about-turned. Dublin aggressively welcomed international firms with tax breaks and tourists with second homes. It backed its universities to keep talent at home.

Helped by joining the EU, Ireland plotted a route to what became the Celtic tiger in the 1990s. This saw it roaring ahead of Britain in per capita wealth. Like Denmark, Ireland showed that in economics small can mean rich. Today, Ireland’s GDP per capita is significantly higher than the

UK’s.There is no reason why Wales should not do likewise. It has a fine labour force, albeit underemployed. It is a fine place to live. Its mountains are lovelier than the Cotswolds – if it does not wreck them with wind turbines.

Its port of Milford Haven beats any in Ireland and its small towns are exquisite. It has some of Britain’s best cheeses, its best local paper, the Cambrian News, and its lowest house prices. Wales should be to the Midlands, Merseyside and Manchester what the south-east of England is to London.So how to get from here to there? There are, of course, degrees of independence.

I can see the objections surging over the horizon. But elsewhere in Europe people have found answers to centralist fanatics such as those in London. They start in self-confidence and end in self-reliance. Wales should set aside its identity paranoia, open itself up and slim itself down. If, as seems likely, ap Iorwerth wins next week, he should look across the water to Dublin’s example. There lies the future for Wales.

BSE Small, Midcap indices set to post

Mumbai: The BSE Small, Midcap indices are set to report their sharpest monthly rally in 12 years. In April 2026 (till Wednesday), the BSE Smallcap index surged 20.1 per cent, while the BSE Midcap index soared 14.8 per cent. In comparison, the BSE Sensex was up 7.7 per cent. Earlier, in May 2014, the BSE Smallcap index had zoomed 20.4 per cent and Midcap index by 15.6 per cent, the BSE data shows. In the short-term , analysts see the overall market structure weakening as long as crude oil prices stay firm and the Strait of Hormuz remains closed for business. From a technical perspective, 23,800 levels (Nifty), analysts said, remains a key support, and a decisive break below this could accelerate downside toward 23,600–23,400 levels. The benchmark Sensex had gained 8 per cent back

then. Among 1,262 stocks from the BSE Smallcap index, over half, or 734 stocks, outperformed in April by recording more than 20 per cent return. Of these 84 stocks zoomed over 50 per cent, and 474 stocks rallied between 25 per cent and 50 per cent. The recent rally, according to Gaurang Shah, head investment strategist at Geojit Investments, was on the back of a host of factors that included hope of stable March 2026 quarter (Q4-FY26) earnings and retail investor interest amid lack of investment opportunities in the primary markets. “That apart, small-and midcaps had a bad 2025, so the valuations in a lot of stocks were juicy. I expect the markets to remain choppy in the months ahead. To that extent, these two segments will also remain volatile. Stock selection will be key,” he said.

Rupee crashes to all-time low of 95.32 per dollar as crude soars to 3-year high above \$125

Mumbai: The Indian Rupee has once again fallen below the 95 mark against the US dollar and hit a new record low. The depreciation in the currency comes largely on the back of a surge in crude oil prices, which hit their 3-year high over the US-Iran standoff. On Thursday, the domestic currency opened at the 95.02 mark per dollar, down 0.2% from its previous close of 94.84 against the greenback. The currency then slipped to a new record low of 95.32 against the dollar surpassing its March’s record low of 95.22 per dollar. The Indian rupee fell to a record low on Thursday, as investors fretted over the economic risks confronting India from a resurgence in crude oil prices to 2022 highs, threatening the inflation-economic growth balance for the net energy importer and sapping capital flows. This marks the currency’s second breach of the 95-level mark. So far this year the currency has fallen by nearly 6%. The weakening of the currency is majorly being driven by the surge in oil prices. Brent crude futures are trading over the \$126/bbl mark, at their highest level in over three years. While the US benchmark, West Texas Intermediate, too is quoted high around the \$110/bbl level. With the dual blockade of the conduit, markets are concerned about when shipments through

the route, which carries nearly 20% of global energy flows, will resume. “Over the past three months, oil alone has added \$12–13 billion every month to the import bill. That’s not just a number; that’s pressure. The US Dollar Index rose after the US Federal Reserve delivered its policy decision, which has been deemed relatively hawkish. The US central bank held rates steady and reinforced a “higher-for-longer” stance. The index, which measures the strength of the greenback, is trending up on the day. A rise in the dollar index increases demand for the greenback, making it a safe haven for investors, as they tend to shift away from riskier emerging market currencies like the rupee. Markets also expect a rather hawkish stance from the European Central Bank and the Bank of England. “The tone is likely to stay hawkish, with hints of possible hikes in the coming months,” Pabari added. RBI is intervening “The RBI is intervening, and will continue to intervene, but the central bank’s strategy here is volatility management, not level defence,” said Anindya Banerjee, Head of Commodity and Currency Research at Kotak Securities.— pressure on the trade deficit, pressure on inflation, and ultimately, pressure on the rupee,” said Amit Pabari,



Managing Director at CR Forex Advisors. FPI outflow on rise Pabari added that foreign investors have already pulled out nearly \$20 billion from Indian equities this year, surpassing the \$18 billion outflow of 2025. “When money leaves, demand for dollars rises and the rupee feels the pressure,” he said. The high crude prices weigh on emerging market currencies like the Indian rupee, as oil is predominantly traded in dollars. High crude prices increase the demand for dollars, adding to the downside for the rupee. Other Asian currencies like Indonesian rupiah, Thai Bhat, and Phillippine peso too

extended declines. The stalled shipments through the Strait of Hormuz route have also created an environment of uncertainty, as India, a net oil importer, imports a large chunk of its oil and energy supplies from the Middle East. “The main effect on the rupee has been from the rising oil prices, which again touched \$120 per barrel and looked headed for further upside, as the US continues with its blockade of Iranian ports while Iran does not allow any ship/tanker to pass through the Strait of Hormuz,” said Anil Kumar Bhansali, head of treasury at Finrex Treasury Advisors

Bajaj Finance shares jump 3%: AUM hits Rs 5 lakh crore, Q4 profit jumps 22%

Mumbai: The Bajaj Finance shares jumped 3% in today’s trade after the company reported its quarterly earnings for the fourth quarter of FY26. The numbers were broadly in line with estimates, driven by healthy operating performance and a sharp moderation in provisions. The leading NBFC recorded a 22% year-over-year (YoY) rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 5,553 crore for Q4FY26, compared with Rs 4,546 crore in the same period a year ago. The firm’s assets under management (AUM) crossed the Rs 5 lakh crore milestone, standing at Rs 5.09 lakh crore as of March 2026, compared to Rs 4.16 lakh crore a year ago, an increase of 22% YoY. During the quarter, AUM expanded by Rs 25,498 crore. The company recorded 12.89 million new loans in the quarter, representing a 20% increase from 10.7 million in the same period last year. Its customer base increased by 17% year-over-year to 119.33 million, with a gain of 3.93 million customers in just Q4. The lend-



er’s asset quality remained steady, with gross non-performing assets (GNPA) at 1.01% and net NPA at 0.41% as of Q4FY26, compared to 0.96% and 0.44%, respectively, a year ago. Provisioning coverage on stage 3 assets stood at 60%. The company upheld a robust capital

position, boasting a capital adequacy ratio of 21.55%, which includes a Tier-I capital of 20.67%, offering significant capacity for future expansion. Bajaj Finance dividend announcement Also, the Board has recommended a final dividend of Rs 6 per

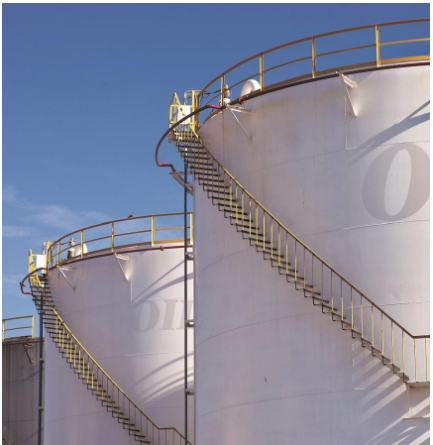
share for the financial year ended March 2026. According to JM Financial, “strong franchise scale, sustained 20%+ AUM growth, sector-leading RoA/RoE, structurally lower credit cost guidance and increasing secured mix provide high earnings visibility.” The brokerage house pointed out that continued AI-led operating efficiencies and strong provisioning buffers further improve resilience and support superior compounding over the medium term.

Apart from that, Rajiv Bajaj will be stepping down from the board at the end of his current term, after deciding not to seek reappointment.

His tenure as a non-executive director will conclude at the close of the company’s upcoming annual general meeting. JM Financial on Bajaj Finance JM Financial maintained a ‘Buy’ with a revised target price of 1,080 per share, valuing the stock at 4.2x FY28 P/BV. This implies 16% upside from current levels.

OMCs under pressure as Nifty Oil & Gas index slips 1.6%

Mumbai: Shares of oil and gas companies came under pressure on Thursday (April 30) as the Nifty Oil & Gas index declined 1.65 per cent, tracking a sharp surge in global crude oil prices, with futures crossing the \$126 per barrel mark. The soaring oil prices also weighed on broader market sentiment, with the benchmark Nifty 50 index falling 1.55 per cent to the 23,800 mark during intraday trade. Among others, Reliance Industries, the country’s largest company by market capitalisation, was down 1.94 per cent. Mahanagar Gas, GAIL (India), HPCL, BPCL and Aegis Logistics were trading lower by over 2 per cent each. Petronet LNG, Chennai Petroleum Corporation, Indian Oil Corporation, Oil India, Castrol India, Indraprastha Gas, Gujarat State Petronet and ONGC were trading lower in the range of 0.30–1.89 per cent. The markets, Gaurav Sharma, head of equity commodity at Globe Capital, said, are tumbling due to elevated crude oil prices. At the last check, Brent crude futures were quoted at \$125.20 per barrel, up 6.07 per cent, while WTI crude stood at \$109.53 per For Reliance Industries, he suggested waiting for levels close to ₹1,435–₹1,440 before considering entry. barrel, higher by 2.48 per cent. “For the past three days, we have been seeing a con-



sistent and steady rise in crude oil prices, which is negative for the overall Indian industry. As far as oil marketing companies are concerned, they will also not remain unaffected. It is negative for them as well,” said Sharma. Despite the near-term pressure, Sharma remains selectively optimistic and sees limited opportunities in the refining space, naming Oil India and Chennai Petroleum as his preferred picks. Meanwhile, the Nifty Oil & Gas index was down 1.50 per cent at 11,592 levels at 10:19 AM on Thursday, with Adani Total Gas being the top laggard, trading lower by over 4 per cent.

Will Maruti reclaim ₹15,000-mark Analyst flags key hurdle

Mumbai: Maruti stock has been a laggard on the stock exchanges in the calendar year 2026 thus far. The stock has declined nearly 21 per cent as against a near 7.5 per cent correction in the NSE benchmark Nifty 50 index.

In April, so far, the Maruti Suzuki India stock has managed to gain 7.7 per cent in line with a broader market recovery, wherein the Nifty surged 8.3 per cent.

The daily chart shows that the stock has been under constant pressure ever since it dipped below the ₹15,000-mark in late February. At current levels, Maruti stock is seen trading below the medium-term and long-term moving averages.

The technical chart shows that Maruti trades below the 50-, 100- and 200-day moving averages (DMAs), which stand at ₹13,625, ₹14,806 and ₹14,768, respectively. The stock, however, quotes above its 20-DMA, which stands at ₹13,141. Technical analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan highlights that the stock is seen also trading above its 20-day exponential moving average (20-DEMA), thus showing strength. Muthuselvaraj M, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan believes that the stock has the potential to rally past the ₹15,000-mark, provided it clears the critical hurdle around ₹14,000 levels. The analyst from Mirae Asset Sharekhan believes that Maruti stock is in a consolidation phase, after correcting by 30 per cent from its peak and

forming a daily triangle pattern.

Muthuselvaraj expects the stock to push towards ₹15,180 - ₹15,980 levels, in case it breaks above the ₹14,057 hurdle. This the analyst explains is the 38 per cent retracement of a fall from its high of ₹17,370 to its recent low at ₹12,240). The upper end of the anticipated target prices, translates into a potential upside of 20.5 per cent from its last close. Among the key momentum oscillators, the daily MACD’s positive crossover near the zero line indicates short-term buying. Hence, the analyst has a positive outlook on the stock. Axis Securities on Maruti Suzuki India Axis Securities has retained its ‘Buy’ rating on Maruti stock, but lowered its projected target price from ₹16,860 to ₹14,620 levels. The revised valuation is based on 26x PE on FY28E Earnings Per Share (EPS). Commenting on its rating rationale, the brokerage highlights that domestic demand for Maruti remained strong in Q4, supported by the GST reduction-led recovery. Exports also jumped up to 34.6 per cent YoY to 4,47,774 units. The company expects to sustain the current run-rate of ~1.30,000–1,40,000 units per quarter, supported by its diversified global presence, while the upcoming eVX rollout remains a key growth catalyst. In the near term, the company expects mid-single-digit domestic volume growth in FY27E and double-digit export volume growth, the note stated.

SAS makes India a hub for analytics and artificial intelligence

Mumbai: CTO, told FE. Even as it pushes into frontier areas like quantum, SAS is keeping analytics at the core of its strategy. At its annual conference, SAS Innovate, the company introduced SAS Quantum Lab, a specialised environment within the Viya platform aimed at helping organisations experiment with and apply quantum AI in real-world scenarios. “It serves as a launchpad for customers to bridge the gap between traditional computing and experimental quantum

technologies,” Harris said. Go-to-market strategy is also evolving. SAS is leaning more heavily on partnerships with system integrators, SAS is no ‘s’ teams is now designing, building and refining platforms deployed worldwide. The transition, however, goes beyond scale to something more structural. “The R&D consolidation is not just about scale, but about ownership,” Harris said. Teams in India are now embedded across critical areas such as advanced analytics, cloud-native

data platforms and emerging technologies. operations, creating a steady demand pipeline. Cloud adoption is a major driver here. As organisations look to unify data and automate decision-making, SAS is positioning its offerings as enterprise-grade, scalable platforms that support both experimentation and production workloads. Government-led digital initiatives are adding further tailwinds, with analytics becoming central to policy execution and service delivery.

Nomura and Ambit warn of tighter RBI provisioning and quicker IBC recovery

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

window.” This gives lenders the ability to take quicker decisions and engage directly with potential buyers, improving speed of resolution. At the same time, the report notes that such a system will require careful monitoring to ensure fair price discovery. For banks, the change is significant because it reduces procedural delays that previously lock capital in stressed assets for years. Nomura says not all banks are affected equally by the new provisioning framework. The report says, “The impact on PSU and mid-tier banks will be higher; several PSU banks have highlighted that the one-time provisioning hit could impact net worth by 3–9%.” Public sector banks typically carry higher levels of legacy stressed assets, which makes the transition to stricter provisioning more painful. At the same time, these banks also benefit more from faster insolvency resolutions, as a large portion of their bad loans are tied to corporate borrowers that fall under the insolvency process. Private banks better placed due to stronger buffers. One of the biggest structural benefits of the insolvency reform is the potential to release capital tied up in unresolved cases. Ambit Capital says the new framework will “support faster capital recycling and improved recovery outcomes.” By reducing delays

and improving clarity in the resolution process, banks can convert stressed assets into cash more quickly. This improves capital efficiency and allows lenders to redeploy funds into new loans. The impact is particularly important for banks with large corporate exposure, where recovery timelines have historically been long and uncertain. Large private sector banks are relatively better positioned to absorb the impact of tighter norms. Nomura says, “Large private banks are better placed, in our view, as the transition impact would be lower given provision buffers of around 2–4% of net worth.” Two forces at play, higher provisioning and faster recovery. Taken together, the Nomura and Ambit Capital reports point to a system where banks are being pushed to recognise stress earlier while also being given tools to resolve it faster. Ambit Capital says, “For banks, benefits are two-fold – stronger ongoing recoveries for corporate-focused lenders and one-off P&L gains from TWO recoveries.” This dual effect means that while earnings may come under pressure in the near term due to higher provisioning, recoveries from previously written-off assets could support profits later. A key structural change in the insolvency

framework is the introduction of a creditor-driven resolution mechanism, which reduces dependence on lengthy tribunal proceedings. Nomura says the Reserve Bank of India’s move to Expected Credit Loss based provisioning changes how banks recognise risk across loan books. The immediate consequence is a hit to profitability and capital. Nomura estimates that for several public sector banks, the one-time transition could reduce net worth by 3% to 9%, while capital ratios also see some drag before stabilising. Ambit Capital says the other side of the equation lies in the resolution of stressed assets under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code. The brokerage says, “The shift to enforceable timelines is expected to enhance recovery NPV by compressing resolution cycles.” The report says, “Implementation of the ECL norms will result in higher upfront provisioning, especially in unsecured retail, MSME and corporate exposures.” Under the new system, banks classify loans into three stages depending on stress levels, with sharply higher provisioning required once accounts begin to slip. This forces lenders to account for potential losses earlier rather than waiting for defaults to fully materialise.

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 instill 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 seemingly 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.

Before the midterms, US health officials seem to avoid discussing vaccines



Washington: As the midterm elections in November approach and important polls suggests that anti-vaccine opinions are a liability, US health professionals seem to be reluctant to publicly express their disapproval of vaccines. In the last year, health officials have drastically altered routine vaccination recommendations, eliminating one-third of the US pediatric schedule, including the hepatitis B vaccination advice at birth. However, despite Donald Trump’s pollsters suggested shifting away from anti-vaccine beliefs ahead of the elections, officials have not supported these significant revisions, even before a federal judge effectively invalidated them. US health officials appear to be very focused on the midterms. Marty Makary, commissioner of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), mentioned support from the “Make America healthy again” (Maha) movement in the 2024 election during a conference on women’s health in March that was hosted by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). He stated, “Mothers turned out to vote for the Maha agenda.” During his 30-minute “fireside chat”

with Mercedes Schlapp, one of the conference organizers, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the HHS secretary and lifelong opponent of vaccines, made no mention of vaccines during the conservative CPAC conference at the end of March. Kennedy did not resort to his twenty years of rhetoric about immunizations and toxic exposures when Schlapp asked him what counsel he would provide to “Maha moms” or “Maha parents.” Rather, he stated: “Cell phones and social media are the biggest threats that we’re facing now.” Kennedy discussed bringing back and flipping the food pyramid as well as eliminating nine artificial food dyes when asked about his accomplishments in the previous year and future goals. Health organizations have not done much to update baby formula, despite the fact that it is a declared priority. Katelyn Jetelina, creator of Your Local Epidemiologist, claimed that the administration had only achieved “headline wins” rather than addressing the “root cause” of health problems. Trump’s executive order on glyphosate, a herbicide marketed as Roundup that the Maha movement opposes, earlier this year also caused cha-

os among the health secretary’s Maha supporters. According to Jetelina, environmental and nutritional concerns are more important to the Maha grassroots than vaccinations. “Obviously it’s something that’s really personal to RFK, who’s built a career and history around that,” she said. Yet for the average Maha voter, “it sure seems like they’re moving away” from opposition to vaccines, she added. Among voters surveyed in the 35 most competitive congressional districts, there was “strong bipartisan support for routine childhood vaccines”, Tony Fabrizio and Bob Ward wrote in December – and that holds across the Maha movement, they found, with most Maha voters rejecting changes to childhood immunizations. These “high levels of trust in vaccines” mean “scepticism toward vaccine requirements is politically risky for both parties”, they concluded. “My perception is absolutely that messaging has gone out to downplay anti-vaccine messaging,” said Elizabeth Jacobs, an epidemiology professor at the University of Arizona and a founding member of Defend Public Health. “It seems like somebody has advised him to stop doing anti-vaccine stuff.” But Kennedy did make quiet references to his long-held anti-vaccine ideologies. He “had been watching this deterioration in the health of our children, the rise of chronic disease, since 2005”, he said. That’s the year Kennedy penned an explosive article for Rolling Stone and Salon – later retracted by Salon – claiming vaccines cause autism. The reference is “a major glaring

sign that he is talking about vaccines, for sure”, said Jacobs. Kennedy has blamed higher recognized rates of autism – widely believed to be the result of improvements in diagnoses – upon vaccines, despite dozens of studies finding no link. “I never knew anybody with autism,” Kennedy said at CPAC. “Suddenly they’re everywhere.” He did not mention the changes in how autistic people receive support, with a greater emphasis on providing care within the community instead of institutionalizing them out of sight, as was common during Kennedy’s childhood. “And when I started talking about it, I got censored. And I prayed every day for 19 years that God would put me in a position to change this,” he said. Under Kennedy, the US ended full recommendations on shots to protect against the flu, rotavirus, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and others. Kennedy in the past year “was a bull in the china shop. They just broke everything,” Jacobs said. The head of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Jay Bhattacharya, only brought up vaccinations once during CPAC, to emphasize how shingles immunization may help prevent Alzheimer’s. He stated, “Researchers are looking into whether a shingles vaccine, which I received a while back, might actually lower the risk of Alzheimer’s disease.” However, he also frequently reiterated Kennedy’s statements about “chronic disease,” a term Kennedy regularly employs to describe autism. “I know we are in the middle of a chronic disease crisis despite all our scientific progress,” he declared.

German outcry over a rule forcing males to obtain military permission before spending extended periods of time overseas

Europe: The law requires men up to 45 years old to obtain authorization from the armed forces before any significant stay abroad, even during peacetime. This little-known provision in comprehensive reforms to Germany’s military service policy has sparked controversy. Aiming to strengthen the military, the law, which went into effect on January 1st, requires all 18-year-old men to complete a questionnaire to determine whether they are qualified to serve in the armed forces. However, it does not impose conscription. As the legislation passed the lower house of the Bundestag in December, defense minister Boris Pistorius stated that if the “modernized” model fails to attract enough recruits, parliament will be forced to examine the reinstatement of compulsory service. Men between the ages of 17 and 45 would need to ask for permission to leave Germany for longer than three months, according to the fine print, which was mostly ignored until a media article brought it to light this week. Millions of German nationals who are starting anything from a new job or sabbatical to a gap year or study abroad could be impacted by the clause. In a nation where schoolchildren subject to the new requirements of the law have already staged street protests in response to the changes to the military service policy, it sparked heated media coverage. The requirement was initially published by the Frankfurter Rundschau newspaper, and it was ver-



ified by the defense ministry. According to a ministry official, the new law was created to create a framework for conscription if necessary, necessitating the whereabouts of prospective conscripts in the event of an emergency. “Males 17 years of age and older are required by the law’s wording to obtain prior approval from the relevant Bundeswehr career center for stays abroad lasting longer than three months,” they stated. According to the law, the requirement expires at age 45. The policy revives a decades-old norm that requires authorization to stay overseas for an extended period of time, even outside of times of crisis. The ministry claimed that the guys in question were primarily unaffected. “The regulation already applied during the cold war and had no practical relevance; in particular, it is not subject to sanctions,”

the spokesperson said. The ministry did not say how many people had made a request for permission this year. The spokesperson indicated that approval for periods abroad would be routine as long as conscription was not in force and Germany was not facing a security emergency. “We will clarify through administrative regulations that authorisation is deemed to have been granted as long as military service is voluntary,” they said, adding: “As military service under current law is based exclusively on voluntary participation, such authorisations must, in principle, be granted.” The spokesperson said there would be a wide berth for exceptions to the authorisation requirement “partly to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy”. It remained unclear, however, what procedure men would need to use to gain permission before the eased regulations take effect or

how long it would take. The policy is intended to find enough volunteers to increase the ranks of the military to 460,000, consisting of 260,000 active soldiers and 200,000 reservists, by 2035. The country has 182,000 active soldiers and just under 50,000 reservists. Compulsory military service was suspended in 2011 under the then chancellor, Angela Merkel. The German chancellor, Friedrich Merz, wants to create the strongest conventional army in Europe amid the increased threat from Russia, since the Kremlin’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and doubts about the US commitment to European security under Donald Trump. Last year, Germany exempted most defence expenditures from the country’s constitutional “debt brake”. It also earmarked more than €500bn (£436bn) for defence between 2025 and 2029.

President of Iran is charged with “threatening possible war crimes” after



Iran: After threatening to destroy Iran’s power facilities and bridges in an obscene social media post on Sunday, Donald Trump has come under heavy fire. “Open the Fuckin’ Strait, you crazy bastards, or you’ll be living in Hell,” the US president said to Iran. On Monday, he told US media that talks were underway and hinted that there was a “good chance” of a deal to end the five-week conflict. Capitol Hill expressed disapproval of Trump’s post. “The president of the United States is ranting like an unhinged madman on social media,” stated senior Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer. He is alienating allies and making threats of potential war

crimes. He is like this, but we are not like this. Our nation is deserving of much better. Trump threatens “hell” if Iran doesn’t reopen the Strait of Hormuz by Tuesday. On Sunday, Donald Trump threatened to destroy Iran’s power plants and bridges if Tehran didn’t reopen the Strait of Hormuz by Tuesday night. In response, the speaker of Iran’s parliament warned that “our whole region is going to burn” as a result of the US president’s “reckless moves.” “Unhinged madman”: US lawmakers respond to Trump’s threats against Iran. Following Trump’s warning to Iran, some US senators expressed con-

cern and questioned the president’s mental health. Former Trump supporter turned critic Marjorie Taylor Greene said that anyone claiming to be a Christian in the Trump administration should “beg forgiveness from God” and stop the president’s “madness.” Trump praises the second crew member who was rescued from the crashed fighter jet. Donald Trump declared that no “single American” had been killed or injured during a mission to save the second crew member of a crashed US fighter jet, calling it “one of the most daring search-and-rescue operations in US history.” After the warplane crashed in southwest Iran,

a two-day search was concluded when US commandos rescued the second crew member of the F-15E fighter jet from an Iranian mountain. Officials appear to tone down vaccine criticism before midterms. US health officials appear to be shying away from voicing negative views of vaccines in public as November’s midterm elections loom and key polling indicates anti-vaccine views are a liability. US former soft power czar on Trump’s damage. Trump’s venal persona and his war on Iran will do untold damage to the US’s ability to make a positive difference in the world, writes Richard Stengel in the Guardian’s featured essay this week.

Why Heat Stroke Is No Longer Just A ‘Peak Afternoon’ Problem In India

Heat stroke was traditionally associated with brief periods of intense daytime heat. However, it is now increasingly recognised as a condition driven by prolonged exposure that extends well beyond peak afternoon hours, even into the night. The nature of heat stress has evolved, with vulnerability now spanning a full 24-hour cycle.

As Dr Ravi Kesari, MBBS, MD (Internal Medicine), Apollo Spectra Hospital, Bengaluru, explains, heat exposure today is less about intensity and more about accumulation over time.

Thermal Accumulation and Delayed Effects

The body maintains thermal balance through sweating and heat dissipation. However, under prolonged heat exposure, these mechanisms become increasingly impaired. With continuous exposure, heat gradually builds up in the body, regardless of when peak temperatures occur.

“Thermal balance is achieved through sweating and heat dissipation, but under prolonged exposure, this mechanism becomes impaired. Heat gets stored in the body, and symptoms may not appear immediately, they can present later in the evening or even at night,” explains Dr Kesari. Dehydration and electrolyte imbalance further disrupt thermoregulation, increasing the risk of heat stroke.

Night-Time Heat and Incomplete Recovery

A major concern now is the lack of adequate cooling at night. Typically, nighttime allows the body to release accumulated heat, but rising night



temperatures are disrupting this recovery cycle.

“When the body does not cool down at night, a state of constant heat stress is maintained. Core temperature and heart rate remain elevated, and the next day begins with an already stressed system,” says Dr Kesari.

This means the body never fully resets, leading to cumulative strain over consecutive days.

Urban Heat and Continuous Exposure

Heat exposure is no longer limited

to direct sunlight. Urban environments with dense construction, concrete surfaces, and minimal green cover, trap and slowly release heat, keeping temperatures high even after sunset.

“Heat exposure is no longer limited to a few peak afternoon hours; it has become a sustained condition throughout the day,” notes Kulpreet Sahni, Founder and CEO, Chiltier.

“The disappearance of natural recovery periods means even early mornings and late evenings carry re-

sidual heat and humidity, preventing the body from cooling effectively.”

High humidity further compounds the issue by reducing sweat evaporation, weakening the body’s natural cooling system, even indoors.

From Intermittent to Continuous Heat Stress

For those working outdoors or commuting in hot conditions, heat exposure is no longer intermittent, it is constant.

“Prolonged exposure, especially without adequate hydration or cool-

ing breaks, significantly increases the risk. Avoiding midday sun alone is no longer enough,” adds Dr Kesari.

This shift demands a rethink of how individuals approach daily heat protection.

A Medical Emergency with Systemic Impact

According to Dr. Pradeep MV, Consultant, Critical Care Medicine, Apollo Hospitals, Sheshadripuram, heat stroke is far more than just overheating, it is a life-threatening systemic condition.

“Heat stroke is marked by a core body temperature above 40°C and severe central nervous system disturbances such as delirium, seizures, or coma. It is now understood as a form of systemic inflammatory response that can rapidly progress to multi-organ dysfunction,” he explains. A severe inflammatory response, often described as a cytokine storm combined with heat-induced gut damage can trigger widespread complications, including clotting disorders and organ failure.

Why Early Action Matters

Survival in heat stroke cases is directly linked to how quickly the body is cooled.

“Rapid cooling is critical. The goal is to reduce core temperature by 1°C every 10 minutes. Delays can significantly increase the risk of long-term complications,” says Dr Pradeep.

Even after recovery, individuals may face lasting neurological effects and increased sensitivity to heat.

A Shift from Reactive to Continuous Prevention

The key takeaway is clear: heat stroke is no longer just about peak heat, it is about prolonged and persistent exposure.

“This prolonged exposure creates cumulative physiological strain, affecting cognitive clarity, reaction time, and productivity well before severe symptoms appear,” adds Sahni. Preventive measures must now extend across the entire day and night, focusing on hydration, electrolyte balance, cooling strategies, improved ventilation, and regular breaks from heat exposure. Early warning signs should never be ignored, as timely action can prevent escalation into a life-threatening emergency.

Matthieu Blazy’s fifth Chanel show hits Biarritz beachfront

Chanel’s honeymoon period with the new designer Matthieu Blazy is showing no signs of cooling. Blazy’s fifth catwalk show – on the Biarritz beachfront where the young milliner Gabrielle Chanel opened a couture house in 1915 – was an irresistibly seductive love letter to the enduring allure of the double-C logo.

The day before the show, sales assistants at the Biarritz boutique were holding up Chanel beach towels on the shop floor to create extra changing room space for shoppers impatient to buy jeans at €3,100 (£2,690) a pair. Blazy’s jeans are becoming a totem of the new Chanel, which, in aesthetic, although certainly not in price, marries high taste with an inclusive, democratic point of view. In a casino ballroom with a beachfront view over surfers riding the Bay of Biscay waves on to golden sands, Chanel skirt suits came in pink denim, or in tissue-fine silks worn over sporty tank tops.

There were models in their 50s and 60s, while the model Kaya, six months’ pregnant, wore her suit jacket open over her bump and swung a pair of tiny two-tone shoes, a show-day gift from Blazy, from her handbag. There were easy quarter-zip sweaters with Basque-striped skirts, and huge double-C logos that Blazy described as “the rock T-shirt” of Chanel. Oversized straw baskets and eye-candy



seahorse earrings nodded to the pop spirit of Karl Lagerfeld, but with the bold colour palette that sets the new era apart from the sugary kitsch of Lagerfeld’s reign. A turquoise gown of shimmering paillettes with a train that slapped the catwalk like a mermaid’s tail was inspired by an image Blazy showed reporters backstage after the show of an art deco mural on the Biarritz lighthouse, depicting two mermaids with tails entwined to form a Chanel-like double C. Biarritz was where “Gabrielle watched the swimmers, she tanned herself, she wore French workwear”, Blazy said. The outdoor lifestyle and wild Atlantic weather honed her taste for comfortable, practical clothes.

Blazy’s show began with a little black dress, celebrating the centenary year of the radically simple

look that Vogue, in 1926, dubbed “Chanel’s Ford”. “She borrowed the black dress from the workers, from the servant, from the shop girls,” Blazy said. “She decontextualised it and put it on the aristocracy, imposing her taste on them. It was a revenge on her own social status.” A newspaper print suit, emblazoned with headlines about Chanel’s time in Biarritz, was another nod to her radical spirit. “There is a quote where she said: ‘I like to read the newspaper, like men.’ I thought that was really interesting,” said the designer. “Also, I like the idea of being on the coast and having fish and chips!”

Bruno Pavlovsky, Chanel’s president of fashion, said before the show: “Matthieu’s research is stunning, and it gives him the freedom to twist, to

create the Chanel of today and tomorrow.” Chanel had “tens of thousands” of VICs, “very important clients”, defined as those who spend more than €100,000 a year in-store, he added. “We have more VICs than any other brand, and they are super happy now. They come, they try – and they buy. So we don’t want crazy growth, we don’t need to go fast. Our objective is to be stronger in 20 years.”

Catwalk shows in exotic locations have become fashion’s most elite battleground, a Champion’s League for the superbrands who can afford to compete. After Chanel’s Biarritz spectacular will be a Los Angeles show for Dior, another brand enjoying fashion’s equivalent of a new manager bounce, followed by Gucci and Louis Vuitton events in New York, and a MaxMara catwalk in



Shanghai.

These shows offer the opportunity to buy mind share, as well as market share. Unlike traditional fashion weeks, where even

mighty brands have only a one-hour slot, a destination show gives luxury brands an extended prime-time slot with which to love bomb social media.

Chanel’s Biarritz takeover extended beyond the show, with a food market in the Basque city transformed into a cocktail party for guests including Nicole

Kidman, Michaela Coel and Tilda Swinton, and a screen installed in the Gare du Midi exhibition hall for residents to watch the show.

ENTERTAINMENT

Dilip Joshi of Taarak Mehta claims that Dhurandhar 2 Star Rakesh Bedi was always a legend



Mumbai: Actor Dilip Joshi, who is well known for his role as Jethalal in the television series Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah, turned back time and reminisced about his time spent collaborating with Rakesh Bedi, star of Dhurandhar, on Hum Sab Ek Hain in 1998.

Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani's Romantic Beach Vacations in the Maldives The Web



Mumbai: Sometimes all it takes to start a conversation on the internet is a few photos, and Sidharth Malhotra did just that. The actor recently posted a laid-back photo dump to Instagram, giving followers a peek into his beach holiday. In addition to the picturesque setting and laid-back atmosphere, his wife Kiara Advani made a charming appearance that immediately attracted admirers. Several photos from the vacation, including care-free moments, windy beach photos, and off-duty views, were included in the article. Reactions flooded the comment area as soon as the post went live. Numerous admirers claimed that the images brought back memories of his past. "You just gave us the 2020 Sidharth Malhotra in 11 slides," a user said. Another said, "Can't remember when Sid posted this many videos and pics at a time on Insta." Thank you. In the meantime, the Shershaah actor recently posted a behind-the-scenes picture of himself and Kiara, suggesting that they may be collaborating once more. Sidharth had previously posted a behind-the-scenes picture of himself and Kiara, implying that they might be filming something. Neither of them was facing the camera in the photo. Kiara chose a striped pink blouse and white slacks, while Sidharth dressed casually in a white shirt and blue jeans. The actor left fans wondering and curious with the caption, "Guess who I am shooting with?" Regarding his career, Sidharth will next be seen opposite Tamannaah Bhatia in the folk thriller Vvan. In contrast, Kiara will next be seen with Yash in Toxic, which also stars Huma Qureshi, Nayanthara, and Tara Sutaria.

Swara Bhasker criticizes the internet for stigmatizing postpartum women

Mumbai: On February 16, 2023, Swara Bhasker wed political activist Fahad Ahmad. In September of that year, she gave birth to her daughter Raabiya. Earlier today, the actress took to Instagram to take aim at online haters who made comments about her body weight after giving birth and how it has changed. Swara Bhasker shared a collage showcasing her transformation before and after pregnancy, expressing her strong discontent with societal pressures regarding women's bodies post-childbirth. She stated, "This is a hill I will repeatedly die on!" reflecting on the "rage and anger" she feels due to criticism for her physical changes after having a child. Bhasker emphasized that women's bodies serve purposes beyond mere sexualization and are not just "hangers for glamour." Highlighting her personal journey, she noted her decision not to conform to the unrealistic expectation of "bouncing back" after having a baby. She asserted that once a woman becomes a parent, her life fundamentally changes, and it's imperative to acknowledge and accept those changes. While she acknowledges nostalgia for her previous self—"our



younger thinner selves"—she criticized the mentality that compels women to idealize their past appearances, labeling it as cruel. Bhasker further addressed the relentless pressure on women to appear desirable for public judgment, decrying the "constant pressure" to conform to unrealistic beauty standards. She criticized the societal shaming of women regarding postpartum weight, arguing that such judgments are both "unintelligent and nasty." Concluding her thoughts, she asserted that women should be free to live according to their preferences rather than dictated by external pressures. She clarified that her stance is not against fitness or health but rather a call to honor our bodies and allow them to evolve naturally. Bhasker encapsulated her philosophy by stating the importance of granting grace to our bodies, reminding us that life is "an inward forward-going journey." Swara announced the arrival of her baby girl in a cute message. "A prayer heard, a blessing granted, a song whispered, a mystic truth... Our baby girl, Raabiya, was born on September 23, 2023," the caption said. Thank you for your love from the bottom of our hearts! It's an

On Satyajit Ray's 104th birthday, Jackie Shroff remembers him



Mumbai: On May 2, Bollywood actress Jackie Shroff used social media to honor renowned director Satyajit Ray on his 104th birthday. The actor tweeted a monochrome photo of Ray sitting next to a film camera as a tribute to one of the most renowned storytellers in Indian cinema. "Remembering Satyajit Ray ji on his birth anniversary SatyajitRay," he wrote. Speaking of the renowned director, Satyajit Ray was born in Kolkata on May 2, 1921. The director is considered by many to be among the best directors in world cinema history. For those who don't know, he made his feature film debut in 1955 with Pather Panchali, which won him distinction at the Cannes Film Festival and widespread praise. Aparajito, Apur Sansar, Charulata, Nayak, Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne, Shatranj Ke Khilari, and Ghare Baire are just a few of the famous Indian films that Ray went on to make. Ray went on to become a worldwide movie legend over time. He directed approximately 35 films, documentaries, and short films over his distinguished career, which lasted nearly 40 years. He was a huge influence on future generations of filmmakers worldwide. At the age of 70, Satyajit Ray passed away in Kolkata on April 23, 1992, following protracted heart-related health issues. He received an honorary Academy Award for his outstanding contribution to film just weeks before he passed away. Speaking of Bollywood celebrities, Jackie Shroff is arguably the only one who can consistently recall significant dates of prominent Bollywood figures. To honor or commemorate his birth anniversary and significant dates, the actor consistently posts on social media.

Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal, R. Madhavan, Sara Arjun, Rakesh Bedi, Gaurav Gera, and Danish Pandor are among the cast members of Dhurandhar. The movie is a duology. A high-stakes clandestine counterterrorism mission served as the basis for the first film in the series. In an attempt to destroy a terror network that targets India, it follows an undercover Indian intelligence agent who infiltrates Pakistan's political power structures and crime syndicates in Karachi. In the meantime, Dhurandhar: The Revenge tells the tale of an undercover Indian intelligence operative who, while seeking revenge for the 26/11 attacks and facing more serious threats, continues to penetrate Pakistani politics and criminal syndicates in Karachi. The plot of the movie is partially based on a number of actual South Asian geopolitical wars and events.

Anil Kapoor on How His Father Was Broken by Rajesh Khanna's Flop Film



Mumbai: At a very young age, Anil Kapoor witnessed firsthand how success in the film industry can alter fast. In a recent conversation, the actor talked about how his father, producer Surinder Kapoor, was deeply affected by a box office disaster starring superstar Rajesh Khanna. He also talked about the event that inspired him to pursue a career in Hindi movies. Anil has frequently expressed his desire to accomplish what his father was unable to, but this time he revealed the specific event that made the situation

extremely intimate. After his father's one movie failed miserably at the box office, he remembered how swiftly people distanced themselves. After the movie's failure, Anil recalled the scene and told Lilly Singh that his father, who had before been surrounded by people, suddenly found himself alone. "He was traveling from Delhi... he went to Bangalore, and there was no one there to receive him at the airport," he said. He had been completely abandoned and disowned by everyone. That was startling. He was clearly very vulnerable and on the verge of tears. He was still affected by that encounter. It was about how brittle success can be in the business, not simply about one movie collapsing. Anil also disclosed that his father never made things simple for him, even though he was a producer. Surinder Kapoor made it apparent that Anil would need to pursue his own path when he showed a desire to perform. Anil entered the field with a sense of duty when he was just 18 or 19 years old. His father's challenges, such as his inability to secure top actors and oversee film projects, forced him to adopt a different perspective. "He (Surinder Kapoor) was a film producer, and it was difficult to get leading men and actors for his films at the time," the actor continued. "I have to become an actor," I declared. I must become a leading man. Subedaar, which is presently available for viewing on Amazon Prime Video, is Anil Kapoor's most recent film.

Sanjeeta Bhattacharya, a Jawan actor, shares her love story with spouse Raag Sethi

Mumbai: Sanjeeta Bhattacharya, known for her role in the film "Jawan," recently married music producer Raag Sethi in an extravagant ceremony held in Udaipur. Embracing her culture, she appeared stunning in her Bengali bridal attire. Prior to meeting Raag, Sanjeeta had reservations about marriage, stating, "Honestly, before I met Raag, I didn't believe in the institution of marriage at all." However, her relationship with him transformed her perspective, saying, "Now I just get to wake up and go to sleep with my best friend every day." Their love story began in 2019 during a brief encounter on a tour, but the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted any following meetings for five years. They reconnected at a music conference last year, which rekindled their connection, leading to a revelation that their relationship felt too significant to remain casual. In a pivotal moment, while having lunch, Raag suggested they should learn each other's ring sizes, marking



a shift in their relationship. Raag's proposal was heartfelt; he first sought the approval of Sanjeeta's parents before proposing on the terrace of their Ahmedabad home, which was beautifully decorated with candles and a romantic setup for the occasion. The wedding was attended by several of Sanjeeta's co-stars from "Jawan," though she noted feeling too intimate to invite Shah Rukh Khan. Nevertheless, she received blessings from the film's director, Atlee, who expressed his well-wishes after seeing photos from the wedding which were shared by her co-star Leher Khan. This personal journey reflects not only a celebratory union but also a profound change in Sanjeeta's views on love and companionship.

Trishala, the daughter of Sanjay Dutt, claims that she intended to work in Bollywood but not as an actor

Mumbai: Sanjay Dutt's daughter, Trishala Dutt, has always been open about her opinions. In a recent interview, she talked about a time when she thought about going into Bollywood like her father. She added, though, that the decision was motivated by a very personal yearning to be nearer to her father rather than a passion for acting. Sanjay Dutt and his first wife, Richa Sharma, welcomed her into the world in 1988. In 1996, when Trishala was still very little, her mother tragically died from a brain tumor. She was reared in the United States by her maternal grandparents after this loss. She deliberately removed herself from the glitz of Bollywood by largely avoiding the spotlight. She has established herself as a successful psychiatrist in the US with an emphasis on mental health advocacy and education over the years, building a life and career on her own terms. During a recent interview on the Inside Thoughts Out Loud Podcast, Trishala Dutt disclosed that she had once thought of going into Bollywood when she was younger, but not because she really wanted to be



an actress. "I did think about that when I was younger," she replied when asked if she had ever wished to work in the field. Acting is my love, but I wasn't considering becoming an actress. All I wanted was to be nearer to my father. Sanjay Dutt, her father, intervened to help her as she considered her job options and encouraged an open discussion about what she really desired. He was the perfect guy to seek guidance from because he had experienced both the highs and lows of Bollywood. After giving this suggestion some thought, Trishala emphasized, "He's been through

hell and back, and he said, 'Is this your calling? Do you find it appealing?' 'I just want to spend more time with you,' I replied. "Let's talk about what you're passionate about and let's get you on that track," he says. Being the daughter of so and so does not guarantee that you will become an A-list actress and receive all these offers. Trishala became a therapist after her personal experiences with mental health led her to seek therapy. Speaking on the show, she emphasized that it's acceptable to struggle and that nobody is expected to have everything figured out. She stated that she wants to

lead by example throughout her career. "I have internal struggles just like everybody else," she stated. In order to show them that it's acceptable to suffer, I decided to become a therapist. You're not alone on this path, and you don't always need to have everything together. Additionally, despite coming from a Bollywood background, I haven't heard many people in the industry discuss mental health. It's not all sunshine and roses, whether you work in the industry or not. I just wanted to be relatable to people. Like you, we are human.

After the Jabalpur Boat Tragedy, 2 days later, 6 people are still missing and 9 people have died



Bhopal, May 02: Five more dead were found on Friday from Bargi Dam in Jabalpur district, where a Madhya Pradesh Tourism Department cruise boat sank the night before, bringing the total number of fatalities to nine. Six more tourists were still being sought after. The state government conducted an investigation and fired three members of the boat’s crew after survivors claimed carelessness and safety violations, including the failure to provide life jackets to passengers. The body of a lady who was still holding her child was a heartbreaking sight for the divers involved in the rescue effort. Teams from the Army, NDRF (National Disaster Response Force), and SDRF (State Disaster Response Force) were hunting for the missing people while 28 tourists were rescued, according to officials. The state administration prohibited the use of such vessels within the state and launched an investigation. While expressing sympathy to the victims’ families, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav stated that the gallantry of the villagers who put their lives in danger to save visitors would be recognized on Independence Day. The Chief Minister stated that in order to stop similar tragedies in the future, the tourism administration will look into the accident brought on by a seasonal cyclone. Additionally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences for the disaster and declared that the PM National Relief Fund (PMNRF) would provide an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the martyrs’ relatives and Rs 50,000 for the injured. “The loss of lives due to the capsizing of a boat in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, is extremely painful,” PM Modi wrote in a post

on ‘X’. I offer my sympathies to everyone who lost a loved one in this terrible accident. I’m praying for the injured to heal quickly. Those impacted are receiving assistance from the local government. No one was discovered inside the boat after it was recovered from the dam water on Thursday night after it toppled due to an unexpected storm, according to an official. Anjul Aayan Mishra, the Jabalpur City Superintendent of Police (CSP), stated that a search was underway to find the six people who are still unaccounted for. When Yadav arrived in Jabalpur, he went to the home of a guy who had been rescued on Thursday night. Umang Singhar, the Assembly’s Leader of the Opposition, also went to the scene and claimed that the tourism department’s carelessness was the cause of the disaster. “They are operating a cruise boat without the mandatory weather instruments,” the leader of the opposition claimed. A comprehensive investigation will be carried out, Tourism Minister Dharmendra Bhav Singh Lodhi informed. The Army, NDRF, and SDRF were collaborating on the search and rescue effort, according to Deputy Inspector General (Jabalpur) Atul Singh. He pointed out that the first responders were workers from a nearby construction company, and they were instrumental in getting people out of the wrecked boat. Witnesses reported that strong winds caused choppy waters, leading passengers to alert the crew for a return to shore, but the crew did not hear them. As a result, the boat drifted and overturned. Some passengers, including children, were rescued with ropes, but allegations of crew negligence surfaced, particularly about the distribution of life jackets and ignoring local warnings. The tourism department subsequently terminated the crew’s services and initiated an inquiry following the incident, which involved nearly 40 people, despite official figures stating only 29 were aboard. Survivor Sangeeta Kori emphasized that the tragedy could have been prevented if timely action had been taken.

How A Coaching Program Went Wrong: From Welfare To Fraud

New Delhi, May 02: A program designed to assist pupils is currently under intense investigation.

About 5,000 students were assisted by the Jai Bhim Mukhyamantri Pratibha Vikas Yojana, which was introduced in 2017 with just 8 coaching institutions. It quickly grew, reaching around 22,000 beneficiaries by 2019. However, investigators claim that widespread abuse was also made possible by this expansion. The investigation has discovered evidence of counterfeit paperwork, duplicate entries, and fraudulent admissions. It is now alleged that nearly 1,000 identified beneficiaries are nonexistent. The government released funds for student stipends and coaching expenses. However, it is alleged that institutions



funneled funds through common operating accounts rather than using distinct, dedicated bank accounts as required. This undermined financial oversight and made monitoring

challenging. Students frequently did not receive their stipends at all. Serious governance mistakes were also present. When choosing institutes, proper tendering procedures were not

followed. The Department of Education was purportedly not involved in verification, and there was little scrutiny. There were no basic precautions. There were little physical checks and no Aadhaar connectivity. This made it possible for anomalies to persist unchecked.

The situation on the ground was similarly alarming. Students might still be enrolled in certain institutions that lacked basic facilities. In a number of instances, payments were made under the names of larger coaching facilities while pupils were routed to small local tuition centers. Weak mechanisms and inadequate control seem to have damaged what started out as a social program to encourage education.

Kyle Jamieson’s aggressive act against Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has angered the BCCI

New Delhi: The Board of Control for Cricket in India took notice of Delhi Capitals pacer Kyle Jamieson after his violent act against 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi of the Rajasthan Royals went viral on social media. For giving the adolescent batter a violent send-off during their Indian Premier League match on Friday, the Kiwi bowler received one penalty point. Article 2.5 of the IPL Code of Conduct, which deals with “using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from another player in the match,” was judged to have been violated by the Kiwi bowler. The incident happened in the second over of the first innings when Jamieson was discovered to be aggressively near to 15-year-old Sooryavanshi after dismissing him. This could have incited an aggressive response from the batter. In a statement, the IPL announced that Kyle Jamieson, a bowler for Delhi Capitals, has received one



Demerit Point and a warning for violating Level 1 of the IPL’s Code of Conduct during Match No. 43 against Rajasthan Royals at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur. The breach pertains to Article 2.5, which addresses the use of language, actions, or gestures that may disparage or provoke aggressive reactions from other players. The incident

occurred in the second over, following Jamieson’s dismissal of Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, where his aggressive demeanor could have sparked a reaction from the batter. Jamieson acknowledged the offense and accepted the penalty from Match Referee Rajeev Seth. Article 2.5 of the IPL Code of Conduct, which deals with “using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from another player in the match,” was judged to have been violated by the Kiwi bowler. After dismissing the 15-year-old Sooryavanshi in the second over of the first innings, Jamieson was discovered to be aggressively near to him, which may have incited an aggressive response from the batter. Jamieson acknowledged the infraction and agreed to the penalty that Rajeev Seth, the match referee, had issued. Here on Friday, the Capitals won their fourth game of the current season by defeating the Royals by seven wickets.

The hangover from the T20 World Cup caused Jasprit Bumrah’s IPL fall

New Delhi: Few people could have imagined that Jasprit Bumrah’s difficulties would become one of the main talking points of the 2026 Indian Premier League. Bumrah had high expectations going into the season after a fantastic T20 World Cup in which he was instrumental in India’s title defense. He has shown to be a match-winner for the Mumbai Indians and India throughout the years, regularly performing well under duress. His reputation as a bowler who uses pace, accuracy, and control to unnervingly hiters has rarely been questioned. This season, though, has revealed a different narrative. Bumrah has struggled to perform at his typical level, giving up runs at an unusual rate and taking only two wickets in nine games. His decline in performance has coincided with MI’s difficulties; the squad is currently in ninth position in the standings and will have a difficult time making the playoffs. Concerns have also been raised about his strategy. His average pace seems to have decreased, and a greater emphasis on slower deliveries has not produced the expected outcomes. The lack of efficacy has been startling for a bowler who is renowned for his variety and crispness. In response to Bumrah’s decline in form, former South Africa all-rounder Shaun Pollock speculated that a lingering hangover from the T20 World Cup would be influencing his strategy this season. Pollock noted that Bumrah’s bowling patterns have clearly changed as a result of the effectiveness of slower deliveries on those surfaces, which seems to have carried over into the IPL. “I believe that the back half of the T20 World Cup also had some influence. The slower ball



became so successful due to the nature of the surfaces and the numerous games that were played. I believe that in the beginning of this competition, there was a bit of a hangover from that one, so let’s continue. He still needs to realize that his quick deliveries, unique movements, and ball-shaping skills are still necessary. In particular, that will be the stuff that strikes first. It’s okay if you bowl those slower balls when you enter the second spell. “I think there’s been a little bit more reliability on that delivery, but I’m not saying he’s gone over the top,” Pollock remarked. After that, former New Zealand pacer Simon Doull gave a more critical evaluation of Jasprit Bumrah’s strategy, speculating that he might have relied too much on slower deliveries. Doull also expressed worries about a potential hangover from the T20 World Cup, pointing out that Bumrah’s slower pace and lack

of consistency would make it easier for batsmen to forecast his fluctuations this season. Doull expresses concern that a bowler has become overly reliant on slower balls, suggesting he should start his delivery with a focus on pace instead. He advocates for the bowler to bowl his first 12 deliveries without using slower balls during the powerplay, aiming for a consistent good hard length.

Doull speculates that the bowler’s reduced pace might be due to ongoing issues stemming from his recent performance in the World Cup and questions his fitness level. He emphasizes that bowlers should only change their approach when batters successfully handle their primary delivery, cautioning against unnecessary variations. Doull acknowledges the effectiveness of the bowler’s slow ball, yet notes that opponents are increasingly anticipating it this season.

Days after the BJP move, FIRs were filed in Punjab against AAP rebel Sandeep Pathak

New Delhi, May 02: Days after Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak left the AAP and joined the BJP, two FIRs were registered against him in Punjab, according to sources. Government sources stated that the lawsuits were filed under non-bailable provisions, albeit it is yet unclear why they were brought against the politician. Pathak was spotted leaving his Delhi home on Saturday amid reports of the FIRs. The Rajya Sabha MP was observed driving away after being questioned. According to official sources, “Punjab Police is making efforts to arrest the

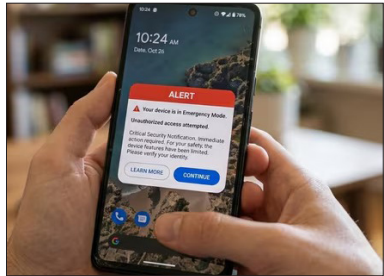
accused as FIRs have been registered under non-bailable sections.” Seven Rajya Sabha MPs recently left the AAP and joined the BJP, including Sandeep Pathak. Raghav Chadha, Swati Maliwal, Rajinder Gupta, Vikramjit Sahney, Harbhajan Singh, and Ashok Mittal were among the other leaders who switched. With only a few months till the Punjab elections, the BJP’s major action reduced the AAP’s Rajya Sabha total from 10 to three, dealing a severe blow to the party. Every MP from Punjab, with the exception of Maliwal, is an MP. Sandeep Pathak was

intimately involved in the AAP’s operations in Punjab and is even recognized for leading the party to a resounding victory over the Congress in the Assembly elections of 2022. Days after Rajinder Gupta, another renegade AAP leader, was targeted in Punjab, Sandeep Pathak is being prosecuted. The Dhaula facility of Trident Group was searched by representatives of the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB). The textile major was founded by Gupta. According to a previous report, a PPCB official claimed, “The team collected samples of discharged effluent,

groundwater, and other relevant materials, to ensure strict compliance with environmental safety standards.” The BJP accused the AAP of attacking Gupta because he left the party, calling the conduct “vendetta politics.” “The PPCB raid on Trident smells like a political grudge... Ashwani Sharma, the working president of the Punjab BJP, has accused Gupta of being a target of the state government because he dared to join the BJP for the benefit of Punjab. The AAP refuted the accusation, claiming that the PPCB officials’ visit was a standard check.

India’s phones beep as the center tests Alert System for Disaster Information

New Delhi, May 02: There was no need to fear if your phone buzzed on Saturday with a government alert that sounded urgent. As the Center officially inaugurated its domestic Cell Broadcast emergency alert system, millions of mobile subscribers nationwide got a test message. The message, which was labeled “Extremely Severe Alert,” notified the public that a new rapid disaster warning service had been activated and made it clear that no action was necessary because it was merely a test. Under the direction of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia implemented the Cell Broadcast Alert System with assistance from the National Disaster Management Authority. The technology operates without the need for mobile apps or internet connectivity and is intended to provide vital information in real time



during situations involving public safety or disasters. SACHET, an integrated alert platform created by C-DOT and based on the global Common Alerting Protocol, is at the center of the program, according to a government release. All 36 states and Union Territories are currently using the system. Over 134 billion SMS notifications in more than 19 Indian languages have been sent by disaster management authorities to date during cyclonic occurrences, weather warnings, and natural

calamities. Compared to conventional SMS warnings, the new Cell Broadcast technology is a major improvement. Cell Broadcast alerts are intended to capture attention right away, in contrast to standard SMS messages. They ensure that even users with their devices in silent or do-not-disturb modes are alerted when they are activated by overriding standard phone settings and delivering a loud alarm sound and a noticeable on-screen message. The system is built to provide vital information in the event of man-made emergencies like gas leaks and chemical threats, as well as natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, and lightning strikes. When fully operationalized, the Cell Broadcast system will ensure a broad and inclusive public reach during actual emergencies by distributing notifications across all mobile phones, regardless of individual settings.

KL Rahul Sends Ajit Agarkar a Furious “Strike Rate” Message While Wearing an Orange Cap

New Delhi: KL Rahul is a name connected with dependability and is without a doubt one of the most gifted and reliable batters in Indian cricket. However, he found it challenging to maintain a spot in the shortest format due to the rising strike rates in T20 cricket. The wicketkeeper-batter last represented India in a Twenty20 International in 2022, and his poor strike rate was cited as the main cause of his exclusion. However, Rahul has averaged 54 with a strike rate of more over 180 this season for the Delhi Capitals, making him the leading scorer in the IPL 2026.

Rahul issued a clear “strike-rate message” to detractors and Ajit Agarkar, the head of the BCCI selection committee, after winning Player of the Match in Delhi’s victory over the Rajasthan Royals. When Rahul spotted the Orange Cap, given to the season’s highest scorer, in front of him at the post-match presentation ceremony, his face brightened up. Throughout the post-match interview, he kept a satisfied smile on his face after exchanging his DC cap for it. Indeed, it does. Ultimately, we participate in the sport in order to succeed. Numbers do matter after all these years of playing. “It’s not as much fun if you don’t get the ‘W’ after the game, even though you’re happy that you score runs and break records,” he remarked. Rahul was also questioned about the mood in the dressing room, particularly in light of some of the recent losses. He claimed that some candid discussions had occurred and that it was crucial to deliver when it mattered most rather than waiting for second chances. “The

dressing room has consistently been at a respectable location. We make every effort to maintain the dressing room’s equilibrium. We acknowledge that the outcomes haven’t gone our way, but if you look closely and check if we’re making significant errors, that wasn’t the case. In the dressing room, we had some frank discussions. Yes, we were unable to profit from the significant events. With the exception of the final game, we were competitive in every other match; we would have won if one over had gone our way. We acknowledge that we played some respectable cricket, but there were a few areas where we really needed to improve. “T20 cricket and this league don’t give you another chance. “I’m really happy that we could get this win and we look forward to stringing a few more together; that will give us more confidence,” he said. “Therefore, it was important that we take our chances and, when we’re ahead, really press hard and finish the game, which we weren’t doing.” In response to the question of what area of his game he was most pleased with this season, Rahul said, “The strike rate.” “I think it was a big talking point for a few years,” he continued. I’ve put a lot of effort into that. I’m glad I’ve worked on it and that, above all, I’m doing what the team needs and what contemporary T20 cricket demands. Yes, I find that to be satisfying. Rahul’s strike-rate problems have kept him out of the Indian squad for a long time. His message to critics and selectors is clear: he has fulfilled their expectations and is prepared to return to the shortest format.

Costlier LPG causes a silent crisis in Delhi’s migrant homes

New Delhi, May 02: In New Delhi’s Prem Nagar, Chandan Poddar, a 25-year-old painter, faces financial strain despite earning ₹18,000 a month, sharing a cramped room with nine other migrant workers. They rely on a 5-kg LPG cylinder costing around ₹3,000 for ten days, but a recent price hike of nearly ₹300 makes this unsustainable, reflecting broader distress for low-income households facing a staggering 47.8% rise in commercial LPG prices due to international energy costs. The smaller cylinder serves as an affordable source of fuel for many, yet its rising price is pushing people like Poddar to consider returning to their villages due to the difficulties of frequent refills. Residents such as Kushila Devi are already reverting to wood-fired cooking, as seen in Chilla Khadar where unused 5-kg cylinders lie dormant while chulhas are in use. The financial strain also affects livelihoods; workers like Kundan Kumar, who previously earned ₹20,000 as an earthmover driver, have been forced to resign due to increasing costs of cooking at home. Similar challenges confront street vendors, like Shiv Nath Prasad, facing gas shortages that threaten their business viability as they contemplate raising prices amid a customer exodus. Students, too, are adapting by switching to induction cooktops due to difficulties in securing LPG cylinders, which have reportedly soared to black market rates of ₹5,000. The rising costs are creating a ripple effect across working-class neighborhoods, impacting daily wage earners, vendors, and students alike.

Top Seeds Jannik Sinner And Alexander Zverev Battle Through To Reach The Madrid Open Final

Sinner Favored To Win At Caja Magica With Alcaraz Out

Madrid: World number one Jannik Sinner downed Arthur Fils 6-2, 6-4 on Friday to reach the Madrid Open final, where he will face Alexander Zverev. The second seed dispatched promising Belgian Alexander Blockx 6-2, 7-5 later on. Sinner won his 22nd straight match to book a place in Sunday's final, where he will aim to win a record fifth consecutive Masters 1000 title. With his chief rival Carlos Alcaraz out injured, Sinner is firm favourite to triumph at the Caja Magica and add to recent titles at Indian Wells, Miami and Monte Carlo. "I played at a very high level, but I focus on always raising my level a little," Sinner told Movistar. Especially when the tournament gets serious... You have to raise your level if you want to keep going."

The Italian admitted he was feeling a little tired after playing so many matches of late. "Obviously there's a bit of fatigue," said Sinner. "Mentally I feel good but there is some physical tiredness. My body isn't completely



fresh but that's normal and I think it's a very positive thing for me because it means I'm playing a lot of matches. "Of course, on Sunday we'll try to do even better but whatever happens, I've reached another final in a very important tournament." Beating Sinner right now seems a near-impossible feat and the four-time Grand Slam winner started superbly against Barcelona Open winner Fils, who has impressed since returning from injury in February. The Italian broke in the third game when

Fils went long to lead 2-1. Sinner broke again in the fifth game with Fils, ranked 25th in the world, unable to cope with his sheer power. The Frenchman has not yet reached a Masters 1000 final and with Sinner in sumptuous form it quickly became clear he would have to wait a little longer. Sinner wrapped up the first set on his serve after Fils found some fighting spirit to prevent a third break. The second set was far closer, with Fils rising in confidence and belief. The 21-year-old saved two break

points for a 3-2 lead, and put pressure on Sinner's next serve, although the Italian produced two aces to hold. Sinner broke with a down-the-line backhand winner to end an excellent rally for a 5-4 lead and served it out to triumph. World number three Zverev, in strong form, claimed the first set against Blockx comfortably but struggled to break the Belgian in the second, before eventually finding a way through. "I'm very happy of course to be in a final," said Zverev, who lifted the trophy in Madrid in 2018 and 2021. "There were a lot of tough matches, a lot of tough battles... and I'm looking forward to playing Jannik again. "Tennis is very very easy for him right now, the way he is playing. Maybe on Sunday I will make it a bit more difficult for him. "He's the best player in the world for sure and I'm just trying to give him a tough battle."

The 29-year-old broke in the first and fifth games to surge into a 5-1 lead against his unseeded opponent.

Lando Norris Secures Sprint Pole Position As McLaren Shine Again At The Miami Grand Prix



Miami: World champion Lando Norris ended Mercedes' early-season supremacy by steering his upgraded McLaren to pole position on Friday for Saturday's sprint race at the Miami Grand Prix. The 26-year-old Briton outpaced championship-leading Italian teenager Kimi Antonelli, in his Mercedes, by 0.222 seconds with McLaren team-mate Oscar

Piastri third, adrift by a further 0.239 seconds. The two McLarens, equipped with a successful upgrade package during F1's five-week hiatus due to the conflict in the Middle East, shone in the Florida heat to finish ahead of their main rivals. "It was great, a perfect result for us and a nice way to reward the team," said Norris. "We've got some new upgrades so

it's nice for me to feel some grip again. We've known that this track has always been good for us. "But we knew, too, that what we were bringing would make a good step and it has and our estimations have been correct." It was the first time this year that Mercedes had been out-qualified after dominating the three previous Grands Prix.

Pathirana's KKR Debut Depends On Conditions

New Delhi: Kolkata Knight Riders fans were overjoyed when they finally got to see Matheesha Pathirana link-up with the squad after the win over LSG. Pathirana, who was bought for Rs. 18 Crore during the auction, was out of action since the T20 World Cup 2026 after sustaining an injury during the match against Australia. Pathirana finally got the NOC from Sri Lanka cricket and arrived in Kolkata on April 19 and had his first training session with the support staff the following day. He was with the squad for the trip to Lucknow, but was still a bit away from making his KKR bow. The pacer has stepped up his progress and looks to be closer than ever. So will Pathirana make it to the lineup for the SRH game? To Tim Southee said that the final decision on Pathirana's participation will depend on the conditions and then they will make a call based on the combination. Yeah, he's arrived. He's been around the group for a little bit now. So, we'll look at conditions and make a decision on the side that we think's best for tomorrow's game. He's been bowling well at training and it's great to have him as a part of the side," said Southee. Pathirana has a good record against the in-form Heinrich Klaasen in the IPL, dismissing him three times and conceding 23 runs off 14 balls bowled to him. Southee admitted that they will look into it as a part of the selection criteria, but a call will only be made on match-day. Yeah, you take a number of things into consideration for selection. Obviously, the balance of the side, make-up of your team. Here with the IPL, your make-up with the overseas has to change, obviously when you make those changes. So, those decisions will be taken into account along with the conditions that we're looking to be faced with tomorrow," said South-ee. Pathirana has played three matches against SRH in his IPL career, picking up three wickets at an average of 22. Matheesha Pathirana's selection for the upcoming game against Sunrisers Hyderabad depends on several factors, including pitch conditions, the balance of overseas players in the squad, and his performance in recent training sessions. According to Kolkata Knight Riders bowling coach Tim Southee, the team management will make a final decision on matchday to ensure the best possible combination for the fixture.

Jannik Sinner Storms Into Madrid Open Final After Dominating Victory Over Fils



Madrid: Jannik Sinner brushed aside another formidable power-hitter in his Madrid Open title run on Friday, producing a commanding display to storm into the final. The 24-year-old Italian was razor-sharp from the first point, dismantling Arthur Fils 6-2, 6-4 to reach his fifth consecutive Masters 1000 final. Chasing a historic fifth straight title at this level, Sinner sealed the polished semi-final victory in just 85 minutes inside Manolo Santana Stadium. Fresh from a

clinical quarter-final win over fast-rising 19-year-old Rafael Nadal, where the Madrid native struck with fearless aggression, Sinner carried that same relentless precision into his clash with Fils. Sinner will meet two-time Madrid champion Alexander Zverev or 21-year-old Belgian Alexander Blockx in Sunday's final. "I tried to be very aggressive. I felt very comfortable on the return. In the second set, he started to serve better, so it was more difficult. But I'm very happy about the general performance to-

day. I'm trying to play the best possible tennis, but today was a very good day in the office," Sinner said. "I knew it before the match. He is one of the best players in the world at the moment. I'm very happy that I played against him. He is very good at tennis, for the sport," he added. With the win, Sinner made history as the youngest player ever to reach the final at all nine Masters 1000 events, joining legends Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal, and Roger Federer. The Italian has now strung together an impressive 27-match winning streak at this level, highlighted by titles in Paris, Indian Wells, Miami, and Monte-Carlo. Two of them have come this year, including the semifinals of the Indian Wells tournament earlier this month. The Italian holds a dominant 8-4 head-to-head record against the Champion.

Diksha Dagar Delivers A Stunning Hole In One To Open Strong At The Mauritius Ladies Open

Port Louis: A moment of brilliance lit up the opening day of the inaugural MCB Ladies Classic in Mauritius, as India's Diksha Dagar delivered a memorable hole-in-one to set the tone for an impressive start. Her confident performance placed her among the early contenders, highlighting her intent to secure a breakthrough win this season. Diksha carded a solid 4-under 68 in the first round at Constance Belle Mare Plage, putting herself in tied-fourth position. Beginning her round on the back nine, she wasted little time making an impact, sinking a spectacular ace on the par-3 11th. She followed it up with birdies on the 15th and 18th to make the turn at four-under. Despite a bogey on the fifth hole later, she recovered with a birdie on the ninth to close strongly. Among the

other Indian players, Tvesa Malik posted a steady 2-under 70 to sit tied-20th. Her round featured three birdies on the front nine, though a double bogey on the ninth slowed her momentum. She regained control on the back nine with additional birdies on the 15th and 17th. Hitaashee Bakshi finished with a 1-under 71, placing her tied-30th, while Vani Kapoor struggled with a 78 and faces a tough challenge to make the cut. The Indians, led by Diksha and Tvesa, have an eye on their home event, the Indian Open, later this year. At the top of the leaderboard, France's Agathe Laisne delivered a commanding performance with an 8-under 64, setting the pace on the opening day. She showcased remarkable consistency, racking up ten birdies to continue her strong run of form this



Season. Close behind her is South Africa's Cara Golei, who fired a 7-under 65, highlighted by two eagles. Denmark's Smilla Tarning Soenderby holds third place with a 6-under 66. With several players tied at four-under, including Diksha, the competition remains tightly packed heading into the second round. The next phase begins early, with only the top 60 players and ties advancing beyond the cut, setting the

stage for an intense battle over the coming days. She is four shots behind leader Kelsey Macdonald (64), who set a new course record with her opening round. Hitaashee Bakshi also had a promising opening round as she carded 2-under 69 to start her week. Bakshi found the fairway on every single hole while her bogey and double bogey came on two of the four holes where she failed to make the Green in Regulation

India vs France Thomas Cup Semifinal: Live Stream and Match Details to Know



New Delhi: When the Thomas Cup quarterfinal between India and Chinese Taipei got underway in Horsens, you could sense a bit of tension amongst the Indian contingent. Since their historic triumph in 2022, India has never made it past the final 8 stage of the tournament. And there was a familiar sinking feeling as we reached a crucial juncture of the match between Lakshya Sen and Chou Tien-chen as the Indian ace was staring at defeat, down by two match points in game two. Fit enough to make it to the climax of an Indian sports Bollywood movie, Lakshya conjured strength from the badminton gods to spark a comeback, and this proved to be the template followed in the next two games. Satwik-Chirag earned a hard-fought three-game win against Chinese Taipei's top doubles team of Chiu Hsiang Chieh and Wang Chi-Lin. Then it was the chance of the star boy of Indian badminton, Ayush Shetty to step up. The Asian Championships silver medallist took down the All England champion in straight games, overcoming a 10-12 deficit.

This ended the four-year wait to make it to the semi-finals but the job isn't done. Infact, it is far from it. Standing up against them is France. Not a lot of people expected them to make it to the semi-finals, yet here they are, upsetting the odds and showing no regard for reputation. Their biggest win came in their Group D encounter against 14-time champions Indonesia as they beat them 4-1. This was followed up with a 3-0 drubbing of 2014 champions Japan on Friday, to reach their maiden Thomas Cup semi-final and guarantee themselves a medal. A win will see India reach the summit clash for the first time since their historic win in 2022 and they will be up against China or Denmark on Sunday, May 3. The India vs France match is expected to be a true 50-50 battle on Saturday. The strength for the French side will be the depth they have in the singles department. Christo Popov is ranked No.4 in the world and will lead the French challenge. He will have Alex Lanier for company and the World No.10 is expected to prove to be a stern test for the Indian shuttlers.

Toma Jr. Popov is the third big name, and his experience will be key. What France did against Japan was to ensure that the doubles contests wasn't needed. But that may not be the case when it comes to Saturday Lakshya, Ayush and Kiran George, they're familiar with the challenge from Popovs, having trained with them in the run-up to Paris Olympics. With the form that Lakshya and Ayush are in at the moment, the rankings don't really matter for them and nor do the big name reputation. If France get pulled into the deep end, the doubles ties, then they will have the Popovs competing in the last tie. There India will keep their trump cards, Satwik-Chirag ready. In case the singles ties do get a bit tricky, Kidami Srikanth and HS Prannoy can jump in at any moment to put their experience to the fore and bail out the team. With the quarterfinals, semis and final being played on consecutive days, the only major concern seems to be fatigue and player recovery. If both sides are able to overcome this, then expect a battle for the ages. "We believe that we can go all the way. Lakshya Sen set the tone in the opening singles clash against Chou Tien-chen, registering a hard-fought 18-21, 22-20, 21-17 victory after coming back from a game down. Rising to the occasion once again, Sen showcased his ability to absorb pressure and deliver in crunch moments. Sen and Chou entered the match with a 4-4 head-to-head record, and the contest lived up to expectations, turning into a topsy-turvy battle. Both players overturned significant deficits in the first two games to force a decider. While Chou fought back from 10-15 down to take the opening.

Suresh Raina Reveals MS Dhoni's Playing Status Ahead Of High Stakes Mumbai Clash



New Delhi: The talk of the town ahead of the high-stakes clash between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians at Chepauk on Saturday, May 2, is whether MS Dhoni will finally return to action for the yellow brigade. The 44-year-old has been missing from the playing XI throughout IPL 2026, and fans have been eagerly awaiting clarity on his comeback. Now, former CSK teammate Suresh Raina has dropped a strong hint that Dhoni could be back for this crucial encounter. Dhoni has not featured in the tournament so far due to a calf injury he sustained before the season began. Although he has travelled with the squad across venues, he has consistently stayed back at the team hotel on match days, avoiding the spotlight and allowing the team to function without the added attention his

presence naturally brings. Speaking on a pre-match show on JioStar, Raina suggested that the wait might finally be over. "He might play tonight," Raina said when asked if he had any inside information regarding Dhoni's return for the MI game. The remark has only heightened anticipation among fans and followers of the franchise. Fellow commentator Aakash Chopra also echoed similar sentiments, further fueling speculation. Meanwhile, CSK batting coach Michael Hussey provided insight into Dhoni's decision to remain away from matchday environments. He explained that Dhoni has deliberately chosen to keep a low profile to prevent becoming a distraction. "He's such a team-oriented guy," Hussey said at the pre-match press conference. "He always wants what's best

for the team and felt that if he came to the ground, the focus would shift towards him. The cameras would be on him, the crowd would react loudly, and it could take attention away from the players. He wanted the team to go about their job without that added pressure." Hussey also clarified that Dhoni is physically capable of contributing with both bat and gloves. However, the only factor delaying his return to the playing XI is his running fitness, which remains the final hurdle. While there is still no official confirmation from the franchise, the possibility of Dhoni returning against Mumbai Indians—or in the upcoming fixture against Delhi Capitals on May 5—has significantly lifted the excitement around CSK's campaign and could provide a major boost at a crucial stage of the season.