

Mizoram MP K. Vanlalvena Calls On Centre To Expedite Bangladesh-Linked Bridge Project



Aizawl, April 03: Mizoram's sole Rajya Sabha MP, K. Vanlalvena, on Thursday urged the central government to accelerate the construction of a bridge linking Kawrpuchhuah in Lunglei district to Bangladesh, aiming to enhance cross-border trade and connectivity. Regional news updates Speaking during the ongoing Parliament Budget session, Vanlalvena drew attention to delays in a trade agreement signed with Bangladesh over a decade ago. The proposed bridge is part of plans to develop Kawrpuchhuah, about 11.5 km from Tlabung, as an integrated check post (ICP) and land port.

The MP acknowledged the Rs 54-crore bridge project over the Khawthlang Tuipui river near the border, being managed by the Union Home Ministry. Citing his 2021 inspection of Border Security Force (BSF) outposts along the Indo-Bangladesh border, he highlighted accessibility challenges in the area. "Many BSF camps remain cut off by road, with

AR commences pre-recruitment training programme



Imphal, Apr 03: Assam Rifles commenced a comprehensive Pre-Recruitment Training (PRT) programme at the Nambol Garrison in Bishnupur District. This initiative is designed to equip local youth with the necessary skills for recruitment as Agniveers in the Indian Armed Forces and as Constables in the Central Armed Police Forces.

A batch of 10 local youths has currently enrolled for this free training which covers both physical conditioning and academic preparation, informed IG-AR(S) in a press release. The module includes structured endurance runs, strength training and medical check-ups alongside theory classes conducted by experienced instructors.

To support their physical development, trainees are provided with a nutritious diet including eggs and milk. During the inaugural session, a contingent of officials and personnel interacted with the candidates to explain recruitment procedures and the importance of discipline and hard work. They highlighted the long-term benefits of a career in the forces, such as secure employment, medical facilities and the dignity of national service.

To further inspire the participants, a motivational film showcasing the 100 per cent success rate of last year's 25 candidates was screened. The event concluded with a group photograph to formally mark the start of the journey, it conveyed.

Guv, CM and Dy CM convey Good Friday greetings

Imphal, Apr 03: On the auspicious occasion of Good Friday, Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla conveyed his heartfelt greetings to the people, especially to the Christian brethren on the occasion of Good Friday. In a message, Chief Minister Khemchand said, "This sacred day commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and reminds us of His profound message of love, sacrifice, forgiveness, and compassion for humanity.

The observance of Good Friday inspires us to reflect upon these timeless values and encourages us to uphold peace, humility, and service to others in our daily lives". The Chief Minister said, "Manipur has always been known for its rich cultural diversity and communal harmony.

Occasions such as Good Friday strengthen the spirit of unity, mutual respect and understanding among people of different faiths and communities in our State".

Arunachal Pradesh GSDP Likely To Hit Rs 50,651 Crore In FY27: Deputy CM



Itanagar, April 03: Arunachal Pradesh is poised for a massive economic leap, with its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) projected to climb from ₹41,314 crore in FY 2025-26 to ₹50,651 crore in FY 2026-27. This represents a robust 23% growth rate, according to Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein. Drivers of Economic Growth In a statement on Friday, Mein—who oversees the Finance, Planning, and Investment portfolios—attributed this optimistic forecast to several strategic pillars:

Aggressive Capital Expenditure: Increased spending on infrastructure and long-term assets. Resource Mobilization: More efficient utilization of the state's natural and financial resources. Tax Reforms: A significantly strengthened tax administration ensuring higher revenue collection. Fiscal Resilience and Future Outlook The Deputy CM noted that these projections, backed

Shija Hospitals observes World Autism Awareness Day



Imphal, Apr 03: Shija Hospitals and Research Institute Pvt. Ltd., in association with the Handicapped Development (HD) Foundation and The National Trust, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, observed World Autism Awareness Day 2026 at the SJ Auditorium, Itocha Block, under the theme "Autism and Humanity - Every Life Has Value."

Nganchoi Tongbram, Clinical Psychologist, delivered the welcome and keynote address, emphasising inclusivity, empathy, and the need to create enabling environments that help individuals overcome barriers and thrive.

Chief Guest Dr. Shantibala Kojiam, Professor & Head, Department of Psychiatry, Shija Academy of Health Sciences, highlighted the importance of early diagnosis and multidisciplinary care for improved outcomes. Guest of Honour Nandinibala Nongmeikapam, Occupational Therapist and Behavior Thera-

Social Welfare Director meets MLAs in Churachandpur



Imphal, Apr 03: In a significant administrative outreach initiative to strengthen welfare delivery in the hill districts, Director of Social Welfare, Sheikh Abdul Hakim, visited Churachandpur along with departmental staff under the leadership of Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh. During the visit, the Social Welfare Director met with several MLAs and sought their cooperation and coordination to ensure that welfare schemes and government projects effectively reach the grassroots. The outreach comes in the wake of the violence that broke out in May 2023, which had made administrative access to the hill areas difficult. In a notable move, the Director personally visited the district to reconnect with the people and understand ground realities. He held meetings with MLA Letzamong Haokip of Hengle Assembly Constituency, MLA Chinlunthang Manlun of Singhat (ST), MLA LM Khaute of Churachandpur AC, and MLA Paolienlal Haokip of Saikot AC and Late Vungzagi Valte son's Joseph Valte and his family. The Director also expressed his condolences on the passing of former minister and MLA, Late Vungzagin Valte. As part of his visit, Sheikh Abdul Hakim interacted with Anganwadi Workers, Helpers, Supervisors, and departmental staff, patiently listening to their grievances, issues, and challenges. He assured them that their concerns would be addressed at the earliest. The Churachandpur Anganwadi Workers' Association expressed gratitude for his visit and for taking the time to hear their voices directly from the ground. The Churachandpur Anganwadi Workers' Association expressed appreciation for his visit and direct engagement. One member shared, "We want to meet the new Chief Minister. We don't know how to reach out to him; if we could, we would have already done so. We are happy that the Director has come to meet us personally. Even though he is a Director, he listened to our grievances like a son." Speaking to the media, the Director emphasised the government's commitment, stating, "Under the visionary leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, the Social Welfare Department is actively engaging with MLAs to strengthen welfare delivery across the state." He added, "We are fully committed to addressing public grievances efficiently, guided by the dynamic leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister." Highlighting immediate relief measures, he said, "In a major relief for beneficiaries, six months of pending old age pension funds will be released within April." Stressing coordination and transparency, he noted, "With strong coordination between MLAs and departmental offices, we are ensuring that every scheme reaches the grassroots level," and further added, "We have successfully compiled beneficiary data across constituencies to ensure transparent and effective implementation." Reaffirming the department's mission, he stated, "Driven by the vision of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, we are working to ensure that every welfare scheme reaches the last-mile beneficiary without delay," adding, "Our focus is to bring real change on the ground so that no eligible citizen is left behind." During the visit, the Director also inspected the One Stop Centre and the District Social Welfare Department office in Churachandpur as part of his review of ongoing services and implementation on the ground.

AOI doctor averts mid-air medical emergency on Tokyo-Delhi flight

Imphal, Apr 03: A potentially serious mid-air medical emergency was successfully managed aboard an Air India flight traveling from Tokyo to New Delhi, thanks to the timely intervention of an onboard critical care specialist Dr. Loni Liriina of the American Oncology Institute, At Babina Specialty Hospital, Imphal. Dr. Loni Liriina, a critical care physician, was among the passengers on Flight AI357 when the incident occurred approximately eight hours into the journey. With nearly two hours remaining before landing in New Delhi, the cabin crew announced a medical emergency and requested assistance from any qualified medical professionals on board. Responding promptly, Dr. Loni Liriina, along with a junior doctor of foreign nationality, attended to a 21-year-old passenger who complained of severe chest pain and breathlessness. The patient reportedly had a history of childhood asthma but had not been on medication for several years.

pist, Georgia, USA, demonstrated communication approaches and emphasised structured therapy and family involvement. Guest of Honour: Th. Sharatkumar Singh, Director, Special Olympics Bharat Manipur, spoke about government support systems, including the National Trust Act, and the need for greater awareness and access. Dr. Chetan Khundongbam presided over the event and highlighted the contributions of individuals with autism, citing figures such as Albert Einstein, Nikola Tesla, and Elon Musk, whose work has had a lasting impact on the world. A dance performance by children with intellectual disabilities highlighted their abilities and confidence.

The event highlighted a shared commitment to greater awareness, stronger support systems, and meaningful inclusion for individuals with autism.

Arm, ammunition recovered in Churachandpur

Imphal, Apr 03: Security forces recovered arms and ammunition from the general area of Dampi ridge under Churachandpur-PS, Churachandpur district. The recovered weapons include two 12 bore rifles, two front loaded single barrel rifles, one modified AK-47, two 9 mm pistols, each with a magazine, three magazines of different arms, four Pumpis, 81 live rounds ammunition of different calibers, seven 12 bore fired cases, two bulletproof jackets, two Walkie-Talkies and pellets (Pompi explosive) weighing 1 kg. Security forces also recovered arms and ammunition in a search operation conducted at Upokpi Khunou Mamang Leikai and adjoining Loktak Lake area under Bishnupur-PS, Bishnupur district. In the operation, they recovered one .32 pistol with magazine, three live rounds of .32 ammunition, one single barrel gun, one H.E. hand grenade, five 12 bore cartridges and blank round. Meanwhile, security forces destroyed three bunkers at Satang Hill range under Sagolmang Police Station, Imphal East district.



Himanta is criticized by Priyanka Gandhi, who claims that one family is plundering Assam

Nazira, Apr 03: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday slammed Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and alleged that “only one family is looting” everything in the resource-rich state, while the people “don’t have anything”.

Vadra also alleged that the BJP government is functioning by threatening the people.

Addressing an election rally at Nazira in support of Leader of the Opposition and party candidate, Debabrata Saikia, she launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and charged him with being a “slave” of the US.

“One family is looting everything in Assam. And when they are not looting, mines, lands and every other asset are being handed over to big industrialists,” Vadra claimed.

Alleging massive corruption on every front during the BJP-led government in Assam, she raked up several old scams such as Sarada, Smart City and NC Hills. “The BJP said they have given a double-engine government. In reality, it is a double-ghulami (slavery) government. PM Modi is engaged in slavery of the US, and Himanta Biswa Sarma is engaged in slavery of Modi,” Vadra claimed.

She also attacked the BJP government for failing to fulfil the promise of hiking daily wages of tea garden workers and stressed that the people from the gardens are struggling in the same way.

“Various tribal communities have been demanding ST status for years. The BJP had promised to accord ST status to them, but they failed to give it,” the Lok Sabha MP said.



She also alleged that women of Assam are forced to attend the rallies of the PM and CM with threats that their names will be removed from various government schemes, especially the flagship poverty alleviation scheme ‘Orunodoi’. “PM Modi and CM Himanta are ruling the country and state with fear and threats. Our fight is against that fear, and for protecting Assam’s culture and civilisation,” Vadra asserted. Addressing her second election rally at Tingkhong in support of her party candidate Bipul Gogoi, Vadra said Assam has land, mines, history, nature, forest and every other resource.

“This land has given you everything. But still the people don’t have anything. Only one family

is prospering in Assam,” she told the gathering.

The Congress leader alleged that the state is being rung by “mafias and syndicates”, and the government is functioning by threatening the people. Vadra also said that popular musician Zubeen Garg, who died in Singapore while swimming in September last year, was the voice of Assam, and he sang for brotherhood, unity and love.

“But the Assam government has not given any justice to his family. We want to bring in a government which will give justice to Zubeen Garg within 100 days,” she asserted. Polling for the 126-member Assam Assembly will be held on April 9, while the results will be declared on May 4.

CM Manik Saha questions feasibility of Greater Tipraland demand at Gomati rally

Agartala, Apr 03: Tripura CM Manik Saha on Thursday criticised the demand for Greater Tipraland, questioning its feasibility, and asserted that the public of TTAADC had decided to bring a change this time. Addressing a poll rally at Natunbazar in Gomati District, Saha said the contours of the proposed Greater Tipraland were unclear and referred to claims that it included areas in Bangladesh. “We do not know the boundary of Greater Tipraland. It is said that it includes areas from Bangladesh as well. No one knows its length and breadth,” he said. He also questioned statements about including regions such as Khagrachari, Chittagong, and Cox’s Bazar in Greater Tipraland, saying, “Is it really possible? Can any state government capture such areas that are now part and parcel of a foreign country?” Referring to India’s foreign pol-



icy, the chief minister said, “India has never attacked any country nor captured any geographical territory,” and added that such proposals would not be acceptable at the national level. Saha alleged that the issue was being raised to attract public attention since Tipra Motha was running out of poll planks this time, adding that the political stance of the party is full of inconsistencies. “The situation has changed. We thought, as allies, we should walk together and fight elections together, but they (Tipra

Motha) say one thing and do another. They failed to keep their commitment,” he said.

He further alleged that misinformation was being spread regarding land under the TTAADC, particularly in connection with the formation of Bishramganja and Amarpur Nagar Panchayats. “Misleading and manufactured facts are being placed before the public. When leaders were invited for joint inspection and officials clarified that there was nothing wrong, they became silent,” he said.

DESAM protests at BOSEM over substandard exam paper

Imphal, Apr 03: Volunteers of the Democratic Students’ Alliance of Manipur (DESAM) on Thursday stormed the office of the Board of Secondary Education, Manipur (BOSEM), demanding an immediate and transparent investigation by the Commissioner of Education into a suspected scam involving the supply of substandard, non-watermarked paper for textbooks and answer scripts. As DESAM members stormed the gate of the BOSEM office and threw rotten eggs inside the complex, police pushed them back, leading to a confrontation. O. Ramesh, President of DESAM, on the sidelines of the protest, told the media that his student organization is demanding an immediate halt to the use of poor-quality, non-watermarked paper in examinations. He also called for a thorough investigation into the alleged tender scam sur-

rounding paper procurement and urged action against officials responsible for the substandard supply, including the BOSEM Chairman and Secretary. Additionally, Ramesh emphasized the need for efficient and high-quality production of textbooks for students. With the deployment of an additional police team, the protesters were finally pushed back from the BOSEM office to the Nupilal complex, a distance of about 100 meters. During the confrontation, some students reportedly sustained minor injuries. They also demanded that the responsible firm be blacklisted. DESAM has previously demanded the removal of the BOSEM Chairman for alleged irregular recruitment practices. The President has also threatened to intensify the agitation if these issues, particularly the quality of examination materials, are not addressed.

88% of BJP candidates are millionaires, highest among major parties

Imphal, Apr 03: Nearly 40% of the 722 candidates contesting the 126 constituencies in the upcoming Assam Assembly elections have declared assets exceeding Rs 1 crore, according to affidavits filed ahead of the polls. In total, 285 candidates fall into the ‘crorepati’ category, with the combined declared assets of all contestants amounting to approximately Rs 2,352 crore. The average asset value per candidate stands at Rs 3.25 crore. The BJP-led North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) and the Congress-led Assam Samilaito Morcha (ASM) have fielded a comparable number of candidates—127 and 128 respectively, including friendly contests. However, their financial profiles show notable variation. Among major parties, 88% of BJP candidates have declared assets above Rs 1 crore, followed



by the Bodoland People’s Front at 82%, Rajiour Dal at 69%, and the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) at 53%. The Congress has fielded 61% crorepati candidates. BJP nominees also report the highest average asset value at Rs 7.01

crore—more than double the overall average across all candidates. Independent candidates make up a significant share of the electoral field, with 258 contestants accounting for 36% of the total, reflecting a strong presence of non-party entrants in the fray.

At the individual level, Rahul Roy is the wealthiest candidate, declaring assets worth Rs 261 crore. He is followed by Badruddin Ajmal, contesting from Binnakandi, with assets of Rs 226 crore, and Jayanta Khaund, who has declared Rs 67 crore. At the other end of the spectrum, Gautam Nath, an independent candidate from Hailakandi, has declared assets of just Rs 400. Two other independent candidates from the same constituency, Dhrubo Chakraborty and Jibon Roy have reported no assets.

The first digital census in is launched in Mizoram in 2027

Aizawl, Apr 03: Mizoram has become the first state in the Northeast region to begin preliminary work for the Census of India, 2027, with the process officially starting on Wednesday, officials said.

A senior official from the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO) stated that Chief Minister Lalduhoma successfully completed his self-enumeration under Phase-I (House Listing and Housing Census) of the Census of India, 2027 at his official residence.

The official noted that the self-enumeration was carried out through a newly-introduced online portal and was facilitated by personnel from the Aizawl Municipal Corporation, the General Administration Department, and the Directorate of Census Operations. This initiative marks a significant step towards promoting digital participation and enhancing awareness among citizens. Following the Chief Minister, other dignitaries also took part in the self-enumeration process. Home Minister K. Sapdanga completed his self-enumeration, while PWD Minister Vanlalhlana undertook the process at their respective residences. Senior officials from the state government and the Census Department were present to facilitate the process. The Census of India, 2027 will be conducted in two phases. The first phase — the House Listing and Housing Census — commenced on April 1 in select states and Union Territories, while the second phase, Population Enumeration, is scheduled for February 2027.

In a major development, this Census will be conducted digitally for the first time, the CMO official said. Citizens have also been given the option of Self-Enumeration, a feature introduced for the first time. The Self-Enumeration period in Mizoram, along with a few other states and Union Territories, will run from April 1 to April 15. This will be followed by the House Listing and Housing Census from April 16 to May 15 across the state. Citizens can complete self-enumeration by visiting the official portal, logging in using their mobile number, identifying their location, and filling in household details. Upon submission, a unique Self-Enumeration ID (SE ID) will be generated. This ID must be shared with the enumerator during their visit to ensure proper inclusion in the Census. The government has encouraged all residents to take advantage of this convenient option, which allows individuals to provide accurate information at their own convenience while also supporting the smooth and efficient conduct of the Census. Mizoram has become the first state in the Northeast region to begin preliminary work for the Census of India, 2027, with the process officially starting on Wednesday, officials said.

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Shah reviews Manipur law & order; nod for women IRB Bn

Imphal, Apr 03: Manipur chief minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Wednesday informed that Union home minister Amit Shah reviewed the prevailing law and order situation in the state during a meeting held at New Delhi.

According to official sources, the Union home minister also gave his in-principle approval for the setting up of a women battalion of the Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) in Manipur.

The review meeting came amid fresh tensions in Ukhrul and Kamjong districts following the killing of four NSCN (IM) cadres in an ambush at

Hongbei village junction on March 28. Shah reportedly emphasized the need to accelerate the peace process and strengthen harmony among all communities.

Expressing gratitude, the chief minister said the raising of a Mahila IRB Battalion would enhance the state’s capacity in maintaining law and order and ensuring internal security. A detailed proposal will be submitted soon, he added. The chief minister’s office stated that the meeting with Shah took place at Parliament House complex around 11:30 am. Singh had rushed to the national capital the previous eve-

ning after being asked to do so. Meanwhile, sources said the chief minister plans to visit Jiribam district on April 4 along with MLAs to follow up on assurances given to different communities during his earlier visit. Singh had previously visited Jiribam on February 11, shortly after taking oath on February 4, where he interacted with leaders of Kuki, Zomi and Hmar communities, visited relief camps, and assured development of road connectivity. He had also pledged to revisit the district after the Yaoshang festival, which concluded on March 7, as part of his peace-building initiative.

Ruksin villagers file fresh complaint against Niglok silicon factory

Dhemaji, Apr 03: Residents of eight villages under the Ruksin circle in Arunachal Pradesh’s East Siang district, bordering Dhemaji, have raised fresh complaints against the ferro-silicon factory established at the Industrial Growth Centre (IGC) in Niglok. The villagers, who are on prolonged agitation against the factory unit, submitted a fresh complaint to the Ruksin ADC on Thursday, stating that the silicon factory operated by M/s Aether Alloys LLP obtained the No-Objection Certificate (NOC) in an illegal manner and installed the factory unit without conducting any ‘public hearing’. The agitating villagers, in the complaint, reiterated that the silicon industry is affecting natural resources and the community’s health in the area, thereby posing a serious threat to

their future generations and nature-based livelihoods. Local gaon burahs of the Ruksin area, who also filed a similar complaint before the ADC, stated that representatives of the silicon company misled them and obtained the NOC by providing false, incomplete, and manipulated information about the ferro-silicon factory. The GBs have lamented that they are bearing the brunt of public anger, as affected people are questioning them for giving consent for setting up the silicon factory without knowing its consequences. “In fact, the company representatives did not explain the project design to us, so we were unaware of the heavy factory and its subsequent implications. Now we observe that the factory is posing serious environmental issues, besides creating health hazards and

social disturbances,” said Niglok Head GB Talung Saroh, while demanding that the government authorities “initiate necessary steps to suspend the NOC of the silicon factory run by M/s Aether Alloys LLP.” The protesting villagers have demanded that the authorities suspend the operation of the factory and institute an independent expert panel to verify and investigate the rising complaints, and also conduct a ‘public hearing’ regarding the silicon factory row, as the pollution issue concerns the lives and properties of local people. To mark their continued protest and fresh demands, several hundred villagers, including a large number of women and youth, took out a foot march along MMJ Road and National Highway-515 today and raised various slogans against the silicon factory.

The protesters later assembled at the Ruksin general ground, organised a meeting, and discussed their demands. It may be mentioned that the National Green Tribunal’s (NGT) Kolkata bench, following a news report published in this daily, took suo motu cognisance of the alleged large-scale environmental pollution caused by the ferro-alloy factory operating in Niglok IGC. Later, IGC Pollution Affected People’s Forum leader Dishing Tagi filed a formal petition outlining the problems and public grievances.

The matter came up for hearing on March 9 before Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi (judicial member) and A Senthil Vel (expert member), filed by the Industrial Growth Centre Pollution Affected People’s Forum (IGCPAPF) and Dishing Tagi.

Assam CM Claims BJP Will Win 9–11 Seats in Barak Valley

Guwahati, Apr 03: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday predicted that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would secure “9 to 11 seats” in Barak Valley in the upcoming Assam Assembly elections. Speaking to mediapersons, Sarma reiterated confidence in the party’s broader prospects, projecting between “90 and 100 seats” across Assam, while underlining Barak Valley’s crucial role in the BJP’s overall electoral strategy. The Chief Minister claimed that the party expects significant gains in Barak Valley while asserting that its organisational

strength and sustained grassroots outreach have resonated with voters. “BJP is certain to win the Hailakandi seat while in Algapur, that there is considerable “hype” among the people even as the electoral results would ultimately reflect the party’s on-ground performance,” he said. Taking a dig at the Opposition, Sarma questioned the intensity of their campaign and the manner in which some public meetings have been conducted. “Instead of creating hype, the BJP focuses on holding more meetings and directly engaging with voters.

Prohibitory orders promulgated in Imphal East for 2 months

Imphal, Apr 03: The District Magistrate, Imphal East has promulgated prohibitory orders across the entire revenue Imphal East district with immediate effect for a period of two months. According to the order issued on Thursday, no person shall convene, organize, or participate in any public assembly of five or more persons in any public place. It also prohibits carrying firearms, arms, clubs, sticks, swords, spears, explosives, corrosive substances, or any other objects or weapons capable of being used to commit violence. Further, the order stated that no rallies, processions, bandhs, strikes, or demonstrations shall be organized with-

out the prior written permission of the District Magistrate. No person shall block roads, public thoroughfares, or obstruct any essential services. Any other act that has the potential to disturb public peace and tranquility is strictly prohibited. The restrictions shall not apply to members of the police, armed forces, government officers on official duty, or any other person or organization specifically exempted in writing by the District Magistrate, Imphal East. Religious and customary practices may be permitted subject to prior written approval from the District Magistrate, the order stated. The order also noted ap-

prehension of a breach of peace, disturbance of public tranquility, and danger to human life and property within Imphal due to potential unlawful activities by certain anti-social elements, and aims to safeguard public order and tranquility in the district. The prohibitory orders shall remain in force throughout the revenue jurisdiction of Imphal East District, Manipur, for a period of two months, effective from April 2. Any person found violating this order shall be liable for punishment under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, and other relevant laws in force, it stated.

Governor emphasises on strengthening healthcare infrastructure

Imphal, Apr 03: Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla graced the inauguration of the Khwairakpam Krishnagopal Memorial Building at Ningthoukhong in Bishnupur district. The building was also formally dedicated to the Community Health Centre (CHC), Ningthoukhong, on the occasion. Constructed by the Gojendro Foundation within the premises of the CHC, the facility has been handed over to the Government of Manipur to support the expansion and upgradation of the centre, with a particular focus on strengthening maternal healthcare through the establishment of a dedicated maternity ward. Minister for Home and Youth Affairs & Sports, K. Govindas Singh, along with MLAs from Thanga, Nambol, Oinam, Moirang, Kumbi and Lilong Assembly Constituencies also attended the event. Addressing the function, the Governor stated that the inauguration of the new facility marked more than the opening of a building, describing it as a significant step towards strengthening hope, dignity, and care for the people, particularly women and mothers who form the backbone of society. He highlighted the enduring strength, resilience, and moral leadership of the Ima community, noting their historic role in shaping society and championing justice and peace. The Governor observed that the initiative reflected a broader vision of



Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla inaugurated the Khwairakpam Krishnagopal Memorial Building in Ningthoukhong, Bishnupur district, dedicated to the Community Health Centre (CHC) to enhance maternal healthcare, particularly by establishing a maternity ward.

strengthening healthcare infrastructure through collective effort. He expressed hope that it would inspire more organisations and individuals to contribute towards nation-building, adding that the facility would stand as a lasting symbol of compassion, unity, and shared responsibility. The Governor commended the Gojendro Foundation for its continued service to marginalised sections and its generous contribution in constructing and dedicating the

building to the Government for the upgradation of the Community Health Centre, calling it a noteworthy example of the synergy between public service and philanthropy. Emphasising the importance of the newly established maternity ward, he stated that improved ac-

cess to quality maternal healthcare would contribute to safer motherhood and healthier generations. Representatives of the CHC also submitted memoranda to the Governor, highlighting various concerns related to service delivery and equipment constraints.

57 Grams Of Suspected Heroin Seized In Arunachal’s Namsai, Two Held

Namsai, April 03: Namsai Police have arrested two individuals and recovered a total of 57 grams of suspected heroin in two separate operations conducted within a span of 12 days in Arunachal Pradesh’s Namsai district. According to police, the operations were carried out under the supervision of Superintendent of Police Sangey Thinley. In the first case on March 20, 2026, acting on specific information, a police team conducted a raid at an abandoned rented premises near a petroleum pump, around 1 km from 2nd Mile in Namsai. During the operation, one accused, identified as Sujita Kungkung, was apprehended. A search led to the recovery of approximately 15 grams of suspected heroin concealed in a soap case. In a subsequent operation on April 2, 2026, police intercepted a vehicle (Suzuki Ignis, registration number AR-20A-5547) along the Solungtoo Highway based on further inputs. The oc-



cupant, identified as Chow Pingta Choutang, was apprehended. During the search, approximately 41 grams of suspected heroin concealed in soap cases were recovered from the centre console of the vehicle.

Police stated that all seizures were conducted following due legal procedures in the presence of independent witnesses and documented through e-Sakshya. Cases have

been registered under relevant provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. The operations were carried out by the Anti Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) team led by Deputy Super-

intendent of Police Kengo Dirchi, along with other officers and staff, with support from local police personnel. Further investigation is underway to trace links in the suspected drug network, police added.

Thoubal shopkeepers resolve not to provide financial donation



Imphal, Apr 03: The Wangjing-Lamding Keithel Shopkeepers Development Association (WLKSDA), Thoubal has unanimously resolved that they will not be able to provide any kind of financial assistance or donations to any individual, group, party, student organisation, or civil organisation for a certain period. The Wangjing Lamding Market Shopkeepers Development Association took the unanimous resolution after holding a meeting of the shopkeepers in the market on Thursday. Regarding the meeting, WLKSDA Vice President Yendrembam Ashakumar told the media that due to the current unrest in the State, shopkeepers are fac-

ing immense difficulties. He said that shopkeepers in Wangjing Lamding markets are taking loans from banks for doing small business but due to several issues, those who took loans from banks are now unable to repay them. The situation has reached a point where they cannot even pay the rent for their shops. These numerous difficulties have been endured by shopkeepers up to this day, he said. He further said that despite facing many hardships, shops located in the old and new markets of Wangjing-Lamding have received donations of money from various student organisations, private associations, CSOs,

and several parties, causing further suffering to the shopkeepers in the markets. He said that a small amount of money earned from the shop is used for household expenses, and to educate the children. In the past, when the conflict was at its peak, WLKSDA didn’t remain as a silent spectator, instead they extended capable financial assistance to the brothers, he said. However, at present, the shopkeepers are also facing hardship, therefore, they have unanimously resolved not to provide any monetary donations to any organisation. For this, the shopkeepers hope that no threat or intimidation would be given to the WALKSDA, he added.

Illegal urea sale busted in Aizawl, MAHFED initiates action against violators

Aizawl, Apr 03: Authorities have initiated action against illegal sale and unauthorised distribution of urea in Mizoram’s Siphir area after inspections revealed serious violations of government rules and pricing norms. According to an official statement issued by MAHFED Ltd., instances of urea being sold above the prescribed rate were detected in and around Siphir, near Aizawl. Urea, which is a controlled and subsidised essential commodity, is required to be sold at a fixed government price. Acting on credible inputs, the Managing Director of MAHFED conducted field inspections on March 20 and March 23.

The inspection included verification of distribution practices and interaction with farmers and buyers. During the exercise, recorded statements confirmed that urea was being sold at inflated rates. Officials said the government-notified Maximum Re-



tail Price (MRP) for a 45 kg bag of urea is ₹266.40, inclusive of GST. However, several instances were found where the same was being sold for as high as ₹450 per bag. The findings point to a clear violation of provisions under the Fertilizer (Control) Order, 1985, which prohibits sale above the prescribed price. Such violations are also punishable under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. Further investigation revealed the involvement of an unregistered private entity, M/s Zekyl Enterprises, which was allegedly engaged in unauthorised procurement and distribution of urea. Officials said the firm

did not possess the required registration under the Fertilizer Control Order and was operating through irregular channels. Authorities described the activities as a serious breach of norms, indicating the existence of an illegal parallel supply chain of subsidised fertiliser. In response, MAHFED has issued show cause notices to defaulting cooperative societies and has begun proceedings, in coordination with relevant authorities, to investigate and take action against the private firm. Steps are also being taken to shut down illegal operations and initiate penal action against those involved.

From Pool Cleaner to Podium: Debi Daimari’s Inspiring Journey

Guwahati, Apr 03: When the going gets tough, the tough get going, is a popular phrase that defines hunger to excel in sports. Wrestler Debi Daimiri’s story is symbolic of the will power and determination to overcome hurdles. The 28-year-old from Dineshpur village in Sisupani, Golaghat district of Assam lost her parents at the age of seven and had to move in with her uncle and aunt and had to work odd jobs just to keep training due to financial difficulties. And all those efforts finally bore fruit when Debi clinched the silver medal in the women’s 62kg category at the Khelo India Tribal Games in Chhattisgarh, which concludes on Friday. “This medal is the result of my hard work. I started wrestling in 2022 at the Khelo India Centre near Kaziranga in Bokakhat. To train there, I had to rent a room nearby, but I didn’t have the money to pay Rs 1000 as rent, so I had to take up a part-time job for a year,”

said Debi, who belongs to the Bodo community. “In 2022, I worked at an Easy Bazaar store in Bokakhat for a monthly salary of Rs 2500. In 2023, I got a job at Bon Villa Resort in Kaziranga, where I earned around Rs 7000 per month. I used to clean the swimming pool there. “After working all day, I could only manage two hours of wrestling practice in the evening. Whatever I have achieved, this silver medal is the result of that effort. But I am not satisfied—I now want to work even harder and win gold,” she said. Before stepping onto the wrestling mat, Debi was involved in powerlifting and arm wrestling. In 2022, she met Assam team coach Anustup Narah, under whose guidance she learned the nuances of wrestling. Coach Anustup recalled, “I met her during an arm-wrestling tournament in Bokakhat in 2022. I immediately told her to take up wrestling. After some thought, she agreed.



I advised her to stay near the centre for better training. She said she couldn’t afford the rent, so I helped her get a job through the district wrestling association and arranged a bicycle for her. She used that bicycle to commute to work and training.” In the very same year after starting wrestling training, Debi qualified for the Senior State Championships held in

Visakhapatnam. Two years later, in 2024, she went on to win a gold medal at the State Championship. Debi got married in 2025 and the support of her husband and the in-laws has only made her more determined to succeed on the national stage. “My in-laws are very supportive, and my husband, who works in Bengaluru, constantly supports me by sending money so that I don’t face any difficulties,” she said. “My next aim is to win medals at the senior level and then compete internationally. I am working day and night for that. Once I return, I will follow the plan my coach sets for me,” she added. The Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) is a dedicated national sporting platform established under the Government of India’s Khelo India initiative, with the specific mandate of identifying, nurturing, and celebrating athletic talent from tribal communities across the country.

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The Role of Determination in Achieving Success

Determination is the strong commitment to achieving goals despite difficulties. It is a key factor that drives individuals to continue working toward their objectives even when faced with challenges.Success rarely comes without obstacles. Individuals who lack determination may give up when faced with difficulties, while those who remain committed are more likely to succeed. In education, determination helps students overcome academic challenges. Consistent effort and persistence enable them to improve and achieve their goals.In professional life, determination is essential for career growth. Employees who remain focused and dedicated are better able to navigate challenges and achieve success.Determination also strengthens personal character. It builds resilience and confidence, helping individuals face future challenges more effectively.Families and educational institutions play an important role in nurturing determination. Encouraging effort and recognising perseverance helps individuals develop this quality.Importantly, determination must be balanced with adaptability. Being committed to goals while adjusting strategies ensures effective progress.A society that values determination encourages perseverance and growth. By staying committed to their goals, individuals can achieve meaningful success and contribute to collective development.

The politics behind Sheikh Hasina’s execution sentence: exile, extradition, and the deterioration of democracy in Bangladesh

The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in Dhaka sentenced the exiled Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to death in absentia on 17 November 2025. The verdict underlines her “crimes against humanity” with reference to her crackdown on the students’ protest in 2024, who demanded the overturning of the Supreme Court verdict to restore quota to the freedom fighters of the Bangladeshi Liberation War in 1971. The Supreme Court verdict was against the political decision of the Sheikh Hasina government not to provide a quota for the descendants of freedom fighters in the public sector. The irony of the matter is that it was her government’s decision not to give a quota to the family members of the freedom fighters. What could have been a protest against the Supreme Court became, farcically, an anti-government and pro-democracy mobilisation. The protest was amplified to the extent of calling it a July Revolution. It was expected that she would not have maintained law and order and would have stood by as the anarchy violently enveloped the country. Her kinetic reaction to douse the flame of revolution was legally interpreted as “crimes against humanity” by the court, and she was sentenced to death. Therefore, the juridical duplicity becomes evident. Political and juridical complicity needs no hair-splitting in understanding its role. Sheikh Hasina rejects the

verdict against her as ‘biased and politically motivated’ and calls the tribunal a ‘kangaroo court’. These developments indicate the awful condition of the country. The leader of the Awami League lives in exile in India, and the Awami League faces political ostracism, being banned and restricted from participating in electoral activities in Bangladesh. The much-needed election to restore democracy in Bangladesh is nowhere to be found in the itinerary. The unelected group, through force and coercion, runs the country. In the absence of a democratic polity, the death sentence of a democratically elected leader shows glaringly the game of the unelected. She is sentenced to death in absentia, with no scope for legally defending her case. The politico-legal drama does not end there. The unelected caretaker government has sent a diplomatic request to India to extradite Sheikh Hasina. It has unleashed a legal battle between the two countries. It is a potential diversionary tactic employed by Muhammad Yunus and his cohorts and collaborators to distract the people from more pressing issues, including the election, economy, radicalisation, and democracy. International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) The ICT was established in 2010 under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act of 1973. Its objective is to punish the perpetrators of crimes in the Bangladesh Liberation War

in 1971. The case of Sheikh Hasina is totally different and does not come under the purview of ICT jurisdiction. When no democratically elected government is in place, such changes in the scope of jurisdiction of the ICT are unwarranted. It is a domestic juridical body. It is not affiliated with any international legal institution. It is solely confined to Bangladesh. The judges, prosecutors, and investigators are Bangladeshi nationals, appointed under the purview of the Bangladeshi judicial framework. The ICT’s probity, fairness, impartiality, and procedural standards have been questioned by international observers and human rights organisations. It is alleged that it has become a puppet institution for politically motivated persecution. The case of Sheikh Hasina is the most notable example of the ICT’s shaky standing and legal disingenuity. Given the ICT’s questionable reputation as a legal institution, the verdict of a death sentence for a democratically elected Prime Minister underlines a politically motivated decision to embroil the country in a state of anarchy. India-Bangladesh Extradition Treaty The ICT may be a kangaroo court. Bangladesh has sent an extradition request to India. The Ministry of External Affairs will examine the matter and its legal recourse. Here, the India-Bangladesh Extradition Treaty assumes significance. The treaty was signed in 2013. It clar-

ifies the legal framework for the reciprocal extradition process of offenders in the event of crime and terrorism to ensure a safe neighbourhood. Article 6 of the treaty refers to the ‘Political Offence Exception’. The exception in this category includes offences related to political character. Article 8 refers to ‘grounds for refusal of extradition’. Extradition can be refused on the grounds of unjust extradition involving oppression against the person concerned, triviality of offence, or a long period having passed between the time of the offence committed and the time of extradition. These provisions will, of course, be seriously examined. India is a mature democracy. It will consider the matter seriously and will provide her with the required legal protection. The verdict also ensures the travesty of justice and judicial subservience to political whimsicality. The agency and autonomy of judicial institutions are severely compromised. She should have been given the necessary legal scope to defend her case. The extradition episode is another gimmick. It is tactfully implanted to attract global attention. It is a distraction tactic to stoke religious nationalism to divert the people from thoughts about the urgency of the election. Muhammad Yunus slowly releases these soft and nonkinetic weapons from his narrative armoury to keep the conditions tense. It goes without

saying that the death sentence and extradition request are mere hogwash. They are designed to bring Bangladesh to the global spotlight through op-eds, podcasts, and social media reactions. The groundswell against Muhammad Yunus has already begun. The proposed election in 2026 may reduce him to a political non-entity. His backdoor entry through students’ protest is not a testament to democracy. It is a travesty of democracy. If the election is further deferred, it will exacerbate the already tense political situation in Bangladesh. The recycling of the issues about Sheikh Hasina is engineered to conceal Muhammad Yunus’ incompetence and failure. Bangladesh has created enough geopolitical tension in the neighbourhood. It is difficult to get back on track. Yunus’ camaraderie with PakistanChina and the US and doing things constantly detrimental to Indian interests has ruined relations with India. He suffers from Stockholm syndrome. He pushes Bangladesh into Pakistan’s control. He paradoxically invites his own doom and that of Bangladesh. The octogenarian’s madness shows no sign of a method. It is pure madness and incurable madness. The verdict of death on Sheikh Hasina illustrates this. His constant provocation abnormally shrinks the scope of friendship with India. The episode of Sheikh Hasina’s extradition adds to the catalogue of provocations.

How pursuing democracy in Pakistan is like chasing a dream

The 27th amendment to the Pakistan constitution received the assent of President Asif Ali Zardari on November 13. It came into effect immediately. It brought in fundamental changes in the country’s judicial set-up by setting up a Constitutional Court and reducing the Supreme Court’s jurisdiction to only civil and criminal matters. The amendment also introduced fundamental changes in the command structure of the country’s defence services. It did so by amending Article 243, which deals with the Armed Forces of Pakistan. Now, the army chief will also be concurrently chief of the Defence Forces. With that, the office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee stands abolished. This has greatly strengthened the constitutional position of army chief.

The 27th amendment is continuing to be greatly criticised by sections of the country’s liberal elite and legal fraternity as well as academia and some political circles. Writing on the amendment, Pakistan’s leading newspaper Dawn noted, “The separation of powers and basic structure established by the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan—which envisioned an independent judiciary and armed forces subservient to the civilian dispensation—now stands terminated.

The irony isn’t lost here that instead of the military, an independent judiciary has been amended away into a subservient department of the executive branch.” In the same vein, Maleeha Lodi, an eminent journalist turned diplomat, wrote after the amendment was tabled but before it was passed, “Pakistan’s slide into authoritarianism has been unmistakable over the past three years or more. Now a fresh move

will reinforce the trend of democratic regression. The 27th constitutional amendment tabled in parliament will alter the country’s judicial structure with significant implications for governance and democracy.” These liberal views on the amendment are hypocritical. The fact is that the Pakistani elites and scholarly circles have never really cared for constitutional and democratic values. Throughout Pakistan’s history they have been ever willing to sacrifice the basic tenets of democracy for their own interests. Besides, there is another reason why they have never stood up to the army. This is because it has instilled in the people of Pakistan, including in the elites, a fear of India as the country’s perpetual enemy.

This has led the people to make sacrifices for the army. These have included allowing the men in khaki to milk the land for their own benefit. There is perhaps no army in the world which is as large a country’s industrial behemoth as the Pakistan army is. All this would not have been possible except with the concurrence of the people, which includes the Pakistani elites. The constitutional amendment formally makes the army chief the chief of the defence forces. In reality this has always been so. The Pakistan army considers the air force and the navy as technical elements.

They have never been willing to share power with them either when they have ruled the country directly on four occasions in the past or when they have controlled elected or civilian governments from behind the scenes. On their part, the air force and navy have accepted this situation because of the crumbs they have been given through arrangements for housing or getting a part of the spoils in the army’s indus-



trial conglomerate. Despite the humiliating defeat of Pakistan in Operation Sindoor, the unchecked power of the Pakistani army chief was in sharp display. The IndiaPakistan military engagements were of an aerial nature, where the two countries’ air forces engaged each other. There was no movement of ground troops, though both countries used their firepower to shell each other’s areas. Thus, the Pakistan army did not engage its Indian counterpart, and yet it was the army chief who was made a field marshal! This is undoubtedly the first time in military history that a four-star army chief has got the fifth star without his force going into action. Normally, there would have been great unhappiness in the air force about Asim Munir becoming a field marshal, but there is no evidence that this was so. This shows how far the men in khaki dominate Pakistan, and that includes its air force

and army. In this context it would not be surprising that even though President Donald Trump may call Asim Munir his favourite field marshal and give him lunch at the White House, he would have little respect among his peers in the major armies of the world. Certainly, the fifth star on his epaulette has not been earned. It is not known how the corps commanders in the Pakistan army have considered his appointment as field marshal.

Naturally, the men would never comment publicly, but, in time, their sentiments would become known about what was clearly a star given by the present Pakistani elected leadership for political reasons and not for any military skill demonstrated by Asim Munir. Yes, he is a ‘Hafiz-eKoran’, but that also is not a skill which merits the rank of field marshal except perhaps in the ‘land of the pure’! As for the creation of a Constitutional Court, it does

not alter the tradition of the Pakistan judiciary really being the handmaiden of the Pakistan army. This has been the case except for brief periods when it has exercised its independence, but it did that only when it felt that it was safe to do so. The tradition of judicial subservience to the army goes back to the days of the first army coup by General Ayub Khan in 1958. He set aside Pakistan’s constitution, which had taken nine years to establish, only two years after its adoption. The matter went to the Pakistani judiciary, which justified it on the basis of the ‘doctrine of necessity’. It is generally believed that this was the first time that the Pakistani courts used this doctrine. However, a note on the website of the Asian Human Rights Commission of 2007 notes, “This doctrine was first used in 1954, just seven years after the creation of Pakistan. The Governor-General, Ghulam Mohammad,

dissolved the first Constitutional Assembly and the government of Prime Minister Khawja Nazim Uddin. This motion was challenged in the Sindh High Court, which held that the dissolution had been illegal and unconstitutional. However, on appeal, the Chief Court of Pakistan, which was later renamed the Supreme Court, decided that the governor-general had acted correctly. Then Chief Justice Muhammad Munir thus created the so-called doctrine of necessity”.

A judiciary which has relied on this doctrine to justify coups has at times sought to assert itself, but it has done so only when it has felt safe to do so. When it was confronted with danger, it did not. Thus, it upheld the death sentence against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. That judgement has rightly been called a ‘judicial murder’. Yes, it held former Pakistan President and earlier army chief Pervez Musharraf guilty of treason, but that was only after he was no longer army chief. It was then safe for the judges to do so.

This does not mean that there are no judges without the right judicial conscience in Pakistan, but as an institution the Pakistan judiciary has a very poor record, and it has never been really independent. Hence, it matters little if now major cases involving the political life of the country are heard by a Constitutional Court which is likely to be aligned with the powers that be, especially the army. Those who seek a democratic Pakistan chase a mirage. That is because the fault lies in the very ideology which created it, and there is no way the army will be willing to give it up. Thus, Pakistani liberal opinion is of little consequence, and those in India who think it matters, or one day it will, are simply mistaken.

In the midst of world unrest, Delhi and Moscow reevaluate their relations

Putin’s visit is seen as significant for India’s foreign policy as it balances relations between Moscow and Washington. It is a strong signal of India’s strategic autonomy and its commitment to a long-standing, trusted relationship with Russia, even as the US has imposed tariffs on India over its continued purchase of Russian oil. Both nations coordinate regularly on international political issues and aim to build a just, multipolar world order. The visit intended to deliver major outcomes and reinforce the relationship amid a changing global order and Western pressure on India regarding its trade with Russia. The visit is the culmination of extensive preparatory meetings,

including External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar’s recent visit to Moscow and discussions between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Putin’s aide Nikolay Patrushev in New Delhi, in which they discussed strengthening collaboration in the maritime domain, including connectivity, port development, skill development, shipbuilding, the blue economy, and Arctic operations. The leaders will discuss regional and global developments, including the Ukraine conflict and coordination within international bodies like the UN, BRICS, G20, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), where both countries are members. Russia supports India’s demand for a perma-



nent UN Security Council seat. A “vision” document is expected to be signed, laying out a roadmap for cooperation across various sectors including shipbuilding (such as “green

shipbuilding” and ice-class vessels), space, agriculture, and infrastructure. Defence remains a central pillar of cooperation, with discussions expected on critical projects like the joint de-

velopment of a fifth-generation fighter jet, further S-400 missile system deliveries, and potentially the joint production of S-500 systems. The leaders plan to move forward with de-

fence projects, including potential deals for fighter jets and missile defence systems. Despite India’s efforts to diversify its defence partners, Russia remains a critical supplier, accounting for a significant portion of India’s military inventory. Discussions will also focus on boosting trade and investment, particularly in energy (oil, nuclear power), and addressing logistics and payment challenges. India and Russia have committed to boosting bilateral trade to a target of \$100 billion by 2030 and exploring alternative payment solutions to circumvent Western sanctions. Key deals in oil exploration and supply, nuclear energy (e.g., increasing the number of reactors

at the Kudankulam power station), and direct diamond sales are expected to be finalised.

The leaders will focus on resolving related issues such as logistics and payment mechanisms, potentially using local or thirdcountry currencies. Both nations are looking to finalise new pacts and initiatives to boost economic ties, with a focus on diversifying trade beyond energy and addressing the existing trade deficit. Discussions are also underway for a Free Trade Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union. A bilateral mobility agreement is expected to be signed to facilitate legal migration and protect skilled Indian workers in Russia, which is experienc-

ing a labour shortage. The agreement aims to establish a formal framework for legal migration, protect the rights of Indian workers in Russia, and facilitate the expansion of skilled Indian manpower in key Russian economic sectors. Russia is keen to attract skilled Indian workers in industries such as construction, textiles, engineering, electronics, and IT. The pact will offer new employment opportunities for skilled Indian professionals and ensure their legal protection and dignified employment in Russia. In conclusion, Putin’s visit is a continuation of regular high-level exchanges and is driven by mutual strategic interests, with the goal of fostering a multi-polar order.

HDB led the largest fundraising effort in India despite a decline in listing returns

Mumbai: India’s Biggest IPO Year: India’s primary market closed the financial year 25-26 on a historic note, even as the final quarter lost steam.Reading the first line, many might now wonder – how can a year that ends on a slow note still go down as the biggest in history? And if investors are turning cautious, how did companies still manage to raise record money from the markets?

This paradox is interesting to understand.According to PRIME Database, Indian companies raised an all-time high Rs 1,78,963 crore through 112 mainboard IPOs in FY26. This is about 10% higher than the previous record of Rs 1,62,387 crore mobilised in FY25, which saw 78 IPOs.But what makes this year even more interesting is not just the record-breaking number. Rather it is the rare back-to-back streak. Yet, beneath this headline number lies a more layered reality. This is where things start to



get interesting. According to Pranav Haldea, Managing Director, PRIME Database Group, despite the tepid end to the year with just Rs 18,772 crore being raised in the last 3 months, it is for the first time in India’s history that there have been two consecutive years of all-time high IPO fundraising activity. In the past, a strong IPO year almost always was succeeded by a lull lasting two to three years.

Haldea pointed out that overall public equity fundraising, however, declined by 18% to Rs 3.05 lakh crore in 2025-26 from Rs 3.71 lakh crore raised in 2024-25, on account of lower mobilisation through FPOs and QIPs.Investor enthusiasm has cooled, listing gains have shrunk, and market volatility has started influencing timing decisions. Now, the key question many might be beginning to ask is

this – Are we still in a boom phase or is the market quietly preparing for a reset?Let’s take a look it suggests a blockbuster year. But, the final quarter of FY26 paints a very different picture from the rest of the year.As per PRIME Database, the last quarter of FY26 saw IPO mobilisation of just Rs 18,772 crore. This muted ending contrasts sharply with the strong run seen earlier in the year.

This “tepid end” indicates a growing caution among both issuers and investors, as according to PRIME Database report. One of the most interesting trends this year is the changing composition of IPOs.

While the total amount raised hit a record, the average deal size dropped to Rs 1,598 crore. This is down 23% from Rs 2,082 crore in FY25. This indicates that the record was driven more by the number of IPOs rather than the size of individual deals, as per PRIME Database report.

Trump to impose up to 100% tariffs on imported drugs

New Delhi: The Trump administration will impose tariffs of as much as 100 per cent on certain imported medicines, albeit with several major exemptions, a maneuver to pressure drugmakers to manufacture more in the US. The new levy, which President Donald Trump authorized on Thursday, applies to patented drugs made in countries that lack tariff deals with the US by companies that don’t have most-favored-nation-pricing agreements with the administration.Duties for products made by certain larger companies will take effect in 120 days, while items from smaller manufacturers won’t be hit for another 180 days, according to a White House statement. Tariffs on imports from major economies that cut deals with the White

House will be capped at 15 per cent. That includes the European Union, South Korea, Japan, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the statement said. Imports from the UK will face a lower rate, after it agreed to double government spending on new medicines as a proportion of GDP over the next decade in a separate deal struck on Thursday. Tariffs on imports from major economies that cut deals with the White House will be capped at 15 per cent. That includes the European Union, South Korea, Japan, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the statement said. Imports from the UK will face a lower rate, after it agreed to double government spending on new medicines as a proportion of GDP over the next decade in a separate deal struck on

Thursday.The charges deliver on threats the president made last fall to impose 100 per cent tariffs on branded or patented medicines unless companies move production to the US. But they also contain significant carve-outs that could blunt the impact of the measures. Most of the world’s biggest drugmakers, including Merck & Co. and Eli Lilly & Co., sidestepped the punitive moves by striking agreements with the administration. Trump sent letters to 17 companies last summer with a list of demands, including cuts to prices they charge the Medicaid program for low-income people, direct sales to US consumers and the launch of new drugs at the same prices available in other developed nations, in exchange for tariff relief.

Steel, aluminium stocks slide amid reports of Trump’s 25% tariff plan



Mumbai: Shares of steel and aluminium producing companies were in focus on Thursday amid reports of the US President Donald Trump’s administration preparing to introduce a new rule on imports of products made using steel and aluminium products. The Nifty Metal index fell over 3 per cent to hit an intraday low of 11,052.55, dragged by Hindustan Copper, Hindustan Zinc, APL Apollo Tubes, Tata Steel, Steel Authority of India, Adani Enterprises, NMDC, and Jindal Steel falling over 2 per cent each. At 12:35 PM, the Nifty Metal index was trading at 11,239.15 levels, down by 1.52 per cent against the previous session’s close of 11,412.05. In comparison,

the benchmark NSE Nifty50 was quoting at 22,349.70 levels, down 329.70 points or 1.45 per cent.According to media reports, the United States could soon set a 25 per cent tariff on finished goods that contain imported steel and aluminium. Currently, a 50 per cent tariff is applied only to the value of the steel and aluminium used inside a product, while a proposed plan would instead impose a flat 25 per cent duty on such finished goods. However, products made largely of steel and aluminium would continue to attract the higher 50 per cent tariff.

Among others, Vedanta, National Aluminium (NALCO), JSW Steel, Hindalco, and Lloyds Metals also fell over 1 per cent.

SpaceX files for IPO confidentially, eyes \$1.75 trillion valuation: Report

New Delhi: SpaceX may soon lead the largest stock market listing on record with an IPO valuation of more than \$1.75 trillion. The Elon Musk-led company had merged with his artificial intelligence startup xAI earlier this year — valuing the rocket company at \$1 trillion and the developer of the Grok chatbot at \$250 billion. According to a Bloomberg report, the company has filed confidentially for a US initial public offering and appears to be on track for a June listing. Companies can receive feedback from the regulator and make changes before the information becomes public in such cases. The publication estimated last week that SpaceX may consider a fundraising target of about \$75 billion — dwarfing the \$29 billion IPO debut record currently held by Saudi Aramco A listing would deepen analyst and investor scrutiny of the sprawling and intertwined business empire led by the world’s richest man — bringing renewed focus to how his companies are financed, governed and valued across markets.SpaceX lines up investor briefings, sessions for analysts Disclaimer: SME IPOs/Stocks constitute investments of inherently extreme risk. These securities are only suitable for investors with a sophisticated understanding of capital markets and a demonstrated capacity for total loss of principal. Due to low liquidity, investors must be prepared



for severe price volatility and material difficulty in exiting the position. This article provides factual analysis only and is not, and should not be construed as, an offer, solicitation, or recommendation to buy or sell securities. Investors must conduct their own independent due diligence and seek advice from a SEBI-registered financial advisor.

The company is reportedly hosting an analyst day on April 21 and offering them an optional visit to xAI’s “Macrohard” data centre site in Memphis later that week. A source told Reuters that SpaceX also plans to hold a virtual session on May 4 to discuss financial models with banks’ research analysts. A separate Bloomberg report indicated that it has already told prospective IPO investors to expect briefings from com-

pany executives this month. These testing-the-waters meetings could include additional details that would support its valuation target.As per a Bloomberg update, the company has already lined up multiple banks (including Bank of America, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs Group, JPMorgan Chase and Morgan Stanley) for senior roles on the IPO. SpaceX is also working with international banks that are looking to take IPO orders in specific regions.

The public listing could come at a potential valuation of more than \$1.75 trillion. This would also make SpaceX the first of what could become a trio of mega-IPOs — ahead of OpenAI and Anthropic PBC. Details of the offering, including the number of shares to be sold and the price range, are likely to be disclosed

in a later filing. Bloomberg reported that SpaceX is considering a dual-class share structure in the listing that would potentially give insiders such as Musk extra voting power to dominate decision-making. The IPO is expected to have a large retail component — with SpaceX potentially allocating as much as 30% of the offering to small investors. Initial estimates suggested that the Texas-headquartered firm could seek to raise more than \$50 billion in the IPO. Bloomberg quoted sources to report last week that the actual figure may be far higher — weighing in the ballpark of \$75 billion. Sources told the news agency that SpaceX has discussed the prospect of raising more than \$70 billion with potential investors.Largest IPO in history

SpaceX is the most valuable privately held company in the world following a merger deal with xAI. Reuters reported in January that the rocket startup had generated about \$8 billion in profit on \$15 billion to \$16 billion of revenue last year. A blockbuster SpaceX debut could jolt the IPO market back to life after years of subdued activity, with market participants expecting strong demand from both retail and institutional investors. Some are likely to be drawn by the Elon Musk brand while others seek exposure to SpaceX’s fast-growing space and Starlink satellite businesses.

BT Explained Sebi has proposed the reintroduction of open market share buybacks

Mumbai: Corporate houses may soon be able to buy back shares once again from the stock market. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has released a consultation paper seeking comments from stakeholders on the proposal to re-introduce open market buyback of shares or other specified securities through stock exchange as an additional method.Why was it discontinued?

The practice of repurchasing shares from the secondary market was discontinued effective April 1, 2025, as there were concerns over the equitable treatment of shareholders, implications arising from the then prevailing taxation framework, among other things.Sebi said there was a possibility that the entire purchase order of the company could get matched with the sale order placed by one or very few shareholders. There was also a possibility that other shareholders who wanted to participate in the buyback could be deprived of such an opportunity.The regulator said open market share buybacks were inequitable from a taxation perspective, too. At that time, companies had to pay a buyback tax with no tax liabilities in the hands of shareholders on gains made by successful participants. However, those shareholders who wanted to participate in the buyback but whose offers didn’t match were deprived of the tax exemptions. The taxation framework governing share buybacks has undergone a significant change now, with the Finance



Bill 2024 shifting the buyback taxation to the shareholders from companies.The Income Tax Act, 2025, as amended by the Finance Act, 2026, has rationalised the taxation of buyback proceeds, effective from April 1. Following these changes, share buyback considerations will now be taxable under capital gains in the hands of the shareholders.The Finance Act 2026 has also introduced an additional tax component for promoter shareholders to minimise any potential tax arbitrage between buyback of shares and dividend distribution. The promoter shareholders also need to pay surcharge on additional tax, which is not applicable to non-promoter shareholders.“In light of the amendments in the taxation framework introduced by the Income Tax Act, the then concerns for the discontinuation of buyback of shares or other specified secu-

rities from open market through stock exchange, now stands addressed,” the capital market regulator said.

It also noted that the buyback from the open market through stock exchanges is undertaken within an order-driven market mechanism wherein the execution of orders is determined by price-time matching and all public shareholders have an equal opportunity to participate in the buyback under uniform conditions. Also, the shifting of the tax burden to shareholders has made selling in normal market equal to selling in buyback through stock exchanges, Sebi said in the consultation paper.“The re-introduction of this method of buyback would provide companies with an additional mechanism for undertaking buyback, while ensuring equitable opportunity and treatment of taxation for public shareholders,”

it said, adding that the buyback should be undertaken through a separate buyback window on the stock exchanges, as is already provided in the Buyback Regulations. Stakeholders ViewsThe Association of Investment Bankers of India has submitted that reinstatement of the method of buyback from open market through stock exchange would allow companies to steadily absorb surplus selling pressure over a continuous period of time, prevent panic selling and restore confidence among retail shareholders.Industry bodies, including FICCI, had made representations requesting the reintroduction of share buybacks from the secondary market. FICCI had pointed out that buybacks from open market through stock exchanges was an efficient and internationally preferred mechanism.

US crude jumps over 11%, Brent nearly 8% as Trump vows more attacks on Iran

Mumbai: US oil prices settled more than 11 per cent higher and Brent soared nearly 8 per cent on Thursday in volatile trading, as traders worried about prolonged disruptions to oil supply the day after President Donald Trump said the United States would continue attacks on Iran.Brent crude futures closed \$7.87, or 7.78 per cent, higher at \$109.03 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose \$11.42, or 11.41 per cent, at \$111.54 per barrel, settling at their biggest absolute price rise since 2020.Both benchmarks remained below highs near \$120 a barrel touched earlier in the conflict. WTI, which typically trades below Brent, was pricing nearly \$3 over Brent as the US contract was trading for May deliveries, while the Brent contract was trading for June deliveries. WTI’s premium over the global benchmark was the highest in a year.“Market’s expectation is that if (the) Strait of Hormuz opens up in (a) couple of weeks this risk premium will immediately go down,” said John Kilduff, Partner at Again Capital. Britain is hosting a virtual meeting of around 40 countries to discuss options for reopening the Strait of Hormuz. The United States is not due to attend.

OPEC+, meanwhile, is likely to weigh a further oil output increase on Sunday, sources said. This would position members to add more barrels should the Strait of Hormuz reopen but is not likely to meaningfully increase supply before then.

Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas President Lorie Logan said on Thursday that a swift war resolution may mean economic impact could be pretty moderate, adding that the economic outlook was uncertain due to the crisis. The

United States has some buffers to impacts from the war, Logan said.Trump said military operations would be intensified, but did not specify a timeline for ending hostilities. He gave no details on any steps that could lead to a reopening of the Strait of Hormuz Iran is drafting a protocol with Oman to monitor traffic in the strait, an Iranian foreign ministry official said, after a Bloomberg report. Iran has effectively shut down the narrow waterway through which a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas is shipped, in retaliation for US-Israeli strikes that began on February 28. Reopening it has become a priority for governments around the world as energy prices soar.“The real question on traders’ minds is that if Iran’s oil infrastructure is possibly now at risk, and with more damage in the area now very likely, even if left intact the restart of oil flows in the region (is) now looking to be delayed further,” said Dennis Kissler, senior vice president of trading at BOK Financial. Brent crude prices could average \$95 a barrel in the base case and \$130 a barrel in the bull case in the second half of the year. Citi said, while oil prices could climb to between \$120 and \$130 a barrel in the near-term, JP Morgan said. Prices could rise above \$150 if the Strait remains closed into the middle of May, JP Morgan added.US oil rigs, an indicator of future output, rose by two to 411 this week, energy services firm Baker Hughes said. An increase in prices for oil to be delivered in future months has producers considering adding more rigs, but they have cautioned that they would like to see the higher prices hold for longer to do so.

Zelenskyy provides experience in keeping rivers accessible despite the Middle East war

Ukraine: Volodymyr Zelenskyy suggested on Thursday to share Ukraine’s knowledge in dealing with freedom of passage in the Black Sea with countries discussing how to maintain the Strait of Hormuz open in the midst of the Middle East war. In his nightly video message, Ukraine’s president stated that the foreign minister, Andrii Sybiha, had participated in a virtual meeting aimed at reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which was attended by around 40 nations. “Ukraine has relevant expertise concerning sea waterways, and the defence and reopening of maritime traffic,” he said. “If [our] partners are ready to act, we will consider how we can strengthen them, how we can apply our expertise, knowledge and technological potential.” Russia’s army made no territorial advances on the Ukrainian frontline in March, the first time in two and a half years, according to an AFP analysis of Institute for the Study of War (ISW) statistics. The Russian army’s gains have slowed since late 2025 as a result of Kyiv’s localized victories in the south-east, and it lost land in March and February on the southern stretch of the frontline, between the Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk districts, the research revealed. In March, Ukrainian forces recaptured 9 square kilometers of territory along the frontline. Kim Jong-un, North Korea’s leader,



provided “field guidance” at the Memorial Museum of Combat Feats during Overseas Military Operations, which is now under construction, according to official agency KCNA. The Pyongyang museum will memorialize the lost troops who were dispatched to help the Russian army in the Ukraine war. The museum’s construction is nearly complete, and Kim stated that the inauguration ceremony will take place in mid-April, on the first anniversary of the North Korean soldiers’ deployment. Six Ukrainian children will be returned from Russia to their families in Ukraine, the White House said on Thursday, citing efforts by Melania Trump to expedite their return. A seventh Ukrainian child will also be returned to their family later this month, the first lady’s office said in a statement. Ukraine says almost 20,000 children have been

illegally sent to Russia and Belarus, where they are sometimes subject to military training and forced to fight against their own country’s troops. Russian strikes across Ukraine on Thursday killed at least two people and wounded dozens, officials said, as Moscow stepped up its attacks amid stalled peace talks. In the south-eastern Kherson region, Russia attacked “with artillery, mortars and UAVs”, the regional prosecutor’s office said on social media. A 42-year-old man was killed when a drone hit a civilian car, and 16 others – including a teenage boy and three police officers – were wounded in air attacks and artillery shelling, it added. In the Chernihiv region, north of the capital Kyiv, Russia attacked with a ballistic missile, the head of Chernihiv’s military administration, Dmytro Bryzhnysky, said on Telegram. Russian forces main-

tained a daylong barrage of drone strikes on Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second largest city, on Thursday, injuring at least two people, local officials said. Kharkiv’s mayor, Ihor Terekhov, posted reports on Telegram throughout the day and well into the evening, noting strikes in four city districts. One city official said there had been at least 20 drone strikes. He said some had triggered fires and two people had been injured in an evening attack, including an eight-year-old girl. Russian forces carried out 129 attacks on Ukrainian gas and heating facilities during the recent 151-day heating season, the state oil and gas firm Naftogaz said on Thursday. “The Russians hit pipelines, gas production, underground storage facilities, heating systems – everything that Ukrainians depend on for heat and gas,” it said in a statement.

Pete Hegseth permits troops to carry their own guns on military bases



Washington: Pete Hegseth, the secretary of defense, signed a memo on Thursday allowing military personnel to request authorization to carry their personal firearms on military installations, including bases, naval yards, and recruitment centers. Hegseth claims the new policy will enable soldiers and other military personnel to defend themselves in the event of an attack. Although the memo’s complete wording has not yet been made public, it seems to relax the present policy, which permits employees to obtain authorization to carry their guns on base on a case-by-case basis and mandates that they be registered with the base’s authorities and kept in a secure device.

Hegseth claimed in a social media video that existing regulations had effectively made US military sites “gun-free” zones, putting residents and employees at risk. Fundamentalists of the second amendment and ardent supporters of gun rights have long held this opinion and have filed challenges against these laws in states all around the nation. The uniformed service members of the war department receive the most rigorous training possible. He declared, “These war fighters, entrusted with the security of our country, are no less entitled to exercise their God-given right to keep and bear arms than any other American.” The authorization to carry will

comply with state gun regulations, he continued. For instance, local regulations like permission requirements and restrictions on the kinds of weapons and ammunition rounds that are permitted would still need to be followed. Additionally, a higher-up must provide a thorough explanation if they reject a service member’s request to carry. He went on, “The assumption is that servicemembers will be able to have their second amendment right on post.” Hegseth gave examples of the kinds of risks faced by military personnel, citing shootings at Pensacola Naval Base in December 2019, Fort Stewart in Georgia in August 2025, and Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico

on March 17. “In these instances minutes are a lifetime and our servicemembers have the courage and training to make those precious short minutes count,” Hegseth said. This isn’t the first time the federal government has taken up the issue. In November 2016, the Pentagon under Barack Obama issued a directive that created a pathway for people to get similar permissions to the ones Hegseth is enshrining. This directive followed the shooting deaths of four people at a military recruitment center and a Naval and Marine Reserve center in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 2015. For more than 20 years preceding that shooting, servicemembers and civilians were not allowed to carry their personal firearms while on their bases and camps unless they were security duty or participating in a law enforcement investigation. Hegseth’s directive goes further by making approval to carry easier, and requiring a thorough explanation for any carry request denials. Mayra Guillen, sister of Vanessa Guillen, a 20-year-old army specialist who was killed by two of her fellow service members in 2020, reposted Hegseth’s statement and showed support for the move, writing: “If my sister would’ve carried, she’d be here today. That monster attacked her inside the arms room, she didn’t stand a chance.”

Trump dismisses Pam Bondi, a supporter and ally, as attorney general

Australia : Donald Trump has fired Pam Bondi, the US attorney general, dismissing a loyalist who reshaped the justice department but still failed to please a president fixated on prosecuting political enemies and frustrated with the politically explosive release of the Jeffrey Epstein files. Trump wrote in a post on Truth Social: “Pam Bondi is a Great American Patriot and a loyal friend, who faithfully served as my Attorney General over the past year. Pam did a tremendous job overseeing a massive crackdown in Crime across our Country, with Murders plummeting to their lowest level since 1900. We love Pam, and she will be transitioning to a much needed and important new job in the private sector, to be announced at a date in the near future.” The president added that Todd Blanche, the deputy attorney general, would serve as acting attorney general. Lee Zeldin, a former New York congressman who now leads the Environmental Protection Agency, is said to be a top contender to replace Bondi. Bondi said she was “thrilled” about “moving to an important private sector role” in a statement. “Leading President Trump’s historic and highly successful efforts to make America safer and more secure has been the honor of a lifetime, and easily the most consequential first year of the Department of Justice in American history,” she posted on social media. Bondi stated that she “will continue fighting for President Trump and this Administration” in her new position. During her 14 months as attorney general, Bondi presided over a major purging of career justice department staff, shifted focus away from criminal prosecutions toward immigration cases, and spearheaded the defense of Trump’s towering stack of executive orders as they faced legal challenges. But she will be perhaps best remembered for complying with Trump’s public demand last year that federal prosecutors bring criminal charges against his personal enemies. Within three weeks, federal prosecutors had indicted James Comey, a former FBI director, and Letitia James, the New York attor-



ney general. Federal prosecutors during Bondi’s tenure also indicted John Bolton, Trump’s former national security adviser, and tried unsuccessfully to convince a grand jury to bring criminal charges against six members of Congress after Trump publicly accused them of “seditious behavior”. The Department of Justice has continued to investigate other Trump foes. Bondi is also known for her contradictory statements about the Epstein files, which helped drive the push for their release in the name of transparency. Trump had grown increasingly impatient in recent months with her handling of the Epstein documents, which have become a continuing liability to the White House. Democrats say Bondi cannot escape a congressional subpoena scheduled for later this month over her handling of the files, and will be expected to be back in front of lawmakers. “Pam Bondi and Donald Trump may think her firing gets her out of testifying to the oversight committee,” Robert Garcia, the ranking member of the House oversight committee, said in a statement after her firing. “They are wrong – and we look forward to hearing from her under oath.” Speaking to NBC, a House oversight committee spokesperson said: “Since Pam Bondi is no longer attorney general, Chairman Comer will speak

with Republican members and the Department of Justice about the status of the deposition subpoena and confer on next steps.” The Senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer, responded to Bondi’s firing by saying “good riddance” and added in his statement that “the rot at the Department of Justice begins and ends with Donald Trump”. Blanche, now acting head of the justice department, defended Bondi in a statement on social media. “Pam Bondi led this Department with strength and conviction and I’m grateful for her leadership and friendship,” he said. “We will continue backing the blue, enforcing the law, and doing everything in our power to keep America safe.” Bondi is the second cabinet secretary, and woman, to be ousted in recent weeks. The president fired homeland security head Kristi Noem on 5 March after a disastrous hearing in the Senate, in which she refused to recant her past statements justifying the killings of Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minneapolis for what Noem called their part in “domestic terrorism”. In that hearing, she faced harsh questioning about a \$220m ad campaign that she insisted Trump authorized. Bondi and Noem had articles of impeachment filed against them for “high crimes and misdemeanors” by Democratic members of Congress.

After escaping Earth’s orbit, the Artemis II crew take off for the moon



Nasa: NASA has committed to the first crewed lunar flyby in over 50 years as the four Artemis astronauts fired up their spacecraft’s engine to break free from Earth’s orbit and rush towards the moon. The Orion capsule engine propelled the astronauts on Thursday as they headed for the moon, which they will now loop as part of the 10-day Artemis 2 mission, with enough thrust to drive a motionless car to highway driving speed in less than three seconds. Their three-day journey towards Earth’s natural satellite—the first since 1972—was fueled by the burn, which lasted little under six minutes. “Looks like a good burn, we’re confirming,” mission control in Houston said. “The crew is feeling pretty good up here on our way to the moon,” said astronaut Jeremy Hansen. “Humanity has once again shown what we are capable of.” The burn came one day after the enormous orange and white Space Launch System (SLS) rocket carrying the Orion capsule blasted off flawlessly from Kennedy Space Center in Florida for the long-anticipated journey around the moon. Now the astro-

nauts are moonbound, there’s no turning back: they are on a “free return” trajectory, which uses the moon’s gravity to slingshot around it before heading back towards Earth without propulsion. In the event something goes wrong, the astronauts wear suits that also serve as “survival systems” – in the unlikely case of a cabin depressurisation or leak, they’ll maintain oxygen, temperature controls and the correct pressure for up to six days. The astronauts – Americans Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch, and Hansen, a Canadian – spent their first hours in space performing checks and troubleshooting minor problems on the spacecraft that has never carried humans before, including a communications issue and a malfunctioning toilet. They began the second day of their mission by playing Green Light by John Legend and Andre 3000, Nasa said – a reference to the go signal they would soon get to fire up the engine and move towards the moon. They also had their first workouts on the spacecraft’s “flywheel exercise device” – each astronaut will carve out 30 minutes a

day for fitness to minimise the muscle and bone loss that happens without gravity. The 10-day Artemis 2 mission is aimed at paving the way for a moon landing in 2028. The mission marks a series of historic accomplishments: sending the first person of colour, the first woman and the first non-American on a lunar mission. If all proceeds smoothly, the astronauts will set a record by venturing further from Earth than any human before – more than 250,000 miles (402,336 km). It is also the inaugural crewed flight of SLS, Nasa’s new lunar rocket. SLS is designed to allow the US to repeatedly return to the moon with the goal of establishing a permanent base that will offer a platform for further exploration.

It was meant to take off in February after years of delays and massive cost overruns. But repeated setbacks stalled it and even necessitated rolling the rocket back to its hangar for repairs. The current era of US lunar investment has frequently been portrayed as an effort to compete with China, which aims to land humans on the moon by 2030. During a post-launch briefing, Jared Isaacman, the Nasa administrator, said competition was “a great way to mobilise the resources of a nation”. “Competition can be a good thing,” he said. “And we certainly have competition now.” The Artemis program has come under pressure from Trump, who has pushed its pace with the hope that boots will hit the lunar surface before his second term ends in early 2029. But the projected date of 2028 for a landing has raised eyebrows among some experts, in part because Washington is relying heavily on the private sector’s technological headway. The crew wrapped up their press conference, in which they spoke about the significance of the mission, adapting to life in space, and the “spectacular” view of Earth. The Artemis II commander, Reid Wiseman, describing the moment the crew saw Earth as a whole, said: “You can see the entire globe from pole to pole, you can see Africa, Europe, and if you look closely, the northern lights. It was the most spectacular moment and it paused all four of us in our tracks.”

U.K. Hosts Talks with 35 Countries Seeking to Reopen Strait of Hormuz

London: Oil prices soared, and stock markets fell across Asia as Trump promised to continue attacks on Iran. Today, foreign ministers from 35 nations, including several EU countries, are holding a virtual meeting to discuss Iran’s control over the Strait of Hormuz; the U.S. is not among nations attending the meeting, which was organized by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. On

Wednesday, supporters of Iran’s government rallied in the streets of Tehran even as the U.S. and Israel continued bombing. “However much they terrorize, however many of us are martyred, we will still have others to take their place. Our country has countless young people, young people who will stand firm, remain and continue the path of the martyred.”



‘A sure-fire summer hit’: 10 refreshing alternatives to Aperol spritz

Sundowners, aperitivo, golden hour: whatever your preferred term, using early summer evenings to relax and socialise presents a welcome chance to unwind – even if you’ve only been working on your tan. And aperitivo hour would be nothing without a perfectly chilled spritz in hand. Aperol spritz – the much-Instagrammed vibrant concoction of bitter Aperol with prosecco and soda over ice with a slice – has had us Britons in a chokehold for several summers now. But there’s more to spritzing than our distinctive orange-hued friend, says Alessandro Botta, founder of Aperitivo Club: “At Aperitivo Club we don’t see the spritz as a trend, but as a timeless tradition that encourages people to slow down, savour the moment and enjoy it together.” So what are the key components of a traditional Italian spritz to be served at aperitivo hour? “An aperitivo spritz should be light, refreshing and made with prosecco,” says Botta. It’s also deeply rooted in place, with each variation reflecting local flavours and traditions. In Padua, it’s made with Aperol; in Milan, Campari; in Venice with Select ples with; Trentino-Alto Adige, where elderflower and alpine botanicals abound, the Hugo Spritz (made of prosecco, soda, elderflower liqueur and mint). Italians are characteristically traditional with their spritzes, generally sticking to the components of prosecco, soda and some kind of liqueur. Across Europe the love for a pre-dinner low-ish-alcohol drink continues with a wider brief; in France pastis and Pernod are diluted with water for a longer, lighter serve, and the deliciously classic kir royale is common at this hour; while in Spain you’ll see vermouth and soda; and Portugal’s light and bright port and tonic fits the mould too. For the purposes of this piece, we’ll keep things fairly traditional, with components of these spritzes similar to their Italian inspiration. All of my recommended serves are effervescent, wine-based and tend towards a botanical aspect; most have soda water in the mix, too. They all also drink best from a large wine glass over plenty of ice with good, salted crisps on the side. I’ve kept things on the lower-ABV side; the early evening drink is best kept

to mid-strength to avoid spoiling proceedings later in the night, after all. Here are my favourite twists on the spritz to get your summer aperitivo hours off to the most sparkling start.

The best spritzes for 2025

The cherry spritz
Not keen on the bitter, herbal liqueurs so commonly used when aperitivo rolls around? Try a cherry spritz made in the French aperitif style: Bellamie cherry liqueur aperitif makes for a fruitier and sweeter spritz when mixed with prosecco and soda, but brings a lovely tartness to take the edge off. On the menu at the original Ivy, it’s made in Kent using real cherry blossom, cherry fruit and cherry stones, and is free from artificial colours and flavours despite its beautiful deep garnet hue. Garnish with a stick of good green olives – the umami, briny flavour really makes the cherries pop – and enjoy alongside salty snacks.

The limoncello spritz
I developed a love for limoncello spritzes when I visited the Amalfi coast; all over the lemon-growing south of Italy, this is an aperitivo equally as popular as the Aperol spritz and even more refreshing. Try with Limoncé limoncello, one of Italy’s top limoncello brands, which uses only Sicilian femminello lemons, handpicked in winter. Serve one part Limoncé to two parts soda over ice in a large wine glass and top up with chilled prosecco for citrusy spritz heaven. A scoop of lemon sorbet has been known to find its way into mine, too, which is the ultimate in naughty summer refreshment or a perfectly acceptable pudding alternative.

The Italicus spritz
Not just a beautiful bottle, Italicus rosolio di bergamotto is a bergamot-based liqueur using native Italian botanicals. It’s made to an original 1850s recipe for aperitivo di corte (royal aperitivo), so named as it was the tippie of choice for the king of Savoia. Today it’s still widely enjoyed across Italy, with its gently floral citrusy profile working wonders when splashed into a glass of iced prosecco. Hold the soda, though: Italicus isn’t as bitter as many aperitivo, so doesn’t need further dilution. Garnish with three green olives.

The English garden spritz
I came across this de-



licious spritz during my quest for the best mid-strength drinks. Indeed, the beauty of so many spritzes is that they fit into that mid-alcohol zone – this one is a very civilised 6%. This ready-to-drink spritz is crafted from the Sussex Bolney Wine Estate’s 2022 chardonnay-based white vermouth and the estate’s own kitchen garden botanicals. Think tart, juicy grapefruit and native English florals, blending sweet and bitter flavours for a fresh and pretty aperitif.

The gin spritz
Gin is a natural bed-fellow for prosecco in a spritz, thanks to its juniper-led, piney bitterness, and a shot of your favourite stirred into an icy prosecco along with a dash of juice is a classic. This summer I’m into Jawbox apple & ginger gin liqueur (20% ABV as it’s not straight spirit), which uses an unusual Belfast apple variety grown on the distillery’s country estate. Use 500ml mixed with a bottle of prosecco and 250ml of soda in a giant jug for parties. Throw in plenty of lime wedges and fresh green apple slices to garnish.

The Hugo spritz
Northern Italians gave the classic St-Germain spritz an update in 2005 by including fresh lime and sprigs of mint to create the Hugo spritz. It’s one of the most popular summer drinks in Europe at the moment and shows no sign of going anywhere; an ad campaign for St-Germain sees Sophie Turner sipping on a Hugo spritz in the south of France. Make your own using St-Germain or stock up on these dreamy aperitivo-ready cans for enjoying on the hop: the Hugo spritz is mixed to fresh and floral perfection.

The rose spritz



Sparkling wine is a key component of any spritz, but thinking pink can keep things interesting. This rose spritz from pale Provence rose peddlers Mirabeau went down very well with me at this year’s Chelsea flower show. Its blend of French rose and Fever Tree’s raspberry and orange blossom soda makes it a subtly fruity and afternoon-appropriate drink at a respectable 8.3%. I serve in flutes, Chelsea-style, or over ice with muddled raspberries – satisfying when you want a longer drink. Similarly, cava house Codorniu is now making a canned wine-based Codorniu Spritz infused with raspberry and hibiscus – perfect to pop in your bag for emergency summer spritzing.

The desi mango spritz
The origins of aperitivo mean we tend to see European flavours, but why not harness the tropical flavours of Goan beach sundowners instead? Desi Daru alphonso mango vodka is on the menu in London restaurants such as Hoppers and Benares, and swirling a shot into a standard Aperol spritz gives

it a heavily fragrant south Asian makeover that I find far more tempting than the original iteration. I’m also a fan of increasing the desi flavours further with 25ml of Desi Daru alphonso mango vodka, 25ml sauvignon blanc and 100ml of London Essence Co white peach & jasmine soda, served over ice and garnished with a fresh curry leaf.

The Nozeco spritz
Sober people like to spritz too, and this ready-to-drink 0% alternative is lovely enough to be enjoyed in its own right. The Nozeco spritz has just won a prestigious IWSC gold award, with judges citing the alcohol-removed wine and natural orange blend as a “delightful medley of orange peel, rhubarb and a hint of rose, complemented by herbal rosemary”. They said it has a “lively acidity, culminating in a refreshing crisp finish that lingers with a pleasing bitterness”. They’re right; my testers and I agree it’s a sure-fire summer hit and a bargain to boot.

The rhubarb spritz
Ask a bartender the flavour of the moment and they’ll likely say ru-



barb. I recently enjoyed a divine fig and rhubarb spritz (vodka, fig liqueur, rhubarb syrup, lime and soda) at Caravan, while Bar Termini’s popular Spritz Termini comprises gin, rhubarb, Aperol and

prosecco. Monin’s classic rhubarb syrup is a simple way to make all manner of on-trend cocktails, particularly the classic spritz: mix 20ml of Monin rhubarb with 120ml of sparkling wine and 60ml

of soda, then stir with ice and garnish with lemon. It’s light and summery without going down the more predictable berry or citrus route. For something harder, I like to swap the soda for a shot of gin.

Mango Mastani Is Cool, Refreshing And Sweet Recipe To Try This Summer

Milkshakes are the perfect meal on a hot summer day. They are energy-dense and can give a quick boost of calories, making them useful for active individuals or people needing extra nourishment. They are also a super fun beverage to sip on to beat the heat. However, milkshakes can also be high in sugar and fat, especially when made with ice cream and added sweeteners, so they are best enjoyed in moderation. Using low-fat milk, natural sweeteners, and real fruit or dry nuts can turn a milkshake into a more balanced, satisfying snack rather than just a sugary treat. This Mango Mastani is a creamy, indulgent treat that blends the rich sweetness of mango with smooth vanilla ice cream and a nutty crunch. Perfect for summer, it feels like a dessert in a glass but is easy to make in minutes. You can adjust the sweetness

and ice-cream quantity to match how rich you want it to be. This recipe for layered Mango Mastani is shared by content creators Neha and Anshu Kumari on Instagram.

Ingredients:
2 ripe mangoes (preferably Alphonso or other soft, sweet variety), peeled and pulp scooped out
2 cups chilled milk
1 tablespoon sugar (optional, adjust to taste or omit if mangoes are very sweet)
2–3 scoops vanilla ice cream
2–3 tablespoons chopped dry fruits, like almonds, cashews, raisins
1–2 tablespoons chopped pistachios, for topping

Method:
Prep the mango: Peel both mangoes and cut the flesh into small chunks, removing the stone. If you like a smoother shake, avoid any fibrous bits.



Blend the base: Add the mango pulp, milk, and sugar (if using) to a blender jar. Blend for 20–30 seconds until smooth and well combined. Taste and adjust sugar if needed.

Add the ice cream: Add 2–3 scoops of vanilla ice cream to the blender. Blend again for 15–20 seconds just until the shake is thick and frothy, but not too warm. If you prefer it colder, you

can chill the mango-milk mix briefly before adding ice cream.

Serve and garnish: Pour the milkshake into chilled glasses, dividing evenly. Top each glass with a sprinkle of chopped dry fruits and a light layer of chopped pistachios over the surface.

Enjoy: Serve immediately while cold and creamy, sipping and scooping for the full Mastani experience.



ENTERTAINMENT

Anshula Kapoor shares a glimpse of her South Korean female gang’s Bachelorette celebration

Mumbai: Anshula Kapoor, the sister of actor and reality show star Arjun Kapoor, is now enjoying her pre-wedding celebrations. She shared a glimpse of her bachelorette party with her girl gang in South Korea, describing it as “Seoulful.”Anshula posted a number of photos from her bachelorette celebration on Instagram on Friday. Before getting married, the reality show star took a quick trip to Seoul to hang out with her friends. In one of the pictures, she was seen sporting a crown, a white veil over her head, and large round glasses that said “Bride to Be.” As she posed for the camera, she also flashed a Korean heart. Laughter, delectable food, and spending time with friends seemed to be the highlights of her trip to Seoul. She and her buddy were spotted smiling in



another photo while sporting similar pink T-shirts that said, “Seoulsters for life before she becomes a wife.” Anshula and her companions were also seen in the photos savoring drinks, adorable cookies, croissants, bagels, and other delectable snacks. Anshula posted the pictures and added, “Seoulsters for life.” With my originals, I was a bachelorette. Anshula and her longtime partner

Rohan Thakkar are getting married. Since going public with their romance in 2023, the couple has posted updates about their lives together on social media. Anshula disclosed in July of last year that Rohan proposed to her in Central Park, New York, and the two were engaged in October. Sonam Kapoor, Rhea Kapoor, Janhvi Kapoor, Khushi Kapoor, Maheep Kapoor, and other celebri-

ties attended the couple’s private engagement ceremony at Anshula’s home. Anshula posted the images to Instagram with the caption, “02/10/2025. This was more than just our Gor Dhana; love was evident in every aspect. Ro’s favourite words have always been ‘always and forever’ - and today, they started to feel real in the sweetest way.” “His love gives me hope that fairytales exist in real-life situations like these, not only in fiction. A room full of blessings, hugs, laughter, and the people who fill our world. Then Ma’s love, silently enveloping us. Her presence was still felt everywhere, in her words, in her flowers, and in her seat. Looking around and thought, “This is what forever should feel like,” is all I can recall. “May God protect you, Rab raakha,” she continued.

Farah Khan expresses her happiness at Rajpal Yadav’s release from prison



Mumbai: In February of this year, Bollywood actor Rajpal Yadav made news when he was taken to Tihar Jail in relation to a ₹9 crore debt and cheque bounce case. But on February 16, the actor was granted interim bail, and he is now returning to fulfilling his obligations at work. Farah Khan recently paid Rajpal a visit for her cookery vlog and conveyed her joy at the actor’s release from prison. For her culinary vlog, Farah went to the home of Saket Swahney, a friend and manager of Rajpal. “I am meeting you

after so many years,” Farah exclaimed, giving Rajpal a hug as he welcomed her inside. Rajpal said that he had made something for her and hoped she would enjoy it when she mentioned that she had brought him some delectable food, including kadhi chawal and a potato dish. Then, Farah expressed her satisfaction that Rajpal was out on bail in his ₹9 crore debt case by saying, “Mereko achha lagga raha hai ki tu bahar ghoom raha hai, sabse zayada vohi achha lag raha hai (I’m happy to see you out and about, that’s what I am most happy about).” She also discussed her brother-sister relationship with Rajpal in the video, disclosing that she had choreographed his very first song for the movie Mast. The director and choreographer also revealed that she frequently reprimanded Rajpal, to which the actor responded that he was only ever afraid of her and that her reprimands were a blessing. In order to finance his first feature film, Ata Pata Laapata (2012), Rajpal borrowed ₹5 crore from Delhi-based Murali Projects Pvt Ltd in 2010. The movie suffered significant losses as a result of its box office failure. A legal battle resulted from the actor’s failure to reimburse the

money. The actor was sentenced to six months in prison in 2018 after a magistrate’s court found him guilty in a cheque bounce case under the Negotiable Instruments Act. The sum eventually increased to about ₹9 crore after a sessions court affirmed the ruling in 2019. He turned himself in and was taken to Tihar Jail in February after failing to make the payment. The actor was apparently supported by a number of celebrities, and on February 16, he was given interim release, which is good until March 18. Rajpal was granted relief when the complainant’s attorney verified that the actor had deposited the ₹1.5 crore bail that the court had ordered. Even when the previous interim order was revoked, the Delhi High Court subsequently made it clear that Rajpal would not be placed back under arrest. Rajpal is presently waiting for his next movie, Bhooth Bangla, to be released. In addition to Paresch Rawal, Tabu, Wamiqa Gabbi, and Akshay Kumar in a leading part, the film is directed by Priyadarshan. The film, which is produced by Ektaa Kapoor and Akshay, will now open in theaters on April 17. Paid previews will start on April 16 at 9 p.m.

Prithviraj Kapoor, Ranbir Kapoor’s great-grandfather 93 years of Lord Ram play Prior to Ramayana by Nitesh Tiwari



Mumbai: Yesterday in India, Ranbir Kapoor’s eagerly anticipated look from Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana was revealed, and the Internet went crazy with nostalgic glimpses. Ranbir appears to continue the 90-year tradition of portraying Lord Ram on movie, which was initiated by his great-grandfather Prithviraj Kapoor, who played the role in the Bengali film Seeta in 1934. The East India

Film Company produced the 1933 Indian talkie Bengali film Seeta, which was directed by Debaki Bose. Trilok Kapoor played Lava, Durga Khote played Sita, Prithviraj Kapoor played Ram, and Gul Hamid played Ram. It set a trend and left an impact that extended beyond India. It became the first Indian talkie to be screened at an international film festival when it received an honorary diploma at the 2nd Venice International Film Festival in 1934. The first of many glances of Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Rama are presented to viewers in the teaser. Ranbir assumes the role of the legendary figure with grace, grace, serenity, and celestial brilliance from the coronation till the banishment in the Panchavati jungle. Don’t miss Yash’s brief appearance as Ravan at

the conclusion of the teaser. Producer Namit Malhotra posted the following teaser for the movie: “Rama is the greatest of all time because he lived a life where the choices he made were always in the benefit of the greater good—duty over desire, and sacrifice over self.” Over time, his legacy has continued to uplift and empower people and spread the conviction that all conflicts can be resolved and world peace can be achieved through the kindness of the human spirit.” During a Q&A session during the New York special IMAX teaser showing, Ranbir stated that he didn’t think he was “perfect” for the part at first. When it comes to playing Lord Ram, I recall Namit offering me this role about four years ago. “I am not fit enough,

good enough,” was my first thought. I thought I wouldn’t be able to give it justice. But because experiences like this were what I really needed in my life, that dread soon gave way to thankfulness,” he remarked. He also mentioned that he went through a profoundly changing period in his own life at the same time as he was playing Ram. I had to alter my way of life at one point. I had recently had my first fatherhood. “Being a father and playing Lord Ram was a wonderful coincidence that changed my life,” he remarked. In November 2022, Ranbir Kapoor and his spouse Alia Bhatt welcomed their first child, a daughter named Raha. The budget for Ramayana was an astounding Rs 4,000 crore.” People thought I was a lunatic when we set out to make this

six or seven years ago because no Indian film comes close to this scale,” producer Namit Malhotra said in an interview with Prakhar Gupta. In other words, the budget for both components will be approximately \$500 million, or more than Rs 4,000 crore. “We’re making the largest film in the world for the greatest epic that deserves to be seen globally,” he continued. Nevertheless, I think we’re doing it more effectively than some of the largest Hollywood productions. We’re being ambitious yet realistic, not reckless.” For the first time, Oscar-winning Hans Zimmer and A.R. Rahman have worked together on this project. Sunny Deol, Yash, Ravi Dubei, and Sai Pallavi are all involved in this enormous endeavor.

Viveck Vaswani explains why he never collaborated with Salman Khan once more

New Delhi: In Patthar Ke Phool, director Viveck Vaswani paired Raveena Tandon with Salman Khan. But Viveck never again collaborated with Salman. Viveck stated that he would only work with Salman under specific circumstances and that he favors structured work environments in a recent interview with Vickey Lalwani on his YouTube channel. “I cannot work where there is liquor,” Viveck added, revealing that he was never tempted to collaborate with Salman once more. Indiscipline ke sath kaam karte hai (where people drink and work with indiscipline) makes it impossible for me to work. I would do it if I could get the Salman who collaborates with Sooraj Barjatya or Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Because Salman is a top professional, totally disciplined, and gives them his all. I want to give Salman my best effort if we collaborate.” “With some filmmakers, like Aditya Chopra, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, and Sooraj Barjatya, he is in control,” he continued. With them, he is in charge. These producers don’t create movies based just on Salman’s name. Because they are such large banners, they receive the same respect. Interference is not permitted. Instead of Salman the star, they need Salman the actor. Indiscipline is not what I seek.

Anant Balani directed the 1991 action movie, while G. P. Sippy and Viveck Vaswani produced it. Salman Khan played a police officer in it, while Raveena Tandon was a rookie. One of the highest-grossing movies of the year, it was written by Salim Khan, Salman’s father and a seasoned writer. Salman is currently waiting for Maatrubhumi, his next movie, to be re-



leased. Chitrangada Singh plays a major part in the film, which is directed by Apoorva Lakhia. In one of the most well-known last-stand tales in Indian military history, Salman plays a colonel in the Indian Army who leads his soldiers against a larger Chinese army. According to the film’s creators, it seeks to balance the intensity of combat with the closeness of love and family while presenting an unwavering image of bravery, sacrifice, and resiliency.

It was originally supposed to open in theaters on April 17 but has since been rescheduled. The revised release date has not yet been disclosed. According to recent sources, the movie is now anticipated to be released in August. In addition, Salman recently collaborated on his upcoming movie with producer Dil Raju. Vamshi Paidipally is directing the untitled action drama, which is anticipated to begin production in April 2026.

A week after giving birth, Sonam Kapoor posts first pic of child

Mumbai: On March 29, actor Sonam Kapoor and his spouse Anand Ahuja welcomed their second child, a boy, and are currently experiencing immense joy. Sonam has now posted her first photo of her baby along with a thank-you card, adding to the excitement. The internet is already melting over the touching moment. Sonam posted some photos from the hospital on Instagram on Friday following the birth of her son. One of the pictures, which caught her holding her baby while lying on the hospital bed, especially warmed people’s hearts. Sonam was spotted eating at the hospital in a different picture.

With her eyes closed and a gentle grin on her face, Sonam is seen in the photo lying on a hospital bed and holding her child close to her bosom. A white cloth is tightly wrapped around the newborn. She also expressed her sincere gratitude to the hospital staff for successfully delivering her child through the post. Sonam shared the pictures with



the caption, “Grateful beyond words “On March 29, Sonam Kapoor and her spouse, Anand Ahuja, welcomed their second child. Sonam and Anand sent a statement on Instagram on Sunday with the happy news. It said, “We are delighted to announce the arrival of our baby boy on March 29, 2026, with immense gratitude and hearts full of love.” With his arrival, our hearts have enlarged in the most exquisite way, and our family has grown.” “Vayu is ecstatic to meet his younger brother, and we are incredibly grateful for this priceless new life that has brought joy and grace into our home. The

note went on, “Sonam and Anand are happy to start this wonderful new chapter as a family of four.” During Prem Ratan Dhan Payo’s 2015 promotions, Sonam got to know Anand. Sonam has previously disclosed that she ended up talking to Anand more even though her friends sought to put her in touch with one of Anand’s friends. The couple was married in a small ceremony in 2018. Vayu, Sonam and Anand’s first kid, was born in 2022. In November 2025, the actor made a grand announcement about her second pregnancy by posting photos of herself showing off her growing baby belly.

Regretfully, Aparna Sen reveals she turned down Shyam Benegal for Ankur



Mumbai: In the 1970s, Shyam Benegal was a leading voice in the parallel cinema movement that brought about new aesthetics. Shabana Azmi made her acting debut in his first film, Ankur, which was widely praised. However, did you know that Shabana wasn’t initially selected for the movie? Aparna Sen, a well-known actor, declined Shyam’s initial offer to star in the movie. Aparna explained why in a recent interview with Straight Up with Shree. The seasoned writer-director revealed that her Hindi movies were “thundering flops” and that she never made them in order to become a popular actress. “I was asked and I did it,” she stated. The cash seemed alluring. I believe I needed the money for something, and regrettably, I made some really poor decisions. Bengali films made excellent selections, but Hindi films did not. One of the movies I should have made but didn’t was Ankur, directed by Shyam Benegal. “He sent me a synopsis and it was written that she [the protagonist] would be speaking in Hindi with a dialect with splatterings of Telugu,” she went on. I assumed that since this was so far away, I would

be helping out around the house. I didn’t feel confident about this. This was Shyam’s debut movie, and as a novice, he requested a lot of people and was turned down. I expressed my admiration for the plot and premise, but I doubt I will follow through. “Okay, fine,” he said. I just received the synopsis [back] from you. He must have felt awful, but if he had asked, “Why?” I would have told him that I felt insecure, and he would have reassured me. Thankfully, though, Shabana [Azmi] was so excellent that it did not occur! We have a Shabana-caliber actress! Shabana portrayed Laxmi in Ankur, whose life completely changes when she and her deaf-mute husband, Kishitayya, work as housekeepers at a landlord’s home to support themselves. The orthodox community is rocked by the young landlord’s affair with Laxmi. Shabana won the National Award for Best Actress after receiving much praise for her performance. In the years that followed, Shabana and Aparna also grew close. They worked together on movies including Sen’s Sati (1989) and the drama Sonata (2017), in which they both starred.

After seeing the teaser, Dipika Chikhlia had second thoughts about Ranbir Kapoor’s Ramayana

New Delhi: The teaser for Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana, which stars Yash as Ravana, Sai Pallavi as Sita, and Ranbir Kapoor as Rama, has finally been out. Actor Dipika Chikhlia, who portrayed Sita in Ramanand Sagar’s Ramayan TV series, responded to the recently released teaser amid parallels. She had previously appeared to be opposed to the notion. In an interview with India Today, Dipika expressed her excitement for the movie and complimented the teaser. “I watched the teaser and it’s very grand,” the actor remarked. Rich lag raha hai, bahut. Unhone bahut achhe se banaya hai. (It ap-

pears to be extremely k. They did a great job. I’m currently waiting for the movie, and it seems really stunning. In June 2024, she told the journal, “Honestly, I am quite disillusioned by people who keep making Ramayan because I don’t think you should be doing it,” suggesting that she had altered her views. People are f*cking things up. I believe that people shouldn’t keep producing Ramayan because each time they do, they want to add something fresh—a different plot, a different perspective, or a different appearance. During the conversation, Dipika also criticized Om Raut’s Adipurush.



When Ramayana was broadcast on Doordarshan in the late 1980s, Dipika became well-known. The delicacy and simplicity of her portrayal of Sita won her widespread admiration. In the show, Arun Govil portrayed Rama, Arvind Trivedi Ravana, Sunil Lahri Lakshman, and Dara Singh Hanuman. One of the most ambitious movies ever produced in India is Ramayana: Parts 1 and 2. The film was written by Shridhar Raghavan, directed by Nitesh Tiwari, produced by Namit Malhotra, and co-produced by Yash. AR Rahman and Hans Zimmer are writing the music for the movie. Eight-time Oscar

winner DNEG created the visual effects for the movie. As it alludes to other Ramayana chapters, the teaser provides a quick glimpse of Ranbir as Rama. The appearance of Sai, Yash, and other characters in the movie is still unknown. It has personally taken me seven years to get to this point. Film-making is a solitary, speculative endeavor. At the teaser unveiling, Nitesh remarked, “Over the past seven years, I’ve imagined this moment as what the reaction would be when it comes out.” Today, looking at your reaction, I feel the seven years are worth those seven years,” he said with

emotion. This movie has been the effort of several people. We hope you all show us a lot of love.” We put a lot of love into making this movie. There’s a sense of wanting to hold onto it before letting it go, and we ask ourselves, “Are we ready to share it?” We are grateful to Nitesh and the team for their hard work in completing this labor of love. I’m pleased with the work we’ve produced. I hope everyone has enjoyed it. “Ramayana chooses you, not the other way around,” Namit remarked. Diwali 2026 will see the theatrical release of Ramayana Part 1, while Diwali 2027 will see the release of Part 2.

Rajnath Singh, the minister of defense, commissions the cutting-edge stealth frigate INS Taragiri

New Delhi, Apr 03: The cutting-edge stealth frigate INS Taragiri was put into service in Visakhapatnam on Friday by Defense Minister Rajnath Singh. The warship is a cutting-edge stealth frigate that is part of the Indian Navy's Project 17A. Senior Indian Navy personnel were present, including Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan and Indian Navy chief Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi. Taragiri's induction coincides with the growing strategic and maritime significance of India's eastern seaboard, which is fueled by India's increasing involvement in the Indo-Pacific and changing regional security dynamics. Taragiri's commissioning demonstrates the Navy's ongoing commitment to enhancing its operational capability and combat preparedness through its extensive fleet augmentation program. Taragiri, the fourth powerful platform of the Project 17A class, is more than just a ship; it is a 6,670-ton rep-



resentation of the "Make in India" philosophy and the advanced engineering prowess of our domestic shipyards. This frigate, which was constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai, is a generational improvement over previous designs. It has a sleeker shape and a much smaller radar cross-section, which enables it to operate with deadly stealth. The ship, which has more than 75% indigenous content, demonstrates the development of a domestic

industrial ecosystem that currently includes more than 200 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and sustains thousands of Indian employment by supporting the Government of India's Aatmanirbharta projects. Taragiri is built for "High-Speed - High Endurance" adaptability and multifaceted marine activities. It is powered by a Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion system. Supersonic Surface-to-Surface Missiles, Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles,

and a specialized Anti-Submarine Warfare suite are all part of the ship's top-notch weaponry. The crew can react to attacks with split-second accuracy because to the seamless integration of these systems through a cutting-edge Combat Management System. Taragiri is designed to handle the intricacies of contemporary diplomacy and humanitarian problems, in addition to its function as a top hunter of the seas. It is perfect for everything from high-intensity fighting to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) due to its adaptable mission profile. Protecting the seas for a Viksit, Samridhha Bharat with ships constructed, planned, and run by Indians, the Indian Navy is still developing into a combat-ready, unified, credible, Aatmanirbhar force. As an unwavering defender of the nation's blue borders and a symbol of growing maritime might, Taragiri is poised for a bright future.

Abhishek Sharma pays a high price for his outburst on the field

New Delhi: Abhishek Sharma, the vice captain of Sunrisers Hyderabad, got into difficulties after an on-field outburst during the IPL 2026 match at Eden Gardens versus Kolkata Knight Riders. After being declared out, the left-hander expressed clear disapproval and seemed doubtful of Varun Chakravarthy's catch. After a check, the ruling was upheld, but Abhishek remained at the crease, making frustrated gestures before returning to the pavilion. His response caught the attention of match officials and resulted in repercussions for violating the code of conduct. In addition to receiving one demerit point for his behavior, Abhishek was fined 25% of the match fees. "Abhishek Sharma, All-rounder, Sunrisers Hyderabad has been fined 25 per cent of his match fees and has also accumulated one demerit point for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during his team's match against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens, Kolkata on Thursday," the IPL released a statement. "He acknowledged the Level 1 offense under Article 2.3 and agreed to the penalty imposed by the match referee. The Match Referee's ruling is definitive and enforceable for Level 1 violations of the Code of Conduct, it said. At Eden Gardens, Abhishek appeared to be in commanding form, but he was dismissed on 48 by Blessing Muzarabani due to a diving catch by Varun. The umpire made a close decision. Travis Head and Abhishek, who were called in to bat, placed Sunrisers Hyderabad under early duress with an 82-run opening partnership off only 34 balls.

Abhishek contributed 48, while Head scored 46. Later on, Heinrich Klaasen's quick 52 and Nitish Kumar Reddy's 39 helped SRH amass an impressive 226 for eight in their 20 overs. Vaibhav Arora took two wickets, while Blessing Muzarabani led the charge with four. Anukul Roy and Kartik Tyagi each contributed a wicket.

Angkrish Raghuvanshi led the way with a 29-ball 52 as KKR collapsed for 161 in 16 overs.

SOS To Chief Justice And Group Calls Behind Bengali Officers' Rescue

Kolkata, Apr 03: The Chief Justice of India was alerted via a WhatsApp message from the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court regarding an alarming incident where seven judicial officers, including three women, were gheraoed for over nine hours by a large crowd at the Kaliachak 2 Block Development Office in Malda district. This standoff occurred on Wednesday afternoon, driven by protests over alleged deletions of legitimate voters from the electoral rolls in the context of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process, ahead of the Bengal Assembly elections scheduled for April 23 and 29. The mass deletion led to widespread outrage, and around 700 officers from West Bengal, Odisha, and Jharkhand are currently addressing over 60 lakh objections to the electoral lists.

Upon receiving the distress call, the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Surya Kant, took suo motu cognizance of the situation. He highlighted the severe delay in action from state authorities, noting that despite alerts about the gherao, no meaningful assistance arrived until 8:30 PM—five hours post the incident commencement. The lack of food and water during this prolonged gherao was also concerning. Following communication with the Director General of Police and the Home Secretary, police forces finally intervened around 1 AM the next day to disperse the crowd and rescue the officers, who nevertheless faced



further violence as their vehicles were attacked on the return journey.

Chief Justice Surya Kant expressed strong disapproval of the civil and police administration's failure to react promptly, emphasizing that the incident reflects an egregious affront not only to the officers involved but also poses a direct challenge to judicial authority. The High Court's Chief Justice's personal involvement, including contacting state officials, underscores the urgency of the situation.

The Supreme Court ordered key state officials, including the Chief Secretary and police heads, to explain their inaction, while also directing measures to ensure the safety of judicial personnel and the continuity of the electoral review process without further disruption. Overall, the incident symbolizes a calculated attempt to undermine the judiciary and intimidate judicial officers engaged in critical electoral responsibilities.

Ajinkya Rahane lashes out at criticism, blaming it on "agenda" and "jealousy"



New Delhi: Ajinkya Rahane, the captain of the Kolkata Knight Riders, responded to criticism of his batting strategy in the IPL without holding back. Rahane, who has been absent from the Indian team for some time, has often been questioned about his appropriateness in the T20 format. Over the previous few seasons, his role and status at KKR have also come under examination. In the hurried round of last year's massive auction, KKR acquired the seasoned red-ball expert. With few other possibilities for captain, the team trusted him to lead a team that had won the IPL three times before, supporting both his leadership and experience. He scored 390 runs at a strike rate of 147.73 in 13 IPL 2025

games, but his team struggled to defend the crown and missed out on the playoffs. Rahane responded forcefully to his detractors, defending his T20 credentials and pointing out what he perceives to be a clear agenda against him. The KKR captain questioned the narrative surrounding his game and cited his strike rate since 2023, implying that those who have doubts about him are either not paying close attention or don't want to see him win. Rahane stated, "I think I have one of the best strike rates so far from 2023," during the news conference following the game. "Those who are criticizing me are either not watching the game or have a personal grudge against me. My playing is disliked by

them. "They dislike watching me play," he continued. Rahane changed his T20 strategy during the 2023 Indian Premier League, where he had a great run with the Chennai Super Kings and contributed significantly to their championship victory with quick middle-order innings. by a remarkable strike rate of 172.49, he amassed 326 runs by the end of the season. He scored 242 runs at a low strike rate of 123.47 in 2024, which proved to be a disastrous campaign. The next season, he did make some progress, increasing his strike rate to 147.73, but it wasn't enough to significantly impact his team's overall performance. Rahane has dismissed criticism by attributing it to jealousy rather than a fair assessment of his performances. He emphasized that his batting intent remains consistent despite some off days, suggesting that those commenting may not fully understand the game or expectations of him. Despite starting the season strongly with a 67-run performance, he had a disappointing outing later. Ultimately, Rahane expressed that he is unfazed by the surrounding chatter, embracing the attention—whether positive or negative—as a sign of his impact in the game.

Bhagwant Mann, the chief minister of Punjab, responds to the removal of Raghav Chadha from the Rajya Sabha



New Delhi, Apr 03: On Friday, the AAP retaliated against party MP Raghav Chadha, accusing him of indulging in "soft PR" rather than speaking out against the Center in Parliament. Saurabh Bharadwaj, the president of the Delhi Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), claimed that Chadha did not participate in opposition walkouts on important issues and

did not follow the party's stand on a number of subjects in Parliament. In a video uploaded on X, Bharadwaj stated, "We are all Arvind Kejriwal's soldiers. The Center doesn't care about soft PR or talking about samosas at airport canteens when bigger issues are at stake." "You (Chadha) never took part in the Opposition's walkouts in Parliament. When former Del-

hi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was detained, you fled to another country and did not voice concerns about Punjab, the state from where you were elected," he said. Chadha was also criticized by Anurag Dhanda, the AAP national media chief, who questioned Chadha's ability to defend the nation if he "fears" Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Voting rights are being taken away in West Bengal. Dhanda stated on X, "You (Chadha) refused to sign a proposal against the CEC when it came up in the House." "In Parliament, we get limited time to speak, and it can be used either to fight for the nation or discuss trivial matters like cheaper samosas at airport canteens," Dhanda stated, noting that Chadha has been reluctant to address "real issues" for a number of years. A day after being dismissed as the AAP's deputy leader in the Rajya Sabha, Chadha said he was "silenced, not defeated" earlier in the day.

Before Ardh Kumbh in 2027, Haridwar intends to move its meat shops outside the city



New Delhi, Apr 03: The Haridwar administration has suggested moving all raw meat stores operating inside the city's urban limits to Sarai village on the outskirts in preparation for Uttarakhand's Ardh Kumbh, which is set for next year. A proposal to this effect has been written and will be tabled at the Municipal Corporation Board

meeting on April 6, according to Haridwar Mayor Kiran Jaiswal. The sale and consumption of meat, alcohol, and eggs are already forbidden within five kilometers of Har Ki Pauri, the city's primary Ganga bathing ghat, according to the ordinances of the Haridwar Municipal Corporation.

According to Jaiswal, if the plan is accepted by the

board, all stores that sell raw meat in the city will relocate to Sarai village. Only 20 meat businesses have licenses from the Municipal Corporation, she continued, but many more are operating illegally throughout the city. "This not only creates unhygienic conditions but also aggravates the problem of stray dogs," the mayor stated, adding that if the plan is approved, shops operating unlawfully will face consequences and fines. Jaiswal added that the board meeting will also cover the topic of serving cooked meat in hotels and roadside restaurants. There are currently a lot of outdoor meat stores in the Jwalapur and Jagjitpur regions, and Hindu organi-

zations often hold demonstrations calling for their closure. The suggestion was supported by Mahant Ravindra Puri, president of the Akhil Bharatiya Akhanda Parishad and chairman of the Mansa Devi Temple Trust. He said that the presence of meat and liquor stores in the city damages religious emotions and that crores of devotees are anticipated to visit Haridwar during the Ardh Kumbh. Additionally, State Chief Secretary Anand Vardhan stated that all required measures, such as moving meat stores from the city's metropolitan districts, will be implemented to guarantee that religious sensitivities are not offended during the Kumbh Mela.

Prior to the assembly elections, a record 2.4 lakh CAPF personnel were deployed in Bengal

Kolkata, Apr 03: Nearly 2.4 lakh members of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) will be deployed in West Bengal by the Election Commission of India (ECI), which will be the largest deployment in a single state during an election. Increased security concerns and the Commission's emphasis on guaranteeing free, fair, and violence-free polling are reflected in this action.

The Commission has also implemented a comprehensive post-election security strategy, according to officials. About 200 CAPF firms will be stationed throughout the state to secure Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), strong rooms, and counting centers until the counting process is finished on April 29, 2026. Additionally, until additional directives are given, 500 CAPF companies will remain on duty to maintain law and order. The ruling raises grave concerns about security arrangements in light of a recent event in the Malda area where court officers were allegedly gheraoed. The occurrence was strongly noted by the Supreme Court, which ordered authorities to provide court officers with sufficient protection. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) was then given the case by the Election Commission to look into. Following the announcement of the West Bengal election schedule, the Commission removed a number of high-ranking state officials, including the Chief Secretary, Director General of Police (DGP), Home Secretary, Kolkata Police Commissioner, and Additional Director General (Law and Order). According to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, the actions were taken to guarantee free and peaceful elections. He continued by saying that the Commission's attempts to be impartial during the election process include the appointments and transfers of top personnel. West Bengal, which had seven stages of voting in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, received the highest proportion of personnel under the

countrywide deployment strategy. Approximately 920 CAPF companies, or nearly 92,000 soldiers, were stationed in the state out of the approximately 3.4 lakh CAPF personnel, which is a substantial increase over past elections. Approximately 725 CAPF companies were deployed throughout eight phases in West Bengal during the 2021 Assembly elections. Given the state's history of poll-related violence, the increase this time suggests increased vigilance.

The deployment's scope is also compared to other vulnerable areas. After ten years, the 2024 Assembly elections in Jammu & Kashmir saw the deployment of about 900 CAPF companies. About 635 CAPF companies were stationed in the Union Territory during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, highlighting ongoing security issues.

The current West Bengal plan is noteworthy for its concentrated magnitude in a single state, since around 3.4 lakh CAPF soldiers were deployed nationwide for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Other states, such as Chhattisgarh (360 companies), Bihar (295), Uttar Pradesh (252), and over 250 companies each in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Punjab, also saw a large deployment of central forces during the Lok Sabha elections. According to officials, the staggered deployment ensures optimum coverage in critical areas by enabling forces to be shifted dynamically based on polling dates and real-time evaluations. Mamata Banerjee, the chief minister of West Bengal and leader of the TMC, accused central forces of being misused before in the CAPF deployment. "The blatant misuse of central forces continues unabated," she wrote on social media. We have brought up this matter time and time again, but the EC has remained silent while personnel in uniform are being utilized in various locations to openly frighten TMC voters and persuade many of them to support a particular party."

After a poor performance against RR, Srikanth makes a huge prediction for the CSK opening

New Delhi: Sanju Samson has the support of former India captain Krishnamachari Srikanth, who believes he will perform well against Punjab Kings on Friday. After making a high-profile move to the Chennai Super Kings, Samson had a quiet start to the season and lost badly to his old team, the Rajasthan Royals.

He failed to make an impression in his debut, being ejected for just six by Nandre Burger. But the wicketkeeper-batter came to the IPL fresh off an incredible T20 World Cup campaign in which he was instrumental in the knockout stages and

won Player of the Match for back-to-back game-winning efforts. Srikanth predicted an aggressive innings against Punjab Kings and expressed confidence that Samson will recover in style, citing Chepauk's knowledge and supporting him to take command once he settles in.

The game will take place at Chepauk, the same venue where Sanju Samson won Man of the Series and made a comeback in the T20 World Cup. He will undoubtedly play a stunning knock. It's the perfect wicket for him to regain his elite form. After seeing the first

four or five deliveries, Sanju ought to lose her mind. On his YouTube channel, Srikanth stated, "I think he will smash PBKS." Key players like Sanju Samson, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shivam Dube, and Ayush Mhatre failed to deliver as CSK's batting lineup collapsed against Rajasthan Royals in their season opener. The squad battled to a meager total of just 127, and none of them could get going as the innings never gained speed. Srikanth anticipates a high-scoring match between Punjab Kings and CSK, with both teams capable of scoring signifi-

cant totals. Even though he thinks PBKS might have a small advantage on paper, he thinks the circumstances might work in CSK's favor, particularly if Sanju Samson finds form and dominates the match. "The winning team is the one with 220 points.

That is something that both teams can accomplish. It's a 50/50 match. PBKS might be the preferred option on paper. However, CSK will do well on decent batting tracks. It was the same even last year. "PBKS doesn't have anyone to match Sanju Samson if he clicks," he continued.

MS Dhoni Returns To CSK Training Sparking Questions Over His Fitness For PBKS Clash

Dhoni Returns To Training But Remains Cautious

Chennai: MS Dhoni has returned to training with Chennai Super Kings, sparking fresh speculation over a possible early comeback in IPL 2026. The 44-year-old, who missed the season opener due to a calf strain, was seen batting in the nets ahead of CSK's home clash against Punjab Kings. IPL-2026-csk-vs-pbks-training-session-video-viral-2890415-2026-04-02?utm_source=global-search&utm_medium=global-search&utm_campaign=global-search"target="_blank">Dhoni's return to training comes sooner than expected after an injury that was initially set to keep him out for around two weeks.

However, speaking through his actions in training rather than any official update, the veteran appeared to be easing his way back into match fitness. At the CSK training session on the eve of the Chepauk clash, Dhoni was seen focusing



On Range hitting and light fitness drills, but notably did not participate fully with the squad. While he spent time batting in the nets, he stayed away from wicket-keeping drills, with Sanju Samson continuing behind the stumps in practice. That detail has added a layer of uncertainty around his availability, suggesting that while Dhoni is close, he may not yet be ready to return to full match duties. Apart from Dhoni, another injured CSK player, Devald Brevis, also took part in the team's training session ahead of Friday's clash. However,

Brevis was limited to short-run drills during practice before the Royals game, working closely with the team physios. Despite returning to training, Dhoni's participation in the clash against Punjab Kings remains unclear. The absence of wicket-keeping practice points towards a cautious approach, with CSK likely to prioritise long-term fitness over a rushed comeback.

The franchise has already begun adjusting to life without him, with Samson stepping in as wicketkeeper following his high-profile move from Rajasthan Roy-

als. His presence, along with a younger core, has hinted at a gradual transition within the squad. Over the past few seasons, Dhoni's role has evolved significantly. Having stepped away from captaincy, he has operated more as a situational finisher, often entering late in the innings rather than anchoring the batting order. The introduction of the Impact Player rule has further limited his time on the field, making his appearances more tactical than constant.

With CSK balancing transition and experience, Dhoni's return is being managed carefully. While his presence in training is a positive sign, the signs suggest that the veteran may take a measured route back, rather than rushing into the Chepauk clash. For now, his availability remains a game-time call, but his return to the nets has already lifted the mood around CSK ahead of a crucial home fixture.

Yuvraj Singh Urges Management to Clarify Rohit and Kohli's 2027 World Cup Plans

New Delhi: Former India cricketer Yuvraj Singh has called on the Indian team management to provide clarity to Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli regarding their roles ahead of the 2027 ODI World Cup, stressing that players of their stature deserve transparent communication. He emphasised that uncertainty at this stage of their careers is unfair and that clear planning is essential as India build towards the next global event. With both Rohit and Kohli having stepped away from Tests and T20Is to focus on ODIs, their roles remain central to India's roadmap, but also part of a wider transition conversation. Speaking to India Today's sister channel, Sports Tak, Yuvraj highlighted the need for honest dialogue between the head coach Gautam Gambhir, India selectors and the two stalwarts.

"I don't know what's going on in their minds. They look committed to playing the World Cup, but I think that decision lies with them and the selectors, who will have to decide the future. My point is that they are such great players, there has to be clarity," Yuvraj said. "You should be able to sit in a room and discuss things openly. It's difficult, especially at that stage of your career. You may not like hearing that the team is looking ahead, but a year later you will appreciate that at least someone told you the truth to your face. That



doesn't really happen in Indian cricket," he added. Both Rohit and Kohli, meanwhile, have shown they remain integral to India's ODI setup. Kohli has enjoyed a resurgence since late 2025, returning to the top of the ICC rankings with a more aggressive approach, including a prolific series against South Africa where he scored 302 runs in three matches at an average of 151 and a strike rate of over 117. Rohit, on the other hand, starred in Australia with 202 runs in three matches at an average of 101, including a match-winning century in Sydney that sealed the series and helped him reclaim the No.1 ODI ranking spot at 38, only to be . However, his form dipped in the subsequent home series against New Zea-

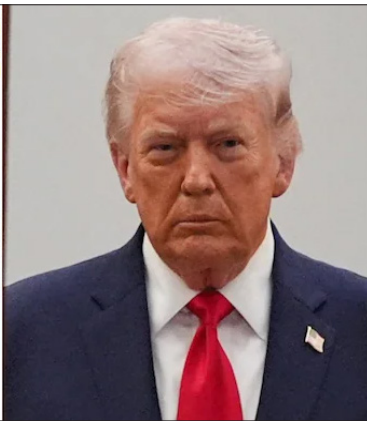
land, where he managed just 61 runs at an average of 20.33. Yuvraj stressed that while the Rohit-Kohli debate will continue to dominate headlines, India's focus should be on building a clear and structured roadmap towards the 2027 World Cup. For him, the bigger concern is not who plays, but how decisively the management communicates its vision to both senior players and the next generation.

"I don't want any player who has represented the country for so many years to be stuck in a situation where no one sits down and tells them clearly what the plan is. Either commit to them for the World Cup and back them fully, or tell them that the team is looking at younger players. Someone has to say it.

Tiger Woods Tells Police He Was Talking With President in Video

New Delhi: Golf legend Tiger Woods was heard telling police he was speaking to US President Donald Trump moments after his car crash in Florida on XX, according to bodycam footage released by authorities. Woods, 50, was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence. The footage, issued by the Martin County Sheriff's Office, shows Woods appearing disoriented as officers assessed the scene following his vehicle's rollover near his home. In the video, a police officer is seen asking Woods to stay at the site while the investigation proceeds. Woods responded, waving his phone, saying, "Yeah, I was just talking with the President." Following the crash, Woods was subjected to a sobriety test before being handcuffed and taken into custody. The 50-year-old golfer has since announced a temporary break from golf to focus on his health after the incident.

Donald Trump commented on the situation while speaking to reporters, expressing concern for Woods. He described Woods as "an amazing person" but acknowledged he was facing difficulties. Another clip released by the Sheriff's Department showed Woods appearing in discomfort as he was transported in the back of a police vehicle following



his arrest. Authorities confirmed that Woods was not injured in the crash, which occurred on a residential road near Jupiter Island when his vehicle overturned. Nonetheless, the episode has brought renewed focus to his off-field challenges. Woods was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence after police noted signs of impairment. Although a breathalyser test detected no alcohol, investigators suspect prescription medication played a role. Woods admitted to taking such medication earlier that day and said he was looking at his phone when the crash happened.

He refused a urine test, resulting in additional charges under Florida law. Police found hydrocodone painkiller pills in his possession at

the time. This is not Woods' first DUI-related incident; in 2017, he pleaded guilty to reckless driving after a similar arrest. Woods has pleaded not guilty in the current case, and investigations continue as further details emerge from the footage. Tiger Woods told police he had been speaking with Donald Trump moments before his vehicle overturned in a Florida car crash. During the investigation, Woods was heard waving his phone and stating, "Yeah, I was just talking with the President," according to bodycam footage released by the Martin County Sheriff's Office. Authorities noted that Tiger Woods appeared disoriented and lethargic at the scene of the rollover incident near Jupiter Island. While a breathalyzer test detected

no alcohol, investigators suspected impairment from prescription medication, which Woods admitted to taking earlier that day. Following the arrest, Woods announced a temporary break from golf to focus on his health and recovery. Following his arrest for driving under the influence (DUI) in March 2026, Tiger Woods has officially stepped away from professional golf to prioritize his health and recovery. The 15-time major champion ruled himself out of the upcoming Augusta Masters and has requested a jury trial after pleading not guilty to the charges. The incident occurred near his home on Jupiter Island when his vehicle was involved in a rollover crash. While investigators noted signs of impairment and found prescription medication, a breathalyzer test detected no alcohol. Bodycam footage later revealed a disoriented Woods claiming he had been speaking with Donald Trump moments before the accident.

The legal and personal fallout has significantly impacted his career trajectory and personal life. Following the arrest, his partner, Vanessa Trump, reportedly issued a "final warning," demanding he get his life under control. Additionally, his long-term professional future remain as he shifts litigation.

Analyzing the Death of Italian Football and the Nation's Steep Fall From Grace



New Delhi: Italian football is back to square one. A nation renowned for its tactical philosophies it has bestowed upon the world is now crumbling amidst its third consecutive failure to qualify for the FIFA World Cup. The Italians have undergone a dramatic slump that few could have foreseen. A team that was world champion in 2006, 20 years later, has become an inconsistent force in European football. Much of this decline is believed to have stemmed from the Calciopoli scandal that rocked Italy.

The scandal severely damaged Serie A's reputation, caused an approximate 17%

drop in revenue during the 2006-07 season, and led to an exodus of top talent from the league. As per an article published by Deloitte titled Annual Review of Football Finance, the total European football market grew to 13.6 billion euros in 2006-07, marking a 1 billion euros increase from the previous year. "This is despite a 236m euros reduction in Italian Serie A revenues in 2006-07, which was primarily due to the relegation of Juventus into Serie B," the report noted. Following this, corruption and unstable financial models became more prevalent, leading to prestigious Italian clubs such as

AC Milan, Inter Milan, and Napoli struggling to consistently achieve European or even domestic dominance. The last time an Italian club triumphed on Europe's biggest stage, the UEFA Champions League, was in 2010 when Inter defeated Bayern Munich 2-0 in Madrid. That Inter side did not feature a single Italian in the starting XI. In fact, the only Italian to appear in that final was Marco Materazzi, who came on in the final minute of stoppage time. In contrast, the AC Milan side that lifted the same trophy in 2007 after defeating Liverpool 2-1 in Athens had seven Italians in the starting lineup.

Ayush Mhatre Recalls Emotional Moment Rohit Sharma Asked About His Long Virar Commute

New Delhi: It is no secret that Ayush Mhatre adores Rohit Sharma and considers the MI legend to be his idol. This was evident from the time he penned an emotional note to Rohit after losing spot to the former India captain during a Ranji Trophy game. Before going to a tour of England last year, Mhatre went to meet Rohit and was gifted a bat by the former Indian skipper. Mhatre, who plays for MI's arch-rivals CSK, has now recalled meeting Rohit at his home before the England tour. Speaking on CSK's YouTube channel, the India U19 skipper said how he sent a simple message to Rohit, asking for a meetup. Mhatre remembered how Rohit offered to meet him whenever he needed help after his first IPL outing for CSK last season against MI.

The young batter decided to take the offer up and sent Rohit a message asking for a meetup. Mhatre said that Rohit called him and was even



surprised to see the youngster ready to make the trip from Virar to meet him before the England tour. "So I was about to go on the England tour, and I wanted to speak to him a bit. I messaged him. Then I said I wanted to meet him, so he directly called me himself. e called me from his side and said, tell me what you want to say. I told him that I am going on this tour and wanted to meet. He asked me, where

do you stay? I said Virar. He said, will you come from Virar to meet me? I said yes, I can come anywhere to meet you, I just want to meet you," said Mhatre.

Mhatre recalled how he insisted to Rohit that he wanted to meet him and spent two hours at his residence. The youngster called it a dream day for him. "He said it's not like that, we can also talk on video. I said no, I want to

meet you personally and talk. Then he gave me his home address and I went to his house the next day. I spoke to him for at least 2 hours. I mean, it was crazy that he gave me so much time, that's a big thing for me. My idol gave me time, so it was a dream for me, a dream day. I didn't even realise how time passed, 2 hours went by. It felt really good talking to him," said Mhatre.

India Women Miss FIBA 3x3 Asia Cup Main Draw Spot Despite Their Dominant Victory Over Turkmenistan

Singapore: The Indian women's basketball team fell short of qualifying for the main draw of the FIBA 3x3 Asia Cup 2026 in Singapore after suffering a crucial defeat against Malaysia in the qualifying round on Thursday. Ranked 88th in the world, India went down 16-13 to 44th-ranked Malaysia in their opening Pool B match, according to Olympics.com. Despite taking an early 6-4 lead, the Indian side could not maintain momentum as Malaysia edged ahead to secure the decisive win.

Pushpa Senthil Kumar was the stand-out performer for India with six points, while Dharshini Thirunavukkarasu added valuable contributions, including two successful shots from beyond the arc. India bounced back strongly in their second match, registering a commanding 21-4 victory over Turkmenistan. Sreekala Rani and Pushpa led the scoring with six points each, while Dharshini chipped in with five, and Sanjana Ramesh added four, showcasing a dominant all-round performance. However, Malaysia sealed the lone main draw berth from the group after defeating Turkmenistan 21-9 later in the day, leaving India out of contention. Only the top team from each qualifying pool advances to the main draw. This marks the second consecutive edi-



tion where the Indian women's team has failed to progress beyond the qualifiers. In the previous edition, India had registered a win over Guam, but losses against Hong Kong China and Chinese Taipei ended their campaign early. In contrast, the Indian men's team enjoyed a successful outing, advancing to the main draw after impressive wins over Bahrain, Kazakhstan and Hong Kong China in Pool D of the qualifiers. They are set to face Qatar and New Zealand in their main draw fixtures on Friday. The top two teams from each group in the main draw will qualify for the quarter-finals. India's men's team had reached the

last-eight stage in the previous edition, marking their best performance in over a decade. The Indian men's basketball team was stuck in Doha and its FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027 Asian Qualifier against Lebanon was postponed following escalating military Tensions in West Asia. India had suffered a Group D defeat against Qatar in Doha on Friday and were scheduled to travel the next day to Lebanon to play at the Nouhad Nawfal Sports Complex in Zouk Mikael.

However, the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) announced on Saturday that four qualifying.