

Mizoram Raises Alarm Over Refugee-Linked Crime; 93% Myanmar Nationals Biometrically Registered

Aizawl, Mar 03: K. Sapdanga, Home Minister of Mizoram, has voiced serious concern over the rising crime rate in the state, claiming that more than 50 per cent of recent criminal cases are allegedly linked to refugees and individuals who have entered the state from neighbouring countries and other parts of India. Chairing a high-level review meeting and later speaking during the ongoing Budget session of the Mizoram Assembly, Sapdanga stated that the state is currently sheltering over 38,000 refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh, along with internally displaced persons from Manipur. He described the situation as a significant law and order challenge.

According to the Home Minister, a substantial number of recent crimes have been traced to sections of the refugee population, particularly those who crossed the international borders from Myanmar and Bangladesh. While acknowledging that many refugees are law-abiding, he alleged that some are involved in illegal commercial activities. He said authorities are aware that a few individuals are covertly operating small-scale businesses in violation of Indian law, even though formal complaints may not have been filed in all such cases. Several arrests



have already been made, and some of the accused are facing serious criminal charges depending on the nature of the goods being sold or transported.

Providing an update on the biometric enrolment drive, Sapdanga informed the House that as of February 5, 2026, a total of 26,381 Myanmar nationals had been biometrically registered, covering 93.40 per cent of the targeted population. Around 1,974 individuals are yet to complete the process. The enrolment exercise, which began on July 31, 2025, marks Mizoram's

first official initiative to biometrically identify refugees from Myanmar. In addition, 1,630 Bangladeshi refugees are currently residing in different parts of the state.

The Minister admitted that managing accommodation, regulating movement, and overseeing the administration of thousands of refugees has posed considerable logistical challenges. The state government, working in coordination with local NGOs, is attempting to regulate movement and prevent unauthorised trade activities.

The influx of refugees began

after the 2021 military coup in Myanmar and intensified due to ongoing armed conflict in border areas. Refugees from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts also entered Mizoram following military operations against ethnic insurgents. Meanwhile, thousands of Kuki-Zo people from Manipur sought shelter in Mizoram after ethnic violence between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities erupted in May 2023. Most Myanmar nationals in Mizoram belong to the Chin community, which shares close ethnic and cultural ties with the Mizos.

Similarly, Kuki-Hmar-Zomi groups from Manipur and members of the Bawm tribe from Bangladesh maintain strong kinship links with the local population.

In a related development, Chief Minister Lalduhoma recently announced that the government is considering confiscating Myanmar-issued identity documents of refugees who repeatedly cross the international border and violate Indian laws. The proposed step is aimed at preventing misuse of cross-border access.

Sapdanga also issued a stern warning to law enforcement personnel, stating that police officers who fail to perform effectively may be advised to opt for voluntary retirement. Those who are not eligible may be encouraged to accept a special retirement package as part of broader police reforms designed to improve efficiency and response capabilities. He further emphasised the importance of civil society participation and called for strengthening village defence parties across the state to enhance community vigilance.

The Mizoram government is expected to announce additional regulatory measures in the coming weeks to address refugee management and related security concerns.

In Brief

Vikshit Bharat Youth Parliament conducted in Chandel

Imphal, Mar 03: The district-level Vikshit Bharat Youth Parliament 2026 for Chandel district took place at the Seminar Hall of South East Manipur College, Komlathabi. The event was held under the theme '50 Years of Emergency: Lessons for Indian Democracy'. Organised jointly by the National Service Scheme, SEMCO, and Mera Yuva Bharat Chandel, the youth parliament witnessed dynamic participation from various institutions, with young individuals aged 18-25 from across the district taking part. The event was graced by Sub Divisional Officer of Chandel, Reikimdaar Khaling, as the Chief Guest. Dr. Miranda Bembem Mutuwa, Coordinator, IQAC, SEMCO, delivered the keynote address, highlighting the Youth Parliament as a platform for young voices to engage in national discussions and shape the vision of the nation and the world.

Total lunar eclipse

Guwahati: A total lunar eclipse will occur on Tuesday evening and it will be visible from the entire North East India, except Sikkim. Rest of the country will witness only a partial phase of the lunar eclipse. Guwahati Planetarium has made arrangements for a live viewing of the event through optical instruments on its premises for the general public and astronomy enthusiasts. As per the Indian Standard Time (IST), the eclipse will begin at 3:20 pm and end at 6:48 pm. In Guwahati, it will be visible after moonrise at 5:24 pm. The eclipse will be visible in the region covering eastern Asia, Australia, Pacific Ocean and Americas. The next lunar eclipse which will be visible from India is on July 6, 2028 and the same will be a partial lunar eclipse.

Four Assam Districts to observe holiday on March 4

Guwahati, Mar 03: In honor of Dol Jatra and Holi, the district administrations of Darrang, Cachar, Morigaon, and Sonitpur have designated Wednesday, March 4, 2026, as a local holiday. All government offices, educational institutions, banks, financial institutions, and government undertakings in the corresponding districts will be subject to the holiday, which was declared under the terms of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881. Exams, written tests, interviews, and other scheduled critical services won't be impacted by the vacation, though. Officers and staff who participate in these activities must report to work on time.

Former deputy chief of BTC Kampa Borgoyari rejoins BPF

Guwahati: In a large public gathering in Kajalgaon, Chirang district, former BTC deputy chairman Kampa Borgoyari—who had previously joined the UPPL and been elected from the 13-Chirang Duar constituency—returned to the BPF. On this occasion, former BTR CEM Officer on Special Duty (OSD) Pramod Boro-Dr. Sangrang Brahma and UPPL Founder General Secretary Maothi Brahma Hazoary joined the Bodoland People's Front (BPF). Ahead of the state assembly elections, the UPPL views their return to the BTC as a setback. In front of senior BPF leaders and a sizable public crowd, BTC Chief and BPF President Hagrama Mohilary greeted and congratulated them with a traditional Aronai and party scarf.

Vikshit Bharat Youth Parliament conducted in Chandel

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65% of the population under 35, youth participation in politics or nation-building is not only inevitable but also indispensable," she said, encouraging participants to articulate their ideas and desires to build a better nation. She also informed that the top five winners would represent Chandel at the state-level competition. Speaking as the Chief Guest, SDO

Chandel reflected on the 21-month-long national emergency during 1975 and its impact on democracy. "Democracy is about living in an ecosystem between citizens, judiciary, executive, and legislature. Healthy democracy isn't just about periodic elections but active participation for citizens' awareness and welfare," she said, adding that rights are inherent and it's a collec-

tive responsibility to protect them. The jury selected the top five winners: Roshni Nula (United College) as first, Lh Penahring (United College) as second, SK Jilihring (SEMCO) as third, Tongsin Phowlnihring (SEMCO) as fourth, and HL Amit Anal (United College) as fifth. These winners will represent Chandel at the state-level competition.

TMT-laden truck set ablaze in Senapati

Senapati, Mar 03: A truck loaded with TMT bars was allegedly intercepted and set on fire by unidentified persons between Kabinam and Lairouching village in Senapati district. The vehicle, bearing registration number NL07AA 2863, was reportedly on its way to Imphal when the incident took place at around 8.30 am. According to information shared by the All Naga Traders Association Manipur, two unidentified individuals stopped the truck and later set it ablaze in broad daylight. The association stated that the vehicle is said to belong to the General Secretary of the North East Federation of Trade Unions. The incident has caused concern among traders and transporters who regularly use the route for movement of goods. In a statement, the association termed the act as a serious blow to the trading community and said such incidents create fear among business operators. It also described the incident as an attack on the rule of law and urged the authorities to identify those involved and take legal action after a proper inquiry. The association further appealed to members of the public to share any information that may help in identifying the persons responsible.

Dol Jatra: Four Assam Districts to observe holiday on March 4



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Total lunar eclipse, Guwahati Planetarium arranges live viewing

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Refrain from entering Kuki areas, KHRC tells Dy CM Dikho

Imphal, Mar 03: The Kuki Human Rights Council (KHRC), headquartered in Lanka, has strongly condemned the recent visits of Deputy Chief Minister Losi Dikho to Kuki-inhabited areas, alleging that the move is aimed at undermining the aspirations of the Kuki community. In a press release issued on Monday, the council accused the Deputy Chief Minister of attempting to create divisions among Kuki sub-tribes, terming his visits as a "blatant attempt to divide and rule." The organisation urged him to refrain from entering Kuki areas until the demand for a separate administration for the Kuki people is fulfilled. The KHRC stated that the Deputy Chief Minister's mandate is to represent the Naga community and work in its interest, and not to interfere in matters concerning the Kuki people. The council

described his actions as provocative and said they would not tolerate any move that could weaken what it termed as the unity and struggle of the Kuki community. Reiterating its demand for separate administration, the council emphasised that every community has the right to protect its territorial integrity and boundaries. It asserted that the Kuki people would not compromise on this principle. The council further appealed to the Government of India to take note of the Deputy Chief Minister's actions and intervene to prevent any further escalation of tensions in the region. The press release was jointly signed by KHRC General Secretary Tomgminthang Kuki and Vice President Gavriel K. Simte, who reiterated the council's commitment to continue its movement until its objectives are achieved.

MLA Robindro assures aid to IDP students



Imphal, Mar 03: A newly constructed building of Youth Sports & Welfare Association (YSWA) Club, located at Chabung Company Awang Leikai under Mayang Imphal Assembly Constituency, was inaugurated. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Mayang Imphal AC MLA Kongkham Robindro as Chief Guest. Speaking at the event, MLA Kongkham Rob-

indro stated that in view of the prevailing situation in the State over the past three years, many people have faced immense hardships. He said the government is taking various initiatives to extend assistance, particularly to students affected by the crisis. He informed that steps are being taken to provide financial aid directly through bank accounts to support the education of displaced students.

He further assured that government assistance would continue to be extended to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). During the programme, BJP Mayang Imphal Mandal President Irom Rabi Singh also appealed to the public to pray for and support the inclusion of a Cabinet Minister from the constituency in the upcoming expansion of the State ministry led by Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh.

Manipur excise department faces acute staff crunch, infrastructure



Imphal, Mar 03: The Manipur Excise Department is grappling with a severe resource crunch, with acute shortages of manpower, infrastructure and logistical support hampering its drive against illicit liquor. Against this backdrop, Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Monday handed over five vehicles to the department in a bid to strengthen field operations. The Chief Minister flagged off the vehicles at a function in Imphal, stating that the addition would bolster surveillance, interception and seizure efforts under the State’s ongoing campaign against prohibited substances. “These vehicles will enhance field-level monitoring and enforcement to a certain extent,” the Chief Minister said, reiterating the government’s commitment to protecting youth and building a drug-free Manipur. “We have reaffirmed our resolve to build a forward-looking and healthy society through firm enforcement and collective

responsibility,” he added. However, officials acknowledged that the department’s challenges extend far beyond mobility constraints. Of the 706 sanctioned posts, only 110 are currently filled, leaving the department critically understaffed. The shortage has forced the Excise Department to seek assistance from District Commissioners and Superintendents of Police during drives against illicit alcohol. In addition to personnel gaps, the department reportedly lacks adequate infrastructure and operational support, further constraining enforcement efforts. Sources indicated that employees have threatened a “cease work” strike over demands for upgraded pay scales, compounding the operational strain. The staffing and infrastructure deficits have significantly affected the department’s capacity to curb the production, distribution and sale of illicit liquor in the state.

Pre-budget review meetings are chaired



Agartala, Mar 03: The Tripura government has initiated pre-Budget consultations ahead of the Budget Session of the State Assembly, which is scheduled to commence on March 13. Finance Minister Pranajit Singha Roy on Monday chaired a series of meetings at the Civil Secretariat with members of the Council of Ministers and senior officials to review departmental expenditures and finalise allocations for the 2026–27 financial year, official sources said.

The discussions focused on the Revised Estimates for 2025–26 and the proposed Budget Estimates for 2026–27. Projected revenue receipts and expenditure outlays across key sectors were examined as part of the preparatory exercise. Separate meetings were held with ministers overseeing major departments, including Public Works, Health, Industries and Commerce, Higher Education, Tribal Welfare, Transport, Tourism, Food and Civil Supplies,

Youth Affairs and Sports, Labour, and General Administration. Sources indicated that the consultations aim to align departmental proposals with fiscal commitments and prioritise spending in line with the government’s policy objectives before the presentation of the State Budget later this month. The Budget is expected to outline the government’s roadmap for resource mobilisation, development spending and sectoral growth for the upcoming financial year.

The government will step up efforts to stop the smuggling of areca nuts from Myanmar

Agartala, Mar 03: Home Minister K. Sapdanga informed the State Assembly on Monday that the government will scale up its operations against the smuggling of areca nuts from Myanmar. Sapdanga said the continued illegal influx of the commodity from the neighbouring country over the past several years has caused significant economic losses to local cultivators and contributed to the circulation of unaccounted money in the region. According to official data from 2019 to 2025, authorities registered 468 cases related to areca nut smuggling, leading to the arrest of 292 persons during the six-year period. “As these goods are untaxed, they are sold at very low prices. This not only increases the circulation of illegal money but also severely affects local areca nut growers in marketing their produce,” he said. Reaffirming the government’s “zero-tolerance” policy, Sapdanga said the ban on illegal trade would continue and border surveillance would be strengthened. Earlier this month, he had stated that any person, including government officials, found involved in the illegal trade would face strict action. He had also alleged that some politicians and police personnel were previously linked to the illicit trade. The Home Minister added that the ongoing enforcement drive has led to a noticeable increase in prices of locally produced areca nuts, offering some relief to farmers. Citing official data from 2019 to 2025, the minister stated that authorities have registered 468 cases related to areca nut smuggling during the six-year period, leading to the arrest of 292 individuals. Of the total cases, 109 were filed for violations of prohibitory orders under the IPC or the newly implemented Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), while 359 cases were registered under the Customs Act, 1962. He said 184 people were arrested under IPC/BNSS provisions, while 108 others were booked under the Customs Act. Offenders charged under IPC or BNSS for defying promulgation orders are tried before a judicial magistrate and face penalties ranging from fines to imprisonment as prescribed under the respective laws. Those prosecuted under the Customs Act are dealt with under its stringent provisions. Sapdanga explained that areca nuts entering from Myanmar bypass mandatory import duties and taxes, constituting a direct violation of customs regulations. “As these goods are untaxed, they are sold at very low prices. This not only increases the circulation of illegal money but also severely affects local areca nut growers in selling their own produce,” he said. Reaffirming the government’s zero-tolerance stance, the minister said



the ban would continue and border surveillance would be further strengthened. Earlier this month, he had warned that anyone involved in the illegal trade, including government officials, would face strict action, alleging past involvement of certain politicians and police personnel. He also claimed that the ongoing crackdown has led to a significant rise in prices of locally produced areca nuts, offering relief to farmers in the state. Of the total cases, 109 were registered for violations of prohibitory orders under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) or the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), while 359 cases were booked under the Customs Act, 1962. A total of 184 persons were arrested for offences under the IPC/BNSS, and 108 others were apprehended under the Customs Act. Sapdanga said those arrested for violating promulgated orders face trial before a judicial magistrate, with penalties ranging from fines to imprisonment as prescribed under the respective laws. Those booked under the Customs Act are prosecuted under its stringent provisions. The Home Minister said the areca nuts entering from Myanmar bypass mandatory import duties and taxes, constituting a violation of customs regulations.

Meghalaya activist refutes charges made by a former MDC and upholds the ST certificate rule for GHADC

Shillong, Mar 03: In response to recent remarks made by former Balachanda MDC Sofiur Rahman and S.G. Esamatur Momin questioning eligibility to run for the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC), social activist and CoMSO consultant Cherian Momin has released a forceful constitutional rejoinder. In response to recent remarks made by former Balachanda MDC Sofiur Rahman and S.G. Esamatur Momin questioning eligibility to run for the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC), social activist and CoMSO consultant Cherian Momin has released a forceful constitutional rejoinder. Momin claimed in a press release from Tura that the GHADC was established expressly to safeguard and advance tribal self-governance in certain regions and that its jurisdiction comes from the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. He argued that in order to run in GHADC elections, candidates must present a current Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificate, which is compatible with the constitution and the goals of the Sixth Schedule. Citing Articles 244(2) and 275(1) of the Constitution, Momin argued that the Sixth



Schedule provides a differentiated governance framework for tribal areas to safeguard indigenous identity, customary laws, and traditional institutions. He emphasised that the GHADC is not a general representative body akin to a municipal or legislative institution under ordinary statutory law, but a constitutionally protected entity

designed to legislate on matters such as land, inheritance, village administration, marriage and social practices within tribal communities. Responding to arguments invoking Articles 14, 15, 19 and 326—relating to equality, non-discrimination, freedom of expression and universal adult suffrage—Momin stated that these provisions

must be read harmoniously with protective measures for Scheduled Tribes. He noted that the Constitution itself provides for reservation of seats under Articles 330 and 332 and recognises special governance mechanisms under the Fifth and Sixth Schedules to ensure substantive equality and prevent historical marginalisation. Momin contended that long-term residence in the Garo Hills does not automatically confer eligibility to represent a constitutionally distinct tribal institution. He stressed that the ST certificate requirement is a procedural safeguard intended to preserve the constitutional character of the GHADC. Calling on Rahman and Momin to retract their remarks, he said any challenge to the eligibility criteria should be pursued through constitutional courts under Articles 226 or 32 rather than through public assertions that may create confusion about the legal framework governing autonomous district councils. The statement underscored that the Sixth Schedule represents a constitutional commitment to tribal political autonomy within India’s democratic and federal structure, and that its integrity must be upheld.

The Agartala Military Station hosted a massive ex-servicemen’s rally

Agartala, Mar 03: The rally witnessed enthusiastic participation of over 1500 veterans and Veer Naris from all eight districts of Tripura, reaffirming the Indian Army’s steadfast commitment towards the welfare and well-being of its veteran community. The event was graciously attended by Shri Indrasena Reddy Nallu, Hon’ble Governor of Tripura as the Chief Guest along with the presence of senior military and civil dignitaries including Lt Gen Abhijit S Pendharkar, UYSM, AVSM, SM, GOC Spear Corps. During the programme, veterans and Veer Naris were aptly felicitated in recognition of their dedicated service and supreme sacrifice for the service of the nation. A wide range of comprehensive facilitation stalls to include ECHS assistance, SPARSH pension support, Aadhaar facilitation, banking services for defence veterans and medical services like consultation and on-the-spot distribution of medicines were also established to address the welfare needs of veterans. In addition, a “Know Your Army” display was also organised to spread general awareness and interest about the Indian Army among the citizens of Tripura and NCC cadets. The display highlighting the ethos, operational capabilities, modern equipment and career opportunities in the Army, fostered greater military-civil connect and inspired the youth. The event concluded with vibrant cultural programmes reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the region further strengthening the bond between the Armed Forces and the people of Tripura.

Dy CM Dikho pledges support to deceased MLA Valte’s family

Imphal, Mar 03: Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho has assured the family members of the deceased BJP MLA Vungzagin Valte that the state government will provide all assistance to them. Dikho made the assurance while visiting the residence of Valte in the Churachandpur district headquarters. He met Valte’s wife and sons and offered a traditional shawl, signifying respect towards the deceased Zomi tribe legislator. Valte, the MLA of the Thanlon constituency, was severely injured during a mob attack in Imphal’s Nagamapal area in the early days of ethnic conflict in the State in 2023. He died on February 21 this year at a private hospital in Gurugram. Dikho, a Naga Peoples’ Front leader, also met with representatives of the Zomi Coordination Committee (ZCC) at the Paite Tribe Conference hall and discussed matters related to delivering justice to the family members and demands raised by the organisation. Dikho later told the media he had come to meet the bereaved family members of the deceased MLA and assured them of providing assistance.



Manipur has been gripped by ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities since May 2023 after a ‘Tribal Solidarity March’ was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community’s demand

for Scheduled Tribes status. At least 260 people, including members of both the Kuki and Meitei communities as well as security personnel, have been killed in the violence, while thousands have become homeless.

Mizoram to intensify crackdown on areca nuts smuggling

Aizawl, Mar 03: The Mizoram government will step up its operations against smuggling of areca nuts from Myanmar. Home Minister K Sapdanga noted in the Assembly that illegal influx of the commodity from the neighbouring country over the past few years has caused severe economic damage to local cultivators and the rise of unregulated “black money” in the region. According to official data spanning from 2019 to 2025, the authorities have

registered a total of 468 cases related to the smuggling of areca nuts from Myanmar, and the enforcement drive has led to the arrest of 292 people during the six years, he said. The Home Minister said the areca nuts entering from Myanmar bypassed mandatory import duties or taxes, which constituted a violation of the Customs Act.“As these goods are untaxed, they are sold at very low prices. This not only increases the circulation of illegal money but also severely affects local areca

nut growers in selling their own produce,” Sapdanga said. The home minister reaffirmed the government’s “zero-tolerance” policy, stating that it intends to continue the ban and strengthen border surveillance. Earlier this month, the Home Minister had said that any person, including government officials, involved in the illegal trade will not be spared. He had alleged that some politicians and policemen had been previously involved in the illegal trade.

Congress leader considers a ticket to the Dergaon Assembly amid controversy

Guwahati, Mar 03: The public has reacted sharply to reports that a Congress leader seeking the party ticket from the Dergaon Legislative Constituency in Golaghat district is involved in several ongoing judicial proceedings. Poranjyoti Saikia, the state vice president of the Assam Pradesh Congress’s Other Backward Classes (OBC) department and a native of Bongabari in the Khumtai Assembly constituency, is accused of having a contentious history. He apparently engaged in disruptive acts in the wider Khumtai area when he was younger, draw-

ing attention from the Komargaon police. Before finally relocating to Guwahati, he also lived for a considerable amount of time in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and other areas. Saikia became the vice president of the Pradesh Congress OBC department with the help of several Assam Pradesh Congress Committee leaders, and he has been involved in Congress politics for almost 18 months. According to reports, he is thinking of utilizing the Congress party ticket to run in the next Assembly elections from either the Dergaon or Khumtai constituency.

Former deputy chief of BTC Kampa Borgoyari rejoins BPF

Guwahati, Mar 03: In a large public gathering in Kajalgaon, Chirang district, former BTC deputy chairman Kampa Borgoyari—who had previously joined the UPPL and been elected from the 13-Chirang Duar constituency—returned to the BPF. On this occasion, former BTR CEM Officer on Special Duty (OSD) Pramod Boro-Dr. Sangrang Brahma and UPPL Founder General Secretary Maotthi Brahma Hazoary joined the Bodoland People’s Front (BPF). Ahead of the state assembly elections, the UPPL views their return to the BTC as a setback. In front of senior BPF leaders and a sizable public crowd, BTC Chief and BPF President Hagrama Mohilary greeted and congratulated them with a traditional Aronai and party scarf. According to sources, those leaders who joined the UPPL after leaving the BPF for internal reasons are probably going to rejoin the BPF before the assembly elections. Hagrama Mohilary emphasized that the BPF believes in teamwork and exchanging ideas for the peace and growth of the BTC and stated that the party’s doors are still open for former BPF deserters. He described Kampa Borgoyari as a responsible leader dedicated to realizing the goals of the BTC Accord and welcomed him back.

Barak Valley farmers benefit from the opening of a renovated dairy facility in Silchar

Silchar, Mar 03: In a historic move for southern Assam, Krishnendu Paul, Minister of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, officially opened the refurbished dairy processing plant in Gungoor, Silchar, signifying the official arrival of organized co-operative dairying in the Barak Valley. The Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Department (AHVD) was the original owner of the dairy plant, which had been closed for a number of years. North East Dairy and Foods Limited (NEDFL), a joint venture between the Government of Assam and NDDB, was given the task of renovating, rebuilding, and operationalizing it by the state government under the Assam Dairy Development Plan. With

the addition of contemporary equipment, the factory can now process 20,000 liters per day. IDMC Ltd., a 100% subsidiary of NDDB, finished the full project in less than ten months. With its commissioning, a long-standing shortage of high-quality fresh milk in the Barak Valley will be filled. Customers in Silchar and the neighboring areas will now have access to standardized, hygienically packed fresh pouch milk under the Purabi brand. Purabi Dairy will launch its regular milk in 250ml and 500ml pouches under the brand name “Purabi Plus.” The milk’s 4.5% fat and 8.5% SNF (Solids-Not-Fat) content guarantee excellent nutritional value and reliable quality. The 500ml



pouch will cost Rs 35, while the 250ml pouch costs Rs 18. Products like sweet curd, plain curd, lassi, paneer, ghee, ice cream, flavored milk, and honey will be

offered in addition to pouch milk. “The inauguration of the Silchar dairy processing plant is a landmark step in fulfilling Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma’s

vision of building a self-reliant, farmer-centric dairy ecosystem in Assam,” Krishnendu Paul, “stated in front of a sizable assembly of dairy farmers. On Monday, the Barak Valley officially joins the state’s balanced regional expansion, which is necessary to reach our target of processing 10 lakh liters of milk per day. Customers will have access to standardized, hygienically processed milk, and local dairy farmers will have predictable revenue streams and secure routes for procurement. The Assamese government is still dedicated to developing dairy infrastructure, bolstering farmer organizations, and guaranteeing that every household has access to nutrition.”

Role of MSMEs in driving entrepreneurship underlined

Imphal, Mar 03: A State-Level Stakeholder Consultation Workshop under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme was jointly organised by the Directorate of Trade, Commerce & Industries, Manipur (DTC&I) and the Manipur Industrial Development Corporation Limited (MANIDCO) at Imperial Hall, Classic Grande Imphal. The workshop brought together government officials, industry representatives, financial institutions and other stakeholders to deliberate on strengthening the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) ecosystem in the state. In his address, the Director of Trade, Commerce & Industries highlighted the critical role of MSMEs in driving entrepreneurship, generating employment and fostering innovation in Manipur. He noted that despite their significant contribution to trade and regional development, MSMEs in the state continue to face structural challenges, particularly limited access to affordable credit and high logistics costs due to geographical constraints. The Director stated that under the RAMP scheme, Manipur has made notable progress through expanded capacity-building initiatives across districts, awareness campaigns to promote formalisation, and strengthened institutional partnerships aimed at improving credit flow and enterprise competitiveness. A key initiative highlighted during the workshop was the Interest Subvention Programme for Women-Owned Enterprises, which provides a 2 per cent annual interest support on loans up to Rs. 4 lakh. The scheme is being implemented through the Directorate of Trade, Commerce & Industries and District Industries Centres in coordination with des-



ignated banks, with the objective of easing financial burdens and promoting inclusive growth by empowering women entrepreneurs. Another major intervention discussed was the Logistics Strengthening for MSMEs Scheme. Under this scheme, eligible MSMEs will receive reimbursement of up to one-third of their annual transportation expenses, capped at Rs. 1.5 lakh. The support will cover both outward transportation of finished goods and inward procurement of raw materials. Over the next two years, the department aims to extend the benefit to at least

500 MSMEs across all 16 districts of the state. The initiatives were stated to be aligned with the vision of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India, and reflect the state government’s commitment to building a resilient, inclusive and competitive MSME sector in Manipur. The workshop concluded with interactive deliberations, during which stakeholders shared suggestions and feedback for further strengthening policy implementation and ensuring sustainable growth of MSMEs in the state.

Guv, CM extend Yaoshang greetings

Imphal, Mar 03: Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla extended his heartiest greetings and best wishes to the people of Manipur on the joyous and auspicious occasion of Yaoshang. “Yaoshang, one of the most vibrant and widely celebrated festivals of Manipur, marks the arrival of spring and reflects the rich cultural heritage, unity, and joyous spirit of our people. From the sacred ritual of Yaoshang Mei Thaba to the rhythmic elegance of Thabal Chongba, the celebration comes alive with vibrant cultural performances and soulful devotional music-strengthening bonds of friendship, unity, and harmony across communities,” the Governor said in his message. “This festival beautifully blends faith and festivity, nurturing love, compassion, and social unity. The enthusiasm of our youth in organising sports and cultural activities during Yaoshang truly showcases the dynamic spirit and collective strength of our society,” he said. On this auspicious occasion, the Governor called upon everyone to celebrate the

festival in the true spirit of mutual respect, peace, and brotherhood. May this festival bring happiness, prosperity, and renewed hope in the State, he wished. Chief Minister Y Khemchand also conveyed his warm greetings to the people of the State on the auspicious occasion of Yaoshang. In his message, the Chief Minister said, “Yaoshang, celebrated for five days starting from the full moon day of the lunar month of Lamta, signals the coming of spring, ushering the birth of new beginnings. The festival provides a platform for social bonding for people from all communities and all walks of life. Sports and indigenous events witnessed during the five-day long festival have a powerful impact on social bonding for people from different social, economic, and religious backgrounds”. “Let the festival, ushering spring, take the state towards the path of inclusive growth and development. May the festival bring emotional integrity and further strengthen the age-old bonding among various communities who are living together since time immemorial,” the Chief Minister wished.

The home minister of Mizoram cautions refugees from engaging in illicit trade

Aizawl, Mar 03: The state Assembly was notified by K Sapdanga that certain migrants seeking sanctuary in Mizoram have been discovered to be involved in illicit business activities, with some of them already facing severe legal action. In response, Sapdanga said at a current budget session that although the government has not received official complaints of widespread infractions, there is reliable information that some refugees have been operating illegal small companies. Depending on the type of commodities involved, authorities are aggressively looking into these incidents, and in a number of cases, people are facing criminal charges. The minister gave an update

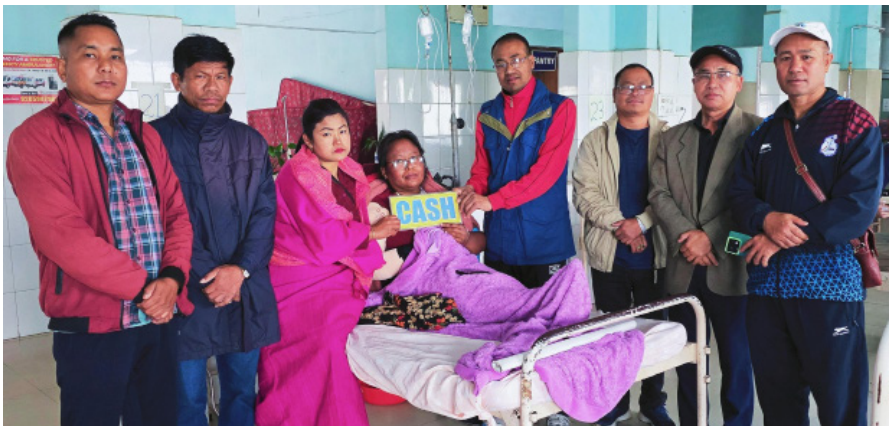


on the biometric enrollment campaign, stating that as of February 5, 26,381 Myanmar refugees had been registered, while 1,974 had not yet finished the process. In addition to internally displaced people from Manipur, Mizoram currently houses more than 38,000 refugees from Bangladesh and Myanmar. The Chin tribe, which has ethnic relations to the

Mizos, makes up the bulk of Myanmar’s population. Members of the Kuki-Zomi-Hmar group from Manipur arrived after ethnic violence broke out in May 2023, while the majority of Bangladeshi refugees are from the Chittagong Hill Tracts region. Despite the government’s proposals for special relief camps or settlements, Sapdanga claimed that their

implementation has been challenging. He pointed out that refugees are dispersed around the state and are not always able to stay in one location because of difficulties with their means of subsistence. The minister reaffirmed that all citizens, including refugees, must abide by the law even as Mizoram continues to provide humanitarian assistance.

LMG doles out financial assistance to needy patient



Imphal, Mar 03: The Like Minded Group (LMG), Manipur has extended a financial assistance of ₹15,000 to Heirangkhongjam Sandhyarani Devi of Mayeng Lamjao, Kaching district, who is currently undergoing medical treatment at Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS), Imphal. As part of its ongoing humanitarian initiative to support needy families, LMG Manipur handed over the monetary assistance to the patient herself at JNIMS on Monday. Sandhyarani Devi, daughter of Ibomcha Singh, has been struggling the life with her sole young daughter and they have been facing financial hardship due to her prolonged illness. Upon learning about her condition and the economic difficulties of her family, members of the group came forward to provide support. While receiving the assistance, Sandhyarani

expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the members of LMG Manipur for their timely help. It is reported that she and her young daughter are currently struggling due to the financial burden caused by medical expenses. The assistance was handed over in the presence of LMG Manipur Secretary Ojit Sorokhaibam, Treasurer Kurjeshwor Mangsatabam, Assistant Secretary Surendra Ningomba, and members Surjit Ngangomcha, Suni Nongthonbam, Joykumar Thokchom and Boinao Maibam. Speaking at the occasion, Secretary Ojit Sorokhaibam stated that in times of hardship and illness, society must come together to extend support to those in need. He emphasised that collective assistance during difficult times strengthens humanity and fosters unity within the community.

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Editorial

The Soul of the Office: Why Work Culture Matters

A workplace is more than just a collection of desks and high-speed internet; it is a living ecosystem. While strategy and capital are the bones of a company, work culture is its soul. In an era where the lines between professional and personal life are increasingly blurred, a robust culture is no longer a “perks and beanbags” luxury—it is a strategic necessity. A healthy culture fosters psychological safety, allowing employees to innovate without the paralyzing fear of failure. When values like transparency and empathy are hard-coded into daily operations, engagement skyrockets. Conversely, a toxic environment acts as a slow-release poison, driving away top talent and eroding productivity far faster than any market competitor could. Ultimately, people don’t just work for a paycheck; they work for a sense of belonging and purpose. A strong work culture aligns individual goals with the company’s mission, turning a group of staff members into a cohesive team. In the modern talent war, your culture is your greatest recruitment tool and your strongest retention shield. We must stop viewing “culture” as a human resources buzzword and start treating it as the foundational engine of sustainable success.

Preserving NE’s knowledge of medicinal herbs



Numerous fragrant and medicinal plants can be found in the northeast, which is a hub for biodiversity. Numerous significant medicinal and aromatic plant species from the region’s forests are in risk of being harvested destructively and maybe going extinct due to the growing demand for herbal raw medicine. Increasing the number of these species under commercial cultivation is still a practical strategy for preserving aromatic and medicinal plants in their native environments. Less than 25% of the demand for medical plants comes from cultivation, according to official data from the National medical Plants Board (NMPB), therefore concerns about harmful harvesting are legitimate.

The growing disparity between supply and demand emphasizes the necessity of numerous national programs as well as global collaboration in the field of medicinal plants. Since the region’s tribal communities are the natural guardians of the medicinal and aromatic plants found in the wild and in traditional agroforestry, commercial cultivation of these plants can guarantee higher returns for farmers, help agripreneurs in the area unlock export opportunities,

and give tribal communities a sustainable means of subsistence. They can more easily embrace commercial cultivation to increase production, raise household income, and create new livelihood opportunities along the value chain since they possess both traditional knowledge of the medical applications of these plants and the skills of processing and value addition. Some cultures have a long-standing custom of gathering planting materials from the wild in a sustainable way to avoid overharvesting or overextraction. Enforcing biodiversity laws is essential to preventing pharmaceutical companies’ commercial inter-

ests from encouraging farmers, particularly the region’s tribal farmers, to harvest medicinal and aromatic plants from the wild. Authorities such as the National Medicinal Plants Board can assist local farmers in engaging in commercial cultivation to meet the needs of pharmaceutical companies and producers of aromatic oils by producing high-quality planting materials from forests in collaboration with the Forest Department and traditional agroforestry and providing them for free.

Opportunities for the growth of commercial cultivation of aromatic and medicinal plants in the area have been created

by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the NMPB and the Traditional Medicine Administration, Ministry of Health of Vietnam. According to NMPB, the agreement’s goal is to advance, enhance, and expand collaboration in the field of medicinal plants on the basis of equity and mutual benefit. Both nations aim to take the appropriate actions to support and foster collaboration in the promotion of medicinal plants; technology transfer in the field of medicinal plant cultivation; conservation; sustainable collection, processing, extraction, and quality control of medicinal plants; production of tradi-

tional medicine products; marketing and research on medicinal plants; gene conservation of medicinal plants; development of digital databases; exchange of information on the use of medicinal plants; and exchange of research experts in the field of medicinal plants. The MoU presents enormous opportunities for the Northeastern states to take advantage of the bilateral agreements on medicinal plants to expand commercial cultivation of medicinal plants and strengthen research, as the region is central to India’s Act East Policy, which envisions deepening bilateral and multilateral ties with ASEAN countries. The region has a wealth of traditional knowledge about medicinal plants, much of which has not yet been recorded. Many medicinal plants are unique to the area, and only the populations who are familiar with them have traditional knowledge of how to employ them for medical purposes. For thorough documentation of such knowledge, the People’s Biodiversity Register can be helpful. When medicinal plants are used for commercial initiatives, their inclusion in the people’s biodiversity record further strengthens legal protection for sharing

benefits with the local population. When projects for the commercial use of medicinal plants are submitted to state and national biodiversity authorities for approval, these registers not only contain basic information about the species’ name and location, but also detailed information about traditional knowledge and their current status. As a result, the communities’ intellectual property rights are registered, giving them the ability to invoke pertinent laws for the protection of the commercial interests of the local communities.

Smuggling medical plants from the area is still a major worry for the conservation of rare medicinal plants, even if legal protection can only be applied to project plans filed to the biodiversity boards. The preservation of globally significant medicinal plants in their distinctive ecosystems in the region depends on raising awareness among farmers, especially those who live in communities on the edge of forests, about the dangers of such smuggling.

It is now urgently necessary to increase funding for biodiversity registers, raise awareness, and improve research on medicinal plants and traditional knowledge in the area.

Defending Indian Interests in a Conflict-Riven Middle East

The Middle East is facing what may be the most catastrophic conflict of the twenty-first century as a result of the dramatic rupture of the region’s geopolitical fault lines. The extraordinary joint military campaign known as “Operation Epic Fury” that the United States and Israel started against Iran in late February 2026 has permanently changed the geopolitical landscape of the world. The crisis has quickly turned from a shadow war into a full-fledged regional conflict with the alleged murder of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and widespread decapitation attacks targeting Tehran’s military and nuclear installations. Iran has responded immediately by launching enormous missile barrages against US military installations dispersed throughout the Gulf states as well as Israeli cities. India is facing a very difficult diplomatic situation in the midst of this tumultuous and extremely unpredictable conflict. For New Delhi, this situation poses a multifaceted threat to its economic stability, energy security, and the safety of millions of its

inhabitants in addition to being a remote foreign policy dilemma. The intensity and scope of the present conflicts are essentially unmatched in contemporary history. The Washington-Tel Aviv axis has taken a risky military move, motivated by the clearly declared goals of destroying Iran’s nuclear program and compelling a regime transition. Breaking Iran’s offensive capabilities has been a top priority for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Donald Trump. They have targeted vital locations from Tehran to Isfahan and destroyed important naval assets. Nevertheless, the Islamic Republic has shown a strong ability to retaliate despite significant losses in leadership and infrastructure. Tehran is aggressively attempting to increase the cost of the fight for Washington’s regional allies by attacking American installations in Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Jordan. This will ensure that the war spreads throughout the Middle East. The promise of regional integration and economic stability have been the early global

casualties of this swift escalation. Fears of a broader supply shock have caused oil markets to respond with typical panic, with Brent crude rising nearly overnight beyond \$82 per barrel. Global supply chains face a nightmarish scenario because to the disruption of vital maritime lanes, especially the constant threat over the Strait of Hormuz. The world economy is plagued by the threat of severe energy shortages and inflationary increases as commercial ships and oil tankers are more likely to be caught in the crossfire. Ambitious connectivity projects like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC), which significantly depends on regional peace to operate as a functional trade route, are also at risk of being totally derailed by the violence. For India, the eruption of the Iran-Israel-US war triggers immediate, existential anxieties that require deft crisis management at the highest levels of government. The foremost concern is the physical safety and security of the Indian diaspora. The broader Gulf region is home to an estimated ten million

Indian expatriates who form the backbone of the region’s labour force and contribute billions in crucial remittances to the Indian economy. The rapid escalation of hostilities, accompanied by the closure of airspace, the suspension of civilian flights, and the sounding of air-raid sirens, has prompted the Ministry of External Affairs to scramble its emergency response protocols. Urgent advisories urging vigilance have been broadcast across multiple nations, and the complex logistical groundwork for what could potentially become one of the largest civilian evacuation operations in Indian history is undoubtedly being mobilized. The serious and imminent threat to India’s energy security is as urgent. India, one of the biggest energy consumers in the world, imports more than 80% of its crude oil, with nearly half of these imports and a sizable amount of its LNG going straight through the unstable Strait of Hormuz. India’s fiscal deficit, domestic inflation targets, and overall economic development trajectory are all directly threatened by the cur-

rent surge in petroleum prices. In addition to raising petroleum costs at the pump, any protracted disruption or blockade in this limited maritime corridor may essentially halt vital manufacturing and transportation sectors of the Indian economy. As a result, protecting alternate energy supply chains and lessening the negative economic effects of a conflict fought thousands of miles away are crucial to New Delhi’s strategic handling of this situation. In terms of diplomacy, India is conducting a master class in strategic autonomy, which is required by its many, deeply ingrained, and often contentious international alliances. New Delhi’s official response has been carefully calibrated, emphasizing that the “sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states must be respected,” calling for moderation, and putting civilian safety first. The extremely challenging balancing act that India must always execute is demonstrated by this nuanced rhetoric. On the one hand, it has a vital, comprehensive bilateral connection with the United States and is rapidly strength-

ening its strategic, defense, and technological collaboration with Israel. The extent of New Delhi’s integration with the US-allied bloc is demonstrated by initiatives such as the I2U2 (India, Israel, the UAE, and the US) framework. The importance of this axis in the face of common security concerns is highlighted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s prompt telephone diplomacy with Israeli leadership. On the other hand, India cannot afford to break its close historical, cultural, and geopolitical links to Iran. Iran is geographically essential for India’s strategic push to Afghanistan and Central Asia, even beyond civilization-al ties. The key component of this connectivity strategy is the India-backed Chabahar port in southeast Iran, which enables New Delhi to avoid its adversarial neighbor, Pakistan, and have a strong commercial presence in the Eurasian landmass. Under extreme pressure from the West, abandoning Tehran would mean losing a vital energy partner, endangering years of diplomatic investment, and unavoidably giving up strategic space to re-

gional competitors like China. In order to ensure that open lines of communication are maintained across enemy lines, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar’s simultaneous outreach to both Israeli and Iranian counterparts exemplifies India’s unwavering unwillingness to be dragged into a binary geopolitical choice. The final details of this new conflict are still perilously uncertain as the sirens continue to sound throughout the Middle East and the humanitarian toll keeps rising. For India, the situation highlights the dangerous vulnerabilities of a globally interconnected world where regional conflicts can quickly turn into urgent home crises. The strength and adaptability of India’s strategic autonomy will be put to the test in the upcoming weeks and months. New Delhi’s success will be determined by its unique capacity to safeguard its large diaspora, preserve its home economy, and actively promote de-escalation without jeopardizing its fundamental sovereign interests rather than by the military alliances it decides to join.

When the use of coercion as a governing technique

Sometimes a nation’s worries manifest in a seemingly unremarkable incident, such as a raid, an arrest, or a factory dispute in a densely populated industrial belt. Reading them as distinct episodes in the everyday grind is tempting. However, certain tales continue to recur in various settings. Two extortion-related reports were discussed in public last week close to one another. One was nearly cinematic: a nighttime drive through the Mohammadpur and Adabor neighborhoods of Dhaka that resulted in a hundred people being detained. The four-hour sweep was presented as an effort to combat criminal organizations, teen gangs, and extortionists. The other report was more complicated: an export-focused factory in Rugganj was allegedly attacked after the owner refused to pay an upfront “one-time” demand and a subsequent monthly payment. This was met with a slow and controversial police response, and there were also reports that the victim encountered considerable obstacles in filing a case that accurately reflected their version of events. There are conflicting interpretations regarding the Rugganj incident: the local BNP leader describes it as an escalating disagreement, while the owner claims it was retaliation.

The more profound concern is what happens when coercion starts acting like a parallel authority, regardless of whether it is legitimate, covert, denied, or obviously transactional. Extortion is not best understood as a moral failure. When people are smashing a gate at 11 p.m., morality is of no use to a company owner. Reading it as a power dynamic—who, in reality, can impose fees and expect compliance—is more illuminating. The state seems to be decisive in the Mohammadpur-Adabor crackdown story. It reveals numbers, communicates its objective, arranges a vehicle, and arrives at night. It is a visible authority. Authority appears differently in the Rugganj plant report. This is authority in the form of uncertainty, friction, and delay. There appears to be capacity. Why, therefore, do enterprises and citizens feel that it does not consistently belong to them when they need it? Sitting with that contradiction is worthwhile. The state is capable of taking amazing action. However, other actors seem to be able to impose obligations outside of legal mandates, such as money, reverence, or silence. The citizen’s connection to governance is slightly altered under such circumstances. In order to adjust, people start to compute. It is not nec-

essary for a factory owner or merchant to respect a forceful actor in order to understand that rejection has repercussions and that protection can come too late. Extortion transcends theft once that mentality takes hold. In the economy, it turns into a price mechanism. Hidden payments function similarly to an unofficial tax. Schedules and receipts are part of formal taxes. Variables in informal extraction include who asks, how much, how frequently, and the consequences of denial. Inflation and even changes in regulations can be managed by markets. Things without an official name make them feel less at ease. Because of this, the phrase “law and order” frequently fails to convey the true fears of businesses. It is the likelihood that players whose authority is unreadable and so ungovernable are setting company costs. Rugganj is located inside Narayanganj’s industrial horizon. From there, a story spreads swiftly across corporate networks. Local entrepreneurs discuss paying “some” extortion on a regular basis with a disturbing regularity in Prothom Alo’s reportage, but they also show fear at the scope and audacity of the factory attack. Demonstrative violence is not the same as routine vio-

lence. It teaches others the price of refusal. Then there’s the way language is starting to falter when discussing this subject. Recently, a recently appointed minister presented a public definition that attempted to distinguish what he called a “unwritten rule” from coercion in the transportation industry. He maintained that if money is collected on roadways at set rates and described as welfare payments under “mutual understanding,” it shouldn’t necessarily be considered extortion. Additionally, he agreed that these agreements are usually dominated by the labor organization that supports the ruling party, but he insisted that this domination does not automatically render the collection extortionate because it occurs within a framework of agreement. It becomes challenging to discern between “agreement” and “compliance” when dominance is present. You may refer to a payment as “voluntary,” but it is rarely made in an environment where choice is balanced. They are acting within a limited range of repercussions. What happens to the public’s expectations of the law when a minister begins to conflate crime with custom? The response from civil society was remarkably quick and acute.

A battle in which all sides are defeated

As the number of casualties rises and the world economy is in grave danger, we are extremely concerned about the war that the United States and Israel started against Iran in the Middle East. Global trade would surely be disrupted and oil prices would rise if there was a full-scale, protracted conflict in the Middle East, which is the world’s main energy hub and one of the primary routes for international air and marine transit. However, the effects will extend beyond a possible rise in the price of crude and liquefied natural gas (LNG) for a nation as dependent on energy as Bangladesh. Every year, Bangladesh imports more than 75 lakh tonnes of crude and refined petroleum, mostly from the Middle East, and about 110 LNG shipments. Additionally, imports account for 65% of the nation’s overall power supply. Consumers have legitimate fears, even if officials and experts do not anticipate any immediate delays in the supply of coal, LNG, or crude oil. After three ships were targeted close to the Strait of Hormuz on Monday, the price of oil surged to \$82 per barrel globally. Some analysts believe that a protracted battle might drive prices up to almost \$100 per barrel, even though they later somewhat decreased. But Bangladesh is concerned about more than simply oil availability and costs. With almost 75 lakh migrants employed in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman, the Middle East is our largest labor market. There have already been seven injuries and at least two fatalities among Ban-

gladeshis. Hundreds of flights into and out of the Middle East have been canceled, raising concerns about the future of thousands more people who had planned to travel to the area. Bangladesh’s remittance inflow, which has so far maintained the country’s foreign exchange reserves and protected it from growing debt repayments and import expenses, will therefore be directly impacted by the war. A protracted conflict would result in greater energy costs, more import bills, diminishing reserves, and a weakening currency, all of which might exacerbate already high inflation. The worries don’t stop there. The Bab al-Mandeb Strait, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Suez Canal are all traversed by numerous ships that transport Bangladeshi RMG goods to the US and European markets. Conflict in or around these important gateways may compel exporters to take different routes, which would raise their costs. The economy will be impacted by this as well. Thirty-one crew members of a Bangladeshi ship are already stranded at a port in the Middle East. Fortunately, the government claims to be keeping an eye on the situation, adopting safety measures for migrant workers, and becoming ready for any potential economic consequences. However, Bangladesh should learn from this battle to lessen its reliance on remittances, imported fossil fuels, and a limited number of export markets. In the end, we hope that big powers understand that a protracted conflict will ultimately harm every nation, regardless of the outcome.

Indian API market to grow at 7% through FY28: CareEdge

Mumbai: Supported by favourable policies, rising domestic demand and shift towards complex active pharmaceutical ingredient (API), the Indian API market is projected to grow at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5-7% through FY28, said the latest report from CareEdge. The ratings agency said that the pharma firms are shifting from basic APIs to complex APIs with an aim to counter price erosion, strengthen margins, and customer retention. “India’s API industry, with a market size of \$15-16 billion, is entering a period of steady expansion. To counter this growing import reliance, the government introduced the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme in 2020 to promote the domestic manufacture of bulk drugs. While the full impact of these measures will take time to materialise, progress is already visible with over 30 projects reaching completion, and companies such as Aurobindo Pharma Limited, Hetero Group, Macleods Pharma, Symbiotec Pharmalab inaugurating new capacities under the scheme. CareEdge said that a key growth driver for domestic pharma is complex generics and high-potent APIs, which are essentially products that deliver strong therapeutic effects even in small doses and are increasingly central to advanced treatments. “Indian pharma companies are steadily transitioning from pure API manufacturing to more complex and specialised areas such as high-potent



APIs (HPAPIs), contract development and manufacturing (CDMO), and formulations. Increased competition While solely API-focused players currently face increased competition, this transition is expected to strengthen long-term pricing power, improve margins, enhance compliance, and increase customer retention,” the agency noted wider healthcare access, rising insurance penetration, and the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases. Even though the import reliance on China for key starting materials (KSMs) remains high, government initiatives are beginning to show progress,” it said. India imports 30-35% of its API requirements. India imports 30-35% of its API requirements out of which China accounts for about 70% imports. China’s dominance in the global markets stems from decades of cost-efficient bulk manufacturing, favourable policies, and the availability of resources at low cost, reinforced by aggressive cost rationalisation strategies.

IndiGo to operate 10 special flights from Jeddah, Air India Express to restart flights

Mumbai: InterGlobe Aviation run IndiGo plans to operate ten special relief flights from Jeddah to India on Tuesday (March 3) for the evacuation of stranded passengers amid escalating US-Iran tensions, the Ministry of Civil Aviation said on Monday (March 2). The country’s largest airline is coordinating with the Consulate General of India at Jeddah for passenger facilitation and will operate the flights, subject to required approvals and prevailing airspace conditions, MoCA said. The government also said that domestic airlines are undertaking calibrated adjustments to their schedules, with long-haul and ultra-long-haul operations being progressively resumed through alternative routings that avoid restricted airspace. Aircraft and crew repositioning measures are underway to restore operational stability at the earliest,” MoCA said.

The closure of the airspaces is not only expected to impact passengers over the coming weeks but is expected to significantly affect the finances and international expansion plans of domestic airlines in the final quarter of 2025-26. Air travel between In-

dia and the UK, Europe, the Middle East, and North America is likely to face significant disruptions as airlines grapple with substantial operational challenges due to the closure of air-spaces.

Air India Express also plans to restart flight operations to West Asia from Tuesday, with the Tata Group airline looking to operate flights to Muscat from Delhi, Kochi, Kozhikode, Mangaluru, Mumbai and Tiruchirappalli, the airlines said in statement on Monday night. The first Air India Express flight from Muscat will operate to Tiruchirappalli, departing at 1025 IST. Multiple foreign carriers, including Emirates, Etihad Airways, Saudia, Qatar Airways, Gulf Air, Saudia, and Oman Air will also restart limited operations, subject to operational and airspace considerations. Domestic airlines have cancelled around 357 international flights on Monday (March 2), with more cancellations expected to be announced over the rest of the week due to airspace restrictions over West Asia following the joint US-Israel strikes on Iran and subsequent Iranian re-



taliatory attacks, the Ministry of Civil Aviation said on Monday. IndiGo, Air India, Air India Express, SpiceJet, and Akasa Air have all suspended operations to the Middle East due to the closure of airspaces over Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia,

the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman, with around 1050 flights being cancelled since February 28. Emirates, FlyDubai, Qatar Airways, Etihad Airways, Gulf Air, Saudia, and Kuwait Airways have also cancelled around 4,077 total flights since February 28.

Petrol up 5.7%, LPG jumps 10% in February; diesel rises 4.4%

Mumbai: India’s fuel demand picked up pace in February 2026, with petrol consumption rising 5.74% year-on-year to 3,356 thousand metric tonnes (TMT) and LPG registering a sharp 10.16% jump, while diesel demand grew 4.44%, according to the flash data report released by the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC). Petrol consumption increased to 3,356 TMT in February 2026 from 3,174 TMT in February 2025 and 3,023 TMT in February 2024, reflecting an 11.02% rise over the two-year period. Cumulative consumption for the current financial year also showed steady expansion across products. Petrol consumption during FY26 so far reached 38,793 TMT, up 6.31% from 36,492 TMT in the corresponding period of FY25. Diesel consumption rose to 85,993 TMT, marking a 3.20% increase over 83,330 TMT recorded a year earlier. ATF consumption stood at 8,350 TMT during FY26, registering a 2.03% rise from 8,183 TMT in the previous year. LPG consumption during the current fiscal increased 7.56% to 28,809 TMT, compared with 26,784 TMT in FY25. The February data indicate continued year-on-year growth across key petroleum products, led by petrol and LPG, while diesel maintained steady expansion during the month, as per PPAC’s report.

Diesel demand Diesel demand, the largest component of India’s petroleum consumption basket, stood at 7,669 TMT in February, com-



pared with 7,343 TMT in February 2025. On a two-year comparison, diesel consumption was up 3.30% from 7,443 TMT recorded in February 2024. Gold, silver jump as the US-Israel war on Iran rattles markets; ETFs surge up to 10%

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) consumption rose 3.33% year-on-year to 760 TMT in February 2026 from 735 TMT a year earlier. Compared

with February 2024 levels of 705 TMT, ATF demand was 5.93% higher. LPG consumption climbed to 2,958 TMT in February 2026 from 2,685 TMT in February 2025 and 2,682 TMT in February 2024. The two-year growth stood at 10.29%. The figures are provisional. Butane is included in the LPG stream, while motor spirit consumption includes ethanol blending.

Resolven lines up \$1.2 bn investment to expand clean power capacity

Mumbai: EQT-backed Resolven plans to invest \$1.2 billion over the next two years to scale up its renewable energy portfolio to 3.4 GW by FY28, as private equity capital continues to expand its presence in India’s clean power sector.

Resolven, the rebranded renewable platform formerly known as Zelestra India, is fully owned by Swedish private equity firm EQT and is pursuing capacity expansion across solar, wind and energy storage. Resolven aims to increase its capacity to 0.6 GW by the end of the current fiscal year before scaling up to 3.4 GW by FY28 and a longer-term target of 10 GW by FY30. Resolven said its expansion strategy blends organic project development with selective acquisitions. The platform currently holds a development pipeline of around 2.7 GW across solar, wind, hybrid and storage projects. The company is targeting demand from utilities and corporate buyers through open-access renewable projects, on-site installations and grid-linked storage solutions designed to manage intermittency. Executives said capital deployment would be aligned with project execution timelines and financing closures, while investment priorities will evolve as the portfolio diversifies. Resolven aims to increase its capacity to 0.6 GW by the end of the current fiscal year before scaling up to 3.4 GW by FY28 and a longer-term target of 10 GW by FY30.

What did Resolven CEO say?



“The capacity expansion will be supported by an initial investment of \$1.2 billion over the next two years,” Resolven CEO Parag Sharma told FE. “Of this, \$300 million will come as equity from EQT and the remaining \$900 million will be raised as debt.”

Govt says will facilitate trade

through tweaks in rules

Industry sources pointed to the scale of EQT’s backing. “EQT has committed an amount as large as \$750–800 million for the growth of this platform, which is perhaps the largest investment committed by a private equity firm in the Indian IPP space,” a source said. The company said initial

growth will be led by solar projects, with diversification into wind and battery storage over time. By FY30, solar is expected to account for 6.3 GW, wind to account for 1.6 GW, and storage 2.1 GW of total capacity. The commercial and industrial (C&I) segment is projected to contribute 34% of capacity by FY30.

Decoding Nykaa’s profit beauty play

Mumbai: Nykaa’s record December quarter may have grabbed investor attention, but the numbers are less a one-off spike and more the culmination of a decade-long transformation — from a niche online beauty retailer into a capital-efficient, brand-led platform spanning digital commerce, offline retail and owned labels. That positioning evolved into a discovery-led platform. The brand portfolio expanded from roughly 300 labels to more than 4,500. Investments in content, tutorials and influencer-led commerce helped build a large creator affiliate network, integrating shopping journeys across platforms such as YouTube and Snapchat. The underlying thesis was simple: beauty behaves differently from grocery or electronics. It is aspirational, brand-sensitive and education-driven. Value lies not just in logistics efficiency, but in enabling consumers to discover, upgrade and trade up. The shift has deepened margins and strengthened control over the value chain, repositioning Nykaa as a brand house with platform advantages rather than a pure retailer. Omni-channel expansion followed a similarly calibrated path. Unlike digital-first peers that rushed offline later, Nykaa built physical retail alongside its online business. It now operates 276 stores and 44 warehouses, using stores as both experience centres and fulfilment nodes. Faster delivery has been layered onto this network without disproportionate capital outlay. Nykaa Now runs more than 50 dark stores across seven cities, while about 80% of orders in the top 112 cities are shipped within 36 hours. The emphasis has been on operational calibration — tighter working capital cycles, better inventory turns and gradual fulfilment

upgrades — rather than blitzscaling. Financial discipline remains the throughline. Even as its customer base expanded from about 50,000 in FY15 to 42 million, the company limited external capital, improved return ratios and shortened working capital days. Management continues to frame the opportunity in structural terms. “We view Indian beauty as firmly at the early stage of its S-curve,” Ganesh said. With per capita beauty spend in India estimated at about \$17 — moving from marketplace to brand owner. Its owned portfolio now spans segments and price points. House of Nykaa Beauty has scaled into an annualised GMV business of about Rs 3,100 crore. Dot & Key has grown to around Rs 1,900 crore. Kay Beauty is nearing Rs 500 crore and expanding overseas, while Nykaa Cosmetics is approaching Rs 500 crore in general trade. In a sector defined by heavy fund-raising, discount-led customer acquisition and rapid delivery wars, Nykaa has quietly charted a different course. “With only approximately \$140 million raised to date, we have built a roughly \$2.6 billion GMV business,” Chief Financial Officer Ganesh P told FE. “This underscores the measured approach we have taken and the sustainable manner in which we have scaled the company.” When Nykaa began, India’s online beauty market was fragmented and largely unorganised. Counterfeit concerns were rife. Founder and Chief Executive Officer Falguni Nayar positioned the company not merely as a seller, but as a curator — emphasising authenticity, education and premium brands at a time when trust itself was a differentiator.

Ophthalmologist Outlines Every Risk of Eye Infection

Contact Lens Wearers Should Be Aware Of

Contact lenses are a convenient alternative to glasses, offering a wider field of vision and more freedom in daily activities. But behind the ease and aesthetics lies a serious health risk if lenses aren't handled with care. Corneal infections, some of which can lead to permanent vision loss, are a growing concern, especially among those who wear lenses for extended periods or neglect hygiene routines. "Contact lenses can disrupt the eye's natural defenses, particularly the tear film that protects the cornea," explains Dr. Neeraj Sanduja, Ophthalmologist and Founder of Viaan Eye and Retina Centre. "Improper use or storage creates an environment where harmful microorganisms can thrive," he adds. Among the most serious complications is microbial keratitis, a painful and potentially blinding infection of the cornea. It can be caused by bacteria, fungi, or amoebas



such as Pseudomonas aeruginosa and Acanthamoeba, all of which flourish in moist, contaminated environments like old lens cases

or tap water. "Sleeping in contact lenses or extending their wear time significantly reduces oxygen supply to the cornea," warns

Dr. Sanduja. "This makes the eye more vulnerable to infections and microtrauma." Common user errors, like failing to wash hands

before handling lenses, topping off old disinfectant instead of using fresh solution, or skipping regular case replacements, can introduce pathogens directly to the eye. "Lens-related infections often stem from poor hygiene," says Dr. Sanduja. "Even something as simple as swimming or showering with lenses on can expose the eyes to waterborne microorganisms like Acanthamoeba, which are very difficult to treat." Extended wear lenses or long hours of wear, even during the day, can gradually weaken the corneal surface. Some users also blink less when wearing lenses, leading to dryness that weakens the eye's natural barriers. "Microtrauma during insertion or removal and dry eye from reduced blinking further compromise the cornea," notes Dr. Sanduja. "The best way to stay safe is to follow hygiene protocols strictly, avoid water exposure, and never ignore discomfort."

Hepatitis Hiding: Not Just Stomach Ache

Hepatitis, a liver condition affecting over 300 million people, often mimics common digestive issues, making diagnosis difficult. It can be unintentionally neglected until the liver starts to fail. Hepatitis develops when the liver gets inflamed due to viral infections or toxins like alcohol and drugs. It can cause liver cirrhosis, liver failure, or even cancer if left untreated. Diarrhea, chronic fatigue, and weakness are common symptoms of Hepatitis, as the liver plays a crucial role in processing nutrients. Chronic fatigue can impact concentration and memory, making it difficult to perform routine tasks. Dark urine and stool may appear tea-colored, while jaundice is caused by the accumulation of bilirubin, a waste substance the liver typically eliminates. Jaundice indicates a serious symptom of liver stress or damage and requires immediate medical care. Managing hepatitis involves a combination of medical treatment and healthy lifestyle choices. Antiviral medications can help control the virus and prevent complications like cirrhosis or liver cancer. In severe cases, a liver transplant may be necessary, but many individuals can manage their condition effectively through timely medication and supportive care. Simple changes, such as avoiding alcohol, eating a nutritious diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and staying updated with vaccinations, can greatly enhance liver health. Acting early not only improves recovery chances but also helps prevent long-term complications associated with chronic hepatitis.



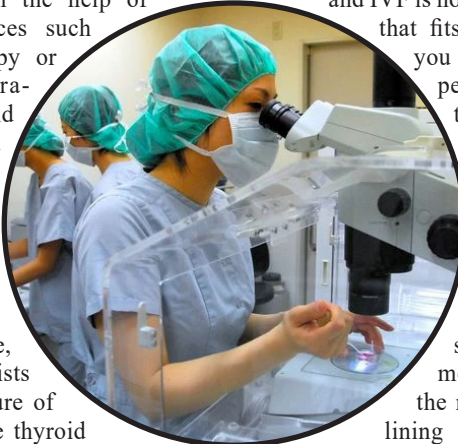
'Knowing Your Numbers' IVF And Miscarriage: Why It Matters

Couples who undergo the procedure of IVF (In Vitro Fertilization) hope that in such a way their family will be expanded, but at the same time there are fears and doubts. Miscarriage is one of the most emotionally traumatic process setbacks. Although a woman could miscarry at any pregnancy, the loss may have deeper emotional effects at IVF since every cycle would be associated with much physical, emotional, and financial resources. Getting to grips with the factors that may cause miscarriage and what might perhaps prevent it involves going deeper into, what many patients do not give much attention to; their numbers. These are levels of hormones, quality of an embryo, chromosomal measurements and measures of uterine health. It is about being informed, it is about being empowered, with regards to saying that you know your numbers. Such hormones as AMH

(Anti-Mullerian Hormone), FSH (Follicle-Stimulation Hormone), LH (Luteinizing Hormone), progesterone, and estradiol are involved mainly in the quality of eggs, the thickness of endometrium, and embryo implantation. The abnormal levels may decrease the success rate or in some cases will cause miscarriage. These interventions are made possible by regular monitoring, which enables fertility specialists to modify protocols and address imbalances before they can progress. Not every embryo is genetic viable. PGT-A could screen out aneuploid embryos and could determine chromosomally normal embryos, which were more likely to result in successful pregnancy. This is of great significance to the women who are past the age of 35 where their chances of several chromosomal abnormalities are very high hence the risk of miscarriage is high too. Implantation and maintenance of pregnancy may be

influenced by such structural problems as fibroids, polyps, or thin endometrium. Information about the thickness of the uterus lining, the flow patterns of the blood in your body, and anatomical defects is important prior to the embryo transfer. These problems can be identified with the help of imaging devices such as hysteroscopy or sonohysterography. Thyroid syndrome and blood clotting disorders are mainly cured with the help of conventional medicine, which consists of the procedure of removal of the thyroid hormones. Recurrent pregnancy loss is known to be caused by thyroid dysfunction, as well

as by such clotting disorders as anti-phospholipid syndrome or thrombophilia not diagnosed previously. These risks can be administered through simple blood tests, and when intervention is made early, the drug can highly benefit the outcome. Each person is distinct and IVF is not a treatment that fits all. Where you monitor the personal reactions made by your body this could be the way you consistently react to the stimulation medication to the manner your lining accumulates so that you as well as your doctor would adjust the protocols to achieve optimal results.



A neurologist discusses how daily routines impair brain health and how screen time contributes to sleep loss

Our always-on lifestyle is taking a hidden toll, not just on our energy levels, but on our brain health. Long days, never-ending digital alerts, and the urge to stay linked the whole time wear the brain down. Over months and years, this can pile up and boost the odds of bigger problems: fading memory, scattered attention, and in the worst cases, strokes or the creeping shadow of dementia. "Today's world moves fast, and our minds are feeling the heat," says Dr. Nasli R. Ichaporla, Director of Neurology at Sahyadri Super Speciality Hospital, Pune. What seems like harmless scrolling or

late-night work sprints can, over time, chip away at cognitive clarity, memory, and even mental resilience. "Even little things, like zoning out at a screen for too long, can lead to sore eyes and a foggy feeling," adds Dr. Ichaporla. "Over months and years, this can pile up and boost the odds of bigger problems." Dr. Ichaporla shares how common habits are endangering brain health and simple changes that can help reverse the damage. Screens are everywhere, from phones and laptops to TVs, and their overuse is affecting how our brains function. Extended exposure leads to screen fatigue, marked by burning



eyes and mental exhaustion. Blue light messes with sleep cycles, while constant notifications disrupt focus, increase stress, and create digital burnout. Multitasking across apps can even lower creativity and lead

to mental sluggishness by day's end. A sedentary lifestyle does more than impact physical fitness. It directly affects cognitive function. Long hours of sitting slow blood circulation, limiting the brain's access to oxy-

gen and nutrients. This can impair memory and even cause shrinkage of the hippocampus, the brain region essential for learning and comprehension, raising the risk of dementia over time. Modern diets, rich in sugar

and processed food, contribute to chronic inflammation that harms brain cells. A lack of nutrients like omega-3s, B vitamins, and antioxidants further weakens brain signalling and memory. The gut-brain connection is also key: poor diet can disrupt gut health, increasing risks of mood disorders and cognitive decline. Chronic stress isn't just emotional, it's physical. Prolonged stress elevates blood pressure, a major risk factor for strokes. Over time, it causes inflammation and arterial damage, increasing the likelihood of blocked or ruptured vessels in the brain, which can lead to either ischemic or hemor-

rhagic strokes. Sleep is vital for memory consolidation and cognitive clarity. But late-night screen use and work habits are cutting into vital rest. Without proper sleep, the brain's ability to file memories and process information is weakened, leaving us forgetful, foggy, and mentally fatigued. Brain health doesn't need drastic measures. Take regular screen breaks using the 20-20-20 rule, move daily, eat whole foods, prioritize sleep, and manage stress mindfully. And don't skip routine health checks – keeping your blood pressure, cholesterol, and sugar levels in check helps protect the brain long-term.

Monsoon Air Fresheners Humidifiers and Nasal Allergies

The monsoon is a welcome break from the scorching summer heat. But for many, it also brings with it a surge in respiratory issues, particularly nasal allergies. While most people attribute this to the weather or increased mould and dust, there are often overlooked indoor culprits: air fresheners and humidifiers. Dr. (Prof) Amit Kumar, Senior Consultant & Director, ENT, Narayana Hospital Gurugram helps us explore how these seemingly harmless household items may be triggering and worsening your allergy symptoms during the monsoon. Monsoon increases the ambient moisture levels (the level of dampness), which creates a perfect environment for mould, dust mites, and mildew to thrive. These allergens are among the most common triggers for allergic rhinitis, an inflammatory condition of the nasal passages. Symptoms include sneezing, nasal congestion, itchy or watery eyes, and postnasal drip. While external weather is not something we can exercise control over, we can maintain good indoor air quality, which can play a huge role in either alleviating allergy symptoms or worsening them. Air fresheners are commonly used during monsoons to mask musty odours caused by dampness. However, they may be doing more harm than good. Most air fresheners be it sprays, plug-ins, or scented candles release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as benzene, formaldehyde, and phthalates. These chemicals can irritate the mucous membranes of the nose, eyes, and throat. For individuals already suffering from allergies or asthma, this can amplify their symptoms significantly. Studies have shown that regular exposure to synthetic fragrances can lead to increased sensitivity in the respiratory tract and, in some cases, chronic nasal congestion. Children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions are particularly vulnerable. Tip: If you like using air fresheners, choose natural alternatives like essential oils for a diffuser which you can then use sparingly in well-ventilated spaces in your home. Humidifiers are used to balance air quality when the indoor air becomes too dry. Humidity makes the air warmer and the levels usually increase during the monsoon. Hence using humidifiers can be counterproductive to maintaining ambient air quality. Excess humidity (>50-60 per cent) creates a breeding ground for dust mites and mould spores, both of which are powerful nasal allergens. Poorly maintained humidifiers can harbour bacteria and mould. You can prevent them from being released into the air when the device is turned on, by cleaning the humidifiers regularly. This can lead to a condition known as "humidifier fever" caused from inhaling air contaminated by unclean humidifiers which mimics flu-like symptoms and aggravates allergic rhinitis.



Is It Only a Fever? Identifying Chikungunya's Warning Signs This Monsoon

Once considered a fading threat, chikungunya is making an unsettling return across several parts of India and beyond. The virus, transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes, is no longer confined to seasonal outbreaks or tropical regions. Today, it's being fuelled by a complex mix of climate change, urban overcrowding, and increased human mobility. Doctors and public health experts are raising red flags as cases resurface in both familiar and new locations. "Chikungunya is re-emerging mainly on account of climate change, vector proliferation, urban congestion and human mobility," warns Dr. Subhashree Samantary, Consultant, Infectious Diseases & Adult Immunisation, Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar. Rising temperatures and erratic rainfall have expanded mosquito habitats, while rapid urbanisation, poor sanitation, and improper water storage in cities create ideal breeding conditions for Aedes mosquitoes – the primary vectors for the virus. Further com-

pounding the issue is the importation of the virus by infected travellers into new areas, especially where competent vectors like Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus are already active. The European CDC has already linked the 2025 resurgence of chikungunya to such international transmissions. The symptoms of chikungunya begin with sudden fever, debilitating joint pain, headache, rash, and fatigue. While fever typically lasts less than a week, the joint pain can linger for weeks or even months, affecting quality of life. "Several patients, particularly older individuals, have symptoms similar to chronic arthritis," says Dr. Samantary. In rare cases, neurologic or cardiac complications can arise. The likelihood of relapse or recurrence varies based on individual, viral, and environmental factors. "A relapse often occurs in immunocompromised or elderly individuals after apparent recovery," she explains. At the community level, factors such as stagnant water, low herd

immunity, and ineffective mosquito control accelerate the spread. What's worrying public health officials is the ease with which chikungunya can rebound. "Unlike some infectious diseases, it can't be shut down between places without sustained efforts," notes Dr. Samantary. The solution lies in targeted mosquito control- eliminating breeding sites, using repellents and protective clothing, improving waste and water management, and conducting regular fogging in high-risk areas. Although two vaccines have received regulatory approvals in several countries, they are not yet widely available.

"The dosing and recommendations are still being standardised," she adds. With its dense population, irregular monsoons, and inconsistent sanitation, India remains particularly vulnerable. "Storing water during supply gaps often leads to inadvertent breeding grounds," she points out. Unless prevention becomes a sustained public health



priority, chikungunya is poised to stay and spread. As chikungunya re-emerges with new intensity, it's clear that controlling the disease will take more than seasonal fogging or reactive public health campaigns. Until vaccines

become widely accessible and standardised, prevention remains the most powerful defence – starting at home, in neighbourhoods, and in the way we manage our water, waste, and wellness.

Beneficial Fats, Exceptional Skin: The Importance of Ghee and Butter in Combating Winter Dryness

As temperatures drop and the air turns dry, our skin often endures challenges during winter, losing its inherent moisture, feeling taut, and appearing lack-luster. While we promptly attempt to replenish hydration with creams and serums, beauty experts and nutritionists agree that true nourishment begins much deeper, from the inside. Remarkably, the solution might be located in your kitchen. For many generations, Indian families have relied on ghee and butter not only as essential ingredients in cooking but also as natural remedies for skin health and overall well-being. Previously dismissed during the era of ‘low-fat’ diets, these traditional dairy fats are now experiencing a scientific resurgence as superfoods beneficial for the skin.

“During winters, our skin loses moisture much faster, but real hydration starts from within,” says Ravin Saluja, Director, Sterling Agro Industries Ltd. (Nova Dairy). “Traditional dairy fats like ghee and butter, which many people tend to skip today, are actually rich in omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins A, D, and E. These nutrients strengthen the skin barrier and keep it nourished from the inside out. Even a spoonful of ghee in your meals can help your skin stay softer and less dull.”



Beyond their nutrient profile, these fats play a crucial biological role in supporting the skin’s hydration system. According to Dr. Debojyoti Dhar, co-founder & Director, Leucine Rich Bio (Bug-

Speaks), the connection between nutrition, gut health, and glowing skin is far more intricate than most realize. “People often treat skin dryness as a surface problem, but hydration is a biological process linked closely to gut health,” he explains. “Research shows that fats such as ghee help maintain microbial balance, reduce systemic inflammation, and support better nutrient absorption. This internal harmony reflects externally through improved skin and texture, particularly in winter.”

The science behind these observations is compelling. Vitamins like A and E are powerful antioxidants that repair skin damage, while omega-3 fatty acids improve elasticity and reduce inflammation. Ghee also contains butyric acid, a short-chain fatty acid known to support gut integrity and, in turn, healthy skin.

As Dr Dhar notes, “Traditional diets, rich in natural fats, intuitively supported these mechanisms long before microbiome science could explain them. It’s tradition meeting evidence and the results are visible, quite literally.”

This winter, as you apply your moisturizer, do not forget to hydrate your skin from the inside. A modest spoonful of ghee on your rotis or a small pat of butter on your toast could very well become your most effective beauty regimen to date.



Here is the explanation for why **Tamannaah Bhatia**’s trainer suggests the daily consumption of sugar

For numerous years, sugar has been viewed as the enemy of fitness – the main contributor to cravings, weight gain, and energy fluctuations. Nevertheless, what if the key to sustaining fitness is not in completely removing it, but in learning how to integrate it judiciously? Celebrity fitness coach Siddhartha Singh, recognized for training stars like Tamannaah Bhatia, is offering a novel, scientifically backed perspective that disputes the no sugar guideline: adding a modest quantity of sugar to your daily nutrition could potentially boost your consistency, enhance your performance, and assist you in achieving your fitness goals over time.

Consistency Over Restriction

Extreme diets often fail not because they lack discipline, but because they lack flexibility. According to Siddhartha, the human mind naturally resists deprivation. “When you allow small, controlled sugar daily, you are more likely to stick to a nutrition plan, as opposed to restricting yourself and then eventually bingeing,” he explains. The message here is

simple: sustainability beats rigidity. By allowing yourself a small indulgence, you create a plan that feels less like punishment and more like a lifestyle. Whether it’s a teaspoon of sugar in your morning coffee or a square of dark chocolate after dinner, moderation keeps motivation alive.

Fuel For Performance And Recovery

Sugar isn’t just about pleasure but also about performance. After intense workouts, your muscles need quick energy to recover. Siddhartha notes that pairing a simple carbohydrate like sugar with protein can significantly enhance recovery.

“So having that banana with your protein shake after your workout is a great idea,” he says. The combination helps replenish glycogen stores, ensuring your body recovers faster and performs better in your next session. In other words, a touch of sweetness can make your sweat sessions more effective.

Sustainability Is The Real Goal

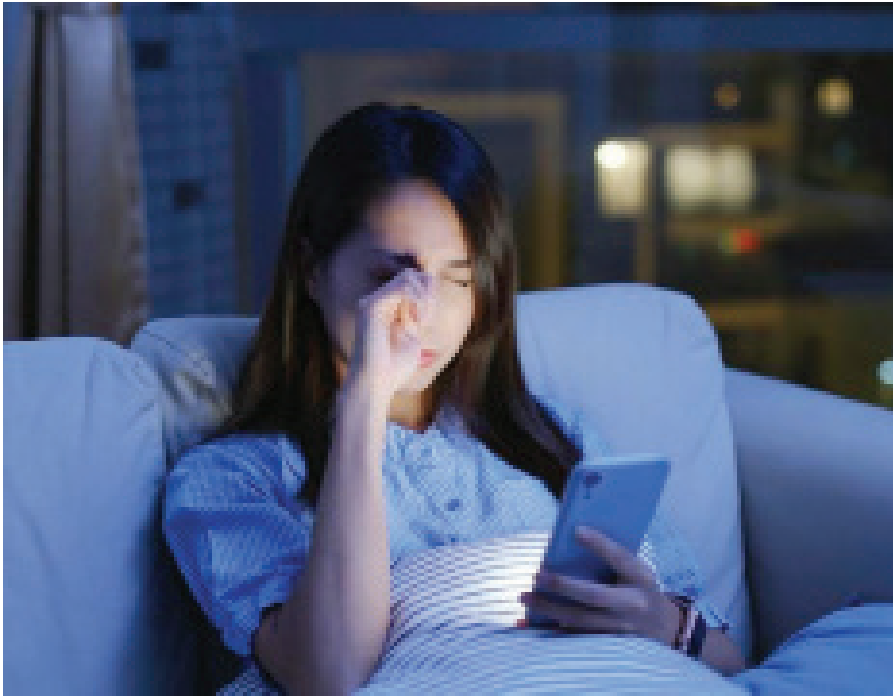
Perfection might look great on paper, but it rarely lasts in real life. “Most plans fail because they demand perfection. Including a modest sugar treat every day gives your

brain permission to enjoy life without giving up progress,” Siddhartha explains.

The essence of sustainable fitness lies in achieving balance. By eliminating guilt from the equation, you transform your diet into a long-term ally rather than a temporary endeavor.

Therefore, rather than resisting your cravings for sweets, approach them with wisdom. A small amount of sugar, when combined with mindful eating and consistent exercise, may indeed be the key to maintaining consistency, enhancing recovery, and fostering a healthier relationship with food.

Five Daily Habits That You May Not Realize Are Harmful to Your Eyes



The eye is one of the most resilient organs in the body. We rely on it constantly for various activities, including reading, driving, working on laptops, and endlessly browsing on our phones. However, we often overlook the importance of eye health. “In our busy lives, we tend to develop habits that can silently deteriorate our vision over time,” states Dr. Chanda Gupta, Senior Consultant at Sharp Sight Eye Hospitals in Delhi.

Here are five everyday mistakes that may be putting your eyes at risk, and how to correct them.

- 1. Excessive Screen Time**
Digital devices have become unavoidable, but prolonged use can lead to computer vision syndrome – causing dry eyes, headaches, blurred vision, and even neck pain. “Follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds,” advises Dr. Gupta. Adjust brightness, enlarge text if needed, and remember to blink often to reduce eye strain.
- 2. Frequent Eye Rubbing**
Rubbing tired eyes may feel soothing, but it can transfer bacteria from your hands, causing infections. Worse, it may weaken the cornea over time. “Constant rubbing can lead to conditions like keratoconus, which thins the cornea,” warns Dr. Gupta. Instead, rinse eyes with clean water or use lubricating drops to relieve discomfort.
- 3. Skipping Sunglasses Outdoors**
UV rays don’t just damage skin; they harm your eyes, too. Without protection, the risk of cataracts and macular degeneration rises. “Always wear sunglasses that block 100% UVA and UVB rays, even on cloudy days,” says Dr. Gupta. Wraparound frames add extra safety.
- 4. Using Old or Unsafe Eye Makeup**
Expired mascaras and eyeliners can harbour bacteria, leading to redness and irritation. “Replace eye makeup every 3–6 months and never share it with others,” suggests Dr. Gupta. Always remove makeup before sleeping to keep the delicate glands around your eyes unclogged.
- 5. Ignoring Eye Check-ups**
Many vision-threatening diseases progress silently. “Conditions like glaucoma or diabetic retinopathy can develop without symptoms until it’s too late,” notes Dr. Gupta. A yearly eye exam can help detect problems early.
- 6. Diet and Eye Health**
Nutrition is equally important. Strong eyesight is bolstered by zinc, omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamins A, C, and E. Excellent choices consist of fish such as salmon, leafy greens, carrots, almonds, and seeds. Dr. Gupta states, “Diet plays a significant role in preventing age-related eye issues.” It is essential to care for your eyes with the same regard as you do for your skin and hair. By eliminating harmful habits and adopting healthy routines, you can safeguard your vision and enhance your quality of life.

Employ Curd in This Way for a Natural and Gentle Glow

Many people try various home remedies to enhance their skin’s radiance, along with different skin treatments. Some choose expensive skincare products or pursue professional facials at beauty salons. However, natural ingredients available at home can effectively promote skin health and brightness, with curd being one of the most powerful choices.

The consistent use of curd plays a significant role in preserving healthy, radiant, and blemish-free skin in a natural way.

Yogurt is rich in lactic acid, which aids in achieving radiant and luminous skin. In contrast to skincare products filled with chemicals, yogurt thoroughly cleanses the skin, eliminating excess oil, dead skin cells, and unclogging pores. Regular use results in skin that is soft, smooth, and naturally glowing.

Packed with protein, calcium, and vitamins, yogurt effectively nourishes the skin. B-complex vitamins enhance the strength of skin cells, helping to diminish early signs of aging such as fine lines, wrinkles, and pigmentation. Additionally, yogurt supplies essential moisture for dry skin.

For individuals suffering from irritation, itching, or excessive dryness, a curd face pack can be beneficial. Its anti-inflammatory properties help to calm the skin and alleviate discomfort, resulting in a cool and refreshed feeling.

How to Apply Curd: Begin by thoroughly cleansing the face prior to application. Take fresh curd and apply it evenly, gently massaging in circular motions to enhance blood circulation. Allow it to

remain on the skin for 15 to 20 minutes before rinsing with clean water. This process aids in the removal of blackheads and whiteheads while deeply cleansing the skin. To amplify the effects, combine turmeric, gram flour, and lemon juice with the curd to formulate a face pack.

Apply this mixture for 30 minutes before rinsing off. The vitamin C present in lemon assists in diminishing spots and naturally brightening the skin, providing a straightforward, chemical-free alternative to costly products.

Comprehending the Function of Social Signals and Approaches to Mitigate Their Impact

It is not simply a puff or merely a last cigarette; it relates to a habit, a social ritual initiated by people, emotions, and surroundings. Whether it entails grabbing a cigarette during moments of stress, savoring your favorite beverage, or being with someone who smokes, these seemingly insignificant triggers continually reinforce the cycle. In India, approximately 267 million adults engage in tobacco use (according to GATS-2). Quitting is not solely a matter of willpower; it involves reprogramming the brain’s reaction to a complicated network of social and psychological cues.

At our tobacco cessation division, we see it every day: a client walks in determined to quit, but their biggest challenge isn’t nicotine, it’s their environment. Dr. Shradha Sidhwani shares

all you need to know to break free.

The Social Code of Smoking

Smoking often begins and continues not in isolation but in the company of others. Workplace cultures that normalize smoke breaks, friends who offer cigarettes to bond, and celebratory settings where “just one puff” feels harmless are potent traps.

These social cues don’t just offer a cigarette; they offer acceptance, routine, and a momentary escape.

According to Social Cognitive Theory, our behaviors are shaped by personal beliefs, our environment, and our actions. When someone sees a respected peer or family member smoke to cope with stress, they’re likely to model that behavior. Over time, smoking becomes a learned coping mechanism.

Breaking Free: Practical Steps That Work



- 1. Dealing with Morning Cravings**
For many smokers, lighting a cigarette first thing in the morning is routine, a deeply ingrained habit reinforced by nicotine cravings. When trying to quit, these cravings can intensify due to withdrawal.
- To break the pattern, change your

- morning routine: exercise, drink water, or use nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) such as patches or gums early in the day to curb urges.
- 2. The Urge to Smoke at Social Gatherings**
Social gatherings often make it hard to resist smoking, whether at parties, post-lunch breaks, or casual get-togethers. Preparation is key. Keep NRT gums or patches handy, or sip a glass of cool water to ease the craving. Having substitutes ready helps you stay in control without feeling left out.
 - 3. The Highs and Lows of Emotions**
Stress, anxiety, loneliness, and frustration are among the most common emotional triggers for smoking. Through therapy and cognitive behavioral techniques, you can learn to manage emotions without depending

- 4. Trigger Cue: After Meals or with Tea/Coffee**
Finishing a meal or sipping tea often feels incomplete without a smoke — an automatic, learned association. Break this loop by changing your environment or timing. Try taking a walk, brushing your teeth, or enjoying your beverage in a different setting.
 - 5. Trigger Cue: Boredom or Idle Time**
Numerous individuals resort to smoking a cigarette merely due to boredom. Instead, occupy that time with stimulating activities such as reading, gardening, sketching, or taking brief movement breaks.
- Behavioral alternatives, like chewing gum or utilizing a stress ball, help keep your hands and mouth busy, thereby diminishing the desire to smoke.

Ranbir Kapoor's appearance as Lord Rama in Ramayana has leaked



New Delhi: Ranbir Kapoor's portrayal of Lord Rama from the sets of Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana was leaked online on Monday. Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana is one of the most eagerly anticipated films of the year. The mega-budget version of one of India's most iconic epics is also the most closely guarded film in recent memory, with everything from the settings to the actors' appearances kept under wraps. However, on Monday, some of this mystery was revealed when photos of Ranbir Kapoor dressed as Lord Rama were released. This sparked conversation about the appearance on social media, and not everyone was impressed. On Monday, Zoom published a bunch of pictures of Ranbir Kapoor from the set of Ramayana. The pictures seem to have been taken while Ranbir is on his way from the shoot to his vanity, with staff members behind him holding an umbrella and vans visible in the background. The actor is seen wearing a kesariya dhoti, a janeu, and a black cape covering his bare torso. His hair is also supported by a wig, completing the look as Lord Rama. It is not certain when the undated pictures are from. The shoot of Ramayana Part One has wrapped, and the shoot for Part Two is underway.

Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety, starring Kartik Aaryan, Nushrratt Bharuccha, and Sunny Singh, will be re-released in cinemas on this day

New Delhi: Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety, a romantic comedy released in 2018, has joined the increasing list of Bollywood re-releases in theaters. The directors of the film, which heralded Kartik Aaryan's career resurrection, have confirmed that it will return to theaters after Holi. Kartik made the news on Monday via his Instagram account. The actor posted a unique video from the film to commemorate the film's eight-year anniversary. Kartik captioned the poster, "This Friday... Relive the laughter and emotions once again on the big screen!" Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety re-releases in theaters on March 6th!"Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety" entered theaters in 2018.

The film was directed by Luv Ranjan and produced by Luv Films and T-Series Films. Nushrratt Bharuccha and Sunny Singh also had important parts. The narrative showed the battle between friendship and love in a lighthearted yet emotional manner.Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety was an unexpected smash, generating ₹156 crore worldwide on a budget of just ₹25 crore. The film began Kartik's box-office career, which includes successive suc-



cesses such as Luka Chuppi, Pati Patni Aur Woh, and Satyaprem Ki Katha, as well as two blockbuster Bhool Bhulaiyaa sequels.Kartik Aaryan's career benefited greatly from the box-office success of Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety, which helped him connect with youthful viewers.

The film has grown in popularity over the years, and many spectators recall the language, music, and performances. Kartik Aaryan was last seen in Tu Meri Main Tera Tu Meri, with Ananya Panday. The romantic comedy failed both commercially and critically. The film earned just ₹30 crore net in India and ₹48 crore globally. Despite having a budget of ₹90 crore, the film performed far below expectations.The actor has two more films scheduled for release in 2026. He's presently filming Naagzilla, a horror comedy produced by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions. Several viral videos on social media show the actor filming in different sections of Delhi during the previous two weeks. Kartik will also appear in an unnamed Anurag Basu film with Sreeleela. Neither film has a set release date as of now.

Vicky Kaushal wins Best Actor at Zee Cine Awards; internet unhappy 'Ranveer Singh deserved it more for Dhurandhar'



Mumbai: Vicky Kaushal's Best Actor award at the Zee Cine Awards for his performance in Chhaava was met with disapproval by several in the crowd. Vicky Kaushal received the Best Actor award at the Zee Cine Awards 2026 for his role in Chhaava. However, the internet was not overjoyed, with many expressing dissatisfaction and saying that Ranveer Singh deserved the award for his performance in Dhurandhar.Following Vicky's victory, various social media users turned to Reddit to share their thoughts. One commenter asked, "How did Vicky even win over Ran-

veer?" A third commented, "Absolutely, Ranveer deserved it more." One admirer said, "SPOILERS: He will very certainly win Filmfare as well. On a serious note, no one from the Dhurandhar cast will attend award events. Maybe they won't even do Part 2. As we all know, only those who attend and perform at these concerts receive these honors. Ranveer deserves the honor. Another commented, "Ranveer is at a point in his career when accolades do not define him. He should follow Aamir Khan's lead and boycott them permanently." Some fans predicted that Ranveer and

Dhurandhar would dominate at the National Awards.Aside from Vicky Kaushal for Chhaava, the other candidates in the Best Actor category were Sunny Deol for Jaat, Akshay Kumar for Kesari Chapter 2, and Ranveer Singh for Dhurandhar. Dhurandhar, directed by Aditya Dhar, is a spy action thriller starring Ranveer Singh as Hamza, an Indian agent who infiltrates the gangs of Pakistan's Lyari to bring down a terror network threatening India. Akshaye Khanna, Sanjay Dutt, R Madhavan, and Arjun Rampal play major parts in the film.

The film became the highest-grossing film of 2026, earning more than ₹1,300 crore globally.Chhaava, on the other hand, received equal praise. The film stars Vicky Kaushal as Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Rashmika Mandanna as Yesubai Bhonsale, and Akshaye Khanna as Emperor Aurangzeb. Directed by Laxman Utekar, it was the first blockbuster of 2025, earning ₹807 crore globally.

Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda fly economy after their luxurious wedding in Udaipur

New Delhi: Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda married on February 26 at the gorgeous ITC Mementos in Udaipur, beginning with a traditional Telugu ceremony and followed by a Kodava wedding. A day later, the newlyweds made their first public appearance at Udaipur's airport. Their makeup artist, Bhavya Jetwani, has now provided an inside footage from a commercial airplane that shows the pair boarding. Rashmika and Vijay opted to travel economy from Udaipur to Hyderabad after their extravagant wedding.In the video, Vijay engages with the staff, and Rashmika smiles like a new wife. She's also spotted waving to people who shouted for her. A user remarked, "Vijay Deverakonda's aura is next level."Another user commented, "He gave her the window seat!!!" "Green Flag."Another remark said, "I don't know why I'm so happy for them."Vijay's poignant statement read: "One day, I missed her. I missed her in a manner that made me believe that if she had been present, my day would have been better. My meals would have seemed more nutritious if she were sitting across from me."Meanwhile, Rashmika showed her love in the following terms: "Vijju, I am constantly at a loss for words to express how much I



adore you!! I have always told you that!! The pair held a Telugu wedding in the morning to honor Vijay's cultural background, followed by a Kodava wedding in the evening to celebrate Rashmika's cultural history.Initially tight-lipped about wedding rumors, the pair began aggressively sharing exclusive peeks of their pre-wedding celebrations with fans on February 23.Highlights included an amazing Japanese supper for guests, pool volleyball, and a friendly cricket tournament known as the "VIROSH

Premiere League" on February 23 and 24.The saangeet ceremony was held on Tuesday evening in the hill resort of Mementos, followed by an intimate haldi ceremony and mehendi on February 25. The wedding was attended by Tharun Bhascker, director and actor of Ee Nagariniki Emaindi, Rahul Ravindran, director and actor of The Girlfriend, actors Eesha Rebba and Ashika Ranganath, stylist Shravya Varna, Arjun Reddy, and Animal director Sandeep Reddy Vanga, and Lokah star Kalyani Priyadarshan.

Vijay's First Post After Wife Sankgeetha Files For Divorce "Victory Is Certain"



New Delhi: Actor-politician Vijay made his first social media post just days after his wife Sankgeetha Sornalingam filed for divorce in Chengalpattu's district court. Vijay went to X (previously Twitter) on Monday to wish students in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry the best of luck in their Class 12 public exams. He began with a Tamil phrase: "Heartfelt greetings to my dear younger brothers and sisters who are writing the 12th standard public exam in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry."He

went on to say, "You guys, who are destined to build a wealthy society tomorrow, confront this exam with confidence, fearlessness, and courage. Advance wants to flourish in higher education as well! Only fantastic things will happen!" "Victory is certain." According to the official timetable, the TN HSE +2 examinations will take place from March 2 to March 26.Vijay's tweet comes at a time when attention has been drawn to changes in his personal life.

Sankgeetha Sornalingam has petitioned for the dissolution of their marriage. In her plea, she claimed that she discovered Vijay's adulterous connection with a female co-star in April 2021, according to PTL. She claimed that it caused her "deep emotional pain and mental suffering, amounting to betrayal and violation of marital trust."Sankgeetha, who describes the marriage as "irretrievably broken," has requested a divorce declaration as well as perpetual alimony based on Vijay's salary and social position. She has also demanded the right to remain at the matrimonial house in Neelankarai until the case is resolved, or alternatively, to be given with equal housing.Vijay, often known as "Thalapathy," is the founding president of Tamilaaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK). With Tamil Nadu set to have legislative assembly elections in the coming months, the divorce case has sparked enormous public interest.

Ram Charan, Nani, Atlee, and other stars join Allu Arjun during his brother's pre-wedding reception



New Delhi: The Telugu film industry got together in style today as Allu Sirish and Nayanika Reddy hosted their pre-wedding event at Allu Studios in Kokapet, Hyderabad. Some of Tollywood's greatest personalities attend-

ed the extravagant party, which took place only days before their private wedding on March 6.Among those who came to bless the marriage were Sandeep Reddy Vanga, Ram Charan, Rana Daggubati, Nagarjuna, Nani,

director Atlee, Basil Joseph, and Ravi Teja. Veteran actors like as Nandamuri Balakrishna, Mohan Babu, Sukumar, Jagapathi Babu, and Rajendra Prasad also attended the event. Meenakshi Chaudhary, an actress, was one of

several who helped to make the night glamorous. The location was tastefully adorned, and people were seen welcoming the newlyweds and posing for photos, making it a memorable evening for the family and

friends.On Sunday, prior to the celebration, Allu Sirish performed his traditional Pelli Koduku ritual. The event was attended by Allu Arjun and his wife Sneha Reddy, as well as Ram Charan and Upasana Konidela.Newlyweds Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna also attended the celebrations. Last week, Allu Arjun and Sneha Reddy organized a secret cocktail party in Hyderabad for Allu Sirish and Nayanika, allowing close friends and family to celebrate the pair before the big ceremony.

Allu Sirish is the younger brother of Allu Arjun and the son of experienced producers Allu Aravind and Nirmala. Meanwhile, the celebrations for Allu Sirish and Nayanika Reddy take place shortly after the wedding of Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna in Udaipur on February 26. The couple is planning a lavish event in Hyderabad on March 4.

Karan Aujla won hearts when he paid off Mumbai car drivers



New Delhi: Karan Aujla took an auto trip in Mumbai before his P-Pop Culture event and paid off overdue penalties to auto drivers. Karan Aujla, a Punjabi musician, is now in India for the P-Pop Culture Tour. The singer began her tour in Delhi on February 28 and will perform in Mumbai today (3 March). Upon arrival in Mumbai, Karan took an auto-rickshaw ride and received appreciation from fans for paying off the drivers' overdue penalties of ₹22000.Taran Sodhi, Karan Aujla's photographer, posted a video of the singer in an auto-rickshaw in Mumbai on

Monday. However, the car was halted by authorities owing to outstanding penalties. The musician directed his crew to clear fines of ₹17000. Later, another auto driver approached Karan and requested him to pay his fine as well. The artist requested his crew to clear an extra ₹5000 fine for the second driver, which made him happy. When the driver recognised Karan Aujla, he hugged him.Karan was recorded saying, "We were pulled over because the car driver had some outstanding penalties, and we assured the officer that we would pay his fees. "I enjoy doing this." He also encouraged

the drivers not to incur any further fines, stating, "Koi aur pay nahi karega (no one else will pay). Suddenly, I'm the city's favourite." Fans showered praise on Karan for his gesture. One fan wrote, "This is the best kind of flex." Another commented, "Man with a golden heart." Others wrote, "That's why I love this guy." "GOAT for a reason," and "Such a sweet-heart." One comment read, "We have made a real diamond famous." The singer began his tour with an electrifying performance at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. With over 70,000 fans in attendance, he performed

hits including Tauba Tauba, Gangster, Bachke Bachke, Boyfriend and For A Reason. Videos from the concert went viral on social media, with one clip showing Karan travelling across the stadium on a zip line. The show concluded with a fireworks display.

However, several fans also criticised alleged mismanagement at the concert, which reportedly led to chaos.Following his performance in New Delhi on 28 February, Karan will perform in Mumbai and Pune on 4 March, Chandigarh on 14 March, Indore on 21 March, and Bengaluru on 29 March.

Return of the West Indies Cricket Team from India postponed



New Delhi: Cricket West Indies (CWI) reported on Monday that international aviation limitations resulting from security concerns in the Gulf Region have caused the West Indies cricket team’s flight from India to be postponed. According to an official statement, “These restrictions are a direct result of the security threats posed by military action in the Gulf Region, which has impacted several international flight routes and required airlines to adjust scheduled services for safety reasons.” The players, coaches, and officials’ safety and wellbeing would always come first, the board promised. ”CWI is working closely with

the International Cricket Council (ICC), relevant governmental authorities, and airline partners to secure the earliest possible safe travel arrangements for the squad and support staff,” said the statement. The board stated that it is keeping a careful eye on the issue and that the West Indies team is now comfortably housed in India. As confirmed travel arrangements are finalized, fans and stakeholders are kept updated. The postponement follows the West Indies’ elimination from the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup after losing to India by five wickets in their final Super Eight match at Eden Gardens in Kolkata. The Caribbean team struggled in the Super Eights and missed the semi-finals despite going undefeated in the league stage. With contributions from Roston Chase (40), Shai Hope (32), Shimron Hetmyer (27), and an undefeated 76-run partnership between Jason Holder (37*) and Rovman Powell (34*), the West Indies scored 195/4 in their most recent match. Jasprit Bumrah topped India’s bowling attack with 2/36. With crucial efforts from Tilak Varma (27 off 15 balls), Suryakumar Yadav (18 off 16 balls), and Sanju Samson (97 not out off 50 balls), India chased down the score and won by five wickets.

The West Indies have won the Men’s T20 World Cup twice, in 2012 and 2016.

How the wealthiest in Dharavi spend Rs 15,000 for Gareebi Darshan

New Delhi, Mar 03: There is enough magic in the city of dreams. Enough to sell its gutters as well. It’s said that gutters are equally valuable. Poverty is a commodity in India, and it may fetch the greatest price in Mumbai. It is no secret that both white tourists and the affluent local elites of Peddar Road and Malabar Hill fetishize the impoverished in India for “exposure” and “education”. The phenomena is most noticeable in Dharavi, one of the largest slums in the world. One of the most startling things I saw during a recent visit to the shantytown in the center of Mumbai was the sale of poverty to the wealthy for two hours at a cost of Rs 15,000. While India Today Digital was interviewing Raju Hanumanta, a plumber, and Shanappa, his neighbor and idli vendor, in Dharavi’s alleyways, a group of Europeans unexpectedly showed up. There was a “guide” with them. Recall that even ordinary Mumbaikars are



reluctant to stray into some of Dharavi’s bylanes. These alleyways, which were formerly connected to criminal bosses like Varadarajan Mudaliar, are located in Mumbai’s underbelly and are now associated with “white” companies rather than extortion and slaughter. Drugs, real estate, and anything related to land. Experts like novelist and veteran investigative journalist S Hussain Zaidi, who is intimately familiar

with Mumbai’s underworld, claim that while the methods may have changed, the instincts have not. However, that shadow economy is a another matter. Here, we will discuss the trade of poverty. In Dharavi’s billion-dollar economy, poverty is a factor we hadn’t considered, and it sells like hotcakes, particularly in India. Omkar Dhamaale, a native, was in charge of the foreigners. In response to a question about the cost of

the slum tour, he said, “Per person, Rs 15,000.” He was accompanied by five foreigners. He would get Rs 75,000 for walking around the slums for two hours.

This is not a recent occurrence. In 2006, India Today Magazine published a piece on poverty tourism in India. However, something has changed. In the past, organized walking groups with qualified leaders led these tours. Dharavikars are now taking up the business themselves, and their pay is comparable to that of a corporate salary. The Dharavi leather market strip is a popular destination for foreign visitors to Mumbai. However, the settlement is kilometers underground and extends much beyond that spine. There are hidden corners and lanes that are only used by locals. lanes that are only three feet wide. Not only do tourists find these locations fascinating, but Mumbai locals who have never been here are also captivated.

Rinku Singh almost escapes with Sanju Samson’s bat



New Delhi: In their virtual quarterfinal T20 World Cup 2026 match, India defeated the West Indies thanks to a 97 off just 50 balls from Sanju Samson, who proved unflappable under duress. But in the middle of his innings, he also got into a funny altercation with Rinku Singh, which was captured on camera and went popular on social media.

Rinku, who wasn’t in the playing XI, came to help the hitters during the drinks break and almost took Samson’s bat. During a drinks break, Rinku and spinner Kuldeep Yadav—who weren’t in the starting lineup—entered the field at Eden Gardens. By now, Sam-

son had given Rinku his bat so that he could rest.

But after giving Rinku his towel back, Samson started to walk back towards the pitch without remembering to return his bat. Fans found the incident humorous, but the wicket-keeper batter soon realized.

After the wicketkeeper batter’s game-winning 97 not out propelled India into the T20 World Cup semi-finals, India captain Suryakumar Yadav gave Sanju Samson a heartfelt tribute, saying that the knock was a just reward for a cricketer who has faced more than his fair share of adversity. I usually maintain that good things happen to good people at the appropriate times. There was never a greater moment or occasion for someone like him to take charge and provide the squad with what they needed. “I believe the first thing he said among the group when we sat together was ‘let’s do something which the team wants, not what you want,’” Suryakumar stated in a video that the BCCI shared on social media on Monday.

Real Madrid Loses La Liga Games Back-to-Back

Madrid : Real Madrid is now four points behind leaders Barcelona after suffering a crushing 1-0 loss to Getafe at home in La Liga on Monday. For the first time since 2020, Alvaro Arbeloa’s team lost two straight games in the Spanish top division after being defeated by a brilliant volley from Martin Satriano. Los Blancos’ poor evening was made worse when Madrid forward Franco Mastantuono was sent off in stoppage time for what ap-



peared to be dissent. “Obviously it’s a match where we could have done things better, but I think my players tried and we had more clear chances than them,” Arbeloa told the press. Real Madrid experienced a tough match, losing to Getafe at the Santiago Bernabeu despite playing with stars like Vinicius Junior in the absence of Kylian Mbappe. Getafe’s Satriano scored the only goal, and despite strong performances from Madrid’s Soria, the home team struggled to convert opportunities.

Both teams finished with 10 players after dismissals in stoppage time. Getafe celebrated their first win at the Bernabeu since 2008, while Madrid’s coach Arbeloa insisted they would not give up in the title race.

After another unsuccessful show, Abhishek Sharma was criticized

New Delhi: As Team India prepares for the T20 World Cup 2026 semifinals, Abhishek Sharma’s performance has come under scrutiny. In six games, Abhishek has only amassed 80 runs, three ducks, and one half-century. The left-hander was dismissed for 10 from 11 balls in India’s crucial Super 8 match against the West Indies, failing to leave a lasting impact. Manoj Tiwary, a former Indian cricket player, criticized Abhishek for failing to put a premium on his wicket and advised him to improve his shot selection and mentality. “You will play loose shots like that when you don’t put a price on your wicket,” Tiwary remarked. “Abhishek has already been a star in such a short period, but he needs to win games for the team if he wants to be a superstar. He needs to be ahead of them because there is a lot of competition and match winners,” he continued. “He had a fantastic opportunity today. He also missed two catches. Tiwary continued, “He needs to develop the mentality that he must choose which balls to pursue and which not to.” Irfan Pathan, a former Indian all-rounder, voiced worries over Abhishek



Sharma’s batting performance. Technical changes are required, according to Pathan. Abhishek Sharma’s form once more is a worry. It seemed like he would keep running after hitting that fifty, but when he attempted that shot, his back knee was overly bent, causing his body weight to tumble backward. It would have been better for him if there had been more weight on the front foot. On his YouTube channel, Pathan stated, “He will need to pay attention to that.” Abhishek is still the top batter in T20I cricket, and by a wide margin, despite his recent lackluster performance.

Temple board will challenge a court ruling permitting women to enter Sabarimala

New Delhi, Mar 03: On Monday, the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) said that it will submit an affidavit to the Supreme Court regarding its decision to maintain the long-standing custom at the Sabarimala temple that prohibits women who are menstruating from entering. In 2018, the Supreme Court permitted women who were menstruating to enter the Lord Ayyappa shrine. The court has requested that interested parties, notably the state government and the TDB, clarify their positions by March 14. Review applications against the ruling are already being considered. In light of the ongoing dispute before the Supreme Court, where a larger bench is scheduled to reconsider the matter, TDB president K Jayakumar stated on Monday that the decision to oppose



the court order was made during a board meeting. As instructed by the court, he said the board would convey its position via a written

affidavit by March 14. The Travancore Hindu Religious Act requires the board to preserve the temple’s traditions, thus it does not conflict

with our previous position. It is the Travancore Devaswom Board’s bounden duty. “We maintain the ancient Sabarimala tradition,” Jayakumar stated. He reaffirmed that the board is in agreement and will challenge the order allowing women to enter, arguing that the current practice should be maintained. “There is no disagreement among the board over this. The TDB was established in accordance with regulations that require the preservation of the temple and its customs. In reference to the women’s admittance issue, he stated at a press conference, “Therefore, we will challenge the Supreme Court’s ruling.” Jayakumar went on to say that the board is obligated by law to preserve temple customs, even though the government may adopt its own stance.

Arvind Kejriwal’s dismissal in the excise policy case is being appealed by the CBI

New Delhi, Mar 03: In its appeal contesting the decision to release all 23 defendants in the Delhi excise policy investigation, including former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) asserts that Judge Jitendra Singh held a “mini trial” and issued an order based on a selective reading of the agency’s case. The CBI has claimed that at the time of the charge, the judge lacked a fundamental comprehension of both the prosecution’s whole case and the relevant legislation. In his February 27 judgment, Singh made negative statements about the agency and its investigating officer, which it described as “unwarranted and incomprehensible.” Last Friday, Singh absolved Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, his deputy at the time, and twenty-one others of any misconduct in the formulation

and implementation of the now-repealed 2021–2022 excise policy. In his ruling, he noted that the CBI information did not even reveal a serious suspicion, much less a prima facie case. The agency contends in the 974-page appeal that HT reviewed that the policy-level modifications to Delhi’s liquor policy were fundamental acts in support of “a pre-arranged quid pro quo,” which was made possible by the top officials of the Delhi government and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Senior bureaucrats have provided unquestionable proof of Manish Sisodia and Arvind Kejriwal’s premeditated intention to create a customized policy. These include the wholesale mode’s privatization, the inclusion of created and obtained remarks in the shape of public opinions, and the exclusion of legal opinions that demand the status

quo. The CBI appeal claims that “there is ample digital evidence to support the same.” Indeed, Singh’s assessment made it very evident that there was no proof. “This court has no hesitation in concluding that the evidence presented on file does not reveal even a preliminary case, let alone a serious suspicion, against any of the accused individuals. As a result, all charges against Accused Nos. 1–23 in this case have been dropped,” he had stated. “The prosecution case is rendered legally infirm, unsustainable, and unfit to proceed any further in law due to the absence of any admissible evidence,” Singh continued. Conspiracy theories were also disproved by his order: “... the theory of an overarching conspiracy, so emphatically projected, stands completely dismantled when tested against the evidentiary record.” However, the

CBI appeal asserts that Singh did not comprehend the matter or adhere to the procedure. “The special judge effectively conducted a mini-trial dealing with distinct conspiracy branches in isolation while passing the contested order. The CBI asserted that the order was “patently illegal, perverse, and suffers from errors apparent on the face” and that he had issued it based on a selective interpretation of the prosecution’s case, ignoring the evidence demonstrating the accused’s guilt.

The agency continued, “Not only does it fail to appreciate the facts of the case in its correct perspective, but such failure on the part of the special judge has further led to passing adverse remarks against the investigating agency and the investigating officer, all of which are unwarranted and incomprehensible, to

say the least.” Additionally, the federal agency claimed that the judge could not comprehend its case. The special court has thoroughly disregarded the conspiracy’s foundation in favor of carefully examining minor inconsistencies, which is not even the case as presented by the prosecution. In essence, the judge has developed his own interpretation of each accused person’s role from an entirely different angle. The observations in the contested order attest to the special judge’s lack of fundamental knowledge of the prosecution’s case in its whole and the relevant legislation at the charge stage. “Read as a whole, discloses a single, continuing criminal conspiracy beginning at the stage of formulation of the policy and culminating in the generation and utilization of the kickbacks for Goa elections,” according to the CBI.

Jitendra Singh countered that the CBI’s attempt to connect its accusations to the Goa election was based more on conjecture and inference than on evidence that might be supported by the law. The CBI claimed in its appeal that “the conspiracy was conceived at the highest political level, where the policy framework was deliberately altered to create a private wholesale regime with an enhanced 12% margin from the existing 5% and also relaxed the turnover criteria, despite expert recommendations to the contrary.” It further stated, “The policy-level changes were not merely administrative decisions but were foundational acts in furtherance of a pre-arranged quid pro quo, facilitated by the top leaders of the Delhi government and AAP.” On March 9, the CBI appeal will be heard by the Delhi High Court.

Virat Kohli will forever be RCB's icon and hero: Mo Bobat

Bengaluru: Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) director of cricket Mo Bobat has paid glowing tribute to Virat Kohli, calling him the franchise's eternal icon and hero after nearly two decades of unwavering service in the Indian Premier League. Kohli, who has represented RCB for 18 straight seasons, has become synonymous with the franchise. From electrifying knocks at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium to the sea of red that rises in unison every time he walks out to bat, his journey mirrors that of the team itself. "Virat Kohli, obviously, I think he'll forever be the icon and the hero of this team. I don't think that's going to go away, and he deserves that. His track record is incredible," Bobat said on the RCB Podcast. Bobat highlighted Kohli's staggering consistency as one of the defining pillars of his legacy. As the run-machine closed in on 9,000 IPL runs last season, all of them in RCB colours, the numbers painted a picture of sustained excellence rarely seen in franchise cricket. "I remember at one point last season seeing his stats when he got to however many runs



it was - close to 9,000 runs - 18 years wearing just one shirt. That's 500 runs a season. It's actually ridiculous. For seven years or something like that, some players would be happy with a 500-run season. He averages 500 runs a season for 18 years. It's actually ridiculous. So, you can't ignore that," Bobat said. RCB finally ended their long wait for an IPL title last year, clinching their maiden crown under the leadership of Rajat Patidar. The triumph marked a historic moment for the franchise, which had previously fallen short despite boasting star-studded line-ups. Bobat revealed that the decision to transition captaincy from Faf du Plessis to Patidar was one of the most carefully considered calls of his career. "We spent a lot of time

thinking about that captaincy decision. I don't mind saying in my career there aren't that many decisions that I've thought about as long and as deeply as that one. And the thinking started in the season before. "We were very blessed to have someone like Faf as our captain. Everybody knows what a champion person Faf is. He was still a player doing the business at that stage as well. We could have easily just rolled him over and continued with Faf." But sport is pretty ruthless. You've got to look at the reality of his age and stage. The big auction gave us a chance to do a bit of a reset. We felt like having an Indian captain was really important. It's an Indian competition, so having an Indian captain I think is really important." Bobat also

disclosed that he and head coach Andy Flower had detailed discussions with Kohli in London after the 2024 season regarding the leadership shift. "Andy and I met him in London not long after the 2024 season and talked about that. He's always ready to step forward and lead. He doesn't need a second invitation. "But we spoke about how this decision is not just about us three as people. It's about RCB more broadly as a franchise. Its leadership maybe even beyond us. The easy thing would have been to say, 'Virat, do you mind filling in and doing captaincy?' But then you're just kicking a decision down the road. At some point we can't be dependent on Virat all the time. "Virat's a bright guy. He got it really quickly. He said, 'Let's think about some of these other individuals. But if you need someone, then obviously I can do it.'" As RCB prepare for the upcoming season as reigning champions, Bobat made it clear that the mindset within the camp is not about defending a title but about setting new standards. "We're not defending champions.

War disrupts sports with doubt over Messi's 'Finalissima,' Ronaldo games and F1 races

Australian: Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lewis Hamilton are among the sports stars whose schedules are in doubt because of the spreading war in the Middle East. Cancellations and travel shutdowns are already affecting events since the United States and Israel launched a wave of strikes on Iran on Saturday. Organisers of Formula 1 and major football games will face decisions soon on whether the competitions can go ahead as scheduled.

Middle Eastern nations have become crucial to the world sports landscape over the last decade as event hosts, financial backers and employers for some of the world's top athletes. The clock is ticking for a decision on whether to cancel or move the Finalissima football game on March 27 in Qatar between Spain and Argentina, the champions of Europe and South America. That match would offer Messi a chance to win yet another trophy in a glittering career. Qatar suspended all football games until further notice Sunday. Argentina was also scheduled to play Qatar in a friendly March 31. "UEFA is monitoring and carefully assessing all developments of the situation in cooperation with (South American football body) CONMEBOL and the (local organizing committee)," European football body UEFA told The Associated Press on Monday. Ronaldo's football team, Saudi club Al-Nassr, has already been affected by a wave of cancellations of Asian Champions League games. His team was scheduled to play Wednesday in Dubai. F1 has races in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia next month. F1 and its teams typically start to fly in staff and freight weeks in advance, limiting the time to make a decision on whether to go ahead. Governing body FIA says its priority is "safety and wellbeing." The men's and women's tennis tours and golf's European tour have just finished their Middle East tournament swings and aren't due back for months.



The LPGA Tour is playing a golf tournament in China this week, then most of the players will head east back to North America so their travel should be unaffected. Iran is set to play in US at the World Cup Iran is due to send its men's football team to the U.S. for the World Cup in just over three months, with a first game June 16 against New Zealand in Inglewood, California. There's doubt over whether Iran can or will take part in the tournament. Iranian football federation president Mehdi Taj has said "we cannot be expected to look forward to the World Cup with hope." The U.S. government has promised exemptions from its travel bans for athletes and coaches at events like the World Cup and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. Even if some events go ahead, a major concern for athletes and teams will be how they can travel in and out of the region safely. Former U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev is among a group of tennis players waiting in Dubai for a chance to fly out after a tournament there concluded last week. If they can't travel soon, it will affect the BNP Paribas Open starting Wednesday in Indian Wells, California. There are also travel difficulties for some athletes heading to the Winter Paralympics, which start Friday in Ita-

ly. The International Paralympic Committee says most teams are already in Europe for training and it's helping out others with travel. Iran is due to have one skier at the Paralympics. Cricket and basketball players were facing challenges, too, along with thousands of foreign tourists. The West Indies cricket team that participated in the Twenty20 World Cup has been stranded in India while awaiting clearance to head back to the Caribbean. Formula 1 personnel were also seeking alternative travel to avoid the region on their way to this week's Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne. The Middle East's influence on world sports has surged in recent years as countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar have hosted major events and become crucial financial backers. Besides football and auto racing, Qatar has a World Endurance Championship sportscar race this month, a MotoGP motorcycle race, a gymnastics World Cup next month and hosts the first Diamond League track meet of the year in May. Qatar also owns Champions League-winning football team Paris Saint-Germain. Saudi Arabia, which will host the 2034 World Cup in men's football, has funded the LIV Golf breakaway league and become a major player in world boxing.

"Pace King Bumrah Ready To Lead India Into Final"

Mumbai: Australian fast-bowling great Glenn McGrath has thrown his weight behind Jasprit Bumrah, calling him a "big-game player" and backing the India spearhead to deliver in the semi-final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup against England at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium on March 5. Bumrah once again showcased his temperament under pressure in India's virtual quarter-final against the West Indies at Eden Gardens. With the Caribbean side threatening to seize control, the right-arm quick produced a decisive over, dismissing the in-form Shimron Hetmyer and the well-set Roston Chase in the 12th. The double strike broke the backbone of a powerful middle order and paved the way for India's five-wicket victory, sealing their passage to the last four. McGrath believes it is precisely these moments that bring the best out of the 30-year-old. "I think



Jasprit is a big-game player. Sometimes in the big games, these players lift from their normal game. Not saying the focus is not there, but they really love those big moments, big games. I've got total faith in Bumrah when it comes to big matches," McGrath said. With India entering the knockouts as strong contenders to defend their title, McGrath urged the team to embrace the pressure that ac-

companies high-stakes cricket. India appeared to find top gear in their final Super 8 matches, particularly in the must-win clash against the West Indies, after a convincing outing against Zimbabwe. Few understand the demands of global tournaments better than McGrath. A key member of Australia's dominant sides that won three consecutive 50-over World Cups in 1999, 2003 and 2007, the former fast bowler said pressure should be viewed as an opportunity rather than a burden. Speaking at the MRF Pace Foundation in Chennai, where he serves as director, McGrath reflected on how great teams elevate themselves on the biggest stage. "You enjoy it. You just bring it back to its simplest form. The team I played in, I just felt our danger period was getting to the final. Once we were in the final, I thought the game was all over. I think the team likes pressure.

Sindhu withdraws from All England Open; Lakshya to begin campaign today

Chennai: In a big setback for Indian badminton, double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu has been forced to withdraw from the All England Open, the Badminton World Federation (BWF) confirmed early Tuesday. Sindhu's withdrawal seemed inevitable as she has been stranded in Dubai since Saturday due to ongoing West Asia turmoil, which had led to closure of airspace at the said region. "No.3 seeds Dechapol Puavaranukroh/Supissara Paewsampran withdrew from the YONEX All England Open Badminton Championships 2026. Former world champion Pularla V Sindhu also withdrew from the most prestigious tournament on the HSBC BWF World Tour due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East where she remains stuck in Dubai and unable to reach the tournament in time," the BWF said in a statement. As per the women's singles draw, the double Olympic medallist was scheduled to open her campaign against Supanida Katethong of Thailand. In Sindhu's absence, Wen Chi Hsu of Chinese Taipei will be Supanida's opponent in the first



round. As reported by The New Indian Express on Sunday, Unnati Hooda was another Indian shuttler whose plans had taken a hit due to the ongoing conflict. But she had boarded a last-minute flight via Africa in order to be part of the BWF World Tour Super 1000 event. Bearing in mind the long travel and late arrival, the youngster's task becomes even more challenging now as she'll be meeting Pornpawee Chochuwong

of Thailand on the opening day itself. Malvika Bansod, who had also barely reached on time, will also be in action on the opening day. From India's perspective, the main focus will be on Lakshya Sen (men's singles), who will be up against World No 1 Shi Yu Qi of China. Women's doubles pairing of Treena Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand will also begin their campaign on the opening day itself.

West Indies cricket team stranded in India due to international airspace restrictions

New Delhi: The West Indies cricket team's departure from India after its exit from the T20 World Cup has been delayed owing to international airspace restrictions triggered by the US and Israeli strikes on Iran. Cricket West Indies said it is working closely with the ICC and relevant government authorities for ensure safe travel of the players.

Flight operations in the Gulf region are currently suspended with damage also reported at the Dubai International Airport, which is one the busiest in the world. "Cricket West Indies (CWI) wishes to advise that the departure of the West Indies Senior Men's Team from India, following their exit from the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, has been



delayed due to international airspace restrictions," the board said in a statement. "These restrictions are a direct result of the security threats posed by military action in the Gulf Region, which has impacted several international flight routes and required airlines to adjust scheduled services for safety reasons." The team

lost to India in a must-win Super Eight match in Kolkata to bow out of the tournament. "CWI appreciates the understanding and concern of our fans, families, and stakeholders during this time," the statement added. Besides West Indies, Zimbabwe is also stranded in India due to the same reason. Zimbabwe Cricket

confirmed on Monday that the squad remains in Delhi, adding that while fresh travel arrangements are being worked out. "The squad was scheduled to return home via Dubai, but travel plans have been affected by the evolving situation in the Middle East, which has disrupted key transit routes," Zimbabwe cricket said in a statement on 'X'. The ICC has activated contingency measures and is working with international carriers to secure alternative travel arrangements. "ZC remains in constant communication with the ICC and team management on the ground to ensure the squad's safe and timely return." Zimbabwe lost by five wickets to South Africa in their final Super Eights match here on Sunday.

"Bumrah, Tilak Edge England In Semi-Final"

Mumbai: Sunil Gavaskar predicts a thrilling T20 World Cup semi-final between India and England at the Wankhede this Thursday. While citing the teams as well-matched, Gavaskar believes India's "enigma" Jasprit Bumrah is the deciding factor.

He urged captain Rohit Sharma to unleash Bumrah early in the powerplay to "break the back" of England's top order before they settle. Gavaskar also praised India's tactical flexibility, specifically highlighting Tilak Varma's ability to stabilize the middle order.

Despite Jos Buttler's current lean patch, Gavaskar warned that the Englishman remains as dangerous as a "destructive" Abhishek Sharma.

Flamengo sack Filipe Luis, line up Leonardo Jardim as his leading replacement



London: Clube de Regatas do Flamengo have sacked head coach Filipe Luis following a run of disappointing results, with Portuguese manager Leonardo Jardim emerging as the club's leading candidate to take charge ahead of the Carioca final. The decision comes despite Flamengo's emphatic 8-0 victory over Madureira in the Carioca semi-final. Filipe Luis, who had addressed the media at the Maracan after the win, was reportedly caught off guard by the news of his dismissal. According to Globo.com, no formal justification was provided to the coach, and he had not been warned. The call to dismiss him was allegedly made before kickoff. Football director Jos Boto informed Filipe Luis in a brief meeting, with the squad already having left the stadium. The former coach is now expected to visit Ninho do Urubu to bid farewell to the players and staff.

The move was ordered by club president Luiz Eduardo Baptista, known as Bap, who had grown increasingly dissatisfied with the team's early-season performances. Following defeats in the Brazilian Super Cup and the South American Super Cup, the board began weighing decisive action. Reports suggest Bap had already issued firmer demands to both players and coaching staff amid concerns over physical sharpness, technical inconsistency, and dressing-room unrest. Filipe Luis had initially been appointed Flamengo head coach in 2023 after impressing within the club's youth setup. He began his coaching journey with Flamengo's under-17 side in March 2024 after retiring from professional football, winning the Copa Rio before guiding the under-20s to a world title in June. Promoted to the senior role on September 30 to replace Tite, he quickly deliv-

ered silverware, lifting the Copa do Brasil in 2024. In 2025, Flamengo added the Supercopa do Brasil, the Campeonato Carioca and the Copa Libertadores to their trophy cabinet under his leadership. However, an Intercontinental final shootout defeat to Paris Saint-Germain and subsequent setbacks this season intensified scrutiny. Despite having recently renewed his contract until 2027, relations between Filipe Luis, Bap and Boto reportedly became strained in recent months, with communication growing increasingly distant. Flamengo have yet to confirm who will lead the team in Sunday's Carioca final against Fluminense, but they are keen to finalise an appointment swiftly. Leonardo Jardim, who was already on the club president's radar late last year and is currently in Brazil, is understood to be the frontrunner to take over at the Maracana.