

Arunachal governor completes self-enumeration, urges citizen participation

Itanagar, Apr 24: As part of the Census 2027 process, Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lt. Gen. (retired) K.T Parnaik completed his self-enumeration at Lok Bhavan in Itanagar on Friday, setting an example for citizens to participate in the important national exercise. Interacting with the enumeration team, the Governor said self-enumeration is vital for a credible and inclusive Census, as it enables citizens to contribute directly to nation-building through accurate representation of their family, community and region. He underscored that reliable census data underpins planning for schools, hospitals, roads, welfare schemes and development policies, making self-enumeration an important pillar in realising the vision of Viksit Bharat. Appeal-



ing to citizens to participate with sincerity and awareness, the Governor said self-enumeration is more than a statistical exercise. “It is a civic responsibility that helps assess needs, ensure fair resource allocation and strengthen good governance,” he said. He urged the Census team to ensure every household is counted, every voice heard and no one left behind, adding that people’s active participation will

help shape a stronger and more developed India. A team from the Directorate of Census Operations, Shillong, led by Director Biswajit Pegu, along with officials from the Department of Economics and Statistics, led by Anu Singh, Secretary-cum-State Nodal Officer, Census-27, briefed the Governor on the Census process and modalities. They informed that the self-enumeration phase under House Listing Opera-

tions, which commenced on April 16, and will continue till 30 April 2026, during which citizens can complete enumeration online. This will be followed by House Listing fieldwork from May 1 to 30, 2026, when Census Enumerators will visit households for data collection. The Governor’s participation has been widely welcomed as a symbolic gesture reinforcing the importance of civic responsibility. By leading from the front, Parnaik has highlighted the role of citizens in ensuring that the Census reflects the diversity and aspirations of every household. His appeal is expected to encourage greater awareness and participation across Arunachal Pradesh, strengthening the credibility of the national exercise and contributing to inclusive development planning.

Renovated Lunglei War Memorial Inaugurated To Honour 108 Martyrs

Aizawl, Apr 24: The newly renovated War Memorial at Chanmari in the heart of Lunglei town was formally inaugurated on Friday, marking a solemn tribute to the courage and sacrifice of India’s fallen soldiers. The ceremony was led virtually by General Officer Commanding of 3 Corps, Lt Gen. Abhijit S. Pendharkar, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, while Brig. Puspendar Sorayan, Commander of 23 Sector Assam Rifles, represented him at the site and unveiled the memorial before laying a wreath in honour of the martyrs. India News Updates Wreaths were also offered by Lunglei Municipal Council Chairman Lalzuithanga, District Sainik Welfare & Resettlement Officer Maj. Rebecca L. Chhakchhuak (Retd), leaders of the Mizoram Ex-Services League, and family members of the fallen heroes. A two-minute silence was observed as ceremonial honours were rendered. In his address, Lt Gen. Pendharkar described the memorial as a lasting symbol of courage and unity, urging that the legacy of the martyrs be carried not only in monuments but in the hearts of the people. Brig. Sorayan reiterated Assam Rifles’ commitment



to Mizoram’s welfare, highlighting contributions in security, healthcare, education, and anti-drug initiatives. LMC Vice Chairman K. Lalrinawma noted the memorial’s significance for the people of Lunglei, while Maj. Chhakchhuak recalled its origins on land allotted by the Mizoram government in 1977. She added that the renovated structure now consolidates the names of 108 martyrs, including 103 from World War II and five from post-Independence operations. Standing prominently in central Lunglei, the War Memorial embodies honour, remembrance, and the enduring gratitude of a community to its heroes. Under the agreement, the Department of School Education will strengthen early learning, school-based health activities, and infrastructure accountability.

In Brief

MoU signed to boost handicraft sector in Arunachal Pradesh

Itanagar: The Arunachal Pradesh government has inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) in Itanagar on Thursday to boost the state’s textile and handicraft sector. The MoU outlines a comprehensive framework for collaboration, focusing on skill development through structured capacity-building. The MoU was signed by Department of Textiles and Handicrafts commissioner Mimum Tayeng and EPCH executive director Rajesh Rawat in the presence of state minister Nyato Dukuma and others. The agreement envisages collaboration in skill development through structured capacity-building programmes, product diversification in line with global trends, and strengthening branding and packaging of traditional crafts, an official statement said.

Kamrup Metro DC reviews NEET (UG) exam preparations

Guwahati: In a significant initiative to ensure secure and seamless conduct of the upcoming NEET (UG)-2026 examination, the Kamrup Metro district commissioner on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review preparations and strengthen coordination among the concerned departments. The NEET (UG)-2026 exam will be held across 17 designated centres in the district on May 3, 2026. The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), administration, the Additional District Commissioner, Kamrup Metro, city coordinators and the centre supervisors of all the 17 designated examination centres.

Authorities penalise curfew violators

Imphal, Apr 24: Manipur Police arrested 12 curfew violators who were involved in disrupting public order and peace in Thoubal district. “They have been penalised with one-week community service by order of the magistrate for violating prohibitory orders. They have since been engaged in cleaning the Khongjom War Memorial site in the aftermath of Thursday’s state function,” the police force said in a statement. Authorities have reiterated that strict action would be taken against individuals found violating curfew restrictions. Police officials stated that the action is part of ongoing efforts to ensure compliance with prohibitory measures and to maintain law and order in the district. Notably, Khongjom Day was observed on Thursay amidst tight security measures taken up by Manipur Police and sister agencies.

Himanta flags action on attacks targeting BJP candidates

Guwahati: Himanta Biswa Sarma has warned that those allegedly involved in attacks on Bharatiya Janata Party candidates in West Bengal would face action if the BJP comes to power in the state. “We will teach a lesson to those who attacked the candidates of the BJP,” Sarma said after the first phase of polling for the West Bengal Assembly elections ended on Wednesday evening. The BJP leader expressed confidence over the party’s electoral prospects in both Assam and West Bengal. He claimed that the BJP would win “at least 100 seats in Assam and 200 in West Bengal,” describing the elections as crucial for the party’s growth in eastern India.

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Over 250 Bnei Menashe Arrive in Israel as ‘Operation Wings of Dawn’ Begins

Aizawl, Apr 24: More than 250 members of the Bnei Menashe community from India arrived in Israel on Thursday, marking the beginning of a renewed government-backed relocation effort. The group landed late at night at Ben Gurion Airport, where they were welcomed with a ceremonial reception that included music, flags, and community members greeting them after their long journey. The arrivals are part of a broader initiative by the Israeli government to bring thousands of Bnei Menashe—who claim descent from the biblical tribe of Manasseh—from India to Israel. The program, known as “Operation Wings of Dawn,” aims to relocate the remaining members of the community by 2030. Immigration Minister Ofir Sofer, who welcomed the newcomers at the airport, marked their arrival a “historic moment.” “This is the beginning of an operation that will allow the entire community to immigrate. Authorities plan to bring around 1,200 people in 2026 alone, with additional flights al-



ready scheduled in the coming weeks.” Originating mainly from the northeastern Indian states of Mizoram and Manipur, the Bnei Menashe have been migrating to Israel gradually since the 1990s. Around 4,000 have already settled in the country, while several thousand still remain in India. Their migration has been facilitated in part by the organization Shavei Israel, which works to reconnect communities believed to be linked to the so-called Lost Tribes of Israel. Despite visible fatigue after the journey, many of the new arrivals expressed joy and relief as they reunited

with relatives and friends they had not seen for years. Emotional scenes unfolded at the airport, with families embracing after long separations. The immigrants will initially be housed in an absorption centre in Nof Hagalil, a northern city that already hosts a significant Bnei Menashe population. From there, they will begin the process of integration into Israeli society. Members of the community traditionally follow certain Jewish customs, although many had converted to Christianity during the 19th century while living in India. As part of their immigration process, they

are required to formally convert to Judaism in order to obtain Israeli citizenship. The Bnei Menashe trace their heritage through oral traditions that describe a long migration across regions such as Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet, and China before settling in India. While the historical accuracy of these claims remains debated, their cultural and religious identity has been central to their efforts to settle in Israel. The latest arrivals come at a time when parts of northeast India, particularly Manipur, have been experiencing prolonged ethnic tensions and periodic violence. For many in the community, the move to Israel represents not only a return to what they consider their ancestral homeland but also an opportunity for greater stability and a new beginning. Israeli officials described the development as a significant milestone, noting that the phased relocation of the entire community will continue over the coming years as part of a long-term national plan.

Kamrup Metro DC reviews NEET (UG) exam preparations

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ing an overview of the examination guidelines, operational procedures and security arrangements.

The presentation served as a key reference point for discussions and helped orient all centre in-charges and officials on their respective roles and responsibilities.

On the security front, the concerned officials were directed to put stringent measures, including frisking,



the district on May 3, 2026.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), administration, the Additional District Commissioner, Kamrup Metro, city coordinators and the centre supervisors of all the 17 designated examination centres.

The meeting focused on all key functional areas of the examination process including the detailed guidelines on examination-day timelines, bell schedules, authorised officials and requisite materials for all stakeholders involved in the conduct of the examination.

A detailed presentation was delivered by city coordinator 1, provid-

biometric verification, CCTV surveillance and jammer installation, at the examination centres.

Special facilities have also been provisioned for PwBD (persons with benchmark disabilities) candidates in keeping with inclusive examination norms. Further, the manual addresses the prevention of unfair means, protocols for packing confidential material, post-examination dispatch procedures and guidelines for staff engagement. The DC emphasised the need for meticulous planning and seamless inter-departmental coordination to uphold the integrity of the examination and ensure a smooth experience for all candidates.

Assam Governor praises Bharat Scouts and Guides for dedicated service

Guwahati, Apr 24: Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya attended the 24th Rajya Puraskar Award Ceremony of the Bharat Scouts and Guides, Assam chapter held at Bhogeswar Phukanani Indoor Stadium at Rudra Singha Sports Complex in Guwahati on Friday. The Governor, in his speech, lauded the awardees for their commitment to the core values of service, character and leadership.

Acharya also acknowledged the invaluable role played by parents, trainers, and officials in nurturing responsible and capable young citizens.

He commended the Bharat Scouts and Guides for their yeoman services rendered during the last 75 years particular during natural disasters and emergencies, demon-



strating exemplary commitment. The Governor noted that the organisation with over 6.3 million members, including a significant number of young women, is among the largest youth organisations in the world and has been playing a vital role in nation-building. He also highlighted its contributions during natural disasters and its role in promoting national unity and leader-

ship among youth. Referring to the motto “Be Prepared,” the Governor urged the youth to equip themselves with essential life skills and face future challenges with confidence and determination.

It may be mentioned that the Rajya Puraskar Award for the year 2024 and 2025 was presented to 40 members and honourable charge to 20 adult leaders of the organisation.

Authorities penalise curfew violators, send them for service at Khongjom Memorial

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“They have been penalised with one-week community service by order of the magistrate for violating prohibitory orders. They have since been engaged in cleaning the Khongjom War Memorial site in the aftermath of Thursday’s state function,” the police force said in a statement. Authorities have reiterated that strict action would be taken against individuals found violating curfew restric-

tions. Police officials stated that the action is part of ongoing efforts to ensure compliance with prohibitory measures and to maintain law and order in the district.

Notably, Khongjom Day was observed on Thursay amidst tight security measures taken up by Manipur Police and sister agencies.

The commemoration programme at the Khongjom War Memorial Complex was attended by the Governor of Manipur Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh, Ministers, MLAs, senior government officials and



community members.

The programme also featured guard of

honour and gun salute by personnel of Manipur Police.

Manipur Cabinet approves Kharungpat Bird Sanctuary

Guwahati, Apr 25: The Manipur Cabinet has resolved to notify Kharungpat Bird Sanctuary in Kakching district under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, marking an important milestone in the State's conservation strategy and eco-tourism development. The proposed bird sanctuary will cover an area of about 227 hectares (ha), which is approximately 6.7 per cent of the total wetland area. The sanctuary is significant from a biodiversity point of view, particularly for the conservation of waterbirds, including both resident and migratory species. The primary reason for this decline is believed to be the loss of suitable habitat, roosting sites, and local disturbances. Taking note of these issues, the government has decided to notify the area as a bird sanctuary in response to public demand. The proposed sanctuary is also seen as an upcoming eco-tourism site by the State Forest Department. Chief Wildlife Warden of Manipur, Anurag Bajpai, said the department would facilitate projects for the development of the sanctuary in coordination with the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India. The Forest Department will also constitute an Eco-Development Committee involving local villagers to promote eco-tourism and

livelihood activities in the area.

The state government is positioning this initiative as a "people's project," combining ecosystem conservation with livelihood promotion. Bajpai added that the conservation of waterbirds is an integral part of wetland management. According to Criterion 5 of the Ramsar Convention, in the latest census of 2025, there has been a decline in the number of migratory birds, which has become a matter of serious concern for the Government of Manipur.

Convention, a wetland qualifies as a site of international importance (Ramsar Site) if it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds. The notification of the sanctuary is the outcome of public demand led by local MLA Usham Deben Singh and is supported by the Keirak United Development Association, Citizens' Association for Rural Development, members of the Wabagai Zila Parishad, and the South Tenth Youth Development Organisation. Bajpai expressed gratitude to the local MLA, Zila Parishad members, associations, clubs, villagers, and local administration, including the DC, DFO, and Range Forest Officer, for their support and efforts in conserving the region's natural heritage, which reflects the rich cultural heritage of Manipur.

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However, in the latest census of 2025, there has been a decline in the number of migratory birds, which has become a matter of serious concern for the Government of Manipur. The primary reason for this decline is believed to be the loss of suitable habitat, roosting sites, and local disturbances. Taking note of these is-



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CM launches 'CM INSPIRE' for UPSC aspirants



Shillong, Apr 25: In a significant push to strengthen Meghalaya's representation in India's Civil Services, the Meghalaya Government launched the CM-INSPIRE scheme aimed at empowering young aspirants preparing for the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) examinations.

While announcing the initiative, Chief Minister Conrad Sangma underscored the importance to bring a change to the decline in the representation of indigenous people in the Indian civil services.

"My dear young aspirants of Meghalaya, today marks an important step in supporting the dreams of our youth. For many years, our representation in the civil services has declined. Today, we take a decisive step to change that with the launch of CM-INSPIRE," he stated.

Under the CM-INSPIRE scheme, candidates who successfully clear the UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Examination will be given financial assistance of Rs.

50,000, whereas those who successfully clear the mains examination will receive Rs. 1 lakh as financial assistance. Sangma said the initiative aims to reduce financial burden which aspiring candidates face, while ensuring that deserving candidates also receive equal opportunities instead of being held back by economic constraints.

"The government stands firmly with you on this journey," Sangma said while encouraging the young aspirants to believe in themselves and stay committed to their goals.

Candidates who are eligible will be able to apply for the scheme through the Meghalaya Administrative Training Institute (MATI) portal once applications are open. The CM-INSPIRE initiative is a welcoming step that will provide aspiring youth of the state with the opportunity to chase their dreams, while reinforcing the government's commitment to building and empowering young visionary leaders.

Meghalaya to introduce ST-only electoral roll for GHADC elections

Guwahati, Apr 25: The Meghalaya government is moving to create a Scheduled Tribe (ST)-exclusive electoral roll for elections to the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC), a step aimed at tightening control of indigenous communities over governance in Sixth Schedule areas. Officials said the proposal seeks to ensure that only ST voters can participate in GHADC elections, aligning the electoral process with the constitutional intent of protecting tribal autonomy. The move follows long-standing demands from indigenous groups in the Garo Hills, who have argued that the existing system leaves room for dilution of tribal political authority. The planned reform is expected to directly impact land governance and representation within the council. By limiting both the electorate and leadership to tribal communities, the state aims to reinforce safeguards around land transfer and customary practices, which are central to the region's socio-political structure. The GHADC operates under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, which provides autonomous administrative powers



to tribal areas. Provisions under Article 244(2) were designed to preserve indigenous control over land and traditional institutions, including the Nokma system in Garo Hills. The proposed electoral framework is being positioned as a measure to strengthen these protections. Government sources indicated that the initiative is also intended to address concerns over demographic shifts and political representation, issues that have periodically triggered tensions in

the region. By formalising an ST-only electoral roll, the administration aims to reduce disputes. The reform, once implemented, is likely to set a precedent for other autonomous councils in Meghalaya. It also signals a broader push by the state to align local governance mechanisms more closely with constitutional safeguards for tribal communities. Further details on the timeline and legal process for implementing the new electoral roll are yet to be announced.

Gauhati High Court anticipatory bail

Guwahati, Apr 25: The Gauhati High Court today rejected Congress leader Pawan Khara's plea for anticipatory bail in connection with an FIR filed against him by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, Rinku Bhuyan Sharma, for accusing her of holding multiple passports and offshore assets. Khara, senior counsel Abhishek Manu Singhvi had argued that CM Sarma's alleged statement against Khara and his action smacked "On what basis can the petitioner expect a fair treatment when the Chief Minister is breathing down his neck?" Singhvi had submitted, stressing that Khara isn't a flight risk and that there is no need for his arrest.

Assam govt to file affidavit in PILs against CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

Guwahati, Apr 25: The Assam government has assured the Gauhati High Court that it will file its response before the next hearing in a batch of Public Interest Litigations (PILs) accusing Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of delivering "hate speech". A bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant, along with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, directed the petitioners to approach the Gauhati High Court. The apex court also asked the High Court's chief justice to expedite the hearing of the matter.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Ashutosh Kumar and Justice Arun Dev Choudhury scheduled the next hearing in the matter for May 28. "It has been submitted on behalf of the state that the response affidavit shall positively be filed by the next date, with a copy served in advance to the counsel for the petitioners in the respective writ petitions. List all these matters on 28.05.2026," the court said.

The division bench had earlier taken up three separate PILs on February 26 that alleged the chief minister had made "hate speech". Noting what it described as a "fissiparous tendency", the court issued notices to Sarma, the Government of India, the Assam government and the Director General of Police. The hearing took place before the announcement of the state's Assembly election schedule. Polling for the 126-member Assembly was held on April 9, while counting of votes is scheduled for May 4.

One of the petitions was filed on February 24 by Sahitya



Akademi award-winning writer Hiren Gohain, former Director General of Police Harekrishna Deka and senior journalist Paresh Malakar. Separate petitions were also submitted earlier by the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on February 21. Earlier, on February 16, the Supreme Court of India declined to entertain petitions seeking action against Sarma over a now-deleted controversial video posted on X, which allegedly showed him firing a rifle at members of a particular community.

Opposition is accused by BJP Wokha of obstructing women's reservation

Guwahati, Apr 25: Bha ratiya Janata Party (BJP) Wokha unit has accused the opposition parties of obstructing the implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill, terming the delay as an "attack on women's rights." Addressing a press conference at the party office on Tuesday, BJP leaders expressed concern over the prolonged delay in implementing the legislation. They alleged that Congress and other opposition parties were creating hurdles to prevent women from availing timely benefits under the Bill. BJP Wokha president Rhanbemo Odyuo said the opposition owed an apology to women across the country. He asserted that the NDA government stood firmly for women's rights and urged women not to forgive the Congress and other opposition parties for the delay. He further alleged that the opposition was unwilling to provide opportunities to

ordinary women, favouring only privileged individuals. Deputy chairperson of Wokha Town Council, Nzano P. Kikon, explained that the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam provided for 33 percent reservation for women based on delimitation following the Census expected after 2026. She cautioned that waiting for the Census and delimitation could delay benefits even beyond the 2029 general elections, stressing the need to delink implementation from this condition. BJP Mahila Morcha president Caroline Patton highlighted that delimitation involves redrawing constituency boundaries, which is essential for implementing reservation. She pointed out that the current cap of 550 Lok Sabha seats, fixed in 1976, does not reflect India's present population growth and suggested raising the number to 850 for fairer representation. BJP Wokha vice president



James Tungoe said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the party strongly supports 33 percent reservation for women. He described the bill as a long-pending reform of 27 years and emphasized that while women excel in various fields, their representation in politics remains inadequate. He expressed confidence that the

legislation would empower women and stressed that it was not merely a political move but a national initiative for societal progress. The BJP Wokha unit further stated that women across India would respond through the power of their vote and push what it described as "anti-women forces" to the margins of politics.

Prosecution plans appeal in higher court in Abhi-Neel case

Nagaon, Apr 24: The Nagaon Sessions Court on Friday sentenced 20 convicts to life imprisonment in the widely discussed Abhi-Neel mob lynching case. The accused had earlier been found guilty by the court.

Out of 45 accused in the case, 20 were convicted, while 25 others were acquitted due to lack of evidence on April 20.

Special Public Prosecutor Ziaul Kamar expressed dissatisfaction with the verdict, stating that the court did not consider the case as “rarest of the rare” and did not award capital punishment. He said the prosecution would challenge the judgment in a higher court.

The case relates to the lynching of

Abhijit Nath and Nilotpal Das at Dokmoka in Assam’s Karbi Anglong district on June 8, 2018, after they were suspected to be child abductors.

The incident had triggered widespread outrage across the country and beyond. Assam Police had arrested 48 accused in connection with the case, including three juveniles. The chargesheet was filed in 2024, and the trial, initially conducted in Diphu, was later transferred to the Nagaon Sessions Court following a directive from the Gauhati High Court.

The victims’ families were represented by senior advocate Bijon Mahajan, while the accused were defended by Manas Sarania.

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The BJP leader expressed confidence over the party’s electoral prospects in both Assam and West Bengal. He claimed that the BJP would win “at least 100 seats in Assam and 200 in West Bengal,” describing the elections as crucial for the party’s growth in eastern India.

Mizoram: ZPM Senior Vice President W Chhuanawma Has Officially Stepped Down From His Party Position Citing Lingering Issues With His Health

Aizawl, Apr 24: Mizoram’s ruling Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) senior vice president and legislator W Chhuanawma has stepped down from his post, citing persistent health concerns. In a letter addressed to the party president on April 22, Chhuanawma, who also serves as deputy chief whip in the current administration, explained that he had considered resigning last year but delayed the decision at the request of party leaders until after the Aizawl Municipal

Corporation elections held on April 21. Online News Subscription I have been unable to fully fulfil my responsibilities as senior vice president due to my health condition. As the AMC elections are over, I am now submitting my request for leave from my post,” he wrote.

Chhuanawma, elected from Tuichang constituency, became senior vice president in ZPM’s first internal election in February 2024. His departure leaves the party with two nominated vice presidents. The development

coincided with Chief Minister Lalduhoma assuming charge as ZPM president after standing president Lalliansawta went on indefinite medical leave. ZPM general secretary Eddy Zosangliana Colney stated that the party’s executive committee will convene on April 28 to deliberate on Chhuanawma’s application and decide whether to fill the vacant post.

Founded in 2017 as an alliance of smaller parties, including Lalduhoma’s Zoram Nationalist Party, the ZPM became a

registered political party in 2019. It contested 40 seats in the November 2023 assembly elections and secured 27, dislodging the Mizo National Front government led by Zoramthanga. Digital News Platform A presentation by former Culture Secretary, Government of India, Raghvendra Singh at the Secretariat on Friday highlighted key recommendations for strengthening museum development in Manipur. Online News Subscription The session was attended by Minister

Kh. Loken Singh, Chief Secretary Dr. Puneet Kumar Goel, and Additional Chief Secretary Anurag Bajpai. Officials said the presentation offered forward-looking insights to guide policy decisions.

The long-pending upgradation of the Manipur State Museum was a key focus, with measures outlined to bring it in line with modern standards. The government reiterated its commitment to preserving and promoting the state’s cultural heritage. While he is stepping back from his

organizational role within the party, he remains a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and the Deputy Chief Whip. His departure coincides with Chief Minister Lalduhoma taking over as the acting party president, as the standing president, Lalliansawta, is also on indefinite leave due to health issues. Persistent health concerns. Reports indicate he has been recovering from a semi-stroke and was unable to attend the most recent Assembly Budget Session.

NSF holds candlelight vigil in honour of 2 Naga civilians killed in Manipur

Kohima, Apr 24: The Naga Students’ Federation (NSF) held a candlelight vigil in Kohima on Thursday evening to pay tributes and seek justice for two Naga civilians killed in a recent ambush in Manipur.

The vigil, held at Naga Solidarity Park under the theme ‘We Rise Together: Unbreakable, Unafraid’, was organised in memory of Chinaoshang Shokwungnao of Tushar village and Yaruingam Vashum of Kharasom village.

The two were killed by suspected militants who opened fire at a convoy of civilian vehicles in TM Kasom area along NH-202 in Ukhrul district on April 18.

“The federation unequivocally demands that the concerned authorities initiate immediate, impartial and stringent action against the perpetrators of this dastardly crime. Any failure or delay in delivering justice will be viewed as a grave abdication of responsibility,” the NSF said in a statement.

“Further, the federation issues a stem and unequivocal warning that any form of aggression, intimidation or violence against the Naga people will not be tolerated under any circumstances. The patience of the Naga people must not be mistaken for weakness. Any recurrence of such acts will invite strong and resolute response from the federation and the Naga public at large,” it mentioned.

Kohima Science College selected for DBT-STAR College Scheme

Kohima, Apr 24: Kohima Science College has once again established itself as one of the premier institutions of higher education in the region by becoming the first government college from Nagaland to be selected under the Department of Biotechnology’s “STAR College Scheme.”

The college initially submitted its proposal under the scheme in March 2025 and was subsequently shortlisted among 34 institutions across the country. The Coordinator, Dr. Vethselo Doulo, along with core committee member Along Longchari, presented the final proposal on March 10, 2026 at the DBT headquarters in New Delhi. Each year, only 10-15 colleges across India are selected for this prestigious scheme. Under this scheme, eight departments of the college — Botany, Chemistry, Geography, Geology, Mathematics, Physics, Statistics, and Zoology — will receive grants from the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India. These funds will primarily be utilized to strengthen laboratory infrastructure, procure advanced scientific equipment and enhance capacity-building initiatives through workshops, seminars and training programmes for undergraduate students, faculty members and the wider community. The scheme will also enable the college to expand its academic reach by promoting interdisciplinary learning, enhancing practical skills and encouraging research-oriented education at the undergraduate level.

Boys Outperform Girls In Mizoram HSLC Exams As The Pass Rate Reaches 80.31%

Aizawl, Apr 24 : Boys outperformed girls in the Mizoram Class 10 board examinations for the fifth consecutive year since 2022, according to results released on Thursday. The examination results announced by the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) on Thursday showed that 80.31 per cent of the total 18,257 students who appeared for the High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination cleared the exam.

This marked a significant improvement over last year’s overall pass rate of 76.68 per cent.

Of the 8,448 boys who appeared for the exam, 81.16 per cent passed. In comparison, girls recorded a pass rate of 79.59 per cent out of 9,809 candidates. Both genders showed marked year-on-year improvement, rising from last year’s figures



of 77.86 per cent for boys and 75.63 per cent for girls. The examinations were conducted between February and March this year. In a significant policy shift, the MBSE has stopped publishing merit lists (Top-10 rankings), distinctions, and divisions in its result books from this year.

Officials stated that the move aims to discourage high-stakes

competition among students based on rote memorisation and to shift the focus toward quality and competency-based education. Regarding institutional performance, deficit schools, which receive regular government grants, maintained their status as the top performers with a 96.92 per cent pass rate. They were followed by private schools with an 89.38

per cent pass rate, while state-run schools recorded a 72.02 per cent success rate. While 146 schools achieved a perfect 100 per cent pass rate, 13 schools recorded zero passes. Ten of these underperforming institutions fall under the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) programme. Among the state’s 11 districts, South Mizoram ranked first with an average success rate of 89.71 per cent, followed closely by Serchhip at 89.49 per cent and Hnahthial at 89.11 per cent.

Once the results for the Science, Arts, and Commerce streams are released, students can access their scores online via the official ASSEB and AHSEC websites by entering their roll numbers.

This year, the Higher Secondary exams were conducted from February 11 to March 16.

Mulam Village Comes Under Armed Attack

Imphal, Apr 24: Mulam village in Ukhrul district came under a suspected armed attack in the early hours of Friday, triggering panic and raising serious security concerns in the region. According to the Mulam Village Authority, the incident began around 1:00 AM when a blank gunshot was heard near the village. While it initially did not cause alarm due to recent unrest, the situation escalated at approximately 5:30 AM when unidentified armed militants allegedly launched a coordinated and unprovoked attack. The assault reportedly involved heavy and indiscriminate firing, along with the burning of several houses.

At least two persons have been rescued with severe injuries. There are also reports of additional injuries and one unconfirmed fatality. The incident has been described as a grave escalation, with the targeting of a civilian village raising serious concern.

Tensions in the area have been rising over the past few days. On April 19, armed individuals reportedly entered the village in daylight and fired blank shots at farmers, causing panic. Later, when village youths approached them, they were met with gunfire, though no casualties were reported. Another incident on April 21 involved firing targeting farmers, further deepening fear and insecurity among residents. Villagers have alleged that repeated acts of intimidation and disruption have created an atmosphere of sustained fear. Despite this, the community had maintained restraint in hopes of a peaceful resolution.

The village authority stated that urgent appeals were made to authorities in nearby areas, including Tounzou and Sirarikhong, seeking intervention, but these reportedly went unheeded.

Calling the situation critical, the Mulam Village Authority urged the government to take immediate action, warning that any further delay could cost innocent lives.

Amritpal appears online, granted bail in Dibrugarh case

Guwahati, Apr 24: Amritpal Singh, the Lok Sabha MP who is currently detained under the National Security Act (NSA), appeared virtually before a court in Dibrugarh today in connection with a case related to the alleged recovery of an electronic device from inside Dibrugarh Central Jail. The case, registered as Case No. 21/2024, was filed after jail authorities allegedly recovered an electronic device from Singh’s room inside the prison. According to his lawyer, Jasbir Kaur, the complaint in the matter was lodged by Jail Superintendent Nipen Das. Speaking to reporters after the hearing, Kaur said the investigation in the case had already been completed and a chargesheet had been filed before the court. Following this, a bail

petition was submitted on behalf of Singh. She said the court granted bail in the matter, although the formal bail bond has not yet been submitted. The proceedings in the case are currently continuing before Judicial Magistrate First Class Chandan Saikia at the Dibrugarh court. Kaur said the trial process is still underway and further hearings will continue in the coming days. According to the defence counsel, some associates of Amritpal Singh who were also detained earlier have already been shifted to jails in Punjab. Singh, however, joined Thursday’s court hearing virtually from Dibrugarh Police Station. Kaur further stated that Singh is expected to be taken back to Dibrugarh Central Jail on Saturday.



Gauhati High Court denies anticipatory bail to Pawan Khera

Guwahati, Apr 24: The Gauhati High Court today rejected Congress leader Pawan Khera’s plea for anticipatory bail in connection with an FIR filed against him by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma, for accusing her of holding multiple passports and offshore assets.

The order was passed by Justice Parthivjyoti Saikia, who had reserved the order after hearing both sides extensively on April 21.

Appearing for Khera, senior counsel Abhishek Manu Singhvi had argued that CM Sarma’s alleged statement against Khera and his action smacked of political vendetta, especially in the context of upcoming elections.

“On what basis can the petitioner expect a fair treatment when the Chief Minister is breathing down his neck?” Singhvi had submitted, stressing that

Khera isn’t a flight risk and that there is no need for his arrest.

Senior counsel KN Choudhury had reiterated Singhvi’s submissions and described the allegations against Khera as scandalous.

“The manner, tenor, and packaging of the allegations unmistakably show that they were made with deliberate malice,” he submitted.

It was also contended that, at best, it is a case of criminal defamation, which can only be pursued through a private complaint.

On the other hand, Advocate General of Assam Devajit Saikia had opposed the grant of any relief to Khera, submitting that this is not a simple defamation case, as the matter involves the manufacture of documents and title deeds.

He added that the dominant offences are cheating and forgery.

Indefinite Bandh in Foothills Naga Areas Fresh Firing Incident Heightens Tensions in Manipur

Ukhrul, Apr 24: The Foothills Naga areas are set to witness further disruption as the Foothills Naga Co-ordination Committee (FNCC) has called an indefinite bandh started from midnight of April 23, even as the three-day shutdown imposed by the United Naga Council (UNC) entered its final day.

In a statement issued on April 22, the FNCC said the decision was taken during an executive meeting, alleging that the Manipur government has failed to implement the Memorandum of Agreement signed on February 20 despite repeated appeals. The committee stated that continued inaction has compelled it to resume democratic agitation. The bandh will restrict movement and economic activities across Foothills Naga areas and will remain in force

until further notice. The FNCC said the protest aims to pressure the government to fulfil its commitments and address long-pending grievances, while urging citizens and organisations to maintain peace and discipline. The impact of the ongoing UNC bandh was also visible in parts of Imphal, where local groups blocked roads in support of the shutdown, indicating widening mobilisation across Naga-inhabited regions.

Meanwhile, tension continues to grip Sinakethei village after a 30-year-old man sustained a gunshot injury, raising serious concerns over civilian safety in the conflict-hit Tangkhul Naga area. According to the village authority, the incident took place around 4 pm on April 22 when the man was allegedly shot by Kuki armed militants from a bunker on

Lungter Hill overlooking the village. The bullet struck his heel while he was moving within the village, highlighting the risks faced by civilians even during routine activities.

Village authorities said the victim was not involved in any confrontation and described the situation as increasingly dangerous for residents. The area has remained tense since February 8 following clashes between Kuki and Tangkhul groups in the Litan region, with intermittent firing reported since then. The situation escalated further on April 18 when two civilians were killed in T. Kasom village in an alleged ambush. Residents of Sinakethei claimed the village has been under sustained armed pressure for over two months, with reports of militant bunkers, trench-

es and camps being set up across strategic locations. They alleged that parts of village land have effectively come under such control. Despite the presence of Army and security forces and regular patrols, firing incidents continue, creating fear and instability. Villagers expressed concern over what they described as inadequate intervention, alleging that militant fortifications have been constructed in full view of security forces. They also disputed claims that militants were beyond firing range, citing recent bullet impacts and injuries as evidence. Calling the situation both a security and humanitarian concern, the village authority urged immediate and impartial action to ensure civilian safety, prevent further escalation and restore normalcy.

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The Growing Gap in Higher Education

Access to higher education has expanded over the years, but disparities in quality and opportunity continue to persist. While some institutions offer world-class facilities, many others struggle with outdated curricula, limited resources, and faculty shortages.Students from smaller towns and disadvantaged backgrounds often face additional barriers—financial constraints, lack of exposure, and limited guidance. This creates an uneven playing field, where opportunities are not equally distributed.The increasing cost of higher education further compounds the issue, making it inaccessible for many. Bridging this gap requires systemic reform—investment in public institutions, updated curricula aligned with industry needs, and financial support for students. Education must remain a pathway to opportunity, not a marker of inequality.

Climate change demands a smarter approach to healthcare

On a hot, humid morning in the coastal village of Satkhira, Rahima Begum wades through waist-deep saline water to reach the nearest health facility. She is unsure if it is still functioning after the recent cyclone. Behind her, she drags a makeshift wooden raft carrying her seven-year-old daughter, severely ill with diarrhoea and dehydration. Rahima's village has long been on the frontline of climate change consequences. Over the years, salinity intrusion in groundwater has reduced access to fresh water. Tubewells, once a lifeline, no longer act as reliable sources of safe drinking water. Daily exposure to saline water for washing, cooking, and drinking is increasing the risk of diarrhoeal diseases, skin infections, menstrual and reproductive health complications, as well as cardiometabolic diseases. For Rahima, and millions like her, climate change is no longer a distant threat but an everyday reality. It is reshaping disease patterns, increasing the occurrence of acute public health events, and straining access

to essential health services. Across Bangladesh, climate-sensitive health risks are intensifying. Heatwaves are becoming more frequent and severe which heightens risks of heat stress, dehydration, and mortality. Dengue, once seasonal and largely confined to urban areas, has become a year-round, nationwide threat. In 2023 alone, Bangladesh recorded over 3,21,000 cases and 1,705 deaths from the disease which is the deadliest outbreak on record. Water-borne diseases, including diarrhoeal illnesses, often surge after floods, and they remain a major contributor to mortality among children under five. Ambient air pollution continues to exacerbate respiratory diseases, contributing to a considerable number of premature deaths every year. These converging risks underscore the importance of a systemic, forward-looking response in protecting health in a changing climate.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's new Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP) provides a critical framework to do just that. De-



veloped with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the plan sets out a clear roadmap to build climate-resilient, low-carbon health systems in alignment with the country's commitments under COP26. It defines priorities across infrastructure, surveillance, workforce capacity, and governance. Crucially, it marks a decisive shift from a reactive approach to one grounded in preparedness, resilience, and long-term sustainability. The priority now is implementation. Health facilities must

withstand floods, heatwaves and cyclones while maintaining essential services, including safe water, sanitation and reliable energy. Disease surveillance must integrate climate data to improve early warning and rapid response, particularly for climate-sensitive threats such as dengue. The health workforce must be equipped to recognise and manage emerging risks, from heat-related illness to shifting patterns of infectious disease. Groups who are being disproportionately affected—women, adolescent girls, children, older persons,

and persons with disabilities—must be prioritised in both planning and implementation. The health sector itself must reduce its environmental footprint. Improving energy efficiency, expanding renewable energy use, and adopting sustainable procurement practices can lower emissions while strengthening system reliability. Climate resilience and sustainability are not competing priorities but mutually reinforcing.

Stronger domestic investment must be matched by more accessible and predictable international climate finance, aligned with country priorities. Only through sustained funding and effective partnerships can the HNAP be translated into tangible health gains for communities like Rahima's, which are on the frontlines of climate change. Cross-sectoral action is likewise critical. Addressing climate-related health risks requires coordinated efforts across water and sanitation, agriculture, environment, infrastructure, urban planning, and disaster management. Empowering local govern-

ments and communities is essential in delivering practical, context-specific solutions, while stronger coordination, combined with locally driven action, may help to build resilience while delivering broader health and development gains, with equity at the centre.

The conversation must shift from commitment to implementation and from planning to protection. Success will be measured in lives protected: fewer disease outbreaks, reduced heat-related deaths, and declines in maternal, neonatal, and child mortality. Success will also be measured in the ability of health systems to withstand and continue delivering care in the face of repeated climate shocks. For communities like Rahima's, resilience cannot remain an aspiration, it must become a reality. The HNAP provides a clear path forward, but its impact will depend on how quickly and effectively it is implemented. In a changing climate, protecting health will ultimately be defined not by plans alone, but by the actions taken today.

How to grow more rice without draining the land

Over the past 25 years, Bangladesh has added nearly five crore people to its population, intensifying pressure on the country's staple: rice. While production has grown, its pace has lagged behind population growth, raising fresh questions about long-term food security and sustainability. Bangladesh's population rose from about 12.9 crore in the year 2000 to roughly 17.6 crore in 2025, an increase of more than one-third. Over the same period, national rice output increased from around 3.6 crore tonnes to 3.7-3.9 crore tonnes, indicating only modest net growth. Experts say yield growth has slowed in the last decade as land constraints, climate stress, and resource limitations intensified. Total rice demand continues to rise due to population growth, meaning even small production fluctuations can influence prices and imports. This long-term pressure is now amplified by the ongoing energy crisis. With the critical Boro paddy season disrupted by acute diesel shortages, increased fuel costs, and power outages, traditional, resource-heavy farming is proving dangerously vulnerable. Thousands of irrigation pumps have lain idle and state-run fertiliser factories have faced forced shutdowns. This immediate crisis underscores that shifting to sustainable agriculture is no longer just a future environmental goal, but an urgent necessity. As the country looks for ways to produce more rice with fewer resources, adopting modern, resilient practices can offer a vital lifeline. The central challenge facing Bangladesh is compounded by the fact that the relationship between rice production and the environment is a dangerous two-way street. The drive

for higher yields through traditional methods is actively harming the ecosystem in several ways.

Methane emissions: Traditional rice cultivation requires fields to remain flooded for long periods. Under these waterlogged conditions, soil micro-organisms decompose organic matter without oxygen, producing methane (CH₄)—a greenhouse gas far more potent than carbon dioxide in trapping heat. Globally, rice cultivation contributes roughly 10-12 percent of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, and Bangladesh is a significant contributor.

Groundwater depletion: Dry-season Boro rice, which accounts for more than half of Bangladesh's total output, depends heavily on groundwater. Millions of tube wells pump water from underground aquifers, causing water levels to decline precipitously in regions like northwestern Bangladesh. Pumping this water requires immense energy, contributing to carbon dioxide emissions and leaving farmers vulnerable to fuel shortages.

Fertiliser pollution and nitrous oxide: Inefficient use of chemical fertilisers, particularly urea, releases nitrous oxide (N₂O) into the atmosphere, another powerful greenhouse gas. Over-application also leads to nutrient runoff into rivers and wetlands, destroying water quality and aquatic ecosystems.

Ecosystem loss: Expanding agricultural footprints can lead to the loss of biodiversity and the reduction of vital wetlands, which play a crucial role in natural carbon storage, flood control, and supporting rural fisheries. Simultaneously, climate change is increasingly threatening the very rice farming that contributes to it.



Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, frequent floods, droughts, and salinity intrusion in coastal regions are already affecting crop yields. Studies suggest that temperature increases during the growing season can significantly reduce yields, particularly for Boro rice, while sea-level rise threatens soil fertility through seawater intrusion.

How can Bangladesh produce more rice to feed a growing population without damaging the environment on which agriculture depends? The answer lies in adopting a strategy of sustainable intensification—increasing productivity from existing farm-

land while actively reducing environmental stress. Agricultural specialists point to several key strategies.

Climate-tolerant varieties: Deploying rice strains resistant to floods, salinity, and drought is one of the most effective tools. These varieties help stabilise yields in vulnerable regions such as coastal belts and flood-prone haor areas, reducing the risk of crop loss.Smarter irrigation: Techniques like alternate wetting and drying (AWD), where fields are not kept continuously submerged, can cut water use significantly while drastically lowering methane emissions. Pairing this with solar-powered pumps and

better field levelling helps farmers reduce energy costs and bypass grid failures.Precision nutrient management: Modern techniques such as site-specific nutrient management, leaf colour charts for nitrogen application, and integrated soil fertility management can significantly improve fertiliser efficiency. Applying nutrients precisely when and where crops need them reduces chemical waste and nitrous oxide emissions.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM): Using biological controls and monitoring pests before spraying helps farmers reduce toxic pesticide use without sacrificing productivity,

protecting biodiversity and human health.

Reducing post-harvest losses: A massive portion of rice is lost during harvesting, drying, storage, and milling due to outdated practices. Upgrading to modern milling facilities and hermetic storage technologies could save millions of tonnes annually, effectively increasing food availability without growing a single additional crop.Mechanisation: The use of rice transplanters, combine harvesters, and other modern equipment can increase efficiency, offset rural labour shortages, and support resource-saving practices like direct-seeded rice.

Opportunistic expansion: While the primary focus must remain on intensifying yields on existing farmland, Bangladesh can also strategically explore new agricultural frontiers. Newly emerging river char lands and parts of the coastal region offer opportunities for expanding cultivation, provided climate-resilient varieties and community-based irrigation are used.Bangladesh's success in increasing rice production over the past few decades has been vital for national food security, serving as a global example of agricultural progress. However, the environmental and energy costs of intensive, traditional cultivation can no longer be ignored. The path forward for our rice sector is not about producing at any cost, but about producing smarter. By combining scientific innovation, efficient resource management, and strong agricultural policies, Bangladesh can achieve sustainable growth—increasing yields even under a constrained environment while safeguarding the natural resources its people depend on.

National Panchayati Raj Day: Strengthening India's Local Democracy

Every year on April 24, India observes National Panchayati Raj Day, commemorating a transformative moment in the country's democratic journey, i.e., the coming into force of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. This landmark reform institutionalised Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as the third tier of governance, aiming to bring decision-making closer to the people. More than three decades later, the occasion offers an opportunity not just for celebration but for reflection on the progress made and the challenges that persist in strengthening grassroots democracy.The idea of local self-governance in India is not new. Historically, village councils or "panchayats" functioned as informal institutions that managed local affairs, resolved disputes, and upheld community norms. These bodies, though not uniform across regions, represented an early form of participatory governance rooted in local traditions. However, colonial rule disrupted many of these indigenous systems, centralising authority and weakening local institutions.In the post-indepen-

dence period, there was a renewed emphasis on decentralisation as a means of democratic deepening and rural development. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee marked an important turning point by recommending a three-tier Panchayati Raj system, i.e., village, block, and district levels, based on the principle of democratic decentralisation. This led to the formal introduction of Panchayati Raj in several states, beginning with Rajasthan in 1959.

Yet, despite initial enthusiasm, these institutions often remained weak, constrained by limited powers, inadequate finances, and bureaucratic control.Subsequent committees, including the Ashok Mehta Committee, highlighted the structural deficiencies in the system and called for greater devolution of powers, regular elections, and stronger financial autonomy. However, it was only with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in 1992 that Panchayati Raj institutions received constitutional status. The amendment mandated regular elections every five years, the reservation of seats for Sched-

uled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women; and the establishment of State Finance Commissions and District Planning Committees. Most importantly, it recognised PRIs as institutions of self-governance, not merely administrative agencies.The significance of Panchayati Raj lies in its potential to make democracy more inclusive and participatory. By decentralising power, it enables citizens, particularly those in rural areas, to have a direct say in decisions affecting their lives. Gram Sabhas, the foundational units of this system, provide a platform for deliberation, accountability, and collective decision-making. In principle, they embody the spirit of democracy in its most immediate and accessible form.Over the years, PRIs have contributed to improved delivery of public services and greater responsiveness to local needs. They have played a crucial role in implementing flagship programmes related to rural employment, sanitation, housing, and social welfare. The increased representation of women, facilitated by constitutional reservations,

has been one of the most notable achievements. Today, millions of elected women representatives participate in local governance, challenging traditional gender roles and reshaping the political landscape at the grassroots level. However, the promise of Panchayati Raj has only partially materialised. One of the most persistent challenges is the inadequate devolution of powers and functions. While the Constitution provides for the transfer of 29 subjects to PRIs, in practice, many states have been reluctant to fully empower these institutions.

Key sectors such as health, education, and agriculture often remain under the control of state departments, limiting the autonomy of local bodies.Financial constraints further undermine the effectiveness of PRIs. Despite the recommendations of finance commissions, many panchayats continue to depend heavily on grants from higher levels of government. Their ability to generate their own revenue remains limited, restricting their capacity to plan and execute development projects.

Strengthening fiscal decentralisation is therefore critical to enhancing the functionality of local governance. Administrative capacity is another area of concern. Many panchayats lack trained personnel and technical expertise, which affects their ability to manage complex development programmes. Capacity-building initiatives, though undertaken periodically, need to be scaled up and institutionalised. The integration of digital technologies offers new opportunities for improving transparency, efficiency, and citizen engagement, but it also requires investment in infrastructure and training.The role of the Gram Sabha, envisioned as the cornerstone of participatory democracy, has also been uneven. In many areas, meetings are irregular or poorly attended, reducing their effectiveness as platforms for accountability. Strengthening the functioning of Gram Sabhas is essential to ensure that decentralisation translates into genuine empowerment rather than symbolic representation.Another critical dimension is the relationship between elected representatives

and the bureaucracy. In several instances, bureaucratic dominance and overlapping jurisdictions create friction and hinder effective governance. Clear delineation of roles, coupled with greater administrative support for elected bodies, can help address these challenges. As India continues its journey towards becoming a more inclusive and resilient democracy, the importance of Panchayati Raj institutions cannot be overstated.

They serve not only as instruments of local governance but also as training grounds for democratic leadership. Many political leaders at the state and national levels have emerged from the grassroots, underscoring the role of PRIs in nurturing political participation.National Panchayati Raj Day should therefore be seen as a call to renew the commitment to decentralisation. Strengthening PRIs requires more than legislative provisions; it demands political will, administrative reform, and sustained public engagement. States must move beyond token devolution and empower local bodies with real authority, adequate resources,

and institutional support.Equally important is fostering a culture of participation and accountability. Citizens must be encouraged to engage actively with local institutions, while mechanisms for transparency, such as social audits and public disclosures, must be strengthened. Only then can Panchayati Raj fulfil its promise of bringing governance closer to the people.In an era marked by complex developmental challenges, from climate change to rural distress, local solutions are often the most effective. Panchayati Raj Institutions, with their proximity to the people and understanding of local contexts, are uniquely positioned to address these challenges. Empowering them is not just a matter of administrative reform; it is central to the vision of a vibrant and inclusive democracy. As India marks another National Panchayati Raj Day, the task ahead is clear: to move from decentralisation in principle to decentralisation in practice. The strength of the world's largest democracy ultimately depends on the vitality of its smallest units.

Premium snack segment heats up as Britannia 5050 launches cheeze and caramel dipped sandwich range

Aizawl: Britannia Industries has strengthened its presence in India’s premium snacking segment with the launch of Britannia 5050 Cheeze Dipped and Caramel Dipped Crunchy Layered Sandwiches, signalling growing competition in the evolving packaged foods market. The launch comes as consumer demand for texture-based and indulgent snack products continues to rise across urban and semi-urban markets.

The newly launched products feature 22 baked layers designed to deliver a crunchy texture, combined with cheese and caramel coatings that provide a melting finish. Positioned as a premium yet affordable snack, the range expands the brand’s long-standing ‘50-50’ identity beyond flavour into texture innovation. Industry observers say such differentiated snack formats are increasingly driving consumer interest in the organised packaged food sector.

Siddharth Gupta, Vice-President, Marketing at Britannia Industries, said the company is focusing on evolving consumer preferences by introducing more engaging snacking experiences while strengthening the brand’s foothold in the premium category.

The company has also launched a marketing campaign featuring cricketers Rishabh Pant and Jimimah Rodrigues, reviving the iconic “Na Re NaaNaa” jingle to connect with both existing and younger consumers.

In Aizawl, demand for premium packaged snacks and convenience foods has been increasing steadily, particularly among young consumers and working professionals. Retailers noted that expanding quick-commerce access and modern retail penetration in Mizoram could support stronger sales for new premium snack launches in the region.

India intends to invest up to Rs 1.2 lakh crore in its mission 2.0

Mumbai: The government is preparing to roll out an expanded version of the India Semiconductor Mission ‘ISM 2.0’ likely by May, with a proposed outlay ranging between Rs 1 lakh crore and Rs 1.2 lakh crore.

According to the NDTV Profit report, inter-ministerial consultations are currently underway, while the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is awaiting final approval from the Finance Ministry.

The proposed allocation is significantly higher than the Rs 76,000 crore earmarked for the first phase of the semiconductor mission, said the report, citing sources. Under ISM 2.0, the government aims to widen the scope of the programme beyond chip fabrication and design to include support for semiconductor equipment, raw materials and other critical inputs, while also focusing on building full-stack intellectual property and strengthening supply chain resilience, it said.

The move comes amid disruptions in global supply chains and increasing geopolitical uncertainties. Ancillary players such as gas suppliers, specialty chemical manufacturers, MSMEs and other ecosystem participants are expected to play a key role in the revamped framework. A major feature of the second phase is a revamped design-linked incentive (DLI 2.0) scheme, which is likely to allow foreign firms to partner with Indian companies for semiconductor research and development within the country. The initiative is expected to accelerate innovation and support the emergence of up to 50 fabless semiconductor design firms in the coming years. Under

the first phase of the mission, 10 semiconductor projects worth about Rs 1.6 lakh crore have been approved across six states, spanning fabrication, assembly, testing and packaging facilities, contributing to the development of a domestic semiconductor ecosystem. In March 2025 at India’s first ‘Nano Electronics Roadshow’, S. Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY, had said that the domestic semiconductor demand market is expected to grow up to \$110 billion by 2030. Officials said ISM 2.0 is aligned with the government’s long-term objective of reducing dependence on imported chips and strengthening India’s position in the global semiconductor value chain.

Under the mission, India is projected to develop capabilities to meet nearly 75 per cent of its domestic semiconductor demand by 2030.

The roadmap also targets advanced manufacturing nodes such as 3-nanometre and 2-nanometre technologies, with an ambition to position India among the top semiconductor nations globally by 2035.

The push comes as major economies, including the US, European Union, Japan and South Korea, ramp up efforts to localise semiconductor production and diversify supply chains beyond a few concentrated hubs. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced ‘ISM 2.0’ in the Union Budget 2026–27, which earmarked an initial allocation of Rs 1,000 crore.

She had said that the scheme already has investment commitments at double the target.

“It has now been proposed to increase the outlay to Rs. 40,000 crore to capitalise on the momentum,” FM Sitharaman said in the Budget speech.

Tata Elxsi announces Rs 75 dividend: Check record date, dividend yield Shares slump 5%

Mumbai: The share price of Tata Elxsi plunged by more than 5% intra-day after the company announced its financial results yesterday. The company’s board has recommended a dividend for FY26, marking its first dividend announcement for the financial year ended March 31, 2026. Tata Elxsi: Dividend Rs 75 per share

The tech company’s board has recommended a dividend of Rs 75 per share of Rs 10 each for the financial year ended March 31, 2026. The dividend payment is subject to the approval of shareholders at the company’s upcoming annual general meeting.

The record date and the payout timeline for the same has not been finalized yet. For FY25, the company has paid out a final dividend of Rs 75 per share. Tata Elxsi reported its net profit at over Rs 220 crore, rising nearly 28% on a year-on-year (YoY) basis, from Rs 172 crore reported in Q4FY25. Sequentially,



the company’s net profit rose 23%. So far the company has declared 26 dividends since its listing in 2001. Its dividend yield is around 1.7%. The tech company pegged its revenue from operations for Q4FY26 at Rs 993 crore, rising over 9% YoY from Rs 908 crore reported in the same quarter last year.

On a sequential basis the revenue rose 4% compared to Rs 953 crore in Q3FY26. In intra-day trade the company’s stock was trading low 5.4% at Rs 4,396. The company’s stock touched an intra-day low of Rs 4,387. Over the past five trading sessions, the stock has declined by over 4%, while over the past one

month it has delivered a return of more than 6%. Tata Elxsi’s share price has gone down by nearly 19% over the past six months. So far in 2026, the stock has declined by more than 15%. Commenting on the company’s financial performance, Manoj Raghavan, CEO and MD of Tata Elxsi said, “During the quarter, we did well in improving our PBT margins by 143 basis points over the previous quarter to 25.6%. This corresponds to 10.7% QoQ growth in PBT.”

He added that, “Our Media & Communications business registered a strong growth 5.6% QoQ in constant currency terms over the previous quarter. The growth was driven by ongoing deal ramp-ups, a strategic AdTech engagement, and a Tier 1 U.S. Telco win. In our transportation business, while our revenues in Q4’26 consolidated after a strong 7.3% QoQ constant currency in Q3’26,...”

Nifty closes above 24,500, Sensex surges over 750 points; Realty, FMCG shine

Mumbai: At market close today, the benchmark indices ended on a strong note, with the Sensex rising 758.09 points, or 0.97%, to settle at 79,278.39, while the Nifty gained 211.75 points, or 0.87%, to close at 24,576.60. Sensex, Nifty at 12:10PM: In the afternoon trade, Indian equity markets extended their gains with strong buying across key sectors. The Sensex surged 704.63 points, or 0.90%, to trade at 79,224.93, while the Nifty climbed 187.40 points, or 0.77%, to 24,552.25.

Sensex, Nifty at 11:00AM: Markets extended their gains in intraday trade, The Asian indices on Tuesday morning opened on a higher note amid hopes for a resolution to the West Asia conflict, even as tensions between Iran and the US continue to simmer. Japan’s Nikkei 225 gained 0.52%, while the Topix was marginally higher. South Korea’s Kospi advanced 1.58% while the small-cap Kosdaq added 0.90%. Hong Kong Hang Seng index futures were at 26,494, higher than the index’s last close of 26,361.07. With the Sensex surging 700 points to 79,214, up 0.88%, while the Nifty climbed 192 points to 24,557, advancing 0.79%. Sensex, Nifty at 10:10AM: In the early trading hours, the market picked up pace, with the Sensex rising 567.96 points, or 0.72%, to 79,088.26, while the Nifty climbed 155.45 points, or 0.64%, to 24,520.30. Share market today at open: Indian equity markets opened on a higher note. The Nifty 50 surged 51 points or 0.21% to open at 24,416, while the BSE Sensex rose 196 points or 0.25% to open at 78,716. The Nifty Bank opened the trade 308 points or 0.54% higher at 56,890. “In the near-term the mar-



ket will continue to be news-driven, oscillating between hope and fear. Reports of second round of talks between US and Iran are keeping hopes of resolution to the conflict alive. Brent crude at \$95 and declining spot prices of crude reflect market confidence that the conflict may not last long. But if it does, crude price will again spike impacting stock markets. or 0.01%, settling at 49,442.56 West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures dropped

0.98% to trade at \$86.57 per barrel. Brent crude futures traded 0.59% lower at \$94.92 today morning. On COMEX, crude prices declined 1.72% to trade at \$88.07 a barrel. The price of gold has fallen by 0.45% from yesterday. The 24 kt gold rate today in Delhi is Rs 1,53,700 per 10 grams. The 18-carat gold price today in India is Rs 1,15,455. On COMEX, the precious metal was trading at a price of Rs 4,838.90 an ounce, rising 0.21%.

Titan, Trent, and DMart are important sector selections for Morgan Stanley’s consumer

Mumbai: A fresh note from Morgan Stanley turns selective on India’s discretionary and retail pack at a time when inflation risks are building again, and demand visibility is uneven. The brokerage singles out a handful of names where earnings drivers remain intact for FY27. It also cut its stance on one company, citing near-term pressure on growth and margins. Morgan Stanley’s latest call on India’s consumption pack rests on selectivity rather than a broad based view. Titan, DMart and Trent stand out in its coverage with steady earnings visibility and execution strength, while Jubilant FoodWorks faces a tougher near term path despite the recent correction in its share price. The brokerage’s positioning reflects a market where inflation, uneven demand and external risks are beginning to weigh on consumption, making stock specific drivers more important than sector wide trends. The report, dated April 17, 2026, lays out where they see resilience and where caution is warranted as macro conditions turn less supportive. Morgan Stanley keeps Avenue Supermarts, the operator of DMart stores, at ‘Overweight’ with a target price of Rs 5,188, implying a 17% upside from the current market price of Rs 4,246. The brokerage points to steady store expansion and better-than-expected operational updates in the recent quarter as key drivers for confidence in execution going forward. It believes that grocery retail could benefit from inflation as pricing dynamics support same store sales growth, helping offset pressure that may be visible in other discretionary categories. The firm also notes that DMart’s value positioning and efficient cost structure put it in a relatively



stronger position as consumers turn cautious on spending. Trent also finds a place in Morgan Stanley’s preferred list with an ‘Overweight’ rating, a target price of Rs 4,835 and an implied upside of 18% from the current market price of Rs 4,086. The brokerage expects consumption conditions to remain soft, especially in quick service restaurants where consumers are more price sensitive. It also flags higher input costs linked to liquefied petroleum gas supply constraints as a margin risk in the coming quarters. Even though the stock has corrected sharply, the firm does not see enough triggers for outperformance in the immediate future. The brokerage highlights the company’s aggressive store additions and improving traction across for-

mati as reasons for optimism. It notes that recent quarterly updates came in stronger than expected, reinforcing confidence in the company’s ability to sustain growth into financial year 2027. we prefer companies which have strong growth levers in place for F27 and offer relative value,” Morgan Stanley says. Morgan Stanley on Jubilant FoodWorks: ‘Equal Weight’ Morgan Stanley has downgraded Jubilant Foodworks to ‘Equal Weight’ from ‘Overweight’, cutting its target price to Rs 486 from Rs 693 earlier. At the current market price of Rs 459, the implied upside stands at 6%. The downgrade reflects concerns around slowing demand, rising costs and weaker operating leverage in the near term. “Grocery retailers could be ben-

eficiaries of inflation, pricing offers support to same store sales growth,” Morgan Stanley adds. Morgan Stanley on Titan Company: ‘Overweight’ Morgan Stanley retains an ‘Overweight’ call on Titan Company with a target price of Rs 5,102 and sees an upside of 14% from the current market price of Rs 4,461. The brokerage builds its case around strong jewelry demand supported by elevated gold prices and company level execution through schemes and customer offers. It expects revenue growth momentum to hold through the first half of FY27 if gold prices remain around current levels, which could translate into better operating performance even in a mixed consumption environment.

IT campus placements declining: Why Infosys

Mumbai: IT major Infosys saw a 2.5% dip in headcount sequentially for the quarter ended March 2026. The Bengaluru-headquartered tech services provider’s total workforce at the end of the fiscal fourth quarter was 328,594, down 8440 from 337,034 in the prior quarter. On a full fiscal basis however, the firm added a little over 5,016 employees in FY26, as compared to 323,578 at the end of FY25

“The headcount is the function multiple things – the growth rate, volumes, the utilization and so on. Keeping these in mind we derive the number of people that we need to hire. If you look at this quarter, the volumes were softer and utilization was lower,” Jayesh Sanghrajka, chief financial officer, Infosys said. “For next fiscal, we do not have any targets right now, it depends completely on demand. (It is a) very volatile environment right now. So, we will play it by the ear. As the demand picks up, we’ll see how it goes,” Saurabh Govil, chief human resources officer at Wipro said at the firm’s Q4 earnings meet

Govil also said that Wipro has reduced its campus hiring over the past four years. It onboarded 19,000 freshers in FY22, which then dropped to around 10,000



in FY25, and finally 7,500 in FY26. Both HCLTech and TechM also did not give a guidance for fresher hires in FY27. Management commentary remained focussed on hiring for roles and skills in demand, and when these demands rise.

TechM chief financial officer Rohit Anand said that the firm attributed the slowdown in fresher hiring to a change in strategy regarding the same in FY26. “We took a pause; the demand profile with AI is also changing. So, this year saw minimum fresher hiring,” he said. MD and CEO Salil Parekh added that seasonality also played a role in the hiring strategy for the quarter. The firm onboarded 20,000 freshers in FY26 and plans to reach the same number in the current fiscal. “We have different starting compensation for people who are coming with skills more attuned to AI. We are also building (a pool of) forward deployed

engineers to make sure that we can do more work directly with clients to make the AI solutions,” Parekh said. Infy’s commentary on hiring and entry level onboarding is in line with peers. IT majors have called out change in their fresher hiring strategy, as delivery models evolve and move to outcome-based billing, and disengage from headcount led billing. TCS has reduced its fresher intake for FY27 to around 25,000, compared to 44,000 onboarded in FY26. Wipro, HCLTech and TechM have not put a number to their fresher hiring targets, something which is unusual in a sector that has some of India’s largest recruiters for tech talent. IT firms are increasingly moving to demand visibility led hiring implying it no longer will look to hire to bolster bench strength, a practice which was the norm when billing was basis the man hours put on a project.

As Trump threatens to “blow up” Iran’s oilwells and export hub, Brent crude exceeds \$116 per barrel



Iran: As Donald Trump threatened to “blow up” and “completely obliterate” Iranian electricity plants, oilwells, and its export hub Kharg Island if it did not agree to a deal, the price of oil reached almost \$117 (£89) per barrel on Monday. After the US president stated on his social media platform Truth Social that the US will take more measures if a solution was not reached and the Strait of Hormuz was not reopened, Brent Crude’s price increased. “We will blow up and completely obliterate all of their Electric Generating Plants, Oil Wells, and Kharg Island (and possibly all desalination plants!), which we have purposefully not yet “touched,” in order to end our lovely “stay” in Iran,” he said. “This will be retaliation for the numerous soldiers and others that Iran slaughtered during the 47-year “Reign of Terror” of the previous regime.” On Monday, Jerome Powell, the chair of the US Federal Reserve and a frequent target of the president’s wrath, asserted that the central bank was in a “good place... to wait and see” how the economic consequences of the war on Iran played out. However, he warned that while policymakers decide how to handle interest rates, they will keep an eye on two opposing factors: the stability of the US labor market and pricing. During a Harvard University Q&A session, Powell stated, “There’s sort of downside risk to the labor market, which suggests keep rates low, but there’s upside risk to inflation, which suggests maybe don’t keep rates low.” “There is conflict between the two goals.” In an interview with the Financial Times on

Sunday, Trump, who has frequently sent contradictory signals regarding the objectives and potential length of the fight, threatened to take control of the Iranian export hub of Kharg Island. “To be honest with you, my favorite thing is to take the oil in Iran, but some stupid people back in the US say: ‘Why are you doing that?’” stated Trump. However, they are foolish individuals. “Maybe we take Kharg Island, maybe we don’t. We have a lot of options,” he said. The oil price rose by 2% to \$116.89 a barrel in early trading on Monday – not far off the \$119.50 highest level since the US-Israel war with Iran started on 28 February – before later dipping to \$112 a barrel.

In Europe, stock markets rose slightly, with the European Stoxx 600 index rising by 0.9%. The UK’s blue-chip FTSE 100 share index rose 1.6%. In the US, the S&P 500 and Dow Jones were up slightly in early afternoon trading on Wall Street. The tech-heavy Nasdaq was roughly flat. Natural gas prices rose slightly in Europe on Monday. Dutch month-ahead futures rose 1% to €54.70 a megawatt-hour. In Asia, where economies are highly exposed to the shortage in oil and gas coming out of the Gulf, stock markets dropped sharply before Trump’s latest post. Japan’s Nikkei fell by 2.8%, while the South Korean Kospi dropped 3%. Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index shed about 0.8%. Due to the current escalation of the Middle East conflict and the arrival of an additional 3,500 US troops, investors have become more anxious. In a risky expansion of the battle

that could exacerbate the world energy crisis, Houthi rebels in Yemen have now joined the fight and are launching ballistic missiles against Israeli locations. According to Deutsche Bank analysts, “there’s still no sign of a clear end to the conflict, and given the various headlines, investors remain fearful about a fresh escalation.” The war in the Middle East has ramped up oil prices to historic levels, with Brent crude now poised for its biggest monthly gain ever in March – up by 54% – beating the previous record of 46% in September 1990 after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. The disruption has fed through to prices at the petrol pump. The breakdown company RAC found that average petrol prices in the UK are now at 152p a litre, the highest level in 28 months. Diesel has reached 181.2p a litre, its highest level since December 2022, the RAC said. Industry figures have warned that there could be “temporary shortages” at petrol pumps in the UK. Keir Starmer was expected to hold talks on Monday afternoon with bosses from Shell, BP and the Norwegian energy company Equinor, as well as executives from the finance, insurance and shipping industries, about the crisis in the Middle East. The UK prime minister was expected to discuss what emergency measures might be needed to contain the crisis from the blockade in the strait of Hormuz. Brent traded as high as \$119.50 a barrel during March, its highest level since June 2022, after Iran all but closed the strait, through which a fifth of global oil and gas would normally pass. Ipek Ozkardeskaya, a senior analyst at Swissquote, said: “There are bets that crude could rise to \$150 and even to the \$200 per barrel level if the war doesn’t end quickly. I believe that demand would be heavily hit if prices go that high. Above \$120-130 per barrel, global recession odds would take the upper hand and tame upside pressure.” Aluminium prices jumped more than 5% in Asia after Iran struck aluminium producers in Bahrain and the UAE over the weekend, she added. Meanwhile, the UK chancellor, Rachel Reeves, is expected to tell G7 nations that they must move faster on clean energy to insulate economies against global price shocks from oil and gas, as she and the energy secretary, Ed Miliband, virtually meet G7 finance and energy ministers on Monday.

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

Iran: The 48-hour drama serves as a warning that an unbeaten Iran can strike back and inflict costs on the United States, but Donald Trump will undoubtedly claim the recovery of the second crew member of the downed F-15 fighter as a propaganda victory. It should also serve as a warning to a White House that is still debating whether to conduct a ground operation in Iran to take control of an island in the Persian Gulf, especially if there is a genuine desire to remove Iran’s highly enriched uranium from underground. Five weeks into the conflict, a single shoot-down became a major issue for the Americans due to the extreme rarity and memorability of the US-Israeli bombing of Iran, which has been so severely biased in favor of the attackers. During the Iraq War in 2003, a US warplane was last shot down by enemy forces. Even if the US and Israeli air forces attack Iran between 300 and 500 times a day, the fact that the F-15E was brought down serves as a warning that their air superiority is not totally absolute. The F-15E Strike Eagle costs \$31 million (but a full replacement might cost \$100 million), but the problems obviously started during the rescue, which is far riskier than the mission the US warplane was on. When two C-130 Hercules transporters—likely modified search and rescue versions—became trapped in the ground, the plan to exploit an abandoned Iranian airport south of Isfahan as a forward op-



erating station went awry. According to US reports, the US destroyed them to keep them out of the hands of the Iranians, and additional transporters had to be rushed forward in order to finish extracting the injured second crew member. The list price of each modernized Hercules is close to \$115 million.

An HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter involved in the rescue was also damaged by gunfire on Friday – so it is easy to conclude that the cost in lost and damaged airframes exceeds \$250m, largely for the rescue of the second crew member. In military terms, a single episode like this does not matter much to the US. Losing aircraft, whether shot down or in accidents, is part of war. The US had 218 F-15E Strike Eagles and 55 C-130s in its special force command before it attacked

Iran, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies. A full-scale US search and rescue operation was politically necessary to prevent Iran from capturing either member of the crew. The capture of one or both would have been a coup for Tehran, reviving memories of the US embassy hostage crisis of 1979-80, which did so much damage to the then president, Jimmy Carter. The point was underlined by Trump, who emphasised in a social media post, using capitals, that the US would never leave an American warfighter behind. It is an attractive commitment, but one that means further cost and risk will be incurred each time it is called upon. On this occasion Iranian forces failed to locate either of the F-15E crew. They were not able to contest the US’s use of the abandoned airbase south of Isfahan,

though this could have been because of Reaper drones loitering overhead, which, according to US briefings, were there to kill any Iranian males getting within 3km. But the enforced loss of the rescue C-130 transporters is a reminder of the greater risks inherent in any US ground operation in Iran. Could it really be feasible for US special forces to seize the 440kg of highly enriched uranium thought to be hidden underground in canisters at Isfahan and fly them away without major incident? There is no doubt that Iran – bombed in excess of 15,000 times so far – is being battered by the relentless US and Israeli airstrikes. But Tehran can still turn relatively small US or Israeli losses into a propaganda victory, whatever the state of its troops or air defences, precisely because they have been infrequent.

During his candidacy, Mamdani promised to provide affordable homes in New York How’s it going



New York : Advocates for the homeless have been incensed by New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani’s decision to challenge a court order requiring the city to expand its housing voucher program, despite his campaign promise to do so. The expense of the City Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS) program, which assists those residing in shelters or at danger of homelessness in finding permanent housing, was cited by Mamdani, who must figure out how to cover a \$5.4 billion budget shortfall. The scheme, according to proponents of the vouchers, is essential to resolving what they and Mamdani refer to as a homelessness crisis. Naturally, politicians frequently make bold promises on the platform that are difficult to carry out after winning office, so it is not unusual for them to change their minds. Despite this fact, the mayor may lose the support of those who had great expectations for him as a result of the housing voucher and homeless camp decisions. According to Christine Quinn, president and CEO of WIN, the biggest shelter provider in the city, “it’s a classic example of a political promise made and a promise broken and really a betrayal of the homeless and unhoused community in New York who took him at his word.” According to a January report from the state comptroller, since the Department of Social Services introduced CityFHEPS in 2018, it has assisted over 123,000 individuals in finding permanent homes. However, the program’s cost rose dramatically, from \$176 million in 2019 to an estimated \$1.2 billion in fiscal year 2025. In 2023, a legislative package was approved by the city council with the goal

of facilitating access to the vouchers by, among other things, raising the income eligibility level and doing away with the need to have lived in a shelter. The proposals were then vetoed by Mayor Eric Adams, who claimed that they went beyond “the council’s legal authority” and “could saddle taxpayers with billions of dollars” annually. People in need of rental help filed a lawsuit after Adams refused to carry out the laws despite the council having enough votes to override the veto. In July 2025, a New York state appeals court decided that the city must expand the voucher program after a lower court had sided with Adams. The Adams administration was later given permission to appeal by that court. Mamdani declared during his campaign that he would “ensure expansion proceeds as scheduled” and abandon the legal battle. His administration did file an appeal as the time for reaching a settlement approached on March 25, citing the same defense as Adams: that the city council had overreached its lawful jurisdiction. In a press conference held on the day of the deadline, Mamdani explained the decision by saying that the city’s fiscal situation when he took office in January was worse than expected and that an expansion would cost the city more than \$4bn in the next few years. He pledged to continue negotiating with the council on a settlement to the lawsuit. “I am deeply committed to ending the homelessness crisis in the city. I’m appreciative of the fact that” the CityFHEPS expansion “is a commitment shared by many New Yorkers, elected officials, and beyond, and also, I’m committed to doing so in a manner that is sustainable for both

the medium and the long term,” Mamdani said. Housing policy experts say rental vouchers are effective at lifting people out of poverty. Less than 1% of families who exit New York homeless shelters with a subsidy – typically a voucher – re-enter a shelter within one year, according to a Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies 2023 report. Without subsidies, 15% of families again became homeless. For low-income households “this kind of benefit can really be a lifeline”, said Vincent Reina, a professor in University of Pennsylvania’s department of city and regional planning. New York, however, has some of the highest housing costs in the country, which means closing the gap between what a person can afford and rent prices requires significant public money, Reina pointed out. “That doesn’t mean you should not do it, right? But it does mean that there are budgetary implications,” Reina said. Quinn believes that the vouchers ultimately save the city money.

“There is general consensus that ensuring people are housed is more cost effective than shelter-based options in the long run,” Reina said. “There is also the reality that things can be more cost effective in the long run but you don’t have the budget for it today.” Vouchers also do not address the primary reason behind high rent: “There are more people who want to live in the city than there are units,” said Daniel Teles, economist with the Urban Institute. CityFHEPS “shrinks the need”. “The voucher program gives people more choice of where they live, so there is a benefit there, but that is a trade-off against trying to use funding to develop more

housing,” Teles said. Still, Mamdani has focused significant attention on building affordable housing. That effort included presenting Donald Trump with a fake front page with the headline “Trump to City: Let’s Build.” Mamdani was trying to secure \$21bn in federal grants to build 12,000 affordable housing units in Queens. “The mayor is doing flawless work as it relates to negotiating with Donald Trump,” Quinn, who previously served on the city council, said sincerely. “If he can get us more resources from Washington, all the better.” But Quinn remains disappointed that the mayor decided to appeal the court decision rather than reach a settlement to expand CityFHEPS. “Parties in the lawsuit and supporters have made clear to the Mamdani administration, ‘We’re prepared to negotiate,’” Quinn said. A spokesperson for Mamdani stated that the administration “inherited a generational fiscal crisis”. “Mayor Mamdani has made it clear that we need to tax the rich and end the drain so that we can build more affordable housing, keep New Yorkers stably housed and tackle the affordability crisis,” the spokesperson stated. “Unfortunately, the city council speaker has yet to join these calls and has not yet put forward a reasonable proposal to expand the CityFHEPS program or make it more efficient. We remain committed to staying at the table, but the speaker’s request that we drop the appeal only makes reaching a settlement harder.” Mamdani also changed how the city treats homeless encampments – at least initially. During his campaign he criticized the police department’s encampments sweeps and paused that work on his fifth day in office.

A month later, he reinstituted the sweeps, but said they would now be led by the Department of Homeless Services staff who would conduct “relentless outreach each and every day”. “The back-peddalling he did on CityFHEPS was very disappointing. The back-peddaling he did on encampment sweeps was very disappointing,” said David Giffen, executive director of the Coalition for the Homeless. “We will continue to push him to do what we believe is the right thing: to help homeless and at-risk New Yorkers.”

Use charts to monitor fuel prices, service station outages, and shipments in Australia

Australia: Oil shipments have been canceled, fuel prices have increased, and hundreds of service stations throughout Australia have run empty. As Iran continues to close the Strait of Hormuz, Australia is facing a petroleum shortage.

The federal government has implemented a national fuel security plan, lowered fuel excise prices, and freed fuel reserves. Although we are aware that there have been price rises and outages, it can be challenging to obtain a whole picture of the situation, in part because there are thousands of separate companies and many governments engaged. We have compiled the most recent information on oil tanker deliveries, outages, and prices. Looking at the averages for petrol and diesel across Australia, we can see how much prices have risen since the US and Israel’s war on Iran began in late February. There can be a huge variation in price and availability,

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



Australian ports by tankers with shipments of fuel and crude oil, which is refined to make fuel.

The data indicates a minor decrease in the number of tankers in February and March when compared to the previous six years, but it does not differentiate between imports and exports. Tankers passing through the Strait of Hormuz during the first few weeks of March completely collapsed, according to the same dataset. Approximately one-third of fertilizers and one-fifth of the world’s oil were transported via the strait prior to the conflict. The federal government lowered the

minimum stock levels that petroleum businesses must maintain for emergencies at the beginning of March.

A monthly snapshot of fuel reserves in relation to the new minimums and how long this would last at typical consumption rates is shown in the following chart. Showing stocks of fuel compared to minimum requirements and how many days this would last at normal consumption rates. This data is released weekly. Latest data as of 31 March 2026. As of the beginning of April, Australia’s fuel reserves – measured in the number of days they would last – had actually increased since prewar levels.

What really controls our appetite – hunger, stress or habit

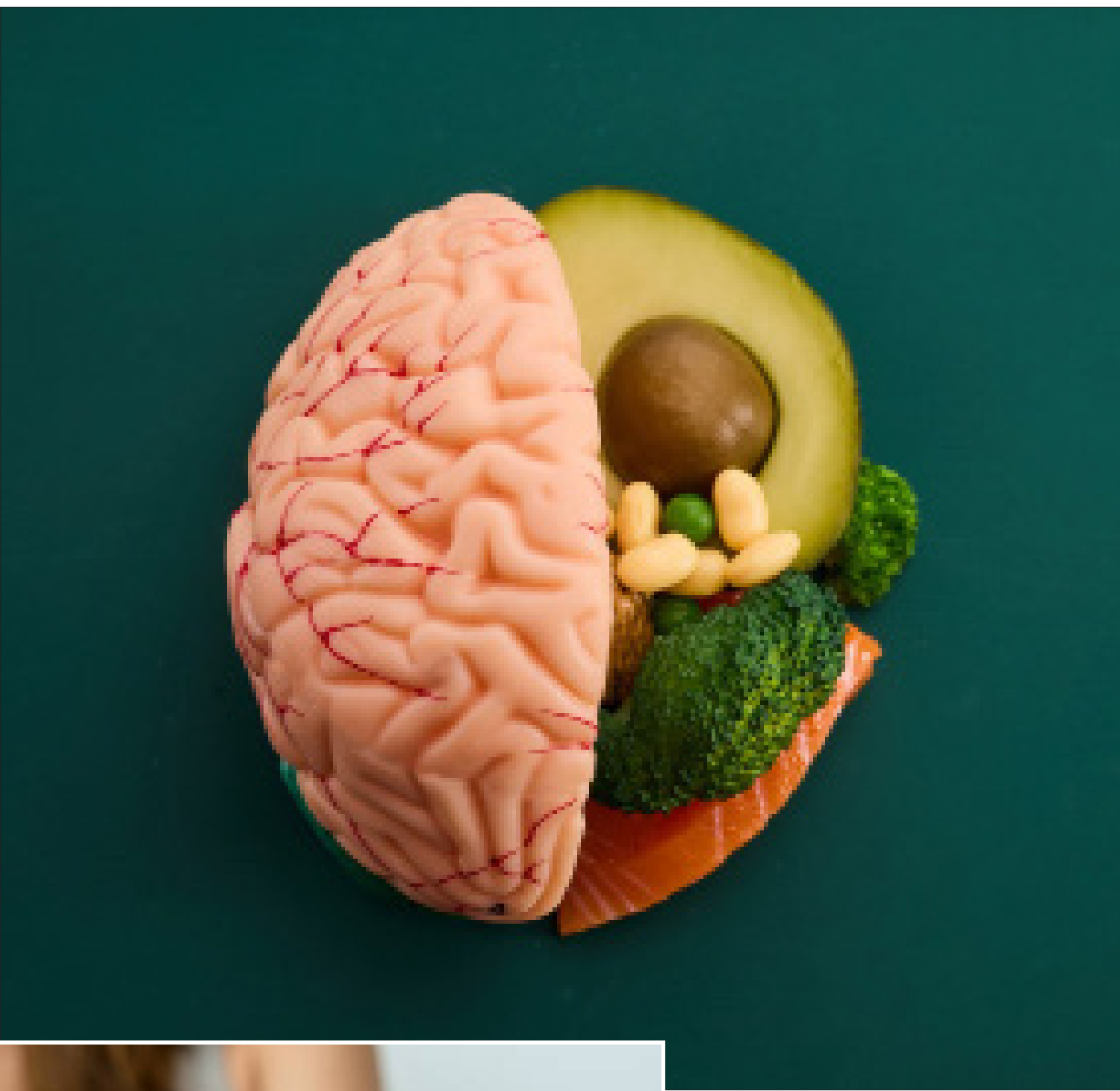
Imagine you're in a meeting room when someone brings out the biscuits – a packet of Jammie Dodgers, perhaps, or a nice little plate of custard creams. Maybe you want one and maybe you don't, but the chances are the people around you are all responding differently: someone will grab a couple straight away, someone else will eat one without seeming to notice, another will barely be aware the biscuits exist, and someone will spend the whole meeting wanting one but not taking it. Our appetites and responses to food vary wildly – but what's going on behind the scenes to govern them? And has modern food somehow hijacked the process? Grab a biscuit (or don't) and settle in.

“First, it's important to distinguish between hunger and appetite,” says Giles Yeo, a professor of molecular neuroendocrinology at the University of Cambridge and the author of *Why Calories Don't Count*. “Hunger is a feeling – it's what happens in the run-up to you deciding you need to eat something. Appetite is everything that surrounds why we eat – including hunger, fullness and reward, or how you actually feel when you eat. Those three sensations all use completely different parts of the brain, but they all work together.” Hunger is regulated by the hypothalamus, which sits behind the bridge of the nose, at the base of the brain, monitoring your body's levels of blood sugar and the hormones leptin and ghrelin to check whether you're in an energy deficit. Fullness is regulated by the hindbrain, located roughly where your skull meets your neck: when your stomach stretches, the vagus nerve sends a signal to this area telling you that you're physically full. Reward, meanwhile, is regulated by a diffuse network of neurons that sit higher up in the brain, driven by dopamine and its search for pleasurable activities.

“All those parts of the brain speak to each other, which is why if you're really hungry, food that offers very little ‘reward’ – like rice or bread – can be delicious. Or why you can feel full but still feel ready for chocolate cake,

because it's activating your reward system even though your hindbrain says you're full,” says Yeo. “It's like a triangle that changes shape depending on your circumstances, with appetite in the middle.” So what's going on with the biscuits? Well, part of the reason we might respond differently to them is how hungry or full we are in the moment, but it's likely that genetics also play a part. “We all know people who love food, and people who simply see it as fuel,” Yeo continues. “Food-is-fuel people will get hungry eventually, but it happens far closer to the time that they actually need to eat than for others. It's also likely to be a matter of how much – or how little – food is needed to trigger the brain's reward response. We know there are more than a thousand genes that influence our appetite, so it's a very complex system.”

Another element in all this is that scent, sight and even sound cues activate the brain's appetite circuitry independently of how much energy we have stored, resulting in what neuroscientists call “hedonic” hunger. “When we see food, sensory and olfactory input interacts with brain regions that regulate appetite, and temporarily increase dopamine signalling,” says Timothy Frie, a nutritional neuroscien-



tist. “That heightens our motivation to eat, even if our physiological energy needs have already been met. The sensation of hunger isn't coming from an empty stomach, but from a conditioned, cue-driven response where the brain and body are preparing for intake based on what you see. Sound can also play a part, with its influence coming primarily through learned associations, like the repeated pairing of a sizzle or a crunch with a desirable taste or sensation.”

One more complication is that all these systems can be confused, or at least disrupted, by stress. “When we're stressed or experiencing some degree of cognitive overload or fatigue, the regulatory capacity of our prefrontal cortex is reduced, while appetite and reward systems remain active,” says Frie. “The

brain's demand for a rapid and reliable source of fuel also increases in response to stress. That creates a predictable imbalance: stronger drive to eat with reduced ability to regulate that drive.” Sugary, salty, fatty and especially ultra-processed foods rapidly increase glucose availability and light up motivation pathways in the brain, and when we're stressed, the brain assigns higher priority to these foods because they provide quick and efficient energy. Appetite can also be disrupted over time. When we overeat refined carbs, sugars and fats frequently over a long period, our receptors for insulin and leptin (which regulates energy balance and appetite) can become muted, reducing their responsiveness and making it harder for us to tell when we should stop eating.

Food companies, of course, know all this, and often respond to it by hijacking the systems that lead us astray: pumping delicious scents through the air in fast-food restaurants, say, or designing foods that pair hyperpalatability with sensory cues like a satisfying crunch. To make matters worse, although our in-built satiety systems are fairly good at roughly judging the energy content of foods that are mostly fat or protein, they're terrible at estimating it in foods that mix refined carbs and fat, making it easy to enormously overeat things like biscuits, pastries and pizza. Where does this leave us? Unfortunately, in a situation where our basic drives and biological mechanisms haven't changed much since our hunter-gatherer past, but are being exploited by the endless food options available. “Many of us live in a supernormal, overstimulating and engineered food environment,” says Frie. “Our brains are saturated with cues to eat, but they aren't necessarily equipped to respond to so many cues for a long period of time. The best thing we can do for ourselves is to develop what I call food-mind fluency: the ability to recognise what is driving the urge to eat in that moment and respond with awareness and conscious intention.” This allows us to regulate and manage the sequence of events that occur between a food cue and a food response. In practice, Frie says: “That could mean inserting a brief pause before acting on the impulse to eat and asking a single question: ‘What is generating this signal right now: energy need, stress, habit or exposure to a cue?’ That step engages our prefrontal cortex, which allows us to shift our behaviour from automatic to intentional.” But when the vast majority of non-infectious diseases we face as a species are diet-related, preaching personal responsibility probably isn't enough. “Personal responsibility is fine and we need to talk about it and give people advice,” says Yeo. “But I also think it absolves policymakers and government from the public health decisions they need to take in order to try to improve our food environment. It has to be a holistic thing.”

Why Strong Skin, Not Just Younger Skin, Is The New Anti-Aging Goal For Indian Women

For years, the anti-aging conversation has focused almost entirely on one goal, looking younger. But for Indian women, it is time to rethink that approach. Healthy aging is not just about achieving flawless skin; it is about building stronger, healthier skin that can age better over time.

As experts often observe, many women begin their anti-aging journey only after visible signs appear. These typically include fine lines, dullness, dryness, pigmentation, uneven texture, or loss of firmness. However, the reality is that skin aging begins much earlier, often in the late 20s to early 30s and is influenced by multiple internal and external factors. We spoke to Dr Sandeep Aroora, Senior Consultant, Dermatology, Apollo Spectra

Hospital, Delhi who shares key insights on the subject. Indian skin has unique needs. Constant exposure to sun, pollution, heat, hormonal changes, and lifestyle habits significantly influences how the skin ages. It is also more prone to pigmentation and tanning, which become more noticeable over time. This is why anti-aging for Indian women cannot be limited to wrinkle correction alone. It must also focus on strengthening the skin, maintaining hydration, and protecting against everyday environmental damage, while preserving luminosity and an even skin tone. Sensitive skin tends to age faster due to repeated barrier disruption. Strong skin, on the other hand, is better equipped to retain moisture, defend against external stressors,



and recover from daily damage. When the skin barrier is compromised, it

becomes more vulnerable to dryness, irritation, and premature aging. In many

cases, this damage does not initially appear as wrinkles. Instead, the skin begins to

look tired, dehydrated, and less radiant, often the earliest signs of declining skin resilience. In this context, skin strength becomes a key foundation for graceful aging, directly impacting hydration, elasticity, and overall skin quality.

Strengthening the skin begins with reinforcing the skin barrier. A healthy barrier helps lock in hydration and protects against irritants and pollutants, allowing the skin to function optimally. One of the most important steps in any anti-aging routine is the daily use of sunscreen, particularly in India, where ultraviolet exposure remains high throughout the year. Without adequate sun protection, collagen breakdown, tanning, and textural changes can accelerate significantly. The next step is choosing skin-

care that supports the skin rather than overwhelming it. Ingredients such as ceramides, hyaluronic acid, and squalene help restore and maintain hydration, while niacinamide supports barrier repair and reduces inflammation. Pro-vitamin B5 further aids in soothing and healing the skin.

Ingredients like purified peptides are now gaining recognition as a gentler alternative to traditional actives such as retinol. These chains of amino acids support collagen production and improve skin firmness and elasticity over time, while remaining well tolerated, even by sensitive skin. Unlike stronger actives that can sometimes cause irritation, purified peptides work in harmony with the skin's natural repair processes, making them suitable for long-term

use. Clinical observations have also shown visible improvements across multiple signs of aging, including enhanced radiance, improved firmness and elasticity, and a reduction in fine lines. When combined with antioxidants such as Edelweiss extract, known to reduce oxidative stress and soothe the skin, these formulations offer a balanced approach that prioritises both efficacy and comfort, supporting healthier and more resilient skin over time. Today, one of the biggest challenges is the over-treatment of skin. Using too many active ingredients or blindly following trends can disrupt the skin barrier and trigger sensitivity. Healthy skin is not built through aggressive routines, but through consistency, protection, and mindful, long-term care.

Salman Khan confirms that his movie with Nayanthara will be released on Eid 2027

Mumbai: Salman Khan has scheduled his next movie with Nayanthara for Eid 2027. Vamshi Paidipally will be the director of the untitled film, which is currently known as SVC63. A preview of the movie’s muhurat has already been released by the producers, giving viewers a sneak peek at the project before it formally begins production.

Salman posted a lighthearted letter on X announcing the release date, pleading with followers to be patient while alluding to long-term planning. “Thoda durr ki sochna chahiye, which is why Eid was declared.” Don’t worry, when the time is right, iss wali ka bhi bataenge. Patience, thoda sa sabar, mere jitna hi intezaar karna padega. He wrote, “One should think a little ahead, which is why I announced Eid. Baharhaal jo aapka haal hai, woh hi mera bhi haal hai.” We’ll unveil the other one at the appropriate moment, so don’t worry. Just a little patience, please. You’ll have to wait as long as I do. I feel the same way you do at this moment. The project’s journey began with the release of a muhurat video. Munna, Brindavanam, Yevadu, Maharshi, and Varisu are just a few of the successful films that Vamshi Paidipal-



ly has directed. He has worked with top actors like Prabhas, Jr. NTR, Ram Charan, Allu Arjun, Mahesh Babu, and Vijay throughout the years, winning praise for fusing commercial storytelling with emotional nuance.

The untitled film, which is being produced by Dil Raju under Sri Venkateswara Creations, is being presented as a fast-paced action drama. Salman’s long-standing tradition of celebratory Eid releases—which includes big hits like Wanted, Dabangg, Bodyguard, Bajrangi Bhaijaan, Sultan, Kick, and Bharat—continues with

this news. One of the biggest names in South cinema, Nayanthara, debuted in Bollywood alongside Shah Rukh Khan in Jawan.

The Atlee-directed movie became a huge international hit, grossing over ₹1,000 crore at the box office. Among the well-known films in her vast Southern repertoire are Chandramukhi, Ghajini, Billa, Raja Rani, and Viswasam. Salman is also scheduled to star in Apoorva Lakhia’s Maatrubhumi, which is purportedly based on the fight between China and India in the Galwan Valley in 2020.

Sonam Kapoor, who recently welcomed a second child, claims that life is a dream

Mumbai: Sonam Kapoor, who and her husband Anand Ahuja had their second child, a son, on March 29, is revealing in her role as a mother. The Neerja actress posted some unposed photos of her family of four on Friday. Sonam is seen lounging with her older kid Vayu at her side in the first picture. Vayu is engaged in his drumming session in the following picture. It’s too adorable to pass up. As the baby rests soundly on his lap, Anand Ahuja can be seen grinning with happiness. Another heartwarming picture shows big brother Vayu gazing at the baby in his cradle. “Life is a dream... this month so far... thank you, Universe,” Sonam said, encapsulating her emotions. My three.

Heart emoticons were also posted in the comments section by Sonam’s sister Rhea Kapoor, aunt Maheep Kapoor, and Patralekhaa, the new mother in B-town.

Sonam Kapoor shared the wonderful news on Insta-



gram, writing, “Our family has grown, and with his arrival, our hearts have expanded in the most beautiful way.” Vayu is ecstatic to welcome his younger brother, and we are incredibly grateful for this priceless new life that has brought joy and grace into our home. As a family of four, we are happy to start this wonderful new chapter. Sonam, Anand, and Vayu, with love.” She thanked the hospital and shared the first

glimpse of her kid. In November of last year, Sonam Kapoor revealed that she was expecting her second child. She typed “Mother,” followed by a kissing emoticon, in a brief caption.

After dating for three years, Sonam Kapoor and Anand Ahuja were married in 2018. Vayu, the couple’s first child, was born in August 2022. Regarding her career, the actress last appeared in the 2023 Zee5 movie Blind.

Director Anurag Basu confirms that Kartik Aaryan and Sreeleela’s film would be released in 2026

Mumbai: In the upcoming musical drama directed by Anurag Basu, all attention is on Bollywood actor Kartik Aaryan and actress Sreeleela. Last February, Kartik shared an exciting glimpse of their onscreen romance, showcasing his transformation with a rugged look while performing the song “Tu Meri Zindagi Hai” in front of a large audience and engaging in intimate moments with Sreeleela, such as riding a bike together and enjoying close moments by a bonfire. Initially, the film was set for a Diwali release last year, but recent speculation regarding its release date led to fears of further delays. However, Anurag Basu confirmed that the film remains on track for a 2026 release, stating, “We are very much on schedule and the shoot is progressing well. It’s a film we believe in deeply, and we are bringing it to audiences this year as intended.”

In April of last year, the film crew was spotted shooting in the picturesque state of Sikkim, where they met with Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, who warmly welcomed them and presented them with traditional gifts. The Chief Minister also expressed the state government’s commitment to ensuring a smooth filming process. A photograph shared on social media showcased the film’s team, including Kartik in a casual outfit and Sreeleela in a striking red attire, alongside Anurag, attired in a matching red shirt. The caption highlighted the positive engagement between the government and the filmmakers, reflecting a spirit of cooperation for the film project.

Veteran comedian Dinesh Hingoo Explains Why He Must Continue Working at 86



Mumbai: With a career spanning from 1967 to 2010, veteran comedian Dinesh Hingoo is well-known for having appeared in more than 300 movies. The 86-year-old actor recently disclosed that he still needs to go to work because he needs money to go to the doctor. Dinesh Hingoo stated, “I am 86 years old,” in the video that has gone viral. I occasionally go out to work. I recently suffered injuries after falling. I

need money to visit the doctor, but everything is okay now.” “Doctor kabhi 5000 Rs mangte hai kabhi Rs 6000,” he went on. Character actors don’t make a lot of money. I worked on black-and-white movies. I’ve worked on Rajasthani and Gujarati films. At the age of 86, Dinesh Hingoo also mentioned that he occasionally goes to work. He said, “Doctor ke paas jaane ke liye maal chahiye (Need money to go to the doctor).”

He remarked, “Jaata hoon kabhi kabhi, bulaya aaya toh,” regarding continuing to work at the age of 86. (If they call, I go).” Films like Baazigar, Humraaz, Saajan, and No Entry are among his most iconic comedic creations. His portrayal of stereotypically humorous Parsi characters continues to leave a lasting impression on moviegoers. Additionally, he has contributed to a number of television series, including those on Doordarshan.

He continued to work later on, claiming financial considerations, but his most famous roles peaked in the 1990s and late 2000s.

The director of Haq reveals that Yami Gautam studied the Quran for her part



Mumbai: Filmmaker Suparn S. Varma has revealed new details about the rigorous planning that went into making his movie Haq, including the extent to which the team went to guarantee authenticity. The film, which stars Yami Gautam and Emraan Hashmi, has received recognition

for its compelling narrative and potent societal concerns. The filmmaker recently discussed the study process and the dedication of his lead actress, especially Yami, to her character preparation. According to Suparn Varma, Yami Gautam studied religious materials to gain a deeper understanding of her character’s background as part of her rigorous preparation. “We spent almost a year and a half understanding Islamic law,” he said, adding that Yami had studied the Holy Quran in preparation for the position. Yami portrays Shazia Bano, a lady in 1970s India who must deal with both emotional and legal issues.

The director also emphasized how meticulous and thoughtful the film’s research process was, particularly in light of the current situation. “Everyone has information, but you never know if it’s accurate or not. “I wanted Haq to be a voice of reason in that space,” he stated. The film, which was produced by Junglee Pictures in collaboration with Insomnia Films and Baweja Studios, examines issues of justice, gender, and individual dignity. It follows Shazia as she sues her husband for not paying her maintenance when he marries another woman. Haq attracted a larger audience when it debuted on OTT on January 2, 2026, following its theatrical release in November 2025. Netflix is presently offering the movie for streaming.

Alia Bhatt wants her daughter Raha to pursue athletics rather than acting

Mumbai: Actor Alia Bhatt is already speculating about her three-year-old daughter Raha Kapoor’s future, and it’s not necessarily Bollywood. Alia recently acknowledged in an interview that she wants Raha to pursue a career in athletics.

Alia talked candidly about her daughter Raha and the kind of career path she envisions for her in a recent interview with Femina. Alia said, “I think, starting with my family,” when asked about the women who have aided in her development. Growing up, my mother was the biggest and most influential person in my life. I watched her raise my sister and me while continuing to pursue her dream of becoming an actor, whether it was through theater or television. Then my sister, who has been quite vocal about her struggles with depression and mental health. Additionally, I work with a group of amazing women that make up my team. They all provide my life so many various levels of encouragement, viewpoints, support, and simply vitality. “I adore it when everything seems like a joint effort. I believe that playing a team sport would be my first choice if I were an athlete! It’s some-



thing I occasionally consider. even for my daughter. I hope she’s a real athlete. She is incredibly athletic and competitive.

Despite just being three years old, she hops around like a bee in a bonnet. “I find that working as a team is truly enjoyable,” she continued. Alia stated that ambition has nothing to do with parenthood while discussing how motherhood has changed her perspective on work. She emphasized that while having children does cause some priorities to change, it also strengthens the emphasis on quality over quantity in both life and work, which is what occurred to her. Alia mar-

ried Ranbir Kapoor in April 2022 after dating him for a number of years. On the sets of Brahmāstra, which ran for seven years, their romance developed. November 2022 saw the birth of their first child, Raha. Alia will soon appear in Love and War, directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. In addition to Alia, the movie features Vicky Kaushal and Ranbir Kapoor. After the 2022 film Gangubai Kathiawadi, for which Alia received a National Award for Best Actress, this is her second project with Bhansali. Regarding the release date of the Sanjay Leela Bhansali film Love & War, there has been a great deal of uncertainty and conjecture.

Originally scheduled for release in 2025, the movie, starring Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, and Vicky Kaushal, was first announced in January 2024. Love & War will now open in theaters on January 21, 2027, which is a few days before the Republic Day timeframe. She is also working on a spy thriller called Alpha. The movie is scheduled to be released on July 10. The release date of Alpha was rescheduled from Christmas 2025 to April 17, 2026.

After Jameel Jamali wins over the audience, Rakesh Bedi receives a rs. 1 crore bonus

Mumbai: Even though Ranveer Singh featured in Dhurandhar, the audience was just as impressed by Rakesh Bedi. He has received a lot of attention for his performance as Pakistani politician Jameel Jamali, which has become an obvious audience favorite. According to a recent source, the actor received a delicious bonus of ₹1 crore as a sign of appreciation amid the film’s enormous success. The producers of Dhurandhar were so delighted with Rakesh Bedi’s performance, according to a report by Bollywood Hungama, that they have chosen to pay him more money as a token of respect and gratitude. As Jameel Jamali, Rakesh Bedi captivated, delighted, and won the audience over. In the world of memes, his line has become timeless, and his influence was further enhanced by the plot twist in the fol-

low-up. The effort he went into creating the character so distinctive moved the producers. They chose to give him more compensation as a thank you,” a source told the newspaper. “Rakesh Bedi was paid ₹50 lakhs for Dhurandhar and Dhurandhar The Revenge,” the informant continued. Together with his brother and partner Lokesh Dhar, Aditya Dhar, the film’s director and producer, gave him a check for ₹1 crore following the release of the second part and its historic success.

It was, in essence, twice the amount he had demanded for the franchise. He has also demonstrated his uniqueness as a human being with this gesture. Such a generous move is uncommon for producers. In Dhurandhar, Rakesh Bedi played the part of Pakistani politician Jameel Jamali. The actor’s performance

in Dhurandhar: The Revenge has been widely praised. A significant plot twist involving his character was also included in the movie, and it quickly became one of the main topics of discussion among viewers. In addition to Ranveer Singh, Arjun Rampal, Sara Arjun, Sanjay Dutt, R Madhavan, and Akshaye Khanna, the two-part film is directed by Aditya Dhar. In just three weeks, the second part eclipsed the original film’s lifetime earnings of over ₹1700 crore worldwide, while the first part became an all-time blockbuster with over ₹1300 crore. The next film starring Rakesh is Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai. In addition to Varun Dhawan, Mrunal Thakur, Pooja Hegde, Mouni Roy, Rajesh Kumar, and Digvijay, the romantic comedy is directed by David Dhawan. The movie is slated to hit theaters on May 22.

After being spotted at Amritsar Airport, Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padma evade photographers

Mumbai: Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padma, stars of Saiyaara, were recently in the news after a video of them at Amritsar Airport showed them attempting to elude the photographers. In the video, the two are seen hurrying through the terminal while attempting to hide their faces from the approaching paparazzi, who appear to have caught them off guard.

The two are seen in the footage evading photographers as they enter the airport. Ahaan was dressed in trousers and a dark blue sweatshirt, while Aneet was dressed casually in a t-shirt, white shirt, and denim jeans. They were both wear-

ing masks over their faces. Fans responded right away, adding heart emojis and joy to the comments. Ahaan and Aneet have gained popularity among viewers despite persistent rumors about their relationship, particularly after making their joint debut in the 2025 YRF hit Saiyaara. Mohit Suri’s film Saiyaara marked the pair’s big-screen debut. The film’s music, poignant story, and chemistry between the main actors all contributed to its economic success. The movie became the highest-grossing love tale in Indian cinema history, earning over ₹571 crore globally. The three are currently preparing to work together

on another untitled movie, which is anticipated to center on a passionate love tale. Similar to Saiyaara, Akshaye Widhani of Yash Raj Films is producing this. The director expressed his enthusiasm at collaborating with Ahaan and Aneet once more, calling the partnership quite unique. “It’s always been love stories for me... overwhelming, when emotions are so unbound and impossible to ignore,” he remarked, adding that he is drawn to dramatic love stories by nature. Returning with the same crew, he added, feels like “coming home,” but with a revitalized creative spirit. Mohit acknowledged that he feels

like he is beginning again with the new project. “This time I feel like a newcomer... excited and anxious about this story,” he remarked, hoping that the soundtrack would have the same impact on viewers as his earlier work. The movie is scheduled to be released in 2027.

Aneet Padma recently shared personal details about her grandfather’s passing. She gave a heartfelt tribute, thinking back on his fight with Alzheimer’s and honoring his unwavering warmth and love. She said she wanted to preserve his influence in her life by passing on his morals, tales, and recollections.

In Murshidabad, Arijit Singh and his wife Koel go to vote together

New Delhi: On April 23, singer Arijit Singh and his wife Koel Roy went out to vote in the West Bengal Elections 2026. Singh was reported to be in a cheerful mood. Photographers were immediately drawn to the occasion, but the musician decided to keep things lighthearted and graciously turned down demands to deliver a message or flaunt his inked finger while making clever comments. Arijit and his spouse went to Koel Roy on Thursday to vote in the 2026 West Bengal Assembly Elections. In Jagannj, in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal, the singer was seen coming at a polling place. They went inside to cast their ballots, Arijit walking hand in hand with her. The musician was seen arriving at the polling place in a happy mood in a number of videos that went viral on social media. Before going inside to cast his ballot, he gave the journalists a friendly grin and gave a quick acknowledgement to the police officers stationed at the location. In a recent video, singer Arijit Singh humorously responded to photographers about his voting experience, suggesting that giving a message while voting could lead to chaos and joking that he might be mistaken for a politician. When asked to show his inked finger as proof of voting, he declined, noting that his presence was sufficient evidence. He encouraged responsible coverage of the voting process. Earlier, his father, Surinder Singh, expressed satisfaction with the voting process during his visit to a polling booth in Murshidabad, stating that everything was going smoothly. Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar praised the voters in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu for their record-high turnout, with West Bengal achieving 91.91% and Tamil Nadu 84.80%, according to Election Commission of India data. Arijit also made headlines earlier this year by announcing his decision to stop taking new playback singing assignments, marking the end of a significant chapter in his career while clarifying that he would still create music. Following this announcement, he released an independent single titled “Raina,” which was well-received. He addressed concerns about retirement by assuring fans that he would be releasing songs from a backlog of previously recorded material over the next months. Arijit is known for his popular tracks, including “Tum Hi Ho,” “Channa Mereya,” and “Kesariya.”

The 31-week abortion of a pregnant minor is approved by the Supreme Court



New Delhi, Apr 24: The Supreme Court permitted a 15-year-old girl to medically end her 31-week pregnancy in a landmark decision on Friday.

A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan declared that a woman's reproductive autonomy must be accorded the "highest importance" and that forcing the child to carry the pregnancy to term violated her fundamental rights. Given that she had made two suicide attempts and was experiencing psychological suffering, the court declared, "Forcing her to continue is a direct affront to her right to live with dignity."

The court further stated that, under Article 21, the freedom to make decisions about one's body, particularly with regard to reproduction, is an essential compo-

neered dangers and that the case had reached court after the statutory 24-week limit for medical terminations. Mehta proposed forcing the 15-year-old girl to endure a hormonal, mental, and physical roller coaster before giving birth to the child and placing it for adoption. He also recommended that her family be given money.

The court, led by Justice Nagarathna, expressed concern over the challenges faced by minors seeking medical termination of pregnancy (MTP), highlighting that financial barriers and lack of awareness often prevent timely reporting of pregnancies.

The petitioner emphasized the traumatic impact on her education and mental health. The court recognized the long-term consequences of forced pregnancies and asserted that in exceptional circumstances, the minor's best interests should prevail over legal restrictions. It reiterated that reproductive choice is a fundamental right, stating that denying relief could lead to irreversible consequences, thus emphasizing the importance of women's bodily autonomy and dignity.

Before the Bengal phase 2 election, Amit Shah warned the TMC "goons"

New Delhi, Apr 24: In advance of the second phase of voting, which is set for April 29, Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated on Thursday that "goons" associated with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's party avoided the streets during the first phase of voting in West Bengal. By 11 p.m. on Thursday, 92.35% of West Bengal's 152 constituencies had cast ballots in the first round of voting. According to chief election commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, this was West Bengal's highest percentage since independence. There have been reports of flare-ups in areas of Murshidabad, Birbhum, Cooch Behar, and Dakshin Dinajpur, among other places in Bengal. Despite the massive deployment of security forces, candidates from both parties were allegedly attacked and crude bombs were thrown. In a post on X, Amit Shah cautioned CM Mamata Banerjee's "goons" not to participate in the second round of



voting. He added, "I tell the goons not to come out in the second phase either, or else I'll hang you upside down and straighten you out." Shah also commended the state's voters for "shattering all records of participation in the grand festival of democracy" and casting "historic votes" as phase I voting came to an end. He also praised the West Bengal police, the Election Commission, and the courageous members of all Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

Throughout the West Bengal campaign, Amit Shah has accused the Trinamool Con-

gress (TMC) of 'corruption' and 'hooliganism.' He shared a symbolic sunset video on social media to illustrate that TMC's era of misconduct has "set." While voting incidents typically remained peaceful, sporadic violence was reported. In Kharisaol, Birbhum, there were allegations of unfair vote registration favoring BJP, prompting protests and temporary polling suspension. Additionally, in Naoda, AJUP leader Humayun Kabir's convoy was attacked with stones, resulting in clashes between supporters and a response by central forces.

Hardik Pandya's error against CSK that cost MI the game is criticized by R Ashwin

New Delhi: Hardik Pandya has drawn a lot of criticism because the Mumbai Indians have only won two of their first seven games in the 2026 Indian Premier League. In addition to failing to score runs with the bat and take wickets with the ball, the all-rounder's captaincy qualifications have been questioned. The seasoned Indian spinner Ravichandran Ashwin struggled to accept Pandya's choice to ask Chennai Super Kings (CSK) to bat first in the match on Thursday. Despite the fact that both games were played on the same field, Ashwin noted that Pandya did not learn from his blunders against the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB). In a YouTube video, Ashwin discussed the implications of the Mumbai Indians' (MI) performance against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) at the Wankhede Stadium. He noted that MI struggled significantly while chasing a target of 241 against RCB, leading to their collapse for just 104 runs against CSK. Ashwin expressed his disappointment, particularly criticizing Hardik Pandya's decision to bat first after winning the toss, arguing that this provided an advantage to CSK, a team that historically performs better batting first. Ashwin emphasized the importance of tactical decisions, particularly against high-scoring teams like CSK and Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH). He pointed out that the conditions during the match mirrored those of previous encounters, and MI's failure to adapt by inviting CSK to bat first was a significant mistake. He highlighted that while MI's bowling performance improved



somewhat, particularly from Allah Ghazanfar, Ashwani Kumar, and Bumrah, it was still insufficient to chase down CSK's total of 208. Additionally, Ashwin criticized the decision to give the 20th over to rookie Krish Bhagat instead of utilizing Pandya, suggesting that experienced players should handle high-pressure situations, especially in crucial moments.

He addressed the external pressures Pandya faces in his captaincy role, particularly following the controversy of replacing the iconic Rohit Sharma. Ashwin acknowledged Pandya's track record of success, including his recent successes with the Gujarat Titans, but noted the emotional toll of transitioning back to MI amidst high expectations and fan scrutiny after a title drought. Overall, Ashwin's analysis underscored the critical importance of captaincy decisions, conditions, and the psychological pressures faced by players in high-stakes environments.

Sanju Samson's post-match comment demonstrates that he is "Captain" Dhoni's true successor



New Delhi: Sanju Samson is establishing himself as the real heir to "Captain Cool" MS Dhoni in his debut season with the Chennai Super Kings (CSK).



Samson demonstrated once more why he is so highly regarded on the T20 circuit with another Indian Premier League (IPL) century, this time against

the Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium. But his performance on Thursday was more than simply his batting prowess; he also demonstrated admirable maturity by digging deep and adjusting his innings speed to suit the circumstances. The captain of CSK, Ruturaj Gaikwad, hasn't started playing yet this season. He got off to a good start against the Mumbai Indians but was removed before turning it into a significant score once more. Instead of Ruturaj, the captain, Samson stood out as Chennai need-

ed a "leader" to step up. Following the match, Samson gave an explanation of his strategy, emphasizing how crucial it was for him to accept accountability and adjust his style of play because CSK was consistently losing wickets at the other end.

In a post-match presentation, wicketkeeper-batter Samson reflected on his innings, highlighting the challenges faced due to regular wicket losses that altered his game strategy. He emphasized the importance of a settled batsman during critical moments,

noting that his experience taught him to prioritize the team's needs over personal performance.

Although he initially aimed for a more aggressive play, the situation dictated a careful approach, leading him to finish with a score of 101 not out. Samson praised his young team's resilience, particularly after facing three tournament losses, and expressed a commitment to maintaining momentum and readiness for upcoming games, recognizing the intense competition they are up against.

After Rekha Gupta's unexpected visit to the Delhi GST office, 162 officials were moved

New Delhi, Apr 24: The State GST Department has undergone one of the largest administrative reorganizations in recent months, with 162 officers and employees being relocated as a result of Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's surprise visit. The decision comes after the Chief Minister's surprise visit to the State GST office on April 8, during which time difficulties with discipline, tardiness in taxpayer services, and attendance were brought to light. The Chief Minister spoke with personnel and taxpayers and examined the GST office's functioning during the inspection. The Chief Minister's Office claims that a number of officials, including senior staff, were discovered to be missing during business hours, raising grave concerns over discipline and adherence to attendance regulations. There were operational inefficien-



cies in the department, as evidenced by the taxpayers who were present in the office complaining about delayed services, frequent visits for simple tasks, and a shortage of officers. The Chief Minister ordered quick improvement of service delivery systems, verification of biometric attendance records, and stringent enforcement of attendance and punctuality standards after the inspection. In re-

sponse to the findings, the government announced a massive departmental reorganization, moving officials who had been assigned to the same jobs for long stretches of time. Three Assistant Commissioners, fifty-eight Section Officers (Grade-I), twenty-two Assistant Section Officers (Grade-II), seventy-four Senior Assistants (Grade-III), and five Junior Assistants (Grade-IV) were among the

162 officers and employees that were transferred.

According to officials, the GST department's move is a part of the Delhi government's larger effort to strengthen administrative discipline through departmental compliance checks and surprise inspections. Previous inspections had identified problems such as service inefficiencies, procedural delays, and absenteeism, which prompted corrective actions in several offices. The Chief Minister has reaffirmed that accountability would be applied consistently at all administrative levels and that public service performance standards cannot be compromised. The government claims that the reorganization intends to restore discipline, efficiency, and responsiveness in taxpayer services as well as restart the GST department's operations.

Six other Rajya Sabha AAP MPs, including Raghav Chadha, join the BJP

New Delhi: Raghav Chadha, an MP for the Aam Aadmi Party, stated on Friday that two-thirds of the AAP's Rajya Sabha MPs are joining the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in accordance with the Indian Constitution. Days after the AAP dismissed him as the Rajya Sabha's deputy leader due to accusations that he was engaging in "soft PR" rather than bringing up important issues against the government, the decision was made to guarantee his continued membership in the Rajya Sabha. In a press conference, Raghav Chadha announced that Ashok Mittal and Sandeep Pathak, two additional MPs, would be joining the merger. It's interesting to note that Ashok Mittal was chosen by the AAP



to succeed Raghav Chadha as deputy leader of the Rajya Sabha. Raghav Chadha claims that around two-thirds of the ten AAP MPs in the Rajya Sabha are involved in the decision, which is necessary for the MPs to keep their seats in the upper house. The other

four AAP MPs who have approved the change are Harbhajan Singh, Rajinder Gupta, Vikram Sahney, and Swati Maliwal, Chadha added. "They have signed and this morning we submitted the signed letter and documents to the Rajya Sabha chairman." The

AAP, which I gave 15 years of my life to and nurtured with my blood and sweat, has strayed from its guiding ideals.

These days, this party works for its own gain rather than the well of the country. I've felt like the right man in the wrong party for the past few years. Raghav Chadha explained that he distanced himself from party activities because he did not "want to be a part of AAP's crimes." "Since I did not participate in their crime, I was not qualified for their friendship. Chadha stated at the press conference, "We had only two options: either we do positive politics with our energy and experience, or we quit politics and give up our public work in the last 15-16 years."

152 of the 294 seats in the WB assembly's first phase will be polled

Kolkata, Apr 24: While the Election Commission of India (ECI) and chief election commissioner Gyanesh Kumar praised voters for the "highest-ever turnout" in the state, polling for 152 of the 294 seats in the first round of the West Bengal assembly elections ended on Thursday amid intermittent violent occurrences. According to the police, 41 persons have been taken into custody in relation to the alterations.

In order to determine the electoral fate of 1,478 candidates, polling in 16 districts started at 7 a.m. under stringent security. 92.35% of voters cast ballots, according to current ECI data. According to Kumar, "this is the highest percentage in West Bengal since Independence." State CEO Manoj Agarwal told reporters later in Kolkata, "We are satisfied with the efforts that we put in which was reflected in the high voter turnout." There's al-



ways room for improvement. The CEC expressed his satisfaction with the news that voters were casting their ballots without fear or favor. Nonetheless, there have been reports of occasional conflicts in various areas of the state. While security forces were stationed in huge numbers to guarantee a free and fair election process, tensions erupted in sections of Murshidabad, Birbhum, Cooch Behar, and Dakshin Dinajpur, where candidates from both parties were attacked and crude

bombs were purportedly thrown. On polling day in Murshidabad, significant voter deletions were reported in Domkal and Nowada, accompanied by violent clashes. In Domkal, voters at a Raipur village polling station claimed they were threatened with firearms, prompting police intervention. Clashes between the TMC and CPI(M) in Raipur injured at least four individuals.

In Nowada, bombings occurred after a conflict between the TMC and AJUP, resulting in roadblocks by party workers. BJP candidates faced violence; Suwendu Sarkar was attacked by TMC supporters, and Agnimitra Paul reported damage to her vehicle.

The state CEO described these incidents as unfortunate but not major threats to law and order. Arrests were made, including nine related to Nowada and 571 preventive arrests overall.

PM Modi's Boat Ride on the Hooghly River: The Ganga Flows Through Bengal

Kolkata, Apr 24: Amidst the upcoming West Bengal Assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spent time on the banks of the Hooghly River in Kolkata on Friday, reaffirming his dedication to the growth and prosperity of the state's citizens.

The Hooghly is associated with West Bengal culture, according to the Prime Minister, who posted images from his visit on social media site X. He claimed that Bengal has a particular place in their hearts for the Ganga and that the soul of an ancient civilization can be found in its waters. "The Ganga holds a very unique place in the hearts of all Bengalis. According to PM Modi, "one could say that the Ganga flows through the soul of Bengal." He claimed that in order to show his appreciation to Maa Ganga, he spent time on the banks of the Hooghly.

The Prime Minister also spoke with morning strollers along the river and boatmen during the visit. He commended the boatmen's diligence and said the encounter provided him with another chance to reiterate the Center's dedication to the advancement of West Bengal. "I also had the chance to meet morning walkers and boatmen, whose diligence is admirable. He stated, "On the Hooghly, we reaffirmed our commitment to work towards the development of West Bengal and the prosperity of the great Bengali people." PM Modi posted additional photos from the trip in another post, claiming to have tried his hand at taking shots of the river. He described it as a "very special morning" on the banks of the Hooghly and mentioned obtaining a close-up look at the famous Vidyasagar Setu and Howrah Bridge.

A few more views from the Hooghly banks. I made an attempt to take pictures of this magnificent river. PM Modi added, "I also got a close look at the Howrah Bridge and Vidyasagar Setu." The Prime Minister's visit coincides with the ongoing Assembly elections in West Bengal, where PM Modi has initiated his campaign for the subsequent round of voting.

During a rally in Krishnanagar, he commented humorously about 'jhalhuri' impacting certain individuals, suggesting that the Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders are feeling the pressure. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee responded by saying they are accustomed to the spiciness of 'jhalhuri.' The first phase of polling for the 294-member Assembly occurred recently with a voter turnout of 91.91%, reflecting significant public engagement despite security measures.

Sehwag Honors Tendulkar On Fifty-Third Birthday, Recalling A Man’s Great Advice



New Delhi: Former Indian opener Virender Sehwag wished his long-time opening partner Sachin Tendulkar on his 53rd birthday, who turned 53 on Friday. Taking to Instagram, Sehwag recalled getting some of the “best advice” from the ‘Master Blaster’, but not always following it on the field, especially controlling his attacking instincts on the crease. The opener also called him as the “cricket ka bhagwaan” (God of Cricket). “The man who gave me the best advice and whose advice I did the opposite of many times. Both worked. That’s how good he is. There is no manual on how to be great.

But if there was, it would just be watching 24 years of Sachin paaji playing for our country. Happy birthday @sachintendulkar paaji. Have a great year and a great life ahead. Cricket ka bhagwan sirf ek hi baar paida hota hai,” he posted. Sachin and Sehwag made their names as one of the most prolific partnerships in Indian cricket at their peaks. In ODIs particularly, Sachin and Sehwag paired up in 114 innings, scoring 4,387 runs at an average of 39.16, including 13 century stands and 18 half-century stands. With a staggering 34,357 international runs, Sachin Tendulkar stands as the most

prolific batter in cricket history. Throughout his illustrious international career, he re-wrote the record books time and again, setting milestones that remain unchallenged to this day. With his unwavering patience and resilience, the ‘Master Blaster’ has 200 Test appearances to his name, the most by any player in the format. Tendulkar amassed 15,921 runs, 51 centuries, and 2,058 fours -- the most by any player in red-ball cricket. Revered as India’s “God of Cricket,” he also became the fastest to 15,000 Test runs, reaching the milestone in just 300 innings, a distinction he holds exclusively.

Manchester City Reclaims Top Spot Following A Narrow Victory Against Struggling Burnley

Chandigarh: Manchester City moved to the top of the Premier League, but their narrow 1-0 win over Burnley raised as many questions as it answered in a title race that continues to twist. An early goal from Erling Haaland, finished inside five minutes, was enough to secure three points at Turf Moor. It also marked the first time since the opening week of the season that Manchester City have gone top, overtaking Arsenal on goals scored with both sides level on points and goal difference. An early goal from Erling Haaland, finished inside five minutes, was enough to secure three points at Turf Moor. It also marked the first time since the opening week of the season that Manchester City have gone top, overtaking Arsenal on goals scored with both sides level on points and goal difference. The shift at the summit reflects a dramatic swing. Arsenal had built a significant lead earlier this month, but a costly defeat to Bournemouth and a direct loss to City have allowed Pep Guardiola’s side to take control of the race.

Yet this was far from a dominant statement. City created chances to extend their lead but lacked sharpness in front of goal. Burnley, already relegated, remained competitive and forced moments of discomfort late in the game, underlining concerns about City’s inability to finish matches decisively. Guardiola admitted his side should have been more clinical,



pointing to fatigue and missed opportunities in the final third. Former defender Gary Neville echoed that view, suggesting stronger opponents may punish such inefficiency in the run-in. The result confirmed Burnley’s relegation, but the bigger story lies at the top. City have momentum, but not complete control. With Arsenal still to play before City’s next fixture, the balance can shift again quickly. For now, City are top. Whether they stay there may depend not just on results, but on how ruthlessly they take their chances in the decisive weeks ahead. Barcelona have taken a big step towards the La Liga title, but the momentum of their win over Celta Vigo has been overshadowed by a major injury blow to Lamine Yamal. The 18-year-old was the difference on the night, winning and scoring a first-half penalty after a sharp run into the box forced a foul. It

was a moment of individual quality in an otherwise tight game. But the story changed immediately after. Moments after converting the spot kick, Yamal signalled to the bench and went down holding his left hamstring before being taken off.

Barcelona have now confirmed the extent of the problem. Tests revealed a hamstring injury in his left leg, which will rule him out for the rest of the domestic season. The club has opted for a conservative recovery plan, with the focus now on ensuring he returns in time for the World Cup with Spain national football team. For Barcelona, this comes at a crucial point. The win moved them nine points clear of Real Madrid with six games remaining, putting them firmly in control of the title race. However, Yamal has been one of their most important attacking players this season, and his absence

will be felt, especially with a Clásico still to come.

The performance itself reflected some of that reliance. Barcelona controlled phases of the match but lacked sharpness in attack beyond Yamal’s moment. A second goal never came, and they had to manage the game carefully in the closing stages. From Spain’s perspective, there is relief. Early indications suggest the injury is not serious enough to affect his availability for the World Cup, where he is expected to play a key role. Barcelona remain in a strong position domestically, but Yamal’s injury adds uncertainty at a time when they would have wanted complete control both on the pitch and in their squad. The numbers underline that impact. Yamal finished the game with eight successful dribbles, the most on the pitch, while also creating three chances and recording over 70 touches, showing how frequently Barcelona progressed through him. He also contributed defensively with eight ball recoveries, highlighting his involvement beyond just attacking phases. Tactically, his role was clear. Starting wide on the right, Yamal constantly moved inside into half-spaces, forcing Atletico’s compact block to shift. That created two key effects, either he isolated the full-back in one-v-one situations or dragged multiple defenders out of position, opening passing lanes for runners like Marcus Rashford.

Arjun And Aditya Singh Assert That MPA Support Was Vital For India’s Triple Gold



Mumbai: Arjun Singh and Aditya Singh clinched three gold medals at the recently concluded US Open Pickleball Championship held in Naples, Florida. Backed by the Maharashtra Pickleball Association and the Indian Pickleball Association, the brothers have announced their place on the global pickleball stage and are among

the foremost talents from India. The newly crowned US Open champions will next compete at the Maharashtra Open 2026, held under the aegis of the Maharashtra Pickleball Association and the IPA, according to a press release. “Arjun and I have been training extremely hard, and the results have been very satisfying. The belief

that Rahool Kanak Sir and the Maharashtra Pickleball Association have shown in us cannot be mentioned enough, and this would not have been possible without their backing.

We are looking forward to continuing the work and getting the results for India,” said Aditya Singh. Aditya and Arjun Singh won two

golds in the Men’s Doubles 5.0 category and the U18 Boys Doubles, respectively, topping top seeds and favourites in both events.

Arjun Singh added the 3rd gold medal to the Indian tally after winning the Men’s Singles 5.0 event at the US Open. “Winning 3 gold medals for India at the US Open Pickleball Championship would not be possible without the support of the Maharashtra Pickleball Association and the Indian Pickleball Association. A special mention to Rahool Kanak Sir, who did not hesitate to make sure we had everything an athlete needs to succeed at the highest level. We are hoping to continue this momentum all the way to the Maharashtra Open as well,” he concluded. India’s final tally at the US Open Pickleball Championship came up to a final of eight medals with four golds, two silvers and a couple of bronze categories.

MI Explains Debatable Mitchell Santner Concussion Sub Call For Shoulder Injury

New Delhi: Mumbai Indians’ decision to replace Mitchell Santner with Shardul Thakur under the concussion substitute rule sparked debate after their defeat to Chennai Super Kings at the Wankhede Stadium on Thursday. The change was approved by match officials during the second innings after Santner suffered a fall while fielding late in the CSK innings. MI vs CSK: HIGHLIGHTS | SCORECARD The point of dispute was not only the medical basis for the substitution, but also whether Thakur met the requirement of being a like-for-like replacement for Santner. The flashpoint occurred in the 17th over when Santner completed a diving catch to dismiss Kartik Sharma. While the New Zealand international was immediately seen clutching his left shoulder and subsequently received treatment in the dugout with an ice pack and a sling, the formal request for a substitute was made on the grounds of a suspected concussion.

Under IPL playing conditions, a concussion substitute is allowed if a player has suffered a head or neck injury, provided the Match Referee is satisfied with the medical diagnosis. The debate arose because the visible injury appeared to be to Santner’s shoulder, while the sub-



stitute request was made on the basis of neurological symptoms. Speaking after the match, Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene explained the team’s medical position. “He hit his head first and neck. Obviously, the shoulder as well,” Jayawardene said. He went for a scan. Once he got back, he felt dizziness. So, he was lying down. Yes, the ice was there for the shoulder. But, he felt he wasn’t stable. So, we took him for a scan.”

The choice of Thakur as the replacement also came under scrutiny because Santner is a left-arm orthodox spin-

ner, while Thakur is a right-arm medium-pacer. Jayawardene said the final call was not Mumbai’s. We requested [for a concussion substitute]. Obviously, it is the match referee and the umpires’ discretion. They allowed Shardul,” he said. Jayawardene also addressed the comparison between the two all-rounders in a lighter vein. “Mitch will be disappointed that his batting prowess was matched to Shardul. But, it is what it is. Hopefully, it’s not too bad,” he said. Even with the tactical flexibility the substitution provided, Mumbai could not recover in the chase.

Veteran Coach Leads Special Goalkeeping Camp For Indian Women’s Hockey Team

Bengaluru: Hockey India on Friday announced that a special goalkeeping camp for the Indian Women’s Hockey Team is currently being held from April 22 to May 2 at the Sports Authority of India (SAI), Bengaluru. The camp is conducted by David Williamson and overseen by the team’s Chief Coach, Sjoerd Marijne. Savita, Bansari Solanki, Bichu Devi Kharibam and Madhuri Kindo are part of this special camp, which aims to further strengthen India’s goalkeeping unit ahead of a crucial international calendar, as per a press release from Hockey India.

The camp is supported by Anandana, the Coca-Cola India Foundation, as they continue to contribute toward the development of women’s hockey in India. They also supported the recently concluded 16th Hockey India Sub Junior Women’s National Championship 2026. David Williamson is a highly experienced hockey coach from Northern Ireland who has been part of the US Women’s National Team coaching staff for a significant period. He also served as an assistant coach for Odisha Warriors in the Women’s Hero Hockey India League (HIL) in 2025, bringing extensive international experience in goalkeeping development. Sjoerd Marijne, Chief Coach of the Indian Women’s Hockey Team, stated, “The goalkeepers did really well during the recent Argentina tour, showing strong



performances against quality opposition. With crucial tournaments coming up from June onwards, this is a great time to have a focused training camp like this.” We also have goalkeepers from the junior team train alongside the senior players. This exposure will be extremely valuable for their development and help prepare them for the transition to the senior level in the near future,” he added.

Veteran Indian goalkeeper Savita stated, “It is always encouraging for us as players to see this kind of support coming into women’s hockey. It is also a great opportunity for younger athletes coming through the system. When young girls see the kind of backing hockey is getting today, it gives them confidence and belief that they can go

far. Support like this from Anandana, The Coca-Cola India Foundation, will definitely play an important role in growing women’s hockey in the country.”

Devyani Rana, Vice President, Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability, Coca-Cola India and Southwest Asia stated, “Our partnership with Hockey India is rooted in a shared belief that investing in women’s sport creates change that endures. When junior players train alongside seniors in a conducive environment, the impact reshapes their understanding of greater possibilities. Through Anandana, The Coca-Cola India Foundation, we are committed to being a meaningful part of that transformation for Indian women’s the grassroots.

Samson And Spinners Decimate MI As CSK Win IPL El Clasico Without Dhoni

New Delhi: There was a time, not too long ago, when anything around 200 at the Wankhede felt like a starting point, not a winning score. The ground has seen too many chases, too many counterattacks, too many nights when the team batting second refused to blink. There are evenings here when 200 doesn’t feel safe. And then there are nights when it looks a long way away. This was one of those nights. Chennai Super Kings didn’t just defend 207, they controlled the game for most of the evening, dismantling Mumbai Indians with calm decisions, clear roles and players stepping up at the right moments.

It ended as Mumbai’s biggest defeat by runs in IPL history, with Sanju Samson and Akeal Hosein driving a memorable El Clasico win. It also came without MS Dhoni, but there was little sign of anything missing in the way CSK went about their work. It began with Sanju Samson, who played an innings that held everything together



when it could have easily fallen apart. CSK did get off to a bright start. Ruturaj Gaikwad looked more like himself, finding the middle early and taking on Hardik Pandya. There was a flick of the wrists, a pull that sailed over, and suddenly 19 runs had come off an over. Samson, at the other end, was already settling in, opening up the off-side with ease.

But just when it looked like CSK might run away with the powerplay, the innings slowed. Gaikwad, after getting to 22, tried to go inside-out and didn’t quite get it right. Tilak Varma judged it well in the deep, and that wicket opened the door for Mumbai. From

there, it became one of those passages where batters got in but didn’t stay. Sarfaraz Khan showed intent but was undone by the dip from Mitchell Santner. Shivam Dube, given the licence to attack, was beaten by a drift from AM Ghazanfar.

Dewald Brevis came and went in a burst. Through all of this, Samson didn’t change. He didn’t try to force the pace when wickets were falling, and he didn’t get stuck either. He just kept playing the ball on merit. A boundary when it was there, a single when it wasn’t. The innings grew quietly. By the time the final overs arrived, he had already done the hard work. And then he finished

it in style, lifting one over cover for six and pulling the last ball to bring up his hundred. An unbeaten 101 off 54 balls, with 10 fours and six sixes, but more importantly, an innings that gave CSK something solid to defend. At 207 for six, they had a total. Not massive, but enough if they bowled well. The chase began badly for Mumbai and never really recovered. Akeal Hosein struck in the very first over, removing Danish Malewar for a golden duck. It set the tone. Quinton de Kock tried to break free early, even got off the mark with a six, but Mukesh Choudhary pulled things back quickly, cleaning him up for 7. There were no easy overs. Mukesh and Kamboj kept things tight, and by the end of the powerplay, Mumbai had posted their lowest score of the season in that phase. There was a brief period when it looked like they might find a way back. Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma came together and began to rebuild in patches.