

PM Modi thanks people of Assam for resounding mandate

Guwahati, May 04: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed his gratitude to the people of Assam for the BJP-led NDA's thumping victory in the Assembly elections. "Assam blesses BJP-NDA once again! The BJP-NDA's win in the Assam Vidhan Sabha elections illustrates the unwavering support for our Alliance's emphasis on development and bringing a positive difference in people's lives," Modi wrote on X. "I thank my sisters and brothers of Assam for the resounding mandate. I also assure them that we will keep working for the state's transformation," he added. Echoing the PM, Home Minister Amit Shah said, "The third landslide victory of the NDA in Assam is a testament to people's unwavering trust in BJP's double engine government under PM Modi Ji and CM Himanta Biswa Sarma Ji which is turning Assam into a land of hope and develop-



ment from the land of disturbances." "I extend heartiest congratulations to BJP President Nitin Nabin Ji, CM Himanta Biswa Sarma Ji and Assam BJP President Dilip Saikia Ji and all the karyakartas of the Assam BJP and

NDA for this grand success," Shah said. CM Sarma also extended his heartfelt thanks to the people of Assam for their "wholehearted" support, noting that the mandate reflects a clear approval of the government's performance

over the last decade. Sarma expressed deep appreciation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating, "I thank PM Modi for his unwavering support to Assam over the last 10 years." He emphasized that this synergy between the State and the Center has been the cornerstone of Assam's transformation. The BJP contested 89 seats, supported by allies Asom Gana Parishad and Bodoland People's Front, while the Congress alliance struggled to make significant gains. Analysts suggest the verdict consolidates BJP's dominance in the Northeast, setting the stage for upcoming elections in neighboring states. Celebrations erupted across Assam as BJP supporters hailed the victory with slogans, processions, and cultural performances. For the NDA, the landslide win not only strengthens its regional foothold but also signals a broader endorsement of its national agenda.

Mizoram launches app to help citizens track waste collection

Aizawl, May 04: The Mizoram government has launched an app named "FAINA PUITU" to help citizens track waste collection in their area, ensuring regular garbage pickup from every household. The app was launched by PHED Minister Prof. Lalnilawma at PHED Office in Aizawl today. FAINA PUITU App enables users to track their sanitation truck, check waste collection schedule, avail door-to-door pickup, sell recyclable garbage like cardboard, metal, plastic and e-waste, read rules and regulations on waste management, and file a complaint. The application can be downloaded from IOS and Android free of charge during the period of 2026 and for a fee of Rs 10 per

month from 2027 onwards. Minister Prof. Lalnilawma expressed his pleasure regarding the launch of the FAINA PUITU application, and stated that Mizoram is keeping pace with global progress, and this application is an excellent way to save both time and energy. He further noted that waste can be utilized effectively, highlighting that researchers often refer to this concept as "Waste to Wealth". To ensure the proper implementation of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, as issued by the Supreme Court, he mentioned that plans are underway to work alongside Village Councils (VCs) for waste processing outside of Aizawl. He expressed confidence that this applica-

tion would be instrumental in those efforts. Prof. Lalnilawma also pointed out that under the New Education Policy (NEP), a key "graduate attribute" (a standard expected of a graduate) is a concern for sanitation and cleanliness. He emphasized that Mizos need to introspect on whether we maintain cleanliness in areas that are not immediately visible. Describing the application as a "win-win solution", he concluded by stating that it is essential to find effective ways to educate and inform the public on how to use the app. Laldinthara, CEO of Waste Technology and Bio Energy and the Operator of the Aibawk Plastic Waste Management Centre, demonstrated the uses of the application.

CM graces Mizoram Rural Bank Branch Managers' Conclave

Aizawl, May 04: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma attended the Mizoram Rural Bank (MRB) Branch Managers' Conclave 2026 as the Chief Guest at the MRB Head Office in Aizawl. Prakash Chandra Baror, General Manager (A&S), SBI Corporate Centre, graced the occasion as Guest of Honour. In his address, the Chief Minister expressed pride that Mizoram possesses one of the most progressive Regional Rural Banks in India. He commended Mizoram Rural Bank for its consistent growth and achievements, particularly highlighting its outstanding Credit-Deposit (CD) Ratio. He noted that a high CD Ratio reflects the bank's commitment to channeling deposits back into the community through loans, which is essential for economic development. The Chief Minister emphasized that Branch Man-

agers play a crucial role in implementing government policies at the grassroots level, especially flagship programmes such as Bana Kaih (Hand Holding). He stated that the bank holds immense potential in contributing to the state's development and expressed high expectations from its continued performance. He also stressed the need to enhance financial literacy across the state, particularly in rural areas, and underscored the importance of accessible and efficient banking services for the people. He urged MRB to continue its commendable work while expanding its outreach to meet the needs of the public more effectively. Congratulating the bank on its remarkable performance over the past year, the Chief Minister assured that the Government would continue to extend full support to MRB in its growth and service to the people. Shri Isaac Lalfamkima

Sailo, Chief Manager (P&OA), delivered the welcome address, while Pi Sheryl L. Vanchhong, Chairman, MRB, spoke on the bank's progress over the past year and expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for his presence. Established on September 27, 1983, Mizoram Rural Bank is jointly owned by the Government of India (15 per cent), State Bank of India (35 per cent), and the Government of Mizoram (50 per cent). The bank currently operates 2 Regional Offices and 106 branches, of which 60 are located in rural areas, with a workforce of 491 employees. During the last financial year, MRB recorded deposits of Rs. 6,526.10 crore, exceeding its target by Rs. 682.11 crore, with a growth rate of 11.26 per cent. Total advances stood at Rs. 4,129.98 crore, surpassing the target by over Rs. 300 crore.

Guwahati Hosts Launch of Book on NRC in Assam

Guwahati, May 04: A book on the assessment of the National Registrar of Citizens (NRC) exercise in Assam was launched in Guwahati on Saturday. The book, "NRC-Turning Hope into Despair", has been authored by senior advocate Upamanyu Hazarika, who is also a Supreme Court appointed Commissioner to report on the India-Bangladesh border, and Shantanu Parashar, serving as District Project Supervisor, NRC for Dhubri district. The book examines the historical reasons of the NRC, legal foundations, procedural mechanisms and political context. "The book examines the process and impact of migration over last 100 years, with indigenous population projected to turn into a minority after 2040.

The NRC being the last resort for the local population to identify foreigners, save themselves from becoming a minority and a secure citizens data base forming the basis for reserving resources for the local population," Hazarika stated. "The flaws in the NRC process by Rs. 682.11 crore, with a growth rate of 11.26 per cent. Total advances stood at Rs. 4,129.98 crore, surpassing the target by over Rs. 300 crore.



Hazarika, who is also the convener of Prabajan Virodhi Manch (PVM), an organisation focused on anti-influx (illegal immigration) issues in Assam, further said the stand of the State Government after the publication of the NRC, that delimitation is the answer to the foreigners' issue and not NRC, has been examined and rejected. "Delimitation, only redefines boundaries of constituencies, it does not identify or segregates any foreigner.

Delimitation legitimises foreigners, as citizenship is not question. The process of evictions by the last Government has also been examined, it does not force any foreigner to leave Assam. In fact, in quite a few instances encroachers of doubtful nationality have been given alternate allotments of land, without investigating their citizenship status," he said. "The stand of the Government that NRC re-verification requires approval and permission of the Su-

preme Court is also examined on the basis of statutory rules. The rule position is clear that the authority for re-verification is conferred upon the Government and does not require approval or permission from the Hon'ble Supreme Court," the senior advocate said. "There is no alternative to a fool-proof NRC being a citizens data base, identifying foreigners and safeguarding the indigenous people," he added.

Conventions, Rallies Highlight Demands for Justice, NRC and Rehabilitation

Imphal, May 04: In Imphal, the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity on May 3 organised a "Manipur People's Convention" at Iboyaima Shumang Leela Shangleen, Palace Compound, marking three years of the ongoing crisis. The convention brought together civil society organisations, community leaders, intellectuals and internally displaced persons (IDPs), focusing on accountability, justice and rehabilitation. The gathering reaffirmed resolutions adopted since May 3, 2023, and authorised CO-COMI leadership to intensify democratic forms of agitation to ensure their implementation. It condemned recent violence in Tronglaobi and T.M. Kasom villages and urged authorities to identify and take legal action against those responsible.

A judicial inquiry into the killing of three civilians allegedly involving personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force was also demanded. Expressing concern over civilian safety, the convention resolved to strengthen ongoing movements through democratic means. It also announced that May 3 would be observed annually as "Anti-Narco-Terrorism Day" and proposed raising the issue at the international level, including urging the United Nations to recognise the day globally. Meanwhile, a large peace rally in Nambol called for the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) before the Census. Organised by the United Protection Committee (UPC), the rally saw participation from thousands of people representing more than 220 local clubs, organisations and Meira Paibi groups. The procession began at Sabal Leikai Community Hall and moved up to Kodongpokpi Lamkhai before returning. Participants from multiple assembly constituencies raised slogans demanding justice, unity among civil society organisations and protection of Manipur's territorial integrity. Protesters demanded deportation of alleged illegal immigrants, time-bound rehabilitation of IDPs and justice in incidents reported at T.M. Kasom and Tronglaobi villages. Speaking at the rally, UPC convener Thokchom Lamjingba said the mobilisation aimed to highlight the suffering of the people and press for accountability, stressing that restoring law and order is the government's primary responsibility. Separately, the Federation of Civil Societies Organisations observed the third anniversary at JN Dance Academy, presenting data on the humanitarian impact of the conflict. According to FOCS, at least 217 people have been killed and 58,821 displaced over the past three years. It reported that 7,894 houses were completely destroyed and 2,646 partially damaged, reflecting widespread devastation. The event, held under the theme "Bridging Divides for a Shared Future," included a two-minute silence in memory of those who lost their lives. Speakers emphasised the need to restore peace, rebuild trust among communities and create conditions for safe resettlement of displaced persons.

The programme was attended by FOCS Acting President BM Yaima, UMO M. Sorjini Leima and Manipur Keithel Nupi Marup General Secretary L. Memma, with Assistant Professor Oinam Dilip serving as resource person.

TMP Banks on Youth for Council, Assembly Wins

Agartala, May 04: Tipra Motha Party (TMP) founder Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on Sunday exuded confidence in his party winning the Village Council and the 2028 Assembly elections in Tripura.

In a video message from a hospital in Mumbai, where the TMP leader is undergoing treatment, Debbarma said if youths stay united and don't fight with each other, nobody can stop the Tipra Motha Party from winning the forthcoming elections in the State.

"Today is the foundation day of

Youth Tipra Federation (YTF). If I have ever given chances, it is to YTF, and the majority of YTF members are MLAs and Members of the District Council. In the coming days also, I want to give opportunities to the youth," he said.

"A majority of youths were earlier put in the receiving line during protests when police resort to lathicharge. But when the leaders come to power, the youth never get a chance. Instead, some people who are very old get the opportunities," he said.

"Today, 70 percent of Tripura's

population is young and below 35 years of age. If our decision-makers are not aware of technology and not connected with the present situation, the hopes of the new generation, and communication, then the next generation and Gen Z will face losses. For this, I have promoted YTF, and the same applies to TISF and all student organisations," Debbarma said.

"My fight is for my people and will always be for my people and the next generation. Politics will come and go, but if we and YTF work with honesty, then the future of Tripura

will be in the hands of good people," he added.

The TMP leader further urged the youths to remain united, visit the villages and stop corruption.

"We must move forward with one voice. We should not forget why we have come here and what our responsibility is. Youth must stay united and not fight with each other. If we move forward together, nobody can stop us from winning the Village Council and the 2028 Assembly elections, as this is the time of the youth," he added.

Northeast United Clinch Dramatic 3-2 Win Over Inter Kashi

Guwahati, May 04: NorthEast United FC clinched a dramatic 3-2 victory over 10-man Inter Kashi FC in their first-ever Indian Super League (ISL 12) meeting at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium in Guwahati on Saturday. Jithin MS (45+2') gave the Highlanders the lead on the stroke of half-time, before Andy Rodriguez (63') doubled the advantage from the spot. Inter Kashi fought back through Sergio Llamas (71') and Mohammed Asif (82'), but Parthib Gogoi (90') struck late to seal all three points. The result takes NorthEast United FC to 10 points from 11 matches. Juan Pedro Benali's men began on the front foot and steadily grew into the contest. The first big opportunity fell to Jithin around the half-hour mark following a swift counter-attacking move involving Rodri-



guez and Thoi Singh, but his effort was blocked at the last moment. The Highlanders continued to threaten as the half progressed. Jairo Samperio saw his low drive come off the post before being denied by Inter Kashi custodian Shubham Dhas moments later.

The persistence paid off in stoppage time when Dinesh Singh won a crucial aerial duel, allowing Jairo to hold off his marker and lay it off for Jithin, who rifled the ball into the roof of the net. After the break, NorthEast United FC almost doubled the lead

from the restart through Thoi, but his Inter Kashi defence held their composure. The Highlanders ensured that they remained in control throughout and doubled the lead just after the hour mark. Once again, Dinesh won the duel, and Macarton won the second ball. He put Jairo through on goal with a sublime pass, but Wayne Vaz clumsily fouled the latter inside the box. The referee had no hesitation in giving Vaz his marching orders and awarding the host a penalty. Andy calmly hammered his penalty home. The visitors then restored the parity through Llamas and Asif, but Juan Pedro Benali's men kept their composure in search of a winner, which arrived in the 90th minute through a brilliant strike by Gogoi. NorthEast United FC next face Chennaiyin FC at home on May 10.

NE/EAST

Katakey panel flags cement firms for moving 3 lakh MT coal without nod



Guwahati, Apr 04: The 37th interim report of the Justice (retd) Brojendra Prasad (BP) Katakey committee has flagged prima facie violations of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), 2024, governing the transportation of coal and other minerals from outside Meghalaya. In its report submitted to the court on Friday, the panel noted that while certain cement companies had applied on April 8 last year seeking permission to transport coal for the period between April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026, no approval was granted by the competent authority. Despite this, the committee cited M/S Star Cement Meghalaya Limited and Star Cement Limited for transporting 2,93,569.349 metric tonnes of coal through 8,174 truckloads between 2025 and 2026, and recommended appropriate action in case of SOP violations. The panel also flagged discrepancies between official claims and ground records. The Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, had stated that the SOP for transportation of coal and other minerals “is being strictly followed”. However, the committee said this assertion “is not correct”, noting that records indicate inadequate compliance and absence of valid approvals under the SOP, 2024. The report further pointed to missing documentation, including mineral transport challans, tax invoices, e-way

bills, certificates of origin and weightment details, indicating procedural lapses in the movement of consignments. To strengthen monitoring, the committee recommended the use of GPS-enabled vehicles, colour-coded identification stickers and regulated movement of coal through designated corridors and check gates. It also stressed administrative accountability, stating that officers responsible for preventing illegal mining should be held personally liable for violations within their jurisdiction. The panel further proposed the setting up of a High-Level Monitoring Committee headed by an Additional Chief Secretary-rank officer to oversee implementation of anti-illegal mining measures and utilisation of funds. In addition, it directed that over 1.55 lakh metric tonnes of illegally mined coal identified through aerial surveys be transported to designated depots and auctioned after obtaining court approval. It also recommended registration of FIRs in connection with more than 33,000 metric tonnes of missing coal. The findings come amid continuing concerns flagged by the Katakey committee over illegal coal mining in Meghalaya, particularly in East Jaintia Hills, which it has earlier identified as a major hub of illicit extraction and transport.

Temjen Imna launches HEART App, releases Quality Enhancement

Bhopal, Apr 04: Minister for Higher Education & Tourism, Temjen Imna Along, launched the Higher Education Attendance & Record Tracking (HEART) App and released the Quality Enhancement Report 2024–2025 during the Government College Principals’ Annual Conference organised by the Directorate of Higher Education, Nagaland, on April 29 at Hotel Japfu, Kohima. The conference brought together principals from 17 government colleges across the state. Speaking at the programme, Temjen Imna Along underscored the importance of reflection, collaboration and collective vision-building for the advancement of higher education in Nagaland. Departmental Meritorious Awards were presented



to four faculty members and three ministerial staff in recognition of their contributions to institutional performance. The awards aim to motivate colleges to adopt best practices in teaching, governance and employee support systems, while encouraging academic excellence and holistic development. The conference was attended by secretary Higher & Technical Education, Sarita Yadav, additional secretaries V. Lovitoly Sema and Sentianger Pongen, principals of the 17 government colleges and officials of the department. Sarita Yadav and V. Lovitoly Sema also addressed the gathering, while Er. Rishav Sethi presented an overview of the HEART

App. Presentation of the meritorious awards was led by Dr. K. Nishena Nekha, additional director, Higher Education. The conference concluded with a reaffirmation of the department’s commitment to fostering quality higher education and collaborative institutional growth in Nagaland through sustained innovation and accountability.

Railway Protection Force rescues minors from railway stations

Dimapur, Apr 04: During the period from April 24 to 30, RPF personnel rescued a significant number of vulnerable individuals, including runaway minors and distressed passengers, from various railway stations and trains. A press release by NFR Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Kapinjal Kishore Sharma stated that in one of the major operations, RPF personnel at Dibrugarh

railway station rescued 12 minor boys from a train and ensured their safe handover to Childline authorities for proper care and protection. Similarly, multiple rescue operations were conducted at stations including Guwahati, Lumding, Kishanganj, Kokrajhar, Hasimara, Mariani and New Alipurduar, where several runaway minor boys and girls were traced and rescued. Notably, at Mar-

iani railway station, RPF rescued 3 minor girls, while at Guwahati railway station, minors were safely reunited with their families after timely intervention. In separate incidents, minors rescued at stations like Kishanganj, Lumding, Dimapur and Kokrajhar were handed over to Child Help Line and other authorized agencies for safe custody and rehabilitation.

Himalayan Buddhism key to national identity

Itanagar, Apr 04: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has underscored that India’s true strength lies not merely in physical infrastructure or borders but in its deep-rooted cultural identity, highlighting the enduring role of Himalayan Buddhism as a civilisational anchor for frontier regions. Khandu, who travelled to Leh on Saturday, shared in a series of social media posts on Sunday that while material capabilities are essential, they represent only the ‘outer shell’ of national strength. “We often define a nation’s strength by its borders, infrastructure and material capabilities. While these are vital, they are only the visible aspects. The real strength of a nation lies in something far deeper, in its culture, identity and the values that bind its people together across generations,” he said in a series of posts on X. Addressing an international conference on “Contribution of Himalayan Buddhism to the Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of India and Beyond” at the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre, the chief minister emphasised that Himalayan Buddhism has for centuries shaped the social and cultural fabric of India’s border regions. “Himalayan Buddhism is not just a spiritual tradition; it is the heartbeat of our frontier communities. It provides a sense of belonging, continuity and resilience. In regions that are geographically remote and strategically sensitive, culture becomes the strongest thread that holds society to-

gether,” he observed. He further stressed that the idea of national security must go beyond conventional definitions. “True security is not only built through defences and physical preparedness. It is equally reinforced by the strength of our cultural roots, by the unity of communities, and by a shared conviction in our civilisational values,” Khandu said. During his visit, the chief minister also called on Ladakh Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena and held discussions on development experiences in Himalayan regions, focusing on infrastructure, tourism and avenues for cultural exchange between states. Khandu also participated in a cultural evening at Leh Market, where he joined locals in singing ‘Chhodo Kal Ki Baatein, Kal Ki Baat Purani... Hum Hindustani’, describing the moment as a celebration of unity and shared national identity. Khandu had travelled to Leh to take part in the exposition of the sacred Buddha relics, an event of deep spiritual significance that draws devotees and scholars alike. The exposition was inaugurated on Friday by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, marking a major cultural and religious gathering in the region. Describing Ladakh as a land of “hope, harmony and cultural vibrancy”, Khandu said such engagements reinforce the shared heritage of Himalayan states and strengthen bonds rooted in spirituality and tradition.

Advance Neurological Operation Theatre Facility inaugurated at AIIMS, Guwahati

Guwahati, Apr 04: The Advanced Neurosurgical Operation Theatre Facility was inaugurated at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Guwahati on Sunday to strengthen super-specialty healthcare services in the North East region. The state-of-the-art facility was formally inaugurated by AIIMS, Guwahati Executive Director Prof (Dr) Ashok Puranik in the presence of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited’s (PGCIL) Senior General Manager Surendra Kumar Majhi. The advanced neurosurgical OT was established with financial support of Rs 6.5 crore from Power Grid Corporation of India Limited under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, an official release said. The funding enabled procurement of cutting-edge neurosurgical equipment aimed at enhancing precision, safety, and outcomes in complex brain and spine surgeries. Prof Puranik highlighted the importance of such collaborations in advancing healthcare infrastructure in emerging institutions and emphasised the institute’s commitment to delivering high-quality, accessible care to the people of the North-East. Majhi pointed out



PGCIL’s commitment to contributing towards societal development through impactful CSR initiatives, particularly in the healthcare sector. The newly established facility is expected to significantly improve the management of complex

neurosurgical conditions and cater to the growing patient load at AIIMS Guwahati, a major referral centre for the entire North-East region, the release added. As the El Nino affect is felt, the North East of India is already feel-

ing the heat-literally. In Nagaland and beyond, errant rains, landslides, and shifting patterns in agriculture and water availability are no longer distant news; they are daily re...Nagaland travel guide
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Independent journalism will be punished Kharge attacks BJP-RSS on press freedom

Itanagar, Apr 04: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday attacked the BJP-RSS over the issue of press freedom, saying their message is clear that independent journalism will be punished, and compliance rewarded. He alleged that sections of the media have been reduced to echoing the ruling establishment, while those who persist in asking questions are “targeted relentlessly”. In a post on X on World Press Freedom Day, Kharge said India’s position in the World Press Freedom Index has steadily declined since 2014 and alleged that the Sangh Parivar has increasingly “weaponised” legal frameworks to silence newsrooms. Kharge said the nation must confront a stark and undeniable reality that since 2014, India’s position in the World Press Freedom Index has steadily declined, falling to 157th place, under the BJP regime. “A free press, in its truest sense, does not exist to amplify the government’s narrative or conceal its failures. It exists to question

authority, to scrutinise power, and to hold those in office accountable,” the Congress chief said on X. Kharge said the media preserves the democratic balance between power and the people. “Journalists are the custodians of public truth. As Pandit Nehru had said, ‘The freedom of the Press is not just a slogan but an essential attribute of the democratic process.’ That essential attribute stands gravely compromised under the present regime,” Kharge alleged. “The Sangh Parivar has increasingly weaponised legal frameworks to silence newsrooms. Defamation laws, national security provisions, and sweeping criminal statutes are deployed not as instruments of justice, but as tools of intimidation,” he said. Between 2014 and 2020, over 135 journalists were arrested, detained, or interrogated, he claimed and added that between 2014 and 2023, 36 journalists were imprisoned. The scale of persecution has risen sharply, with several journalists booked under draconian laws such as the UAPA, he said. “At



the same time, a far more disturbing pattern has emerged, one of violence and impunity. Journalists are being murdered in BJP-ruled states for doing their job,” he alleged. “Raghvendra Bajpai in Uttar Pradesh, Mukesh Chandrakar in Chhattisgarh, Rajeev Pratap Singh in Uttarakhand, and Dharmendra Singh Chauhan in Haryana, each of them was reporting on corruption and issues of public interest. Today, they stand as grim reminders of the cost of speaking truth to power,” he said. Not satisfied with its exist-

ing control, the BJP-RSS government, in its quest for total dominance, is now seeking to tighten its stranglehold over social media in an attempt to silence it, he claimed. “The message of the BJP-RSS is clear: independent journalism will be punished, and compliance will be rewarded. Sections of the media have been reduced to echoing the ruling establishment, while those who persist in asking questions are targeted relentlessly,” he alleged. As we observe, World Press Freedom Day, it is time for deep introspection by all stakeholders, Kharge said. Most importantly, those in power must always uphold the long-established norms of Democracy, he said. “Any deviation from these principles, if allowed to persist over time, risks becoming normalised and even accepted, causing lasting damage to democratic norms, values, institutions, and the people they serve,” he said. The government of the day must, therefore, hold itself to the highest possible standards, Kharge asserted.

Exit polls manipulated by BJP to mislead voters:

Guwahati, Apr 04: Assam Congress chief Gaurav Gogoi on Saturday alleged that exit polls are being manipulated by the BJP to create confusion among voters. Addressing a press conference after a meeting of opposition alliance leaders here, Gogoi said the BJP may try to mislead people, but will not succeed. “Neither the opposition parties nor the people of the state have fallen into the trap of exit polls, and this will be evident on the day of counting on May 4,” he said. Gogoi said there is a “silent vote” and an “undercurrent” in favour of the opposition, which exit poll surveys have not captured. Many voters, especially women, have voted based on real issues like price rise and governance, he claimed. Gogoi alleged that the BJP has been trying to create anomalies in the strongrooms, but our candidates and alert public have gone to the administration on several occasions to prevent such misdeeds. “All sections of society across the state want a change of government in the state. They have voted for this on April 9, and the results will be known on May 4,” he added. The Congress candidate from Jorhat said opposition leaders met to discuss preparations for counting and to remain alert on counting day. Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said the exit polls are misleading and that the “party is confident about its survey, which indicates the opposition will form the government after May 4”. The BJP is making efforts to derail the counting process, but “we are prepared to deal with the situation with legal rooms in both Delhi and Guwahati to deal with the situation”. “We are prepared to protect our candidates and to ensure that the state machinery is not used for any mischief,” he added.

Union Minister highlights Mizoram's potential in sericulture

Aizawl, May 04: The Union Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh has said that Mizoram holds significant potential in sericulture and fibre-based industries. Singh, who is on a two-day visit to the state, stated that the introduction of small, community-level machinery is crucial for efficient fibre extraction and cocoon processing. He underlined that decentralised infrastructure would not only enhance production but also empower rural communities by creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. He was addressing a meeting at Lok Bhavan in Aizawl, which was attended by Sericulture Minister Lal-thansanga, along with officials from the Sericulture Department, Cooperation Department, Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Department, Eastern Zone Weavers' Service Centre, and the Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms. The Union Minister further highlighted the importance of adopting a buy-back model for fibre extraction projects. Focusing on diversification, the Union Minister

spoke about the need to promote new-age fibres such as Ramie and linen, and suggested that the Agriculture Department should initiate pilot demonstration projects to assess their viability and expand cultivation in Mizoram. Addressing the handloom sector, the Union Minister stated that targeted interventions at the household level can significantly enhance income generation. He suggested that select families be supported with multiple looms to build successful micro-models, which could then serve as inspiration for broader community adoption. He stressed that showcasing such success stories would help in motivating others and strengthening the sector organically. On market development, the Union Minister called for the organization of buyer-seller meets involving designers and stakeholders from across the Northeastern region. He observed that such platforms would facilitate better design integration, improve product visibility, and open up new market opportunities for local artisans. Highlighting

the importance of branding and outreach, the Union Minister also encouraged the participation of youth, particularly women from the Northeast, in promoting silk products, stating that their involvement would add value to marketing efforts and help position regional textiles on a larger platform. The Union Minister reiterated that a coordinated approach involving innovation, market linkage, and grassroots empowerment is essential to unlock the full potential of Mizoram's textile and sericulture sectors and to ensure long-term socio-economic development for weavers and artisans across the state. At the meeting, Cooperation Commissioner & Secretary Udit Prakash Rai and Sericulture Secretary Florence Zotluangpuii delivered a presentation titled "Mizoram's Sericulture Potential at a Glance." They used a PowerPoint presentation to explain the current status of Mizoram's textiles and the roadmap leading up to 2047. Agriculture Joint Director R. Lalramhluni also detailed various initiatives and future plans under the department.

BJP's Jahar Chakraborty Wins Dharmanagar Bypoll

Agartala, May 04: BJP's Jahar Chakraborty has won Dharmanagar by-election in Tripura on Monday by a massive margin of 18,920 votes over CPI(M)'s Amitabha Dutta.

Chakraborty secured 24,291 votes, while CPI(M)'s Dutta polled 6,001 votes. Congress candidate Chayan Bhattacharya bagged 5,936 votes.

With this victory, the BJP's tally in the 60-member Assembly has risen to 33, while its allies, Tipra Motha Party (TMP) has 13 MLAs and the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura has one.

The by-poll was necessitated by the death of former Tripura Assembly Speaker Biswa Bandhu Sen in December 2025.

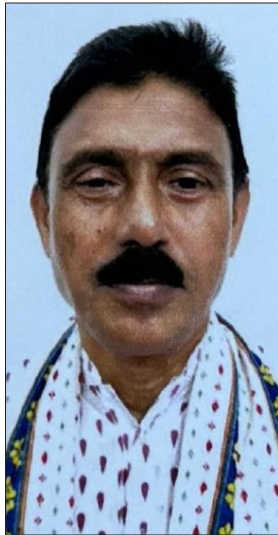
Voting for the bypoll was held on April 9 with a turnout of 79.84 per cent.

Counting began at 8 am under tight security in North Tripura, with all polled EVMs brought to the counting hall as per schedule.

A prohibitory order under Section 163 of BNS was enforced within a 100-metre radius to maintain law and order, and senior police officials monitored the arrangements.

Six candidates were in the fray even as the main contest was between the BJP, CPI(M) and Congress.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha expressed his gratitude to the people of Dharmanagar for favour-



■ Jahar Chakraborty of BJP won the Dharmanagar by-election in Tripura by a margin of 18,920 votes over CPI(M)'s Amitabha Dutta.

nata Party candidate, Jahar Chakraborty, with an overwhelming majority in the Dharmanagar by-election," Saha posted on social media.

"Your immense support and trust have made us even more responsible. We are committed to working tirelessly towards the overall development, peace, and progress of Dharmanagar. Let us move forward together and take this journey of development even further with everyone's support," he said.

112 Vacancies to Be Filled After Tripura Cabinet Approval

Agartala, May 04: The Tripura Cabinet has approved recruitment to 112 posts across various departments. Of the vacant posts, 107 vacancies will be filled through direct recruitment examinations, while five posts will be filled through promotion. Addressing the media at the Civil Secretariat in Agartala on Saturday, Tripura Transport, Tourism, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Sushanta Chowdhury said the Cabinet also approved several welfare-oriented decisions. The Minister informed that 50 posts of Senior Computer Assistant un-

der the Directorate of Treasuries and Accounts of the Finance Department would be filled through the Tripura Public Service Commission (TPSC). He further stated that 43 technical posts in different categories under the General Administration Department would also be filled. Apart from recruitment decisions, the State Cabinet approved a new welfare scheme under which one unmarried and dependent son or daughter above 18 years of age from families of paramilitary personnel from Tripura who were martyred while serving the nation, will receive a monthly allowance of Rs 2000.

Assam Chief Secretary Orders Implementation of Waste Rules

Guwahati, May 04: Assam Chief Secretary Ravi Kota on Saturday issued directions for effective implementation of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026 across the State, in compliance with the orders of the Supreme Court and provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. "District Commissioners have been authorised to conduct infrastructure audits and undertake quarterly performance reviews of Urban and Rural Local Bodies. Co-District Commissioners also empowered to undertake inspections and ensure urban-rural convergence of waste management infrastructure," the Chief Secretary said. Kota said that all urban and rural local bodies have been directed to ensure 100 percent compliance

with SWM Rules, including mandatory four-stream segregation (wet, dry, sanitary and special care waste) and time-bound remediation of legacy waste. "Local bodies have been asked to notify outer timelines for achieving full compliance within 60 days and prepare time-bound action plans for legacy waste remediation," he said. The Chief Secretary further said nodal officers have to be designated at Block (BDO) and Ward levels (not below Junior Engineer) within 30 days for implementation, monitoring and reporting. "Monthly reporting with geo-tagged evidence mandated; registration of Bulk Waste Generators on CPCB portal and enforcement of Extended Bulk Waste Generator Responsibility provisions," he stated. "Department of Hous-



ing and Urban Affairs and Panchayat and Rural Development to prepare and implement action plans and

undertake IEC outreach; Department of Education to integrate SWM in curricula and promote aware-

ness; Assam Pollution Control Board to support monitoring, compliance, translation of rules and en-

forcement, including environmental compensation mechanisms," Kota stated. "Online grievance redressal systems will be established while digital, real-time monitoring and integration with centralised CPCB portal has been mandated. Three-tier enforcement framework including fines, prosecution and accountability of officials prescribed," he said. The Chief Secretary further directed concerned departments to take necessary action, in consultation with stakeholders and competent authorities, to ensure alignment with the directions of the Supreme Court within a period of three months or at the earliest possible time. "Interim measures will have to be undertaken immediately under the supervision of the State Level Committee," he added.

Union Minister highlights Mizoram's potential in sericulture

Aizawl, May 04: The Union Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh has said that Mizoram holds significant potential in sericulture and fibre-based industries. Singh, who is on a two-day visit to the state, stated that the introduction of small, community-level machinery is crucial for efficient fibre extraction and cocoon processing. He underlined that decentralised infrastructure would not only enhance production but also empower rural communities by creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. He was addressing a meeting at Lok Bhavan in Aizawl, which was attended by Sericulture Minister Lal-thansanga, along with officials from the Sericulture Department, Cooperation Department,

Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Department, Eastern Zone Weavers' Service Centre, and the Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms. The Union Minister further highlighted the importance of adopting a buy-back model for fibre extraction projects. Focusing on diversification, the Union Minister spoke about the need to promote new-age fibres such as Ramie and linen, and suggested that the Agriculture Department should initiate pilot demonstration projects to assess their viability and expand cultivation in Mizoram. Addressing the handloom sector, the Union Minister stated that targeted interventions at the household level can significantly enhance income generation.

BJP Wins Koridang, Daochier I Imchen Becomes Nagaland's Youngest MLA

Kohima, May 04: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Daochier I. Imchen has secured a decisive victory in the 28 Koridang (ST) Assembly constituency by-election in Mokochung district of Nagaland, winning by a margin of 3,123 votes. As per the official election results, Imchen received 7,317 votes, defeating independent candidate Toshikaba, who garnered 4,194 votes. Other contestants included Imliwapang with 3,633 votes and I. Abenjang with 3,219 votes. Imchatoba Imchen and T. Chalu-kumba Ao secured 147 and 144 votes respectively. Out of a total of 22,506 registered voters, 18,745 cast their votes, resulting in a voter turnout of over 82.21%. Among these, 18,654 votes were valid, while 48 voters chose NOTA and 43 votes were rejected. With this win, Daochier I. Imchen has become the youngest member of the 14th Nagaland Legislative Assembly at 35 years of age.



He led comfortably across several polling stations, especially in Mangmetong and Longkhum, which significantly contributed to his convincing victory. The by-election was held following the demise of his father, Imkong L. Imchen, a veteran leader and five-time former MLA.

First Assamese woman newsreader Lily Das Malik no more

Guwahati, May 04: Lily Das Malik, one of the most iconic voices of Assamese radio journalism and a pioneering figure in public broadcasting, passed away in Bengaluru on Sunday night, family sources said. She was 90.

Widely remembered as the first Assamese woman to serve as a newsreader with All India Radio, she played a defining role in shaping Assamese radio news during the golden age of broadcasting.

Her mesmerizing voice

and unique style of news-reading endeared her to the listeners and made her a household name in the state in during the 1950s, a time when societal restrictions made it difficult for women to succeed. She was married to journalist KN Malik. Her demise has been widely mourned, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, BJP president Lurinjyoti Gogoi, among others, expressing grief. CM Sarma offered condolences to her bereaved family members.



Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi suffers defeat in Jorhat constituency

Guwahati, May 04: In a big setback for the Congress, the party's chief ministerial face and Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi lost to his BJP rival Hitendranath Goswami by 23,182 votes in Jorhat Assembly constituency. Gogoi, who is the Lok Sabha member from Jorhat, made his electoral debut in this Assembly polls against Goswami, a five-

time MLA who has represented the constituency thrice as an AGP leader and twice as a BJP legislator. The two other seats won by the BJP so far are Dhemaji and Sissibargaon. Education Minister Ranaj Pegu has won from Dhemaji constituency by a margin of 32,229 votes, while Jiban Gogoi emerged victorious from Sissibargaon by a margin of 40,593

votes. Among the results declared so far, is the Mazbat seat, which is won by NDA ally BPF. In Mazbat, BPF's Charan Boro won by a margin of 55,546 votes. Polling for all 126 Assembly constituencies in Assam was held in a single phase on April 9 and counting of votes is still going on in the remaining seats. Political observers note that Gogoi's defeat is particularly sig-

nificant, as he was projected as the Congress's face of renewal in Assam. The setback underscores the BJP's organizational strength and voter outreach, while raising questions about Congress's strategy in the state. Celebrations broke out among BJP supporters across Upper Assam, with party workers hailing Goswami's victory as proof of the electorate's trust in

the BJP's governance. For the Congress, the loss of its state president in his home turf is a symbolic and strategic setback, complicating its efforts to regain relevance in Assam's political landscape. The BJP's victory in Jorhat adds to its tally, with Education Minister Ranaj Pegu winning Dhemaji by 32,229 votes and Jiban Gogoi securing Sissibargaon by

40,593 votes. NDA ally Bodoland People's Front (BPF) also registered success in Mazbat, where Charan Boro won by a massive margin of 55,546 votes. Polling for all 126 Assembly constituencies was conducted in a single phase on April 9, with counting still underway in several seats. Early trends suggest the BJP-led NDA is heading toward a comfortable

majority, consolidating its dominance in Assam. In a major blow to the Congress, its chief ministerial face and Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president Gaurav Gogoi was defeated in the Jorhat Assembly constituency by BJP veteran Hitendranath Goswami. Gogoi, who is also the Lok Sabha MP from Jorhat, lost by a margin of 23,182 votes in his

Assembly debut. Goswami, a five-time MLA, has represented Jorhat thrice as an Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) leader and twice as a BJP legislator, giving him a formidable local base. For the Congress, losing its state president in his home turf is both a symbolic and strategic setback, complicating its efforts to regain relevance in Assam's political landscape.

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Editorial

Turn the Page: Why Children Must Return to Libraries

In an age where screens dominate every waking hour of a child’s life, the quiet rustle of book pages has become an almost forgotten sound. Libraries — once sanctuaries of curiosity, wonder, and learning — now stand half-empty, their shelves patient but neglected. This must change. Reading physical books does far more than entertain. It sharpens focus, builds vocabulary, fosters empathy, and nurtures a child’s imagination in ways no algorithm can replicate. The library, beyond its books, teaches something equally invaluable — the discipline of sitting with a thought, following it patiently to its conclusion. Parents, educators, and policymakers share this responsibility. Schools must schedule regular library visits, not as a reward but as a routine. Parents should model the habit at home — switching off devices and picking up books together. Local governments must invest in making libraries welcoming, vibrant spaces stocked with books that reflect young readers’ worlds and interests. Digital literacy matters, yes — but not at the cost of deep reading. A generation that cannot sit with a book is a generation that cannot sit with a complex idea. Let us put the library back at the heart of childhood. The habit we build today will shape the minds of tomorrow.

Freedom of the press in a world of churnalism and slopaganda

Do you feel exhausted trying to find reliable facts about everything happening around you? As emerging digital platforms increasingly outpace legacy media, it is often frustrating to discover that a seemingly credible story, complete with high-quality video footage, turns out to be fabricated. Such content is frequently designed either to malign individuals or to advance the vested interests of particular groups. While many of these interests are political in nature, they can also serve corporate or business agendas. Rapid technological advancement and the widespread, low-cost accessibility of artificial intelligence (AI) tools have significantly lowered the barriers to content creation. Today, almost anyone with minimal resources can become a content producer. Much of this cheap, low-quality content is now weaponised as propaganda, used by malicious actors to run disinformation and misinformation campaigns. Communication experts have coined the term “slopaganda” to describe this phenomenon. Although the word has yet to enter common vocabulary, most of us have encountered, and at times been misled by, such content. Across the spectrum—politicians from all

sides, business leaders, civil society representatives, academics, and activists—there is now broad recognition of the dangers posed by slopaganda, along with growing calls for urgent measures to counter it. Alongside this trend is another troubling form of media proliferation. A number of media outlets have emerged that show little interest in serious public-service journalism. Instead, they are used as tools to advance specific business interests, shield corruption and malpractice, or promote one-sided narratives. These outlets often rely on the unethical practice of copying and republishing press releases or producing derivative content with minimal verification or critical analysis. Experts have termed this practice “churnalism,” distinguishing it from genuine journalism. In Bangladesh’s already overcrowded media landscape, churnalism has become a dominant practice and is widely regarded as one of the key reasons behind the audience’s growing disengagement from legacy media.

If reading this far feels disheartening, it is important to recognise that Bangladesh is not unique in facing these challenges. The global media ecosystem is currently in a dire state, confronting levels of adversity and attack that are unprecedented in recent history. The latest World Press Freedom Index indicates that global media freedom has fallen to its lowest level in a quarter of a century. In 25 years, the average score across the 180 countries and territories assessed has never been this low. Should this come as a surprise? When self-proclaimed leaders of the free world remain conspicuously silent in the face of what many rights activists describe as “journalicide” in Palestine and Lebanon by Israel, their moral authority to criticise censorship in fragile democracies or countries drifting towards autocracy becomes increasingly questionable. According to the United Nations, since the start of Israel’s war on Gaza, more than 260 media professionals had been killed by December 2025. In addition, 11 Lebanese journalists were killed in their own country in connection with this conflict, as per figures compiled by the Global Investigative Journalism Network. The Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which publishes the annual index, also indicated that the legal environment for journalism has deteriorated most sharply over the past year, signalling an increasing trend

towards the criminalisation of journalistic work. While journalists continue to face killings and imprisonment, the methods used to undermine press freedom are evolving. Journalism is being choked by hostile political rhetoric, a faltering media economy, and laws increasingly deployed as instruments against the press. Despite a brief improvement in 2025, Bangladesh’s position in the index has been on a downward trajectory for nearly two decades. The most recent drop—by three places—is particularly concerning as it reflects the failure of an interim administration born out of an uprising to uphold its commitments to ensure journalists’ safety and to end harassment, including arrests and prolonged detention on questionable charges. Further underscoring the challenges, UNESCO’s World Trends Report on Freedom of Expression and Media Development (2022–2025), released ahead of this World Press Freedom Day, notes that freedom of expression worldwide has declined by 10 percent since 2012. The report describes this regression as comparable in scale to the most unstable periods of the 20th century, encompassing both world wars and the Cold War era. According to UNESCO, sev-

eral factors are driving this setback, including the intensification of armed conflicts (61 active conflicts were recorded globally in 2024), alongside rising information manipulation and interference by malicious actors, often facilitated by AI technologies. The erosion of trust and concerns over national security also play a role. The report highlights a 48 percent increase in efforts to control or restrict media, as well as persistent violence against journalists, with 85 percent of such killings going unpunished. It also points to the growing economic fragility of independent media, linked to the concentration of more than 54 percent of global advertising revenues within digital platforms. At the same time, digital disruption and AI-driven transformations of information ecosystems are accelerating, AI to create or modify content. These pressures have contributed to a 63 percent increase in self-censorship since 2012, driven by fear of reprisals, online harassment, judicial intimidation, and economic constraints. These adversities are not unfamiliar. Bangladesh’s Media Reform Commission (MRC), formed by the interim government following the 2024 uprising, identified many of these is-

ssues during its investigations and consultations. Some of these challenges are deeply rooted and historical, while others are emerging and largely uncharted. The MRC put forward a comprehensive set of recommendations, proposing phased implementation. Notably, several of these measures could have been enacted immediately under existing laws and regulations. However, the interim government failed to take meaningful action during its tenure, resulting in a missed opportunity for reform. This democratic transition has opened a new window of opportunity to undertake meaningful media reforms, without which democratic recovery risks faltering once again. In its election manifesto, the ruling BNP pledged to ensure full independence of the media, establish a permanent media commission to safeguard press freedom, protect journalists from attacks, and restore public trust through mechanisms of self-regulation. These commitments are critical. Without a vibrant, transparent, and accountable media ecosystem, the threats posed by slopaganda, churnalism, and other challenges will continue to undermine democratic stability and distort public discourse.

The necessity for a media freedom index specific to Bangladesh

Concerns over freedom of the media are not new in Bangladesh. There has been debate, criticism, and international assessment for many years. Bangladesh’s position in various global indices has also come up repeatedly, with the latest World Press Freedom Index putting it at 152th place out of 180 countries. These indicators are important. They often shape a country’s image on the international stage and may influence diplomatic negotiations. But the problem is that external indicators do not always fully capture the reality inside a country. The same is true for Bangladesh. That is why now might be the time for Bangladesh to create a national media freedom index, keeping in mind its realities, crises, institutions, and people. It’s worth recalling that the 2025 report of the Media Reform Commission had highlighted some important realities facing the press in Bangladesh. The report said that a single factor has not caused the crisis of media freedom here, and it cannot be explained by censorship or abuse of law alone. It’s not just the government. This crisis has been created by the relationship between three powerful entities: the government, the media, and the citizens. We generally see free-

dom of the media as a link between the state and journalism. But the reality is more complex than that. If the government does not provide an independent environment, the media is curtailed. If the media fails to uphold ethics, professionalism, and public interest, its credibility is compromised, even in a free society. And if citizens do not verify information but instead spread rumours, become distrustful, and refuse to participate in democratic discussions, then the public sphere is weakened. So, to sustain media freedom in a country, the government, media, and citizens must all work together.

First, the government. The state must be clear in distinguishing between whether it is protecting or controlling the media. Constitutional safeguards must be in place and there should be remedial laws, practical application of the Right to Information Act (RTIA), transparency in licensing and accreditation process, and fairness in government advertising distribution. Most importantly, safety of the journalists must be guaranteed. Government must also ensure that state-owned media is indeed acting as a true public service institution. In Bangladesh, control over media does not always come from



direct censorship, sometimes it can be seen in licensing restrictions, advertisements, lawsuits, informal directives, or through administrative complications.

Second, the media itself. Freedom of the media is not just freedom from the government. The media also has to be free from the influence of the own-

er, the advertiser, business interests, party loyalties, and the culture of internalised fear. The number of media outlets has increased in Bangladesh, but pluralism has not been expanded as a result. In many cases, ownership has been concentrated in the hands of a few groups. The same groups have exerted influ-

ence across multiple platforms, financial interests have influenced editing policy, and political proximity has affected news presentation. Without addressing the media’s own role in the question of its freedom, a truly independent media climate might always stay a dream.

Third, the citizens. This part

is the most neglected, but perhaps the most important. Because freedom of the media is not only a matter for journalists but also for civic life. In today’s Bangladesh, citizens not only read the news but also circulate it. They not only receive information, but become part of the information itself. What is being shared on social media, what news is being trusted, how rumours are being spread, how much dissent is being tolerated, how the RTIA is being used—all this now affects the public sphere. There might be positive and negative indicators for citizens as well. Positives might include media awareness, use of the RTIA, participation in policy discussions, standing up for independent journalism, and responsible citizen journalism. Negatives might include the spread of rumours and false information, the inability to verify information, intolerance of dissent, a shift away from democratic participation, and an overall distrust of both the state and the media. Finally, a Bangladesh-specific media freedom index has at least three major advantages.

First, it will give a more accurate picture of reality. Global indicators may indicate whether the situation is good or bad, but a national indicator can show

where the problem is most dire. Whether it is the law, security, or perhaps the centralisation of ownership, there will be a higher degree of clarity. Second, it will make way for accountability. If this index is based on legal documents, court data, journalist safety reports, content analysis, and public opinion polls, freedom of media will no longer be a mere euphemism. It will become part of measurable governance and policymaking. Third, the index will bring the existing reforms into a framework. When freedom of media is discussed, some only talk about the law, the safety of journalists, or perhaps the opaqueness of ownership. But in reality, they are all interconnected. A national indicator can analyse these relationships, bring legal reforms and pave the way for regulatory independence. Bangladesh is passing a time when just uttering words such as “freedom of expression” or “media freedom” is not enough. There needs to be a deeper, more honest, more principled discussion about how media freedom is built, curtailed, and sustained. Creating a Bangladesh media freedom index based on the reality of Bangladesh while respecting international policy can take that discussion to a new height.

Decorating a dying tree: The illusion of education reform in Bangladesh

There is a particular disease that afflicts policymakers in developing democracies, and Bangladesh’s education establishment has a textbook example for it. Let’s call it “instant applause syndrome” where a person does performative things to look good on paper regardless of the said work’s long-term impact. For example, a video recently circulated on social media that captures this pathology perfectly. The education minister steps out of a car in a village, microphone clipped to his collar, and poses a question to a group of schoolchildren with theatrical flair: “There will be no more cheating in exams. You are studying properly, aren’t you?” It might have seemed like a charming moment of grassroots engagement. But pause and ask yourself: when a minister’s primary talking point—at field visits, board meetings, and education seminars alike—is

exam hall discipline, what does that tell us about the ceiling of our ambitions? The fact that the minister considers cheating prevention a selling point is not merely disappointing. It announces, loudly and without irony, that we have set the bar at administrative adequacy, calling it reform. The minister’s agenda, as it has emerged in public, reads like a checklist of procedural anxieties: preventing cheating in exam halls, drafting new legislation to criminalise digital fraud in examinations, and overhauling how answer scripts are evaluated and marked. These are not unimportant matters, but obsessing over how strictly we mark a test tells us nothing about whether the test is worth taking. Criminalising digital cheating does not produce a single curious, capable, or creative mind. These are the concerns of an administrator trying to plug leaks in a sinking ship, not of a

visionary trying to build a better vessel. Compare this with what policymakers in high-performing education systems actually discuss. In Finland, South Korea, or Singapore, the national conversation in education circles revolves around cultivating creativity, building research capacity, redesigning curricula to address 21st-century skills, and preparing students for labour markets that will look radically different in twenty years. Their ministers are not photographed asking children if they’re copying off each other. They are being asked hard questions about learning outcomes, teacher development pipelines, and whether their systems are producing thinkers or test-takers.

Bangladesh, meanwhile, remains imprisoned in a conversation about exam centres and grade sheets. And this is not simply the minister’s personal failing. It is a structural one, rooted in how our political economy works. When a party comes to power with a five-year mandate, its core incentive is to produce visible wins before the next ballot. A shiny new school building can be photographed. Distributing devices to thousands of students generates a front-page headline and gives the impression of a country going digital overnight. But no one can photograph the quality of a lesson. There is no ribbon-cutting ceremony for a genuinely improved curriculum. You cannot put a better-trained teacher on a campaign leaflet.

So, we get buildings instead of learning, gadgets without pedagogy, and policy announcements without institutional follow-through. The new policy announcements popping up in recent months—mandatory third languages and vocational training—follow exactly this pattern. They are presented as forward-thinking reforms, but

without the foundational structural work that any serious curricular overhaul requires: teacher retraining at scale, assessment reform, coherent implementation frameworks, and a willingness to sit with complexity for years before results arrive. Instead, these initiatives feel scattered and performative, sewn onto a system whose foundations remain undressed. You cannot decorate a tree whose roots are being eaten through; you can only delay the moment it falls.

The tablets would be distributed; whether teachers could use them, whether the curriculum would be compatible with digital learning, whether students in those schools even would have reliable electricity—these questions often dissolve into the background noise of governance. The GPA-5 count swells year on year, pass rates reach improbable heights, and yet we continue producing

graduates who are uncompetitive in the global workforce. We are measuring performance while avoiding the harder question of whether any real education is happening. The real tragedy is that the reforms which would actually matter are both obvious and achievable. Teacher dignity is one of them. In most countries where education genuinely works, the teaching profession carries social prestige and financial security. In Bangladesh, we have systematically undermined both. A teacher who is poorly paid, professionally unsupported, and socially marginalised is not going to transform classrooms no matter how many syllabi we redesign above their heads. Investing in teachers—their training, salaries, working conditions, professional identity—yields no photographs. It yields no statistic that mounts impressively in a five-year report. But it is the single most powerful

lever any education system has. We have spent decades pretending otherwise.

The curriculum problem is similarly neglected. We live in an era of rapid technological disruption, where artificial intelligence is reshaping white-collar work, where the skills that will matter most to today’s schoolchildren are adaptability, critical reasoning, and comfort with ambiguity. Our curriculum barely asks students to think. It asks them to remember, to reproduce, to perform at narrow cognitive tasks under timed pressure. The result is young people who are technically literate on paper and practically unprepared for the world they are entering.

None of this is secret knowledge. Our policymakers know it. The problem is that fixing it takes a decade, requires political courage, and none of it offers any easy win. It requires a government to plant trees it will never see

bearing fruit to trust that doing the right unglamorous thing today will matter enormously to a generation of children who cannot yet vote. We must be clear about what we are asking for. Not dramatic gestures or more slogans. We are asking for the boring, difficult, unphotographable work of building a real education system: rigorous curriculum reform, investment in assessment quality, and a political culture that treats long-term outcomes as worth more than short-term optics. A nation’s true development cannot be measured by the height of its buildings. It must be measured by the depth of its people’s thinking. Our ministers can choose to be remembered as the generation that fixed exam hall conduct, or as the generation that finally decided to build something that lasts. So far, they are choosing the wrong thing to be proud of.

SIS targets ₹20,000 crore revenue in FY27, eyes 500,000 workforce

Mumbai: SIS Ltd, a security and facility management services provider, aims to cross Rs 20,000 crore in revenue by FY27, driven by strong double-digit growth, expansion of its service network, and a simplified regulatory framework under new labour codes, said its Group Managing Director Rituraj Sinha.SIS, which currently employs nearly 3.46 lakh people, expects to hit an ‘inflection point’ i Management Services’, led by tailwinds such as expansion of service network, new labour codes, which simplified the regulatory framework and compliance arbitrage. The company, which also has operations in markets such as Singapore, Australia and New Zealand besides India, is targeting to increase its workforce to 5 lakh by 2030, becoming one of the top five private sector employers, as it scales up operations. SIS, which reported a 21 per cent increase in revenue to Rs 16,030 crore in FY26, expects growth momentum to sustain on the back of new client additions from both government and private sectors, along with

deeper penetration across industries ranging from healthcare, manufacturing and construction, and automobiles to e-commerce. Besides, SIS is also taking a leap by providing AI (Artificial Intelligence) Enterprise-based solutions to its customers, which will empower them with smarter decision-making, predictive insights, and operational efficiencies by automating routine tasks, enhancing security“This is the year where we see AI being adopted at the enterprise level, both internally and on the customer-facing side. ensuring smarter engagement and sharper value creation,” he said.SIS is positioning itself not just as a service provider but as a technology-driven partner, helping clients future-proof their operations and stay competitive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape, he added.“In FY27, given our order book and our current run rate, we are targeting roughly Rs 20,000 crore in revenue and close to 500 crore in profit after tax,” Sinha told PTI in an interaction.

India-linked supertanker with 45,000 tons of LPG

New Delhi: An India-linked supertanker carrying around 45,000 tons of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is attempting a high-stakes transit through the Strait of Hormuz, Bloomberg reported citing ship-tracking data. The rare passage comes at a time when traffic through the vital shipping lane has nearly ground to a halt due to escalating tensions in the region.The Marshall Islands-flagged vessel ‘Sarv Shakti’ was moving northward past Iran’s Larak and Qeshm islands on Saturday, according to Bloomberg’s report. The tanker appeared to be heading toward the Gulf of Oman, signaling a potential breakthrough in an otherwise constrained corridor. Bloomberg reported that such movements have been scarce since a weeks-old US blockade targeting ships linked to Iran disrupted maritime flows. Besides, India has also prioritised LPG shipments, directing ports to fast-track berthing and discharge of such cargoes while ramping up local production.

Oil and Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said in April that India has increased LPG output by 60% to 54,000 tons per day.City gas distribution companies — including IGL, MGL, GAIL, and BPCL — were directed y the government to accelerate new piped natural gas (PNG) connections and offer incentives to consumers willing to switch from LPG.

According to the latest government data, over 5.27 lakh new PNG connections were gasified since March 2026, with new connections being added at a rate of 10,000 per day.

Shipping documents re-

viewed by Bloomberg identified Indian Oil Corporation as the buyer of the cargo. If successful, the tanker’s passage would mark the first observed transit by an India-linked vessel through Hormuz since the blockade began. India, the world’s third-largest oil importer and second-largest LPG consumer, has been grappling with acute shortages of cooking fuel. In response, the government has taken steps to secure alternative supply routes and boost domestic output. With cargoes from West Asia effectively stranded in the Persian Gulf, New Delhi has moved to secure alternative energy supplies. It has ramped up LPG procurement from countries such as the US and Argentina. In parallel, India has reportedly expanded its search for LPG to newer markets, including the Atlantic Basin and Norway. India’s

LPG consumption for 2025-26 stood at 33.21 million tonnes (MT). Monthly trends indicated a sharp decline in March, driven by supply disruptions from West Asia following the outbreak of conflict on February 28, according to the government data. Prior to this, India depended on imports for nearly 60% of its LPG requirements, with a significant share sourced from West Asia, especially Qatar.Consumption dropped from 3.012 MT in January and 2.822 MT in February to 2.379 MT in March, marking a 26.6% fall compared to January levels. However, long queues outside gas agencies and labour migration due to the LPG crisis has been reported in parts of the country.

Markets shut for 3 day BSE, NSE are closed today and what it means for settlements

Mumbai: Equity markets are set for a long weekend amidst the busy earnings season.There will be no trading for three consecutive days as Indian stock markets will be closed on Friday, May 1.May 1 is celebrated as Maharashtra Day and even Buddha Purnima is also being celebrated the same day this year. As a result, stock exchanges will remain shut today. What all markets are closed?

Asia’s oldest stock exchange, the Bombay Stock Exchange is closed. The National Stock Exchange is shut as well. It’s not just equity markets, but currency derivative markets too are closed today. This means investors cannot trade in shares, stocks, or any other form of securities. So in case you placed an order yesterday, under the The Multi Commodity Exchange

(MCX), will observe partial closure on May 1, as trading will remain suspended for its morning session (9:00 AM to 5:00 PM IST). However, the exchange will resume trading for its evening session (5:00 PM to 11:30 PM IST), and the prices will align with the global cues.However, National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) will be fully closed for Maharashtra Day. T+1 settlement cycle it will be settled on the next working day, which is Monday, May 4. While the stock exchanges observe closure, the Q4 earnings season will not lose its momentum as companies will declare their quarterly and full-year annual results as per their regular schedule. If a company has set May 1 as the record date for asserting the shareholders eligibility, you will still receive the dividend.Rupee slides



to record low on higher oil prices, FPI outflowsDefence equipment manufacturers, Zen Technologies will announce its result today and the company’s board may also recommend a dividend. While Jindal Steel and Punjab Chemicals and Crop Protection will also announce their Q4 financials too, and the latter may also recommend a dividend

for FY26Banks closed on May 1Banks across majority cities of the country are closed too for the occasion of Buddha Purnima and Maharashtra Day. So in case you have any important appointments scheduled, better get them done on the weekend as financial institutions will remain open on Saturday, May 2 following their regular working cycle.

US-based Spirit Airlines becomes industry’s first casualty of Iran war; over 17,000 jobs at stake

New Delhi: Spirit Airlines, the bankrupt discount carrier, ceased operations on Saturday (May 2), becoming the industry’s first casualty linked to the Iran war, after failing to secure creditor support for a US government bailout plan. The airline has gone out of business after 34 years in the aviation sector. It can be seen that the collapse of the first carrier due to a doubling in jet fuel prices during the two-month-old Iran war will cost thousands of jobs.The airline faces another blow as the stakes are high, with more than 17,000 employees set to lose their jobs. On Friday, a Spirit board meeting ended without an agreement to rescue the company. “Unfortunately, despite the Company’s efforts, the recent material increase in oil prices and other business pressures have significantly impacted Spirit’s financial outlook,” Spirit said in a statement announcing “an orderly wind-down of operations.” According to the data available from aviation analytics firm Cirium, Spirit had as many as 4,119 domestic flights scheduled between May 1 and May 15, offering



809,638 seats.Meanwhile, global carriers are contending with surging jet fuel prices after the US-Israeli strikes on Iran

disrupted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. This comes as a big blow to Spirit as it was already struggling to turn a profit before the fuel shock

The airline had built its brand around affordable fares for budget-conscious travelers ready to eschew add-ons like checked bags and seat assignments.That demand tapered off quickly after the COVID-19 pandemic, as passengers preferred comfort and experience-based travel, leaving ultra-low-cost carriers struggling to adapt.With Spirit’s shutdown, its rival carriers like JetBlue Airways and Frontier Airlines, who are reeling from the cost shock, will benefit.

This comes as a huge blow to US President Donald Trump, who had earlier proposed \$500 million to save Spirit despite opposition from some of his closest advisers and many Republicans in Congress. It should be noted that no US carrier of Spirit’s size has liquidated in two decades. Spirit helped keep fares lower in markets where it competed against major carriers.

Group insolvency fix only under strict confidentiality rule, to exclude foreign

New Delhi: The government is likely to introduce a confidentiality clause under group insolvency regulations to prevent the leak of sensitive information among the resolution professionals (RPs) within a corporate group and to competition, even as the resolution process is under way. Also, to start with, resolution of stress in corporate groups will exclude the foreign subsidiaries and affiliates of the conglomerate, as it is felt that a coordinated mechanism with overseas jurisdictions and necessary legal processes might take time to evolve. “The IBBI regulations might provide a clear protocol for sharing confidential information within the group. Given that entities across the corporate group may access sensitive materials, the framework will provide for appropriate non-disclosure obligations,” an official said. A confidentiality clause will also protect the passing of sensitive information to competition, the person noted. A 2021 committee had recommended that India first enact and operationalise domestic group insolvency mechanisms, including procedural coordination, common RPs, and group-level committees of creditors, before considering the UNCITRAL Model Law on enterprise group insolvency,” said Srinivasa Rao, partner and leader (risk

advisory services) at Nangia Global.

Further, IBBI will likely permit creditors to file a joint application for initiating insolvency proceedings against multiple entities within a corporate group. This will reduce costs and help the adjudicating authority quickly decide whether to accept the insolvency application.According to official sources, the confidentiality clause among RPs is intended to ensure that the valuation of individual group entities undergoing resolution is not undermined. The IBC Amendment Act 2026, which received the President’s approval last month, also provides for the appointment of a common insolvency professional (IP) to oversee the group-level resolution strategy. Individual RPs will be appointed for different entities within the corporate group. Additionally, the new regulations will likely prescribe eligibility criteria for a coordinating IP, including enhanced managerial capabilities and relevant industry experience, and clarify the extent to which firm-level RPs can delegate authority to the coordinating IP to facilitate timely and efficient action. “Allowing individual RPs of group companies to delegate responsibilities to the group-level IP will enable quicker decision-making,” the official said. The official said that since



the cross-border insolvency framework is new in India, and will involve coordination across various jurisdictions, the Insolvency

and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) might introduce group insolvency rules that apply only to domestic firms of a corporate group.

India IPO market slows as geopolitical tensions weak listings hit sentiment

Mumbai: India’s red-hot primary market, which clocked back-to-back record fundraising years, is likely to lose steam in FY27 as geopolitical tensions, elevated valuations and weak listing performances dent investor appetite — despite a robust IPO pipeline exceeding ₹3 lakh crore.

Escalating conflict in West Asia has disrupted oil supplies, pushing crude prices sharply higher and stoking inflation concerns. The Indian crude basket has surged from \$69 per barrel in February to \$110.63 as of April 16. This has weighed on equities, with the Nifty 50 falling 7.5 per cent from its January 2 peak of 26328.55 to 24353.55 on April 17, eroding investor wealth and confidence. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) have pulled out a record \$13.6 billion in March, with an additional \$6.24 billion exiting markets so far in April. Market volatility has made it difficult for companies to command favourable valuations,

prompting several to defer public issues. Fintech major PhonePe, which was targeting a ₹12,000–13,000 crore raise, has postponed its IPO citing geopolitical uncertainty and market instability. Meanwhile, Reliance Industries is reportedly looking to file draft papers for the IPO of Jio Platforms in May, incorporating full-year earnings. The move — delayed from March due to market conditions — aims to present a stronger investment case. The issue is projected to be India’s largest ever, with an estimated size of ₹35,000 crore to over ₹50,000 crore (\$4–6+ billion).Weak sentiment has also impacted other sectors, with five jewellery companies also deferring IPO plans worth ₹3,840 crore. To provide flexibility, Sebi has allowed companies to reduce IPO sizes by up to 50 per cent without refileing a draft prospectus. The relief will apply to IPOs opening on or before September 30, 2026, offering a temporary but mean-

ingful window for firms planning to tap the markets. Recent listings have further dampened enthusiasm. Shares of CIL subsidiary Central Mine Planning and Design Institute, logistics firm Shadowfax Technologies and analytics company Fractal Analytics declined 10.43 per cent, 11.31 per cent and 5.87 per cent, respectively, on listing debut.Market participants expect the “wait-and-watch” approach to persist until macroeconomic conditions stabilise and secondary markets recover. “The pipeline of issues continues to be staggering. Around 144 companies looking to raise ₹1.75 lakh crore have Sebi approval, while 63 firms targeting ₹1.37 lakh crore are awaiting clearance. However, given the volatility, issuers may prefer to delay rather than launch in a weak market,” said Pranav Haldea, MD, PRIME Database Group. Vaqar-javed Khan, senior fundamental analyst at Angel One, highlighted a valuation disconnect: “Promoters

remain anchored to bull-market expectations, while investors are pricing in geopolitical risks.”Analysts said investors have turned selective. “Recent IPOs have seen muted subscription and disappointing listings. Apart from geopolitical uncertainty, high valuations, limited retail participation and cautious investor behaviour have contributed.

The market is no longer chasing issues blindly,” Khan added.Apurva Sheth, head of market perspectives and research at SAMCO Securities, said the shift reflects a maturing market. “Investors are prioritising free cash flow and earnings visibility over growth narratives. Issuers are also increasingly using confidential filings to test demand before committing to pricing.”

While strong domestic institutional flows from mutual funds and insurers have offered some support, they too have become more selective amid the crowded pipeline, Sheth said.

Tata Trusts set to review representation at Tata

Mumbai: Tata Trusts, which owns around 66 per cent in Tata Sons, the holding company of the salt-to-software conglomerate, is likely to take up issues with far-reaching implications in its forthcoming board meeting on May 8, according to sources in the know. The top agenda of the meeting includes a review of Tata Trusts representation on the Tata Sons board, it is learnt. Currently, Tata Trusts has two nominee directors on the Tata Sons board — Tata Trusts Chairman Noel Tata and Tata Trusts Vice-chairman Venu Srinivasan. The other vice-chairman of Tata Trusts — Vijay Singh – was the third nominee director on the Tata Sons board until September 2025, when he had to step down amid a clash between two camps within Tata Trusts. If the review implies Srinivasan’s exit from the Tata Sons board, Noel Tata will remain the only trustee nominee there. Noel The other important agenda before the Tata Trusts board this Friday would be a discussion on the public statements made by the two vice-chairmen — industrialist Srinivasan and former bureaucrat Singh — on the contentious subject of the stock exchange listing of Tata Sons, one of the sources said. While Tata Trusts had last year

passed a resolution opposing any effort to list Tata Sons, the recent statements of Singh and Srinivasan had gone against that sentiment recently. They argued that a listed entity would be in a better position to raise funds in new capital-intensive businesses, especially in the tech space. A potential listing of Tata Sons has been a long-drawn issue. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had mandated listing of upper-layer non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) by September 2025. However, Tata Sons, which was categorised as an upper-layer NBFC, has remained unlisted. Tata Sons had earlier sought an exemption from the upper-layer NBFC category, but there are indications from the RBI that such an exemption may not be granted.

According to the latest regulations in the Maharashtra Public Trusts Act, only 25 per cent of the trustees can be lifetime members. As of now, there are six trustees at Sir Ratan Tata Trust, implying that only one of the perpetual trustees can retain that status. According to some legal opinions, the oldest member — in this case Jimmy Tata, who’s Ratan Tata’s brother — should ideally retain the perpetual trustee status.

Does the US’s attack of Iran’s civilian infrastructure constitute war crimes

Washington: strikes and threats of strikes against Iranian civilian infrastructure seem to be encouraged by Donald Trump, other high-ranking US officials, and their supporters. According to legal experts, this appears to constitute significant war crimes under international law. The US president threatened to “hit each and every one of their electric-generating plants” and “bring [Iran] back to the stone ages – where they belong” if Iran did not make an unnamed agreement with him in a long speech to the country on Wednesday. A day later, Trump carried out his threat by posting pictures of an attack on the incomplete B1 bridge close to Tehran along with the caption, “Much more to follow!”

”Intentionally attacking civilian infrastructure such as power plants is generally prohibited,” stated Erika Guevara Rosas, senior director of research, advocacy, policy, and campaigns at Amnesty International. A party cannot attack power plants if doing so will cause disproportionate harm to people, even in the rare circumstances in which they are considered military targets. “Attacking such power plants would be disproportionate, illegal under international humanitarian law, and could amount to a war crime, given that they are essential for meeting the basic needs and livelihoods of tens of millions of civilians.” That principle was underlined in 2024 when the international criminal court issued arrest warrants for Russia’s former defence minister Sergei Shoigu and the Russian general Valery Gerasimov, who were accused of directing widespread attacks on Ukraine’s power infrastructure and of causing excessive harm to civilians. On Thursday, more than 100 US experts in international law from universities including Harvard, Yale, Stanford and the University of California said the conduct of US forces and statements by senior US officials “raise serious concerns about violations of international human rights law and in-



ternational humanitarian law, including potential war crimes”. The letter, published on the website of the policy journal Just Security, highlighted Trump’s comment last month that the US may conduct strikes on Iran “just for fun”. It also cited comments by the defence secretary, Pete Hegseth, who told reporters that the US did not fight with “stupid rules of engagement”. The experts said they were “seriously concerned about strikes that have hit schools, health facilities and homes”, noting an attack on a school in Tehran on the first day of the war that killed more than 160 children and teachers. The two issues of what constitutes a civilian object and the consideration of proportionality in striking civilian objects that a belligerent has identified as having a military function are among the knottier questions in international humanitarian law. Under article 52 of the first additional protocol to the Geneva conventions of 1977, “civilian objects”, such as infrastructure, are defined not in themselves but by what they are not: military objectives whose destruction offers no definite military advantage. At the heart of the question of what may – or may not – be attacked is the overarching principle of distinction between civilians and combatants. Rule 10 of the customary rules of international humanitarian law – relating to both

international and internal armed conflicts – explicitly states: “Civilian objects are protected against attack, unless and for such time as they are military objectives.” That places a requirement on all parties: attackers must avoid targeting civilian objects and the party under attack must avoid “mingling” the military and civilians. Codified in international law, the statute of the international criminal court makes it explicit that it is a war crime to intentionally direct attacks against civilian objects if they “are not military objectives”. Even when a civilian object is deemed to have become a military object, international law requires an attacking party to balance the harm to the civilian population. International law has become more explicit and precise over the issue of the protection of civilian objects since the second world war, but the US and western allies have launched questionable attacks on civilian infrastructure before, including against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war and on Serbian power plants. Sarah Yager, the Washington director of Human Rights Watch, said the crippling of Iran’s power plants would be “devastating to the Iranian people”, cutting off electricity to hospitals, water supplies and other vital civilian needs. “The US military has protocols designed to constrain that kind of harm to the civilian population, but when the

president speaks this way, it risks signalling that those constraints are optional, and that is what makes this moment so dangerous,” she said. International law permits attacks on energy plants and other ostensibly civilian targets only if it is determined that they primarily support military activity. Tom Dannenbaum, a professor at Stanford Law School, said Trump’s statements indicated otherwise. “The reference to the stone age indicates that objects would be targeted seemingly because they contribute to the viability of a modern society in Iran, which is completely unrelated to the question of contribution to military action – the necessary condition for targeting in war,” he said.

Attacks on civilian objects by Iran, the US and Israel have prompted a pointed response from the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mirjana Spoljaric, who said war crimes may be being committed. “War on essential infrastructure is war on civilians ... Deliberate attacks on essential services and civilian infrastructure can amount to war crimes. We are seeing energy, fuel, water and healthcare infrastructure damaged and destroyed,” she said.

“This disturbing trend is not limited to the Middle East or the last three weeks; it has been pervasive in conflicts across regions.”

Trump asks for \$152 million to reopen Alcatraz as a jail

Washington : According to a budget plan unveiled on Friday for the 2027 fiscal year, Donald Trump is requesting \$152 million to rehabilitate Alcatraz, a former federal prison off the coast of San Francisco. Trump initially requested that Homeland Security, the FBI, and the Department of Justice rebuild the jail in May of last year. In a Truth Social post, he extolled the virtues of Alcatraz. “In the past, when we were a more serious country, we did not hesitate to imprison the most dangerous offenders and keep them far away from anyone they could hurt.” That’s how things should be,” he wrote at the time. “The reopening of Alcatraz will represent justice, law, and order.” It has been a controversial plan. The viability and worth of such an endeavor have been questioned by a number of California government authorities. The San Francisco Standard claims that Alcatraz now lacks sewage, gas, electricity, and water facilities. According to KQED, the office of California state senator Scott Wiener calculated this week that reconstructing the property would cost more than \$2 billion. State Governor Gavin Newsom denounced Trump’s plan as a “colossally bad fiscal idea” and said, “Nothing about this makes any sense,” in an interview with CBS Sacramento last year. On Friday, Nancy Pelosi, the former



speaker of the House, said in a news release: “Rebuilding Alcatraz into a modern prison is a stupid notion that would be nothing more than a waste of taxpayer dollars and an insult to the intelligence of the American people.” The administration would use the \$152m to cover the first year of the restoration project’s costs, according to the budget proposal. If the plan were to advance, it’s unclear what the timeline for reopening the property would be. A spokesperson for the White House did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

That figure is a part of a larger \$1.7bn request to fund the Bureau of Prisons’ “crumbling detention facilities”. The maximum security penitentiary housed some of the nation’s most notorious criminal offenders from 1934 until its closure in 1963. Dubbed “the Rock”, Alcatraz’s location on an island made escape difficult but also made operations costly. The maintenance expenses spurred the facility’s closure, according to the Bureau of Prisons. It has since become a vaunted historical site that over a million tourists flock to annually.

As arrests start in California, Trump declares a “fraud” crackdown in Democratic states



Washington : Donald Trump appointed JD Vance to spearhead a new campaign against “fraud” in Democratic states. In California, authorities quickly announced a series of arrests. The US president declared his vice president to be “in charge of ‘fraud’ in the United States” in a Truth Social post on Friday. He claimed that the issue is “massive and pervasive” and that Vance’s new position as “fraud czar” will be “a major factor in how great the future of our country will be.” Trump stated that Vance will concentrate on “everywhere but primarily in those blue states where crooked Democrat politicians... have had a ‘free for all’ in the unprecedented theft of taxpayer money,” without offering any proof. Without offering any proof, he said that the fraud was “so large that, if successful, we would literally be able to balance our American budget,” citing California, Illinois, Minnesota, Maine, and New York. “In Los Angeles, raids have already begun.”

Trump declared. Federal investigators said on Thursday that eight people had been arrested for allegedly committing more than \$50 million in healthcare fraud, mostly in southern California. According to a statement from the US Department of Justice, the majority of the accused, including medical professionals like nurses and psychologists, reportedly planned to defraud Medicare by

operating “sham” hospice care facilities that employed non-terminally sick patients as beneficiaries. It occurs while the United States is still fighting Iran, which has cost \$12.7 billion in its first six days. On Friday, the Trump administration also proposed a budget that would drastically reduce other federal programs while increasing Pentagon spending to its highest level in decades. Meanwhile, Trump’s supporters are increasingly accusing blue states of being involved in fraud. Due to these allegations, Trump suspended federal childcare funds to Minnesota in December of last year. In the midst of contentious immigration raids that killed two Americans, Renee Good and Alex Pretti, and large-scale demonstrations, he has also significantly increased the number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in the state. In February, Vance announced that the Trump administration would “temporarily halt” more than a quarter-billion dollars in Medicaid funds to Minnesota as part of efforts to ensure the state was a “good steward of the American people’s tax money”. Minnesota’s Democratic governor, Tim Walz, pushed back at the time, saying: “This has nothing to do with fraud.” He added: “The agents Trump allegedly sent to investigate fraud are shooting protesters and arresting children. His DoJ is gutting the US attorney’s office

and crippling their ability to prosecute fraud. And every week Trump pardons another fraudster.” Trump has also previously claimed “there is more fraud in California than there is in Minnesota”. In recent months, the Trump administration argued that southern California was rife with healthcare fraud and pledged to crack down, while frequently using the matter politically to criticize the state’s Democratic leadership. Nearly all cases cited by the justice department in the wave of arrests as part of “Operation Never Say Die” were tied to southern California. “The southern California region is a high-risk environment for hospice-related and many other forms of healthcare fraud,” said Akil Davis, assistant director at the FBI, who claimed that the US loses “hundreds of billions of dollars annually to healthcare fraud”. In response to the news, Gavin Newsom defended his state, saying California has taken action.

The governor said that he banned new hospice licenses in 2021 and that the state revoked more than 280 licenses since 2024 and pursued more than 100 criminal cases. “The Trump Administration – home to the biggest fraudsters on Earth – is trying to blame California for issues with THEIR federal programs,” Newsom said. “Glad to see the Feds finally taking seriously the fraud in the programs they themselves manage... only 15 months after Trump took

office.” In a news conference announcing the arrests, Dr Mehmet Oz, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services administrator, said his agency planned to review every hospice in California. In response to Trump’s announcement, New York governor Kathy Hochul’s spokesperson, Jen Goodman, told the Guardian: “Well before the Trump administration took office, Governor Hochul was leading efforts to root out waste, fraud and abuse, including sweeping reforms that saved over \$2 billion for taxpayers. As always, New York is glad to partner with the federal government to continue our work, but we won’t stand by as Donald Trump and JD Vance use ‘fraud’ as a disguise for their efforts to cut healthcare and rip critical programs away from New York’s most vulnerable.”

The Guardian has approached the governors’ offices of Illinois, Minnesota and Maine for comment. Since retaking office last January, Trump has granted presidential pardons to dozens of people convicted of white-collar crimes, including several individuals who were convicted of fraud. Meanwhile, earlier this week, Trump delivered a primetime address in which he said: “We’re fighting wars. We can’t take care of daycare,” adding: “It’s not possible for us to take care of daycare, Medicaid, Medicare – all these individual things, they can do it on a state basis.”

Iraqi leaders must strike a balance as the dispute with Iran reveals significant divisions

Iraq: Of all the nations drawn into the US-Israeli assault on Iran, Iraq is the one where the battle has revealed some of the deepest divisions. Iraq still has the psychological and physical wounds from the previous time the Americans attempted to use force to change the region. Cutting across state institutions, the armed forces, and Shia Islamist parties, the war is splitting those who see the attacks on Iran as a means of ending Tehran’s long-standing influence over Iraqi politics from the self-declared loyalists of the Islamic republic.

The fact that the battle began during a fragile political vacuum in Iraq following the resignation of caretaker leader Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, whose coalition secured the majority of seats in November’s parliamentary elections, has increased tensions. Parts of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella organization of armed groups supported by Iran, promised to drag the United States into a protracted war of attrition that would “leave no American

presence in the region generally, especially in Iraq” just hours after Iran’s supreme leader Ali Khamenei was killed at the beginning of the conflict. The group has claimed responsibility for scores of drone and missile attacks on targets in Iraq and neighbouring countries, such as the US base in Erbil and the city’s international airport, Camp Victoria near Baghdad international airport, and compounds of US oil companies in Basra and northern Iraq, forcing the country to suspend production in big oilfields. In response, unclaimed airstrikes that have been widely attributed to US and Israeli forces have hit positions across the country, including in Jurf al-Sakhar, south of Baghdad, a stronghold for Kataib Hezbollah, one of the main pro-Iran factions, as well as other resistance forces’ bases in the south and north of the country, killing half a dozen commanders and scores of fighters. In Mosul, videos purported to show attack helicopters firing on checkpoints, while Iraqi army units were struck by as

yet unknown forces in the western desert, killing one soldier and wounding three. In another sign that Iraq is being dragged further into the war, the US embassy in Baghdad’s green zone has been attacked repeatedly and it warned on Thursday that pro-Iran armed groups in Iraq might attack other parts of the city in the coming days. Kataib Hezbollah is also suspected to have been responsible for the abduction of a US reporter, Shelly Kittleson, late on Tuesday. The frequency of attacks had declined in recent days after Kataib Hezbollah declared a pause. But the group did not announce an extension on Wednesday night when the pause expired. The Iraqi government had sought to pursue an “Iraq first” policy, largely staying out of the post-7 October wars convulsing the region and trying to project an image of security services in control. As the conflict expands, Iraqi leaders have been trying to continue their balancing act, on one hand denouncing the killing of Khamenei and sending official condolences,

while on the other rejecting attempts by Tehran to drag Iraq into the conflict, calling on security forces to go after those who threatened “diplomatic missions and oilfields”, and even going as far as firing a number of military and intelligence officers.

But this balancing act is complicated by the fact that pro-Iran groups are also members of the PMU (Popular Mobilisation Units), a sprawling institution that is in theory part of the official army and under the authority of the commander-in-chief, but in reality operates according to its own agenda. These factions claim resistance legitimacy when attacking US targets, then denounce the strikes on their PMU brigade bases as attacks on Iraqi sovereignty. This contradiction exposes the weakness of the state, and the absurdity is not lost on Iraqis, with a joke circulating that while the US and Israel were attacking Iran, and Iran was attacking Israel and the Gulf countries, only Iraq was being bombed by everyone: Israel, the US, Iran, and Iraqis themselves.

Galaxy XR Is Impressive. The Problem Is Nobody Needs It

After using the Galaxy XR for about 2 weeks, it quickly became evident that Samsung built the device to make premium mixed reality feel less like a tech demo and more like a product you can live with.

It aims to deliver the core promise of XR in a practical way. You get big screens wherever you want them, a flexible workspace without physical monitors, and a strong entertainment experience that feels private and immersive.

The question is not whether the Galaxy XR is impressive, but whether it fits into everyday life often enough to justify the cost, setup, and friction of wearing it. At its best, Galaxy XR sells a new kind of convenience. It lets you create a large-screen experience without owning one, and it enables you to place multiple windows around you without buying a multi-monitor setup. These are clear benefits for travelers, small-space households, and people who like to move between rooms.

It also appeals to anyone who wants more screen without more clutter. This pitch is easy to understand, which is a big deal for mainstream adoption. Mainstream users will not tolerate discomfort. If a headset feels heavy, presses on the face, or gets hot quickly, it becomes something you use occasionally rather than daily.

Galaxy XR moves the ball forward with a lighter, better-balanced feel than earlier premium headsets. You can wear it longer without feeling like you are fighting the device. Still, it remains a headset, and even a good one can cause pressure points over time, especially if you wear glasses or you move around a lot.

The Samsung Galaxy XR headset weighs 545 grams, plus a 302-gram external battery, while the Apple Vision Pro headset weighs 600 to 650 grams (Apple also lists 750 to 800 grams depending on configuration and accessories), plus a 353-gram external battery. The Galaxy XR shines when you



treat it like a private cinema and a floating monitor wall. The text looks sharp enough to work in documents and to browse the web without squinting. Movies and shows feel large and vivid, making a tablet feel small.

This capability is the closest thing the product has to a universal wow moment because it is instantly understandable. Most people can try it once and immediately get why “a big screen anywhere” has appeal. Mixed reality is only practical if you can still exist in your room. You want to see your coffee, check your phone, glance at a door, and talk to someone without feeling disoriented.

Galaxy XR’s passthrough is good enough to support that kind of normal behavior. It does not feel like natural vision, but it feels functional and stable

most of the time. The remaining friction is that the real world still feels mediated by cameras, and that subtle layer can fatigue some users during long sessions. Galaxy XR leans on hand tracking, eye tracking, and voice, and when everything clicks, it feels elegant. You look where you want to interact, make a simple gesture, and keep moving. Mainstream users have very low tolerance for input mistakes. A missed gesture, a selection that lands on the wrong icon, or a cursor that feels imprecise can quickly break trust. Samsung offers controllers as an option, and that matters because controllers still deliver the most reliable precision for games and other tasks that require accuracy. The trade-off

is obvious. If most people end up relying on controllers, the headset feels less effortless and more like a specialized device. The Galaxy XR benefits from running a wide range of familiar apps. That helps avoid the empty platform problem that has killed many new device categories. Even so, the difference between “apps that run” and “apps that shine” is huge. Mainstream users do not just want phone-style apps floating in front of them. They want experiences that feel designed for the headset, with layouts, controls, and workflows that make use of the available space. Galaxy XR is moving toward that, but the category still needs more software that makes you think, I cannot go back to a flat screen after this. Even Apple has not been able

to conjure up a comparable killer must-have VisiCalc or Lotus 1-2-3 app that had users and businesses busting down computer store doors for the Apple II or IBM PC during the 1980s. Samsung positions AI as a core part of the experience, making it one of the more credible mainstream arguments for XR. A good assistant can reduce friction. It can help you find things, summarize information, launch tasks, and navigate without a maze of menus. The best version of this feels like you have a helpful guide sitting beside you, not another feature you have to learn. The challenge is that most people already have AI on their phones. For the headset to matter, AI inside XR has to feel meaningfully more useful

because it is contextual and hands-free, not just because it is present. At \$1,799, priced \$1,700 less than the Apple Vision Pro, the Galaxy XR includes an external battery pack, which keeps the headset lighter while adding one more thing to manage. In practice, it changes how people use the device. You plan sessions rather than living in it all day. You charge more often than you’d like. You become aware of cables, pockets, and placement, which is not how mainstream devices typically work. None of this is a deal-breaker for enthusiasts, but it is a real barrier to adoption for everyday buyers who want frictionless convenience. From a performance perspective, I wasn’t able to run benchmark tests against the original Apple

Vision Pro, which I’ve had for over a year, but I don’t think the Galaxy XR will have any difficulty running XR apps in the Google Android store. Galaxy XR undercuts the premium leader on price (Apple’s Vision Pro is \$3,499), and that matters because the category needs a more accessible entry point. Yet mainstream shoppers still compare it to everything else they could buy. A great TV, a new laptop, a tablet, a phone upgrade, or simply keeping the money. A headset also competes with the comfort of habits people already like. Watching TV on a couch is easy. Working on a laptop is familiar. A headset must deliver a clearly better outcome, not just a different one. Galaxy XR can be a great alternative to Apple Vision Pro in the ways that matter most on paper. It comes in at a better price point. It can feel lighter and easier to wear for longer sessions. It can also make sense for people who do not want to depend on an iPhone or a MacBook to unlock the full value of the experience. Those are real advantages, and they make Galaxy XR easier to recommend than many premium headsets that came before it. Yet the bigger question is not whether Galaxy XR beats another headset. It’s whether XR has found a strong enough mainstream pull to generate excitement. Outside of a private theater experience and a floating multi-monitor workspace, how many everyday routines become genuinely better? How many routines become better enough that people want to put a headset on after dinner instead of picking up their phone or turning on the TV? Galaxy XR proves the hardware can be excellent. The next step for the category is to demonstrate that everyday usage models are essential, not merely impressive. That remains the quandary for both Apple and Samsung in their attempts to make the XR category something more than just another pricey gadget.

MWC 2026 Signals the End of the ‘Dumb’ Smartphone Era

This year’s Mobile World Congress in Barcelona wasn’t just another trade show; it was the official wake for the “dumb” smartphone. It marked the transition from the era of connectivity to the “IQ Era,” where the value of a device is no longer measured by its screen-to-body ratio but by its ambient intelligence. For companies like AMD, HP, and Lenovo, this wasn’t about incremental spec bumps. It was a high-stakes demonstration of “agency,” the move toward hardware that doesn’t just wait for you to type a prompt but proactively anticipates what you’re about to do next. This week, we’ll talk about my take on the top 10 announcements from MWC 2026, ranked by how much they’re actually going to change your life, and close with my Product of the Week, a modular Notebook from Lenovo that makes the old Microsoft Surface look like something from the last decade. One of the most significant announcements wasn’t a phone; it was Qira. Lenovo has finally addressed the continuity gap that has plagued us for a decade. Qira is a system-level, proactive AI that maintains your “state” across the entire Lenovo and Motorola ecosystem, launching as a built-in cross-device intelligence. We’ve lived in silos — phone, tablet, PC — for too long. If you’re researching a project on your Motorola Razr during a flight, the second you open your ThinkPad, Qira has already surfaced the relevant tabs and drafted a summary of your notes. It is context-aware and available across devices, without re-

quiring you to switch to a separate app; it simply works on your behalf using local, offline AI. Lenovo is effectively out-maneuvering Microsoft here. While Windows Copilot is powerful, it remains OS-centric. By integrating Qira at the system level with natural entry points like “Hey Qira” or a dedicated key, Lenovo is building a moat that even Apple will find hard to bridge, turning a collection of gadgets into a unified, thinking organism. AMD brought the Ryzen AI 400 Series to the desktop, and it’s a game-changer for the enterprise. With the XDNA 2 NPU architecture delivering up to 50 TOPS, AMD is moving heavy AI workloads off the cloud and onto local silicon, qualifying these as the first “Copilot+ PC” capable desktop processors. In the corporate world, “cloud AI” is often a synonym for “data leak.” By enabling high-performance AI and large language models (LLMs) to run locally, AMD provides the security C-suites demand. This shift allows power users like project managers to save significant time per week by running AI assistants directly on the device, ensuring sensitive data stays private. AMD has effectively boxed Intel into the mobile space — at least for now. While Intel’s Panther Lake is efficient, AMD’s x86 dominance in the enterprise and the standardization of NPU support across desktops and laptops mean they own the “pro” AI market. AMD is even expanding the line to mobile workstations, ensuring that design and engineering professionals have the same local

AI muscle. Following their merger, HPE and Juniper unveiled their integrated telco portfolio, headlined by the Juniper PTX12000 series routers. They’re calling it “genetic-AI ready” networking, designed to handle high-growth AI workloads from the core to the network edge. We are entering an era where AI workloads will break traditional networks. These routers use AI copilots and the Juniper Routing Director to detect congestion and re-route traffic before the latency hits your services. It’s the self-driving-car equivalent of the internet backbone, offering a 49% improvement in power efficiency thanks to the new Express 5 ASIC. This is a direct shot at Cisco. By integrating Juniper’s networking smarts with HPE’s server muscle (like the ProLiant Compute EL9000), they’ve created a full-stack AI infrastructure that is incredibly hard to replicate. They are even offering “90/9 Advantage” financing to help telcos accelerate these modernization projects amid uncertainty in commodity pricing. Every year, there’s one product that makes you realize how boring everything else is. This year, it’s the ThinkBook Modular AI PC Concept. It’s an ultra-thin 14-inch laptop that uses magnetic pogo pins to swap out its keyboard for a second screen, expanding into a 19-inch dual-display workstation. We usually have to choose between portability and productivity — the “carry small, use big” dilemma. This concept solves that by allowing interchangeable I/O elements and detachable input components. Whether you

need an extra battery module or a secondary side screen, the hardware adapts to your specific workflow for that day. This is my “Most Interesting” pick because it challenges the status quo of the “disposable” laptop. It’s a PC that evolves based on your needs, potentially extending device lifecycles in AI-ready environments. While still a concept, its use of an Intel Core Ultra 7 Arrow Lake processor shows Lenovo is serious about the engineering behind the modular dream. Honor showed the Robot Phone, featuring a motorized titanium alloy gimbal. It’s not just for steady video; it allows the 200MP camera to physically move, track you, and interact via AI-driven gestures like nodding or shaking its head. This is the beginning of “embodied AI.” It’s one thing to talk to a screen; it’s another when the device physically acknowledges your presence. Honor has miniaturized complex robotics into a standard smartphone chassis, using “super steel” and micro-motors shrunk by 70% to create a 4-degree-of-freedom mechanical arm that retracts when not in use. Beyond the cool factor, this is a legitimate tool for content creators, offering stabilization levels comparable to professional external gimbals. It uses an AI “multi-modal brain” to maintain visual awareness, making the phone feel less like a tool and more like an active, sensory-aware participant in your environment. Xiaomi is proving that if you want a real camera, you don’t buy an iPhone anymore. The Xiaomi 17 Ultra and its Leica Leitzphone twin feature

a massive 1-inch main sensor and a 200MP periscope telephoto lens, effectively ending the “foldable compromise” in photography. They are successfully pivoting Chinese manufacturing into German-tier luxury. The Leitzphone variant stands out with its physical, knurled camera ring that can be assigned to control zoom, focus, or exposure. It’s a tactile masterpiece powered by the Snapdragon 8 Gen 5 Elite, designed for professional photographers who demand manual control. The inclusion of a 6,000 mAh silicon-carbon battery and 90W fast charging ensures this beast can keep up with heavy shooting days. By using Leica’s APO lens technology to minimize color fringing, Xiaomi is setting a new benchmark for mobile imaging that challenges both Samsung and Apple’s top-tier flagships. A gaming handheld with an 8-inch screen that unfolds into an 11.6-inch display, the Legion Go Fold Concept bridges the gap between portability and immersion. It runs on an Intel Core Ultra 7 Lunar Lake chip and features detachable controllers that can even function as a vertical mouse. This device proves that foldables have moved past the “fragile” stage and can now handle the ther-

mal and physical abuse of hardcore gaming. It supports multiple modes, including a “Tabletop” mode where you use the controllers separately and a “Laptop” mode with a detachable wireless keyboard, making it a viable primary PC for gamers on the go. The 11.6-inch pOLED screen provides high color accuracy and durability for repeated folding. While it’s currently a prototype, the fact that Lenovo is disclosing internal specs like 32GB of RAM suggests a high probability of this device actualizing, offering a screen that literally doubles in size compared to its rivals. Qual-

comm is putting a dedicated NPU in your watch with the Snapdragon Wear Elite platform. Built on a 3nm process, Qualcomm says the platform delivers up to a 5x performance improvement and major gains in battery life, enabling multi-day usage. This platform enables “AI Recall” on the wrist. The watch can process your health data and calendar locally to tell you, for example, “You’re stressed, and your next meeting is high-pressure; should I suggest a breathing exercise?” By enabling billion-parameter models to run locally, Qualcomm is turning the wearable into an active participant in a distributed AI

network. This is a shot across Apple’s bow. With 5G RedCap and Wi-Fi 8 support, these wearables stay constantly connected while consuming 80% less power. It’s the proactive, always-on personal AI future we were promised, and it’s coming to the next generation of Galaxy and Motorola watches. Motorola finally moved into the large-format foldable space with the Motorola Razr Fold. Boasting a massive 8.1-inch internal screen and a 6.6-inch external display, it aims to outsize its main competitors while remaining remarkably thin at just 4.6mm when open. Competition is good for the consumer. By equipping this with a record-breaking 6,000 mAh battery and a triple 50MP camera system, Motorola is addressing the two biggest complaints about foldables: battery life and photo quality. It even supports the Moto Pen Ultra for precise drawing across both displays. Integrating this hardware with the Qira AI ecosystem makes the Razr Fold a serious play for power users who find Samsung’s software a bit too bloated. With seven years of OS updates promised, Motorola is positioning itself as a long-term premium alternative in the foldable market. A partnership led by the GSMA, with support from AMD, AT&T, and others, launched the Mobile AI Innovation Initiative.



Sunil Pal responds to an embarrassing incident with Kapil Sharma and Samay Raina



Mumbai: Comedians Samay Raina and Sunil Pal recently appeared together on The Great Indian Kapil Show, one of the most unexpected collaborations in the Indian comic world. After their India’s Got Latent fiasco last year, which resulted in the show being removed from YouTube, Kapil Sharma brought Samay Raina and podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia, also known as Beer Biceps, together, making the episode already quite interesting. Samay’s “abusive” comedy approach was criticized by Sunil Pal on social media and in interviews after

that event, but their recent episode’s banter gave the impression that the seasoned comedian was called in to be “humiliated.” Sunil, though, disagrees. In one of his jokes, Samay made fun of Sunil by claiming that the comments on Sunil’s comedic videos taught him how to be abusive. “Main usko humiliation nahin maanta hun kyunki wo comedy show hai, and comedy show mein taang khichayi hoti rehti hai,” he says, offering his viewpoint on the entire situation. Saamne aa jaye koi to aise maarne-kaatne to nahin daudenge, aisa to koi mann mutaav nahin hai.

People will make jokes about one another; I made jokes about him, and he responded. Hamein shikayat karne ka haq bhi hota if it was a serious topic or show. On such a show, even actor Shah Rukh Khan is made fun of, therefore mujhe koi shikayat nahin hai. Sunil reveals that he was advised in advance that Samay would be appearing on the show and that he was instructed to discuss his preferences for humor. He responds, “I don’t have a personal beef with anyone,” when asked if this presence addressed his grievances with Samay. It’s simply a difference of opinion, and it applies to all of these Gen Z comedians who use foul language and abuse, not just Samay. Aapke paas itna potential hai, internet ka access ka education ka hai, aapko sab cheez ka knowledge hai, to aapke subject to aur badhiya hone chahiye.” Audience tak acchi cheezein pahuchni chahiye kyunki wo unka haq hai, par ghum firkar, wahi gaali galauch jata hai aur usse mera dil dukhta hai,” the comedian continues. I simply ask that all of these young comics make good use of their access. Hamare paas to itni suvidha thi nahin to hamen to adjust karna padta tha, tab bhi humne saaf suthri comedy ka daaman nahin choda.

Janhvi Kapoor makes a statement refuting reports that she has an alcohol addiction



Mumbai: Janhvi Kapoor recently discussed a time in her life when she regularly drank alcohol following a terrible event in a podcast with Raj Shamani. Her comments, however, were frequently misconstrued as a sign of alcoholism. In a recent statement, the actor’s alcohol awareness project clarified that she never had an alcohol addiction. Janhvi published a post from Off The Rocks and Amaha on Sunday that said, “We at Off The Rocks & Amaha have noticed certain media pages misrepresenting content associated with this initiative and Janhvi Kapoor.” This is really wor-

rying. “We want to be clear: Janhvi Kapoor is part of this conversation as a caregiver and ally, not as someone who has personally experienced addiction or alcohol dependence,” the statement continued. In addition to diminishing her role, this kind of misinformation denigrates and disrespects the actual, lived experiences of those struggling with addiction and those who support them. Let’s avoid trivializing attempts to address a serious issue by disseminating false information for clickbait purposes. Additionally, it called on media outlets, online platforms, and individuals to

report with honesty and tact, emphasizing that false information in this area is damaging, careless, and disrespectful to the community that the discussion seeks to uplift. Janhvi had stated, “I would not say I was addicted or I was abusing alcohol, but I was drinking frequently,” in an interview with Raj Shamani. And this came after a really horrible event in my life. I had the want to just say, “I need to get drunk.” She added that she did not enjoy how it was affecting her body or how she felt when she woke up, and she went on to describe how she became more conscious of its effects over time.

The next film starring Janhvi is Peddi, which is helmed by Buchi Babu Sana. Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings present the sports action drama, which is co-produced by Ishan Saksena under IVY Entertainment and produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru under Vriddhi Cinemas. Ram Charan plays the main character in the movie, while Shiva Rajkumar, Jagapathi Babu, and Divyenndu play important parts. With music by A. R. Rahman, it is Ram Charan’s 16th feature film as the lead actor. On June 6, 2026, the movie is slated to open in theaters.

Babil Khan returns to work following a mental health leave

Mumbai: Actor Babil Khan, the late Irrfan Khan’s son, gained notoriety last year after discussing his personal hardships and the demands of the business. He soon moved out of the spotlight. The actor has now returned to the set and sent his followers a poignant message. Babil posted a carousel image from his new project’s set on Instagram on Sunday. A snapshot of a statement that said, “As I begin the second schedule of shooting, I would like to take a moment to let you know that I love you and acknowledge how much your love means to me,” was included with one of the pictures. I put forth a lot of effort to make every moment you spend observing me worthwhile. I hope to see you soon on your televisions. The actor, however, withheld information regarding the project. In the comment area, fans showered him with affection, and others even applauded him. A video of Babil sobbing and criticizing Bollywood as “screwed” and “fake” went viral in May 2025. While criticizing the industry, he also mentioned a few actors, but he later clarified that his remarks had been misconstrued. His family and team then released an explanation



after he temporarily disabled his Instagram account. Babil withdrew from filmmaker Sai Rajesh’s movie that same month, stating that he needed a vacation. Subsequently, the director expressed his respect for Babil’s choice to put self-care first. In October, Babil made a comeback to social media, discussing his mental health and disclosing that he had been struggling with depression. “This glass house has lean walls; I didn’t mean to eavesdrop,” he wrote. I wore my heart on my sleeves, and now my T-shirts are covered with blood. I required time to recover. I have severe cuts from my demons. I was mak-

ing strange confessions due to worry and insomnia. I was so desperate for assistance that I was unable to control my emotions. My health suffered much, and my spirit was weary of oppression. In 2022, Babil made his Hindi film acting debut in Qala, where he received high appreciation for his work. He then starred with actors like R Madhavan and Kay Kay Menon in the highly regarded television series The Railway Men. Additionally, he has starred in movies including Logout and Friday Night Plan. Fans are excited to see him back on screen, even though his next project is still a secret.

A comprehensive documentary about India’s Got Latent controversy has been announced by Ranveer Allahbadia

Mumbai: Ranveer Allahbadia, a YouTuber, recently joined comic Samay Raina on The Great Indian Kapil Show. They were together for the first time since the India’s Got Latent incident. Following the Saturday broadcast of the program, Ranveer announced a documentary about the topic in a behind-the-scenes (BTS) vlog. Samay, Ranveer, and Kapil Sharma were seen meeting prior to the shoot and having a lighthearted chat in the video. Ranveer was spotted in his vanity truck after the performance ended, thinking about how it “felt good” to hear the applause as he took the stage. “It felt good after a long one year of everything,” he remarked. Additionally, Ranveer and Samay recreated

their widely shared India’s Got Latent shot in the vlog. Ranveer went on to say that his grandfather used to frequently watch Kapil’s program in his last days, therefore it was an emotional time for him to be on it. He also discussed how he deals with criticism and trolls, revealing that he uses meditation a lot and makes an effort to stay detached—even during his career’s high points. declared, “Next month, we will be releasing a very detailed Latent documentary.” Every event that took place throughout the controversy, day by day, has been documented. However, I would like you to let me know in the comments area what viewpoint you would like to see in that dispute. I want to put this controver-



sy behind me and move on to the next stage of my life with that documentary, so please send us your questions and help us develop it. Ranveer Allahbadia, YouTuber Ashish Chanchlani, and content creator Apoor-

va Mukhija participated as panelists on Samay Raina’s India’s Got Latent in February 2025. On social media, Ranveer’s contentious comment regarding parents and sex caused a huge backlash. Several FIRs were filed against him, Samay, Apoorva, and Ashish despite his public apology. After the issue, Ranveer was prohibited from releasing his podcasts, and Samay was compelled to remove all of the show’s episodes from YouTube. Apoorva further disclosed that she had been threatened with death. After the Supreme Court permitted Ranveer to continue his podcasts in March, the situation progressively improved. Later, Ashish posted his series Ekaki on YouTube, and Apoorva returned with a thorough storytime video. With his stand-up special I Am Still Alive, which became one of the most watched full-length comedy specials worldwide, Samay made a powerful comeback nearly a year later.

The host’s comment about identifying actors from behind stunned Sara Ali Khan



Mumbai: During a recent promotional event, Sara Ali Khan was put in an embarrassing situation when the host made a joke that made her look uncomfortable. The host’s comment about identifying actors “from behind” shocked the actor, who is getting ready for the release of her new movie Pati Patni Aur Woh Do. The actor even acknowledged that she had watched similar paparazzi recordings. Ayushmann Khurrana, Rakul Preet Singh, and Wamiqa Gabbi were among Sara’s co-stars who attended the trailer launch event in Mumbai. The host started joking about recognizing performers “from behind” throughout the conversation and mentioned that he stores these kinds of recordings in his archives. Sara seemed surprised by the remark. She turned to Ayushmann, obviously uncomfortable, and said, “Yeh kya bol raha hai?” “What is he saying?” Her response was captured on tape, and the

video quickly went viral on social media. Sara’s response has raised awareness of a problem that a number of actresses have already discussed. Celebrities like Janhvi Kapoor and Malaika Arora have already voiced their displeasure with the way paparazzi occasionally photograph them, particularly from obtrusive positions. Despite having a cordial relationship with photographers, Janhvi has acknowledged that she is now more aware of how she is photographed in public. She mentioned that she becomes uncomfortable with some camera angles. Actors like Mrunal Thakur have also discussed how these kinds of pictures might cause discomfort for their families. Similar events have been reported by others, such as Zareen Khan, Nora Fatehi, and Ayesha Khan. South Indian performers like Saphthami Gowda and Rukmini Vasanth, who have voiced concerns about being filmed from improper angles, are also included in the discussion. Right now, Sara Ali Khan is working hard to promote Pati Patni Aur Woh Do, in which she co-stars with Vijay Raaz, Ayushmann Khurrana, Rakul Preet Singh, and Wamiqa Gabbi.

The movie is characterized as a spiritual follow-up to the popular 2019 film Pati Patni Aur Woh, starring Bhumi Pednekar, Ananya Panday, and Kartik Aaryan. The romantic comedy, which is directed by Mudassar Aziz, is scheduled to open in theaters on May 15, 2026.

Shah Rukh Khan has seen many highs and lows, according to Divya Dutta



Mumbai: Divya Dutta is celebrating the success of her web series, Chiraiya, following her breakthrough role in Veer-Zaara alongside Shah Rukh Khan and Preity Zinta. In an interview with Humans of Bombay, she praised Shah Rukh for his kindness and sensitivity, recounting a personal experience that highlighted his consideration for others. She described a moment during a flight after the IIFA awards where Shah Rukh showed empathy towards her mother by acknowledging her during a movie scene, demonstrating his innate ability to understand the needs of those around him. Divya’s reflection underlines Shah Rukh’s infectious joy and his commitment to spreading happiness, especially amid the celebrity chaos. Chiraiya, released on JioHotstar on March 20, addresses the serious issue of marital rape and is directed by Shashant Shah. In the series, Divya stars as Kamlesh, a small-town housewife battling familial pressures while supporting her sister-in-law, Pooja (Prasanna Bisht), who speaks out about the abuse in her marriage. The show has garnered attention for its mature handling of sensitive themes, further establishing Divya’s role in addressing significant social issues through her work.

In their first appearance, Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal are both glowing



Mumbai: In what is reportedly one of their first official public appearances since the birth of their kid, actor couple Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif were spotted walking out together in Mumbai on Sunday night. The couple maintained a modest yet fashionable appearance as they were seen on Sunday night

at the airport in Mumbai. The actress opted for big sneakers, black leggings, and an oversized black coat. She used dark shades to finish off her ensemble. Vicky opted for a laid-back look with beige sneakers, a brown suede jacket, a cap, and a black T-shirt and pants. Fans responded favorably

to videos of their outing that swiftly went viral on social media. Since becoming a mother, Katrina has largely avoided public gatherings, thus many people found this appearance particularly memorable. On November 7, 2025, the couple welcomed their first child, a son called Vihaan Kaushal. They had announced the arrival of their “bundle of joy” in an emotional statement earlier. The couple also shared their son’s name in a joint post in January. Fans were given a brief insight into Katrina and Vicky’s new life as parents in the photo, which featured them cradling their infant’s little hand. In September 2025, Katrina used a cute photo from what looked to be a prenatal photo shoot to announce her pregnancy. “On our way to start the best chapter of our lives, with hearts full of joy and gratitude,” the couple shared on Instagram. On December 9, 2021, Vicky and Katrina were married in Six Senses Fort Barwara in Rajasthan.

Mumbai: The relationship between actor Huma Qureshi and her partner Rachit Singh has never been publicized. We have now exclusively learned that the couple is prepared to move their romance further and tie the knot this year, following our exclusive disclosure of their engagement in the US. Wedding preparations have already started as the two approach the big day. A reliable source tells us, “They are planning an October end or November wedding as of now. The



planning process has started. “Knowing Huma, she will have a good intimate wedding party and then throw a reception for the industry,” the source

adds. It might not be an extravagant wedding, but only her closest friends and family will be present, and there will be a large reception afterward. Right now, it most likely resembles Mumbai. Following their appearance together at the Thamma movie screening and their joint attendance at her best friend Sonakshi Sinha’s wedding, Rachit and Huma’s engagement became well-known. We revealed that Huma and Rachit became engaged in the United States in September of

2025. “Huma and Rachit have been going strong as a couple for a while, and on Sunday, he proposed to her in an intimate proposal and she said yes,” the insider stated. It happened in the United States and was a close-knit affair. They haven’t decided when they want to formally announce it to the public. Recently, Rachit and Huma were spotted departing together from the Mumbai airport. This is one of the few times that they have been seen traveling together.

Rachit Singh and Huma Qureshi will tie the knot in October

The SIR effect is overshadowed by anti-incumbency, and the TMC’s “anti-Bengali” label for the BJP

New Delhi, May 04: Given the Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) commanding leads in 184 of Bengal’s 294 seats, it was evident by Monday midday that Mamata Banerjee, the leader of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), would not take the oath of office as chief minister for the fourth time. The saffron wave in the recent elections was evident across both the first and final phases, with significant gains for the BJP occurring amidst strong anti-incumbent sentiment directed against the Trinamool Congress (TMC). This sentiment was largely fueled by widespread corruption allegations against senior TMC figures, particularly regarding chit fund scams such as Saradha and Rose Valley, teacher recruitment fraud, and coal and cattle smuggling cases. Political scientist Maidul Islam noted that these corruption factors, combined with the perceived arrogance of TMC leaders, significantly contributed to the party’s struggles during the polls, particularly given that a large portion of voters were delisted during the special



intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. In key areas like Kolkata’s Rashbehari seat, the TMC’s sitting MLA, Debasish Kumar, faced a substantial loss to BJP candidate Swapan Dasgupta following scrutiny from the Enforcement Directorate for alleged land transfer irregularities. In the previous state polls in 2021, while the TMC won 213 seats compared to the BJP’s 77, the current elections dramatically shifted the political landscape. Despite TMC’s efforts to address anti-incumbency by fielding individuals from

diverse communities—including 78 candidates from the scheduled castes, 17 from scheduled tribes, 47 Muslims, and 55 women—the fallout from persistent local corruption overshadowed these strategic moves. The BJP claimed that the high voter turnout rates—93.19% in Phase 1 and 92.67% in Phase 2—reflected a repudiation of the TMC’s governance, while TMC leaders argued that these figures were misleading, pointing to the recent purging of around 9.1 million names from the electoral roll as

a factor skewing participation. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee dismissed claims of a BJP landslide victory, suggesting instead that the turnout numbers indicated a potential return for TMC. However, as the results unfolded, many TMC ministers found themselves trailing behind their BJP opponents; local sentiments, like that expressed by a shopkeeper in Kolkata who voiced fatigue with TMC’s local leaders and their corruption, underscored the party’s challenges moving forward.

Andaman Unfolds the Biggest Underwater National Flag, Setting a Guinness Record

New Delhi, May 04: At Radhanagar beach on Saturday, the Andaman and Nicobar administration unfurled the largest underwater national flag in the world, setting a new Guinness World Record, according to officials.

The enormous Tricolour, which is about 60 by 40 meters in size, was placed underwater at Swaraj Dweep (Havelock Island) in a complicated, well-planned operation involving several agencies and skilled divers, they added. Senior officials, including Director General of Police H S Dhaliwal, Chief Secretary Chandra Bhushan Kumar, and Lieutenant Governor D K Joshi, attended the occasion.

To carry out the complex underwater unfurling, personnel from the Andaman and Nicobar Police, Forest Department, Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, and scuba divers from different diving centers worked together. Out of over 200 dives, the youngest participants were three schoolchildren: Ranvijay Singh (14), Lavanya Eira (15), and Fateh Jahaan Singh (16). According to the officials, Guinness World Records adjudicator



Rishi Nath formally verified the accomplishment at 10.35 am and gave Joshi the certificate. Speaking to the crowd, Joshi commended the teams for their cooperation and dedication and described the achievement as a noteworthy addition to the islands’ history of exceptional achievements.

According to the administration, the accomplishment demonstrates the Andaman and Nicobar Islands’ rising prominence as a destination for adventure travel, maritime

sports, and internationally renowned events.”

I don’t have words to express how beautiful the marine world is. I am feeling so proud to have become a part of this event,” Fateh, a Class 12 student at Gurugram’s Shri Ram School, told PTI. He has competed in numerous international competitions as a trained equestrian. Lavanya and Ranvijay, students in Classes 10 and 11 at Sardar Patel Vidyalaya in New Delhi and Rishi Valley School in

Bengaluru, respectively, were equally ecstatic about the accomplishment.

We had an adrenaline rush and experienced a really emotional moment as we held our country flag underwater,” they stated.

The Lt Governor and other high-ranking officials are anticipated to attend the administration’s attempt at the “Tallest Human Stack,” another Guinness World Record, on Sunday at the Lighthouse dive site on Swaraj Dweep.

BCCI Toughens Its Position on “Girlfriend Culture” in the IPL; New Regulations Will Be Enacted

New Delhi: According to reports, the public appearances of several players with their girlfriends during the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 have angered the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). During the current campaign, players including Hardik Pandya, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ishan Kishan, and Arshdeep Singh have frequently been seen traveling in team buses and lodging in team hotels with their alleged partners. The BCCI is therefore creating regulations to forbid this “girlfriend culture” in the T20 league out of concern that if the trend persists, a serious problem would develop. The board is worried about some partners’ “influencer” position, according to a story in Dainik Jagran. Some of these people may have previously advertised betting apps on social media, according to reports. Conflicts between certain players and their partners have also surfaced in recent years; in certain cases, female acquaintances have filed police complaints, damaging the league’s and the board’s reputations. “If this is



not stopped now, it could lead to major problems in the future,” said a senior BCCI officer. We are witnessing situations where girlfriends stay in the same hotels as the players and are made to wait on team buses.” Additionally, the official disclosed that certain Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) officers were allegedly permitting girlfriends to remain with athletes after being informed that they were

“officially announced partners.” “I have no idea where the ‘formal girlfriend’ rule originated. The official policy of the BCCI does not contain such a clause. Only wives and family members are permitted under certain conditions. We must look into who gave the go-ahead for this,” the official stated. The board is concerned that private information can unintentionally be disclosed, endangering the integrity of the sport, since a number of these partners are well-known social media personalities. The BCCI is eager to discuss the topic at its upcoming meeting and establish stringent rules pertaining to “girlfriend culture” within the league. According to reports, these regulations will cover both the Indian national team’s foreign trips and the IPL. The BCCI plans to establish a central rule that will be applicable to all franchisees, notwithstanding the fact that IPL teams are privately owned. It is also anticipated that the ACU would be given explicit instructions about travel and stay procedures.

Rohit Sharma hurts ground personnel and rushes with first aid



New Delhi: Rohit Sharma’s participation in the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL) remains uncertain, but his respect for fellow players and the cricketing community is clear. Despite Mumbai Indians (MI) being nearly out of playoff contention, Rohit, sidelined due to a hamstring injury, attended a recent optional training session to show his support. His commitment was highlighted when he provided first aid to a grounds-

man, Siban Biswas, who was accidentally injured by one of his shots. Rohit was attentive, arriving with an ice pack and medicine, demonstrating his caring nature despite his injury woes. Biswas expressed mixed feelings about the incident, balancing the pain of his injury with the joy of meeting Rohit. Injuries during matches are not unusual; a recent example involved an elderly fan, Krishan Chand, who was struck by a six and later offered an invitation to a match by Punjab Kings co-owner Preity Zinta. Currently, MI is struggling in the tournament, holding the ninth position in the IPL standings with only two wins from nine matches, closely followed by the last-placed Lucknow Super Giants (LSG). Both teams face elimination from playoff contention soon, with Hardik Pandya openly acknowledging their disappointing season. As Rohit anxiously works towards recovery, the uncertain outcome of his return only adds to the season’s challenges for Mumbai Indians.

Meet Joseph Vijay Chandrasekhar, the man who will end a 49-year TN curse

New Delhi, May 04: If Vijay wins Tamil Nadu in 2026, he will become the state’s first actor-turned-chief minister since M.G. Ramachandran changed politics in 1977—something no movie star has accomplished in 49 years. MGR won the 1977 Assembly election and ruled Tamil Nadu for ten years until his death in 1987, marking the last direct victory of cinema against Fort St. George. He established welfare as an emotional pact with voters, transformed fan loyalty into an institutional political machine, and fundamentally changed the state’s relationship between personality and policy. Despite numerous tries and enormous fan bases, no actor has ever reached that last electoral hurdle. Vijay’s Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), a party that is only two years formed, appears to be in the

100–118 seat range according to early counting patterns in the 2026 Assembly election. At the upper end, it puts Vijay within striking distance of the 118 seats required for a majority in the 234-member House, while at the lower end, it solidifies his position at the top of state politics. This rise is remarkable because of how intentional and compacted it has been. Unlike their forebears, who stayed rooted in film and dabbled in politics, Vijay began organizing his fan base in 2009 with the establishment of Vijay Makkal Iyakkam, initially focused on welfare and community service. His political engagement intensified in the late 2010s, culminating in sponsorship of the AIADMK and vocal criticism of the Citizenship Amendment Act in 2019.

His organization demonstrated electoral effectiveness

by winning a majority in the 2021 local elections. In February 2024, he launched Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), committing to contest the 2026 Assembly elections independently and positioning himself as a clean alternative to the DMK-AIADMK duopoly. Despite facing challenges, such as a stampede at a TVK event in 2025, his measured responses suggested potential governance competences. Projected support indicates TVK could play a pivotal role in government formation, marking a significant shift in Tamil Nadu’s political landscape towards a credible three-cornered contest. Vijay’s appeal, unlike MGR’s populism, focuses on generational anxieties and a promise for governance reform, suggesting a transformative yet uncertain future for Tamil Nadu politics in 2026.

KKR’s game-changer is named by Ajinkya Rahane as the team registers Three Wins in a Row

New Delhi: In their IPL 2026 encounter on Sunday, Kolkata Knight Riders defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by 7 wickets because to another game-winning effort from spinner Varun Chakaravathy. Travis Head had a great start, but SRH, batting first, were bowled out for 165. KKR won for the third time in a row after chasing the mark in 18.2 overs. Chakaravathy, who took 3/36 in his four overs, was crucial to the win.

Ajinkya Rahane, the captain of KKR, complimented the spinner’s effort following the game. Rahane emphasized to the host broadcasters how Chakaravathy recovered from a challenging period and performed when the team most needed him. Extremely pleased for him (Varun C).

He was having trouble both prior to the competition and during the first few games of the competition. It was incredible how he returned. He was always self-assured. Works extremely hard and has a positive outlook. In difficult circumstances, you want players like him to contribute to the squad. He has been bowling the difficult overs. Rahane remarked, “I’m confident he will keep up his performance.” Excellent game. how we returned with the ball. It appeared that they would receive 190–200. 190–200 would have been difficult to chase, but it was a nice track to bat on. However, our bowling unit deserves praise, particularly the spinners, who continued to take wickets. “I’m thrilled with the victory, and those little moments are really important,”



he continued. Prior to chasing down the score in 18.2 overs, Kolkata Knight Riders knocked out SRH for 165 in 19 overs thanks to a disciplined bowling performance spearheaded by Varun Chakaravathy (3/36). Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma tore into the KKR onslaught as SRH got off to a scorching start. With Head hitting a fifty off 22 balls and ultimately scoring 61 off 28, the hosts quickly reached 71/1 in the powerplay. However, the innings lost momentum when Head was removed. With two wickets apiece from Sunil Narine and Kartik Tyagi, the KKR bowlers maintained the pressure. SRH came far short of a par total despite Ishan Kishan’s best efforts to keep the innings together with 42 off 29.

SPORTS

RCB Blow: Phil Salt Flies Home After Injury Scares in IPL 2026



Bengaluru: Royal Challengers Bengaluru’s (RCB) title defense has hit a significant roadblock as explosive opener Phil Salt has flown back to the United Kingdom for medical assessments. The England international, who has already missed RCB’s last three fixtures, is seeking specialist consultation for a persistent finger injury, leaving the franchise in a state of mid-season uncertainty. The Impact of the Absence Salt’s departure creates a daunting void at the top of the order. Before his sidelined stint, the wicketkeeper-batter was a cornerstone of RCB’s aggressive strategy, amassing 202 runs in six innings at a blistering strike rate of 168.33. His ability to capitalize on the powerplay provided the perfect platform for Virat Kohli and the middle order—a rhythm RCB has struggled to replicate since his exit. In Salt’s absence, the franchise has turned to young Jacob Bethell. However, despite flashes of potential, Bethell has yet to match the veteran’s clinical impact, leading to a noticeable dip in RCB’s early-inning momentum. The Gonda Connection: How it Happened The injury occurred during RCB’s home clash against the Delhi Capitals on April 18. While attempting a routine

Mahela Jayawardene And Mumbai Indians Are Not Ready To Give Up On Their Season



Hyderabad: Real Kashmir FC will look to secure a win to confirm safety from relegation as they face Namdhari FC in the Indian Football League (IFL) 2025-26 at the Deccan Arena on Monday, with kick-off scheduled for 18:30 IST. The match will be broadcast live on DD Sports and Sony Sports Network, with streaming available on Waves and Sony LIV, according to a release. With the league phase concluded, the competition has now moved into a high-stakes round-robin involving the bottom four sides. Each team has already played one match and will play two more, with the side finishing bottom facing relegation, raising the competitive intensity of every remaining fixture. Real Kashmir arrives with momentum firmly on their side after a commanding 3-0 victory over Gokulam Kerala FC, with the help of goals from Shedrack Charles, Mohammad Inam, and an own goal from Vitor Barata. In contrast, Namdhari come into this encounter on the back of a 1-2 defeat to Aizawl FC, and the psychological contrast between the

Jaishankar Describes India and Jamaica Relationship As A Story Written In Runs

Kingston: India’s External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar highlighted the deep-rooted ties between India and Jamaica, describing the relationship as one built on shared history, respect and friendship. In a post on X, Jaishankar said, “The India-Jamaica story is written in runs, written in respect, written in friendship,” underlining the cultural and sporting links that bind the two nations. The minister was referring to his participation in an event at Sabina Park, where he joined Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness to formally dedicate a new electronic scoreboard gifted by India. Jaishankar expressed hope that the scoreboard would witness many memorable cricketing moments in the future, adding that it would also stand as a symbol of the growing partnership between the two countries. oined Prime Minister @AndrewHolnessJM



in formally dedicating the electronic scoreboard at Sabina Park, gifted by India. May this scoreboard count many great innings to come. Among them, that of - friendship. PS: Chris @henrygayle was missed,” the External Affairs Minister concluded. Sabina Park, located in Kingston, is one of the most iconic cricket grounds in the Caribbean and has hosted several historic matches involving both West Indies and international teams. Earlier, Jaishankar on Sunday (local time) visited Old Harbour in Jamaica, the historic landing site of the first Indian arrivals to the Caribbean nation more than 180 years ago. In a post on X, Jaishankar described the visit as an opportunity to connect with the Indian diaspora and acknowledge their enduring cultural legacy in Jamaica.”Glad

Nandini Sharma Of Chandigarh Earns Maiden India Selection For Women’s T20 World Cup

Chandigarh: Chandigarh’s medium pacer Nandini Sharma has received her maiden India call-up after a stunning performance in the recent Women’s Premier League (WPL). Numbed and emotional on hearing the news, she abruptly stopped the car in the middle of the road, leading to a minor traffic jam. The Chandigarh uncapped cricketer has been picked by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in the 15-player squad for the upcoming three-match T20I tour of England, followed by the Women’s T20 World Cup, starting on June 12, 2026. I have put in a lot of struggle, and waited long for this moment. I am blessed to have such people around me, who encourage me to do well. I have lived for cricket and being alive to see this becoming true is unbelievable,” said Nandini. Nandini emerged on the national scene after claiming 17 wickets in 10 matches she played for Delhi Capitals. She was also part of the India squad that played in the Women’s Asia Cup Rising Stars Tournament in Bangkok earlier in February this year. Interestingly, 24-year-old Nandini got her maiden call owing to unavailability of another Chandigarh girl Kashvee Gautam and Mohali girl Amanjot Kaur, who was part of the Indian women’s historic ICC World Cup winning squad last year. “We had replaced Amanjot



with Kashvee, who is also injured. We have brought in Nandini to replace her. Amanjot is someone who strengthens all three departments in the team and is difficult to replace. Still, we have high hopes from the team. In case of Kashvee, there is some problem with her right knee and she will have to undergo surgery,” said chairperson of selectors Amita Sharma at the BCCI headquarters in Mumbai. Nandini has been part of the BCCI-organised tournaments at the U-19, U-23 and senior levels for both Punjab and Chandigarh. She has also played in the Senior Women’s Inter-Zonal Tournaments, Women’s T20 Challenger Trophy and Senior Women’s One-Day Challenger Trophy. It was in January this year, when Nandini claimed a five-wicket haul, including the first hat-trick of the WPL season, for Delhi Capitals’ against

Bangladesh and Australia in the league stage of the T20 World Cup. “Nandini has been a great player for us throughout the WPL. To be honest when we got her, we didn’t know what to expect; we knew she had the talent,” Jemimah said, as quoted by PTI. “When she came on to the bigger stage of WPL in front of the world, the way she delivered, not just that five-wicket haul (5/33 vs Gujarat Giants), in every single game she was consistent,” Jemimah said. “I know this team, it is going to welcome her, prepare her well and there is a lot of experience in this team and that is going to get the best out of her,” Jemimah added. Before the T20 World Cup, India will get an opportunity to assess Nandni during the three-match series in England, scheduled from May 28 to June 2. India are set to begin their World Cup campaign against Fatima Sana’s Pakistan on June 14 at Edgbaston in Birmingham. Nandni has joined Kranti Gaud, Renuka Singh Thakur and Arundhati Reddy as part of the pace attack for the global event. A tale of two halves - After opting to bat first, it was the SRH top order that provided the usual strong start, with Travis Head leading the charge. At 107/2 halfway through the innings, the home side looked on course for a big total, but KKR staged a remarkable turnaround.

Ramakrishna Ghosh Ruled Out Of IPL Season Following CSK Debut Fracture

New Delhi: Chennai Super Kings’ injury list continues to grow, with uncapped all-rounder Ramakrishna Ghosh becoming the latest casualty in a bruising IPL 2026 campaign. CSK confirmed on Sunday that Ghosh has been ruled out of the remainder of the season after sustaining a foot fracture on his IPL debut against Mumbai Indians. The franchise announced the setback via social media, bringing an abrupt and unfortunate end to what had begun as a memorable first outing in yellow. The 28-year-old made his long-awaited IPL debut in CSK’s emphatic eight-wicket win over Mumbai Indians on Saturday and showed enough in a brief appearance to leave an impression. Introduced into the attack in a high-pressure fixture, Ghosh conceded 24 runs in his three overs but struck a key blow by dismissing Suryakumar Yadav, who had looked in ominous touch after racing to 21 off just 12 balls. Ghosh also made his presence felt in the field, pulling off a sharp catch to remove Will Jacks early in the innings and underlining the all-round value CSK had



seen in him. His injury, sustained late in the game, was a particularly cruel twist after what had otherwise been a promising debut. CSK head coach Stephen Fleming admitted after the match that the setback was a major disappointment, especially given the balance Ghosh offered to the side. It’s disappointing that he got injured towards the end. The other point is that he can bat, and bat well, which is an area of big improvement. So he can genuinely be called an all-rounder,” Fleming said at the post-match press conference. Ghosh was picked up by CSK at the IPL 2025 auction and retained for the 2026 season, with the franchise viewing him as a long-term utility option capable of contributing with both bat and ball. His injury only deepens CSK’s growing personnel crisis. The five-time champions have already been hit hard by fitness issues this season. Khaleel Ahmed has reportedly been ruled out with a serious quadriceps injury, while Ayush Mhatre was officially sidelined after suffering a hamstring injury. The

biggest absentee remains MS Dhoni, who is yet to feature this season. CSK had already moved to sign Akash Madhwal as Mhatre’s replacement, but are yet to announce a replacement for Ghosh. With injuries mounting and the business end of the season approaching, CSK will now have to regroup quickly before their next clash against Delhi Capitals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on May 5. Mumbai, asked to bat first after Hardik Pandya won the toss, never built the innings their situation demanded. Ryan Rickelton and Naman Dhir offered early encouragement. Rickelton, in particular, looked in the mood to force the issue, taking on the seamers and finding the boundary down the ground and through the leg side with ease. Dhir settled into rhythm at the other end. Mumbai pushed to 57 for one in the powerplay and appeared well-placed. The shift came once Chennai’s slower bowlers settled into the contest. Noor Ahmad, one of CSK’s most dependable middle-overs weapons this season, was the chief wrecker.

Unconscious Alex Ferguson Taken To Hospital During Manchester United Versus Liverpool

New Delhi: Former Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson was taken to hospital after feeling unwell ahead of Sunday’s Premier League match between United and Liverpool, according to media reports. The 84-year-old had been at Old Trafford for the high-profile clash between the two rivals. Sky Sports reported that Ferguson was conscious and undergoing precautionary checks before being taken away. A Manchester United spokesperson said the club was unable to comment on Ferguson’s condition. Ferguson, who managed United from 1986 until his retirement in 2013, enjoyed a glittering 26-year spell at the club, winning 13 Premier League titles and two Champions League trophies. He secured a total of 38 trophies during his time in charge. He remains a regular presence at United’s home matches and has a designated row of seats in the Old Trafford directors’ box. Manchester United beat Liverpool 3-2 in a dramatic Premier League encounter, with Kobbie Mainoo scoring late to seal the victory and strengthen United’s bid to return to the Champions League next season after a two-year absence. Mainoo struck in the 77th minute from the edge of the box to send Old Trafford into raptures. United had earlier raced to a 2-0 lead, with Mathew Cunha scoring in the sixth minute before Benja-



min Sesko doubled the advantage eight minutes later. Liverpool fought back in the second half. Dominik Szoboszlai reduced the deficit in the 47th minute after Amad Diallo lost possession, and Cody Gakpo equalised nine minutes later following a costly mistake at the back. However, Mainoo had the final say as United climbed to third place with 64 points on 35 matches. Liverpool sit fourth on 58 points, level with Aston Villa, who have a game in hand. The City boss, who appeared relaxed, also downplayed any frustration over fixture congestion as his side continue their push across multiple competitions. City face a demanding end to the season after Premier League matches against Crystal Palace and Bournemouth were rescheduled around their FA Cup final against Chelsea. The rearrangements were necessary due to City’s progression in domestic cup competitions, but the updated schedule has left them with three matches in seven days between May 13 and May 19. Their season concludes with a home fixture against Aston Villa on May 24. City were reportedly unhappy with the timing of the rescheduled fixtures, particularly the Crystal Palace match originally set for March, which they felt could have situation.