

In Brief

Assam CM to File PIL Against Election Commission of India

Guwahati, Apr 14: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said he will file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) against the Election Commission of India after the conclusion of the state assembly elections, alleging that false documents and accusations were used to influence the electoral process. He stated that the proposed PIL would raise several serious concerns related to the timing and intent of allegations made against him and his wife ahead of polling. Sarma claimed that the allegations surfaced just before voting on April 9 with the intention of impacting the election outcome. He questioned what accountability mechanisms exist if such claims are later proven to be false. "If these documents turn out to be fake after the results are declared, will elections be held again?" he asked, suggesting that any impact on the electoral outcome would be irreversible.

Dry Days declared for Aizawl

Aizawl: The Mizoram government has declared Dry Days in Aizawl for the municipal polls in the state capital. In exercise of the power conferred by Section 4A of the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2025, Commissioner of Excise & Narcotics, Government of Mizoram has declared Dry Days for the whole area of Aizawl Municipal Corporation with effect from 4 pm of April 20 to 4 pm of April 21 (i.e. 24 hours immediately preceding the conclusion of voting) and shall include re-poll day (April 23), if necessary and on April 27 (the date on which the counting of votes is to be taken up) on account of general election to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation, 2026. During this period, sale and consumption of any intoxicating liquor or wine shall be prohibited in the said areas. Polling for the capital city's civic polls will be held on April 21.

Governor Releases Zoramthanga's Memoir About Political Journey

Aizawl, Apr 14 : Mizoram Governor, General (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh, PVSM, AVSM, YSM (Retd), today formally released the memoir of former Chief Minister Zoramthanga titled "From Guerrilla Fighter to Chief Minister", at the Aijal Club in Aizawl. Media platform consultancy Speaking at the launch event, the Governor described the book as far more than a mere personal narrative. He lauded it as a significant and reliable historical document that provides valuable insights into important phases of Mizoram's political history. "The book chronicles the author's remarkable journey from insurgency to responsible democratic governance and statesmanship," he said. The Governor noted that the memoir serves as a powerful reminder that dialogue, understanding, and perseverance can overcome even the most difficult challenges. He praised Pu

Zoramthanga's dedication and lifelong desire to learn, saying these qualities reflect exceptional political acumen and true statesmanship. "It shows that if there is a will, there is a way," he remarked. General (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh highlighted that Mizoram's history is unique – a journey from struggle and conflict, through reconciliation, to lasting peace and progress. He commended the author for documenting history based on his own lived experiences and expressed hope that the memoir would help the younger generation better understand the complexities of conflict while appreciating the true value of peace and the strength of democratic institutions. The Governor believes the book will prove to be a valuable resource for students, scholars, policymakers, and citizens alike. Author and former Chief Minister Zoramthanga described the release of the book as a deeply significant

milestone in his life. He revealed that he had meticulously maintained personal diaries for 50 years, which served as key references while writing the memoir. He emphasised that most of the events described in the book were personally witnessed or experienced by him. Zoramthanga expressed sincere gratitude to all those who assisted in the preparation and publication of the book. He hoped that the memoir would not only benefit the Mizo people but also enable readers from other communities to gain a clearer and deeper understanding of Mizo history. Former Chief Minister also shared a memorable personal anecdote, recalling that he had first met the Governor decades earlier during the 1971 East Pakistan War, when General (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh was serving as a young Lieutenant in the Indian Army. Zoramthanga remarked that it was a remarkable and unexpected coincidence Mizoram.

MLA Urges Amit Shah for Deadline-Based NIA Inquiry in Manipur Attack

Imphal, Apr 14: Manipur legislator from 11-Sagolband Assembly constituency Rajkumar Imo Singh has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, requesting a time-bound National Investigation Agency (NIA) inquiry into the recent bombing at Tronglaobi in Bishnupur district that killed two minors. Terming the Tronglaobi killings deeply disturbing and demanding a "comprehensive crackdown on all such terror outfits," the MLA praised the NIA for promptly taking up the investigation but stressed that timely action was critical to restoring public confidence and reinforcing the rule of law in the conflict-torn state. In the letter to Shah, Singh also touched upon the upcoming national census, which he stated would only be appropriate only after the proper relocation of those staying in relief camps to their original homes. He pointed out that accu-

rate house listing would be nearly impossible given the scale of displacement caused by the ongoing ethnic conflict. The MLA laid out three specific demands to be addressed before any Census exercise is conducted in Manipur. First, the completion of the National Register of Citizens in Manipur, which he says is essential to ensuring that democratic representation is confined to bonafide Indian citizens. Second, the identification and removal of illegal immigrants from electoral rolls, along with the elimination of bogus voters. He cited reported anomalies already present in voter lists and called for their rectification before delimitation commences. The MLA also pointed to the discovery of 65,000 fake Aadhaar cards under the previous state government, calling it "an alarming revelation" that represents "a



grave threat to the rights and identity of the indigenous people." He argued that fake Aadhaar cards must be weeded

out before any linkage exercise is carried out, otherwise the system would remain unreliable. His third demand is the constitutional protection

for the 40 Assembly constituencies in Manipur's valley region, which are currently classified largely as general seats.

NCPEDP Seeks Political Reservation for Disabled Amid Women's Quota Debate

Agency: As Parliament prepares to deliberate on the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People has called for a parallel national discussion on ensuring political representation for persons with disabilities. The organisation praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for advancing women's political participation through the proposed 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. It described the move as a landmark reform but emphasised that it should also pave the way for broader inclusion. In this regard, NCPEDP has written to top constitutional authorities, including the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Lok Sabha Speaker, and leaders of various political parties, urging them to include reservation for persons with disabilities within the larger framework of electoral reforms. Arman Ali, Executive Director of NCPEDP, stated that

while the Women's Reservation Bill is a transformative step, persons with disabilities continue to remain significantly underrepresented in decision-making spaces. He stressed that their inclusion is essential for building a truly inclusive democracy. The organisation pointed out that "political barriers" are recognised under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and the lack of representation often results in disability-related concerns being overlooked in policymaking. With the proposed expansion of legislative seats, NCPEDP believes there is now an opportunity to accommodate such representation without affecting existing categories. India has one of the largest populations of persons with disabilities, with over 2.68 crore individuals identified in the 2011 Census—a figure widely considered an underestimation. With updated data expected in the upcoming Census, the demand for direct political representation has

gained urgency. In recent years, NCPEDP has taken several initiatives to promote political participation among persons with disabilities. During the 2024 General Elections, it introduced a "Manifesto For and By Persons with Disabilities," engaging stakeholders across the country and political spectrum. The organisation has also encouraged cross-party dialogue through its MP Forum on Disability and continues to organise discussions such as "Empowering Inclusion" during Parliament sessions. It highlighted that states like Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan have already implemented political reservation for persons with disabilities at the local level, demonstrating its feasibility. NCPEDP has urged Members of Parliament to take up the issue during the ongoing session and work towards integrating disability reservation into broader electoral reforms, stating that such a move would strengthen inclusive and representative democracy in India.

Dry Days declared for Aizawl Municipal Corporation polls

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Mizoram govt signs memorandum of settlement with Hmar rebel group

Aizawl, Apr 14: A memorandum of settlement (MoS) was signed between the Government of Mizoram and the Hmar People's Convention-Democratic (Lalhmingthanga Sanate's faction) (HPC-D (LF)) at Vengpui Community Hall, Sakawrdai today. Mizoram Home Secretary David Lalthantluanga signed the agreement on behalf of the state government and Lalhmingthanga Sanate, president, HPC-D (LF) signed on behalf of the organisation. Lalmuanpuia Punte, MLA and Adviser (Political) to the Chief Minister of Mizoram, and Rodingliana Chawngthu, DIG (Northern Range), were also present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Lalmuanpuia Punte highlighted that unrest often arises when people's expectation of development is not adequately achieved. He expressed hope that today's agreement will bring meaningful development and its success will be conspicuous. He further stated that agreements with HPC and HPC-D were signed in Aizawl before but with only a few people are aware of them. However, he expressed happiness that this time the agreement was signed at Sakawrdai in the presence and full knowledge of the public, and he is very pleased to note that fac-



tional divisions among the Hmar community in Mizoram no longer exists. Home Secretary David Lalthantluanga, speaking on behalf of the state government, expressed happiness over the new milestone achieved in the path of peace and stability in Mizoram. He stated that HPC was formed in 1986 and a peace agreement was signed with them in 1994. Further, in 2018, another agreement was signed with HPC (D) -- a faction that broke away from HPC and today, another agreement has been signed with another breakaway group-HPC-D (LF). He expressed relief that there are no longer any armed insurgent group in Mizoram. The Home Secretary also stated that a peace camp will be set up near Mauchar village for the cadres of HPC-D (LF)

and a "laying of arms" ceremony will be held on April 30. He expressed deep appreciation to Lalhmingthanga Sanate and his group as they have come forward to renounce violence and adopt a peaceful way of life. He further said that the Government of India is making efforts to transform the country into a developed nation by 2047, and at the same time, the Government of Mizoram is also striving with full commitment under the vision "Transform Mizoram 2047." He emphasized that Mizoram aims to progress in a balanced and inclusive manner across all sectors with a clear long-term vision. To achieve this, he stressed that it is not only the responsibility of the government, but requires collective effort, unity, and cooperation among all citizens.

HPC-D (LF) president Lalhmingthanga Sanate stated that they had been in struggle for 33 years and had to make many sacrifices in order to reach this agreement. He expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister Lalduhoma, Home Minister K. Sapdanga, Adviser to CM (Political) Lalmuanpuia Punte and officials of the Home Department, and expressed confidence that Mizoram government will give due importance to the development of the Hmar-inhabited areas as they have come forward to follow a normal and peaceful way of life. He also assured that their side will also make every possible effort for the successful implementation of the agreement. The Government of Mizoram had identified HPC-D (LF) as the only remaining underground armed group operating within Mizoram and began engaging with them since mid-2024. On September 20, 2024, the first round of peace talks was held at Mizoram House in Silchar which ended on a positive note. The second round of talks took place on October 10, 2025 at the office chamber of Assembly Speaker Lalbiakzama wherein HPC-D (LF) presented their charter of demands and they were discussed constructively.

Following this, a high-level committee led by the Home Minister met on October 28, 2025 to review the progress of the talks, discuss the demands put forward by HPC-D (LF), and clarify the position of GoM. The third round of talks was held on December 1, 2025 at Aijal Club where the Government's views were communicated to HPC-D (LF). On December 2, 2025, HPC-D (LF) conveyed their acceptance of the Government's position and submitted some of their demands in writing to the Home Department. Thereafter, official-level discussions continued. The final round of talks was held on March 30, 2026 at the office of Adviser to CM (Political) Lalmuanpuia Punte, where all remaining issues were discussed in detail. Subsequently, on April 9, after thorough deliberations by officials led by the Home Minister, a draft agreement was prepared. As a result, the memorandum of settlement has been successfully signed today. The MoS signing ceremony was chaired by PC Lalduthlanga, Joint Secretary, Home Department, Government of Mizoram and Rev. Langhmingthang Joute, Presbytery Superintendent, EFCI, Sakawrdai led the invocation.

'False Documents' Allegation: Assam CM to File PIL Against Election Commission of India

Guwahati, Apr 14: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said he will file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) against the Election Commission of India after the conclusion of the state assembly elections, alleging that false documents and accusations were used to influence the electoral process. He stated that the proposed PIL would raise several serious concerns related to the timing and intent of allegations made against him and his wife ahead of polling. Sarma claimed that the allegations surfaced just before voting on April 9 with the intention of impacting the election outcome. He questioned what accountability mechanisms exist if such claims are later proven to be false. "If these documents turn out to be fake after the results are declared, will elections be held again?" he asked, suggesting that any impact on the electoral outcome would be irrevers-

ible. The Chief Minister further said that if any national political party is found to have deliberately spread false information to influence voters, its registration should be cancelled. Describing the issue as a threat to democratic integrity, Sarma said his legal move would aim to protect the "purity of democracy" and added that he would pursue the matter in his personal capacity. He also urged the Election Commission to introduce clear guidelines to address the use of deepfakes and fabricated materials during election campaigns. According to him, strict action, including possible deregistration, should be taken against parties found guilty of such practices. Sarma warned that similar tactics could be used in future elections, including the 2029 general elections, and stressed



the need for urgent safeguards.

Sikkim supports Modi’s push to advance Nari Shakti VandanAdhiniyam

Gangtok, Apr 14: Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang-Golay has recorded the wholehearted support of the Sikkim government and people of Sikkim to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the historic Nari Shakti VandanAdhiniyam (Women’s Reservation Act).On behalf of the Government and the people of Sikkim, I convey our wholehearted support, deep appreciation, and sincere gratitude to the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for spearheading the historic Nari Shakti VandanAdhiniyam, a transformative initiative of the 21st century dedicated to empowering women across the nation, said the Chief Minister on social media. In September 2023, Parliament passed the ‘Nari Shakti VandanAdhiniyam’, commonly known as the Women’s Reservation Act, marking a significant step towards enhancing women’s representation (33 per cent) in legislative bodies.The Act provided for the reservation of one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State legislative Assemblies.To implement it from the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, changes were needed in the Nari Shakti VandanAdhiniyam; hence, the Union government is holding a special three-day sitting from April 16 to pass the amendments to the law.

“The special discussion in Parlia-

ment commencing from 16th April marks a defining milestone in India’s democratic journey. It reflects our collective resolve to strengthen inclusive governance and to move forward in unity, ensuring equitable representation and meaningful participation for all sections of society,” said the Chief Minister on Monday.Golay expressed that the presentation and unanimous support for the Nari Shakti VandanAdhiniyam in 2023 stands as a historic achievement, symbolizing rare consensus and a strong national commitment towards enhancing women’s representation in legislative bodies. It reaffirms our shared vision of securing rightful space and voice for women within the democratic framework and marks a decisive step towards building a more inclusive, equitable, and progressive India, he said. Let us reaffirm our unwavering commitment to women-led development and work together with unity and purpose to realize the vision of a truly empowered and developed nation, said the Chief Minister. Once again, on behalf of the Government and the people of Sikkim, I extend our wholehearted support to the historic Nari Shakti VandanAdhiniyam, a landmark initiative conceptualized and spearheaded by the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said



the Chief Minister, adding that “this transformative initiative will stand as a proud and enduring achievement in the nation’s democratic journey.”Similarly, Lok Sabha MP (Sikkim) Indra Hang Subba has extended full support towards the implementation of the historic Nari Shakti VandanAdhiniyam by 2029.We express our sincere gratitude to the Prime Minister for his visionary leadership in making this long-awaited reform possible,” said the Lok Sabha MP from Sikkim.Indra Hang shared that he received a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding the proposed plan of implementation of the historic Nari Shakti VandanAdhiniyam by 2029.“Greater participation of women in law-making and policy decisions will have a

deep and far-reaching transformative impact on our society, strengthening inclusivity, improving governance, and ensuring balanced and holistic development for all. This is not just a legislative milestone, but a defining step towards a more equitable, inclusive, and empowered India,” said Indra Hang.Census.A draft amendment bill cleared by the Union Cabinet proposes to increase the strength of the Lok Sabha from 543 to 816 seats, with 273 seats reserved for women. The reservation will follow a vertical model, ensuring quotas within SC and ST categories as well instead of waiting for fresh population data, allowing the reservation to be rolled out in time for the 2029 elections.

NUJS boy found dead near hostel, first-year student

Gangtok, Apr 14: A first-year student from Kerala was found dead in front of a hostel on the National University of Juridical Sciences (NUJS) campus on Monday morning.Joss Jebin, 18, is believed to have fallen from the terrace of the seven-storey hostel building. “It is a case of falling from a height. We visited the spot and did not find any foul play. Preliminary investigation has revealed that the student had sent a text message to one of his acquaintances in college in which he sounded a bit depressed,” said an officer of the Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate.“The cause of why he wrote that way has yet to be ascertained. It is yet to be ascertained whether the fall was accidental or suicidal in nature,” the officer said. A first-year student from Kerala was found dead in front of a hostel on the National University of Juridical Sciences (NUJS) campus on Monday morning.Joss Jebin, 18, is believed to have fallen from the terrace of the seven-storey hostel building.

“It is a case of falling from a height. We visited the spot and did not find any foul play. Preliminary investigation has revealed that the student had sent a text message to one of his acquaintances in college in which he sounded a bit depressed,” said an officer of the Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate.“The cause of why he wrote that way has yet to be ascertained. It is yet to be ascertained whether the fall was accidental or suicidal in nature,” the officer said

The student’s body will undergo a post-mortem on Tuesday, police said.

An officer of the Bidhannagar South police station said they would speak to his parents once they arrive. “So far, a case of unnatural death has been registered. We will speak to the parents and try to get their version. No complaint has been lodged till now,” the officer said on Monday evening.Jebin, a first-year BSc LLB student, was from Kochi.NUJS registrar Raja Chakraborty said the student had breakfast at the mess with his friends early in the day.He was found dead around 7am.

An NUJS official said they heard a sound from the ground in front of the boys’ hostel around 7am.“As we neared the spot, we saw Jebin on the ground in a pool of blood. When we took him to the Bidhannagar sub-divisional hospital, doctors pronounced him dead,” the official said.The student, who enrolled in the five-year integrated BSc LLB programme last year, was scheduled to write his first-year end-semester exam beginning April 17.“He had taken part in cultural events held last week,” a university official said.The registrar ruled out any possibility of ragging. He also denied any suggestion that the student was under academic pressure.“We are awaiting the police probe report. Once that comes, the institute is expected to issue a release,” an NUJS official said.In 2015, a student was found dead on the NUJS campus. That student had also fallen from a height and died.

MLA surrenders in violence

Shillong, Apr 14: Former Meghalaya legislator, Esmatur Mominin, who was absconding in the wake of last month’s communal disturbances that left two persons dead and several others injured in West Garo Hills, surrendered before police at Nongpoh Police Station in Ri-Bhoi district on Monday.

Several FIRs were filed against Mominin, who was MLA from the Phulbari assemblyconstituency in the West Garo Hills of Meghalaya, for inciting communal hatred and violence through inflammatory speeches that allegedly led to law and order situation in the district.

A team of the West Garo Hills district police proceeded to Nongpoh, the district headquarters of Ri-Bhoi, to take custody of Mominin, a police official said.

“We have registered several cases against the former legislator for inciting communal hatred and violence through inflammatory speeches under various sections of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Meghalaya Maintenance of Public Order Act,” Abraham Sangma, the district police chief of West Garo Hills, said.

Mominin had been evading arrest since violence broke out ahead of the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC) elections last month, leading to communal tensions across the region.Mominin, a Bengali-speaking Muslim politician, had gone ahead to file his nomination papers for contesting the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC) elections at the office of the Depu-



ty Commissioner in Tura on March 9 as an Independent candidate from Shyamnagar constituency, despite strong public opposition to participation of non-tribals in the tribal council.Unidentified miscreants who assembled in front of the DC office at Tura, reportedly assaulted him, and was later rescued by the police.Last month, Police arrested Sofior Rahman, a former member of the GHADC in connection with the communal violence in West Garo Hills district.

Animesh Debbarman files defamation case against party MLA Ranjit Debbarma

Guwahati, Apr 14: The case has been lodged before the court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, West Tripura, in connection with statements made by the MLA at rallies held on March 30 and April 9. The minister has alleged that the remarks harmed his reputation and public image. Advocate Sankar Lodh, representing Debbarman, said portions of the speeches contained “highly defamatory” statements targeting the minister’s personal and professional integrity.According to the counsel, the MLA used terms such as “Takla Mantri” and made allegations regarding the minister’s wealth and recent property purchases. He also purportedly claimed that the minister was involved in discussions over a property transaction in Delhi. Further, the MLA allegedly accused the minister of misusing a forest bungalow for personal activities, including consumption of alcohol and hosting companions during his stay. The lawyer said these public



statements prompted the minister to seek legal recourse, asserting that the allegations were baseless.The court has listed the matter for hearing on April 30.The development comes amid an apparent rift within Tipra Motha, with Debbarma publicly criticising Debbarman in recent weeks. Party sources indicated that the minister had played a

key role in internal divisions ahead of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) elections, during which several party leaders defected to the BJP. Sources also claimed that the minister maintained a distance from party campaigning in the run-up to the polls, further deepening tensions within the party.

Harassed online, candidate’s mother in Assam moves NCW

Guwahati, Apr 14: Sujata Gurung Chowdhury, mother of Kunki Chowdhury—the Assam Jatiya Parishad candidate from Guwahati Central—has sought intervention of the National Commission for Women (NCW) over “false, defamatory, and misleading statements” allegedly made by CM Himanta Biswa Sarma during the campaign, and the subsequent online harassment.Sujata wrote to the chairperson saying, “I am a private individual with no active involvement in electoral politics,” adding that she was drawn into public discourse because her daughter was in the fray.

“The object in the image is an artistic prop shaped like a conical cylinder, not any form of food. The allegation that I was ‘eating beef’ is factually incorrect and deliberately misleading. Such claims are deeply offensive and damaging to my reputation,” she wrote. A purported supporting letter from Elevation Ministries, Inc states: “The item that she is putting up to her lips is a pillow, not any type of meat. This is a

pillow designed for visitors of our museum to take pictures with at the entrance.”Sujata said that following the allegations, her personal photographs—including those with her minor son—were widely circulated on social media without consent, subjecting her to harassment.She urged the NCW to direct authorities to investigate the alleged online harassment, ensure removal of the content, and recommend appropriate legal action against Sarma.

She said Sarma had alleged during the campaign that her social media activity “hurt the sentiments of Sanatani people,” that she harbours sympathies for Pakistan, supports “anti-national” individuals, and publicly consumes beef.Calling the allegations “false, baseless, and malicious,” she said they appeared intended to defame her and politically target her daughter.Sarma had earlier shown journalists a photograph allegedly depicting Sujata consuming beef. She clarified that the image was taken at The International Church of Cannabiss in Denver, Colorado, USA.

Rahul Gandhi backs Pawan Khera, calls Assam CM ‘most corrupt’

Guwahati, Apr 14: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Monday extended support to party spokesperson Pawan Khera, following the Assam Police action linked to allegations made by Khera against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma. In a post on X, Gandhi described Sarma as the “most corrupt” chief minister in the country and alleged misuse of state machinery against political opponents. He said

the allegations raised by the Congress required investigation and stressed that “transparency, accountability and the rule of law” were core constitutional principles. He added that the party stood firmly with Khera and would not be intimidated.The remarks came after the Assam Police moved the Supreme Court challenging a Telangana High Court order that granted Khera one week’s transit anticipatory bail from April 10, subject to condi-

tions. The order directed him to approach the appropriate court in Assam for further relief.The case stems from allegations made by Khera, who claimed that Riniki Bhuyan Sharma held multiple passports and that the family, along with their son, had business interests worth ₹52,000 crore in the United States. Chief Minister Sarma has denied these allegations. allegedly depicting Sujata consuming beef. She clarified that the image was taken.

According to the chief minister, Manipur’s general law and order has much improved

Guwahati, Apr 14: Amid the unabated protests across the valley district and high tensions in parts of the hill district, Manipur chief minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Monday claimed significant improvement of overall law and order situation in the state.

Singh credited the development to the concerted efforts of the government and security agencies in a post on social media platforms after a detailed discussion on the prevailing law and order and security situation in the state with Director General of Assam Rifles Lt General Vikas Lakhera at former’s secretariat in Imphal today.“.....we held a detailed discussion on the prevailing law and order and security situation in the state. It is encouraging to note that, through the concerted efforts of the Government and security agencies, the overall situation has shown significant improvement,” Singh stated in the post.He continued that “ensuring the protection, safety, and peaceful coexistence of all communities remains our foremost priority. This has been carefully considered in all our actions, and necessary measures have already been undertaken to maintain stability and strengthen the security framework.”The government remained steadfast in its commitment to sustaining peace, fostering harmony, and safeguarding the well-being of every citizen, the chief minister added.The meeting between the chief minister and the top official of the paramilitary force came barely a day after state home minister Govindas Konhoujam deliberated on the prevailing law and order situation in the state during a meeting with Union home minister Amit Shah in New DelhiOfficials said that Konhoujam called on the Union home minister Sunday evening and deliberated on the prevailing law and order situation in the state.After the meeting, the state home minister, in a post on social media, said, “We held a constructive discussion on strengthening peace, ensuring stability, and safeguarding the interests of the people.”Konhoujam also stated that he was glad about the Union home minister’s continued support and unwavering commitment to



the security and development of the state.

Notably, at a time, tensions between the Kuki and various Naga tribes were running high in parts of hill districts, particularly in Ukhrul, Kamjong and Kangpokpi district, fresh protests erupted across the five valley districts after two kids of five years and five months were killed in a suspected RPG bomb attack at Tronglaobi in Bishnupur district on April 7.Though there were no reports of fresh firing, tensions in the Litan area of Ukhrul district remained high. The security forces have been conducting operations to nab those involved in the recent killing of a Border Security Force (BSF) jawan at Mongket Chepu.The BSF jawan died after he was hit by a bullet coming from unknown direction while he was on duty Mongket Chepu village where there was a heavy exchange of fire between suspected Kuki armed group and Tangkhul (Naga) armed group in the villages of Mongket Chepuand Shikibung.

Following the fresh tensions, movement of people of both tribes along the Imphal-Ukhrul

road (NH-202) remained disturbed.Tensions in the Kanglatombi , a mixed populated area, in Kangpokpi adjoining Imphal West district are also running high after an incident of indiscriminate firing by unidentified miscreants on April 9 night.

The tension was heightened after the Kanglatombi residents imposed a restriction on the movement of armed Kuki militants under suspension of operation in the area.

At the same time, agitations demanding justice over the killing of two sleeping kids in the recent Tronglaobi terror attack were gaining momentum across the valley districts where indefinite curfew has been imposed by the respective district administrations of the five districts.

The curfew was relaxed for 12 hours (5am to 5pm) on Monday and during the relaxation hours, protests in the forms of rallies and sit-in-protests were carried out by the people in their respective areas.No major untoward incident related to the protests reported from any parts of the valley districts for the day.

Assam Labourers Rescued from Bihar Kiln Allege Sexual Abuse, Violence and Bonded Labour

Guwahati, Apr 14: Shocking allegations of sexual abuse, physical violence and bonded labour have emerged after 47 workers from Dhubri were rescued from a brick kiln in Saharsa by Bihar Police.

The workers, including women and children, were rescued from the Star Marka brick kiln in Dhamsaini village under Kahara block and brought back to Assam on April 13. They were transported by buses to Dhubri and handed over to local authorities.

The case came to light after a woman sustained a bullet injury inside the kiln, prompting police intervention. Deputy Superintendent of Police Om Prakash said the victim was rescued and shifted to a hospital, and a case was registered based on her husband's complaint.

Police have arrested kiln owner Md Owais Qarni, also known as Chunna Mukhia, along with his associate Amit Kumar. Both have been sent to judicial custody, and further investigation is underway.

Survivors have described horrific conditions inside the kiln. Refaz Ali,

a labourer from Airanjongla village, alleged that they were forced to work without wages and subjected to inhuman treatment. He claimed workers were made to start work as early as 2 am and were threatened with violence if they refused.

He further alleged that women and minor girls were systematically targeted. According to him, intoxicated perpetrators would take away minor girls, and anyone who resisted was brutally assaulted. He also claimed that his wife was shot in the leg when she refused to comply with their demands.

Another labourer, Ali Sk, echoed similar allegations, stating that girls were taken away by force and workers were tortured if they tried to intervene.

Other survivors described daily beatings, lack of food and shelter, and complete denial of freedom. One worker alleged that a minor girl was burned with a cigarette for refusing to dance.

Officials said seven minor girls rescued from the site are currently housed in a government children's home in Saharsa, where they are receiving care



and protection. Their testimonies are expected to play a crucial role in the investigation.

Labour officer Ravindra Kumar Sarma confirmed that all 47 labourers and their children have been safely repatriated and that rehabilitation measures under bonded labour schemes have been initiated.

The workers, belonging to around 14 families, had migrated to Bihar five to six months ago in search of employment but were allegedly trapped in a cycle of exploitation, with restricted movement, no wages and constant threats.

Authorities said multiple legal provisions, including those related to

bonded labour, trafficking and child protection, may be invoked as the investigation progresses.

The incident highlights the vulnerability of migrant labourers from economically weaker regions, exposing how they often fall prey to trafficking and exploitation in unregulated sectors.

Press Club of India condemns recent attacks on media in Assam

Guwahati, Apr 14: The Press Club of India (PCI) has expressed shock, and condemned the recent attack on the office of Assamese daily Asomniya Pratidin.

“What is noteworthy is that the vandalism, carried out on April 10 night by unidentified persons at the newspaper’s Lakhimpur office, occurred just hours after the state Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma made public remarks against the Pratidin media group along with an Assamese news channel, DY365,” a statement from PCI said.

“PCI is highly concerned about the shrinking space for journalism in the northeastern state, particularly during the run-up to the just-concluded assembly elections within which the April 10 attack on Asoniya Pratidin happened. It also includes burning of hundreds of copies of the newspaper in Upper Assam by unidentified forces close to the April 9 voting day,” it stated.

The statement further said that during the election campaign, the Chief Minister was seen on many occasions verbally attacking reporters from various media organisations both within and outside the state for posing him questions, a right the media holds in a democracy.

The PCI reminded the Chief Minister that he holds a Constitutional position, and is answerable to the press in the interest of citizens, however uncomfortable the questions may be.

“Questioning the government of the day or a political leader in public interest is journalism. PCI urges the state authorities to conduct an impartial and swift inquiry — at the earliest — into these attacks which are directly linked to press freedom, and freedom of expression, a right granted to every citizen by the Constitution,” it said, demanding that the authorities must ensure that those responsible for these cowardly attacks are identified and brought in justice.

Assam Man Arrested for Duping People with Fake Pharmacy Licences

Itanagar, Apr 14: Arunachal Pradesh Police have arrested a 33-year-old man from Assam’s North Lakhimpur district for allegedly duping multiple people by promising to facilitate pharmacy and business licences in exchange for money. The accused, Debojit Sharma, a resident of Bihpuria, was apprehended on April 10 from Pithaguri in Mazgaon following more than a year of sustained surveillance, SP Nyelam Nega confirmed. Sharma had been on the run since 2023 after allegedly cheating several individuals in Doimukh and Naharlagun by collecting money under the pretext of arranging pharmacy licences and other business documentation.



Multiple cases are pending against him at different police stations within the Itanagar Capital Region, including at Naharlagun and Yupia. SP Nyelam Nega urged the public to exercise cau-

tion and verify credentials thoroughly before engaging in any licence-related transactions, warning that such fraudsters often operate by exploiting people’s trust in official processes.

Minister Raj Bhushan Choudhary Reviews Development Projects In Saitual District

Saitual, Apr 14: The Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Dr. Raj Bhushan Choudhary paid an official visit to Saitual District, where he reviewed developmental activities and interacted with government officials and local leaders. Media platform consultancy During his visit, the Minister held a meeting with officials from various departments and local leaders, who highlighted their needs and the challenges faced in the district. In his address, Dr. Choudhary assured full support from the Govern-

ment of India and reiterated his commitment to facilitating the district’s progress across multiple sectors. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Commissioner, Srinivas Sadi, who delivered a detailed presentation on departmental activities and achievements using PowerPoint. As part of his visit, the Minister, accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner, Srinivas Sadi, and the Superintendent of Police, Gaurav Tyagi, inspected the water reservoir at Sihfa village constructed under the Jal Jeevan

Mission (JJM). He was received by Er. Lalpektluanga, Senior Executive Engineer (PHED), and Er. Lalzuala, Sub-Divisional Officer (PHED). The visit underscores the Government’s continued focus on strengthening water supply infrastructure and public service delivery in Saitual District. Clean energy solutions Dr. Choudhary also visited the District Hospital, where he reviewed healthcare services and infrastructure. He was received by Dr. Zothanpari Chhakchuak, Deputy Chief Medical Officer.

April 15 Hearing Fixed as Supreme Court of India Takes Up Assam Plea on Pawan Khera Bail

Guwahati, Apr 14: The Supreme Court of India is scheduled to hear on Wednesday a plea filed by the Assam government challenging a Telangana High Court order that granted one-week transit anticipatory bail to Congress leader Pawan Khera.

A bench comprising Justices J K Maheshwari and A S Chandurkar will take up the matter on April 15. The case is linked to allegations made against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sarma.

The Telangana High Court had on April 10 granted Khera one-week transit anticipatory bail with certain conditions, allowing him time to approach the appropriate court in Assam for further relief. The Assam government challenged this order through a plea filed on April 12 by advocate Shu-vodeep Roy.

The case stems from allegations made by Khera during a press conference on



April 5, where he claimed that Riniki Bhuyan Sarma possessed multiple passports and foreign assets that were not disclosed in the Chief Minister’s election affidavit for the April 9 Assembly polls. The allegations have been strongly denied by the Sarma family, who described them as false and fabricated.

Following the claims, a case was registered against Khera at the Guwahati Crime Branch Police Station under multiple provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including Sections 175 (false statement in connection with an election), 35 (right of private defence of body and property), and 318 (cheating).

In its order, the Telangana High Court stated that without commenting on the merits of the case, it found sufficient grounds to grant limited transit anticipatory bail, noting that Khera’s apprehension of arrest appeared reasonable based on available material.

The bail conditions required Khera to furnish a personal bond of ₹1 lakh with two sureties, cooperate with the investigation, and appear for questioning when required. He was also directed not to leave the country without prior permission from a competent court and to approach the appropriate court in Assam within the stipulated time.

Additionally, the court advised restraint in making public statements that could potentially affect the ongoing investigation.

Khera had approached the Telangana High Court on April 7, citing his residence in Hyderabad and seeking protection from arrest in the case.

Shah: US And Ukraine Citizens No Threat

Aizawl, Apr 14: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday clarified that a group of foreigners recently arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in Kolkata, Lucknow, and Delhi posed no security threat to India. The group included one American and six Ukrainians. Media platform consultancy Shah stated that the group was attempting to use India as a transit route to enter Myanmar via Mizoram for terror training at insurgent bases. “They were caught as they were planning to transit through Mizoram into Myanmar, where insurgent bases would be used to impart training to the Ukrainians. They did not take the necessary advance permit required by foreigners to enter Mizoram,” he said. This is the first official confirmation that the group’s focus was Myanmar, with India serving only as a passage. “No threat was posed to India’s security. It is our policy that any foreigner who visits India for any wrong act will not be spared,” Shah added. On the issue of Naxalism, Shah said the March 31, 2026, deadline is not about victory or defeat.

Pub Mazbat Kharamkha Gears Up for 56th Rongali Bihu

Orang, Apr 14: As the Pub Mazbat Kharamkha Nabajyoti Yuvak Sangha and its colleagues prepare to hold their 56th annual Rongali Bihu festival with tremendous passion and cultural fervor, the festive mood of Rongali Bihu has started to spread throughout the region.

The three-day event, which is set for April 15, 16, and 21, promises a lively fusion of customs, cultural displays, and community involvement that reflects Assam’s rich history.

In an effort to honor notable figures like Bhupen Hazarika, Ramcharan Bhorali, Zubeen Garg, and Deepak Sharma, the organizers have asked residents around the state to light lamps at their doorsteps in the evening on the first day.

ZPM Predicts A Landslide Victory In The Upcoming Aizawl Polls



Aizawl, Apr 14: Zoram People’s Movement leader and Education Minister Vanlalhlana on Monday expressed confidence that the ruling party would secure a landslide victory in the upcoming Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) elections, citing growing public support and dissatisfaction with previous governance. Addressing a function at the

party office, Vanlalhlana said the ZPM is aiming to replicate its performance in the Lunglei Municipal Council (LMC) elections by winning all seats in the AMC. He attributed the party’s optimism to increasing support from politically neutral voters, who, he said, are drawn to the government’s “Kalhngthar” or new system of governance and its developmental ini-

Sonowal Reviews BJP Post-Poll Strategy in Upper Assam

Guwahati, Apr 14: Union minister and Dibrugarh Lok Sabha MP, Sarbananda Sonowal on Monday chaired a key review meeting with BJP mandal presidents from six Assembly constituencies in Upper Assam’s Tinsukia district, focusing on post-election assessment and future organisational strategy.

The meeting reviewed electoral experiences, assessed grassroots feedback and outlined a roadmap to further strengthen the party’s organisational structure in the district.

Emphasising the importance of continuous engagement at the booth and mandal levels, Sonowal called for greater coordination among party workers to build a more responsive and people-centric organisation.

“Post-election reflection is an opportunity to refine our approach and strengthen our connection with the people. With unity, discipline and grassroots engagement, our party, under the inspiring leadership of the Prime Minister, will move forward in a more organised and effective manner to serve society,” Sonowal said.

The senior BJP leader highlighted the need to consolidate organisational gains and ensure that the party remains closely aligned with the aspirations of the people.

He also stressed disciplined execution of future



programmes and sustained outreach efforts across all constituencies. Party leaders and workers expressed confidence that with collective efforts and strong organisational cohesion, the BJP would continue to expand its outreach and strengthen its

presence in the region in the coming days.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to work in a more coordinated and structured manner to advance the party’s vision and deepen engagement at the grassroots level.

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United We Stand, Divided We Fall

In an age of fracture, India’s oldest strength remains its unity in diversity. Few truths are more enduring — or more urgently relevant — than the ancient maxim: united we stand, divided we fall. From the freedom movement that swept across caste, creed, and language to forge one independent nation, to the wars that India fought and won on the strength of collective resolve, history bears irrefutable witness to this principle. Unity is not merely a sentiment; it is a strategic and moral imperative. Yet today, the forces of division are louder than ever. Communal rhetoric poisons public discourse. Regional chauvinism strains the federal compact. Economic inequality deepens the fault lines of class. Politicians mine identity — caste, religion, ethnicity — for electoral gain, sowing distrust among neighbours who had lived in amity for generations. Each act of divisiveness chips away at the foundation upon which a 1.4-billion-strong democracy rests. India’s constitution enshrines fraternity as a foundational value — not by accident, but by wisdom. The makers of modern India understood that a diverse republic could only survive, let alone flourish, if its citizens chose solidarity over suspicion. That choice must be consciously renewed by every generation. Citizens, institutions, and leaders alike must resist the seductive ease of ‘us versus them’ and uphold the harder, nobler work of building common cause. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Neither can a nation.

Bring Kushtia pir’s killers to justice



We unequivocally condemn the brutal mob lynching of a pir in Kushtia’s Daulatpur upazila, reportedly over allegations of hurting religious sentiments. The victim, Abdur Rahman alias Shamim al-Jahangir, was beaten and hacked to death by a mob at his darbar, which was vandalised and set ablaze. This reprehensible act once again shows how mob violence, often fuelled by rumours and religious incitement, continues unabated in Bangladesh with impunity. As of this writing, no arrest has been made in the Kushtia murder case. Mob violence saw a sharp rise during the interim government, claiming 197 lives in 2025 alone. With the return of an elected government in February this year, we hoped such lawlessness would come to an end. But the brutality of the Kushtia killing suggests that those behind mob violence still remain emboldened. Just a few days ago, another violent mob assaulted at least four people near the Shahbagh police station in Dhaka. Many of these attacks take place in plain sight, with law enforcement members failing to intervene even if they are present at the scene. In the first quarter of 2026, 49 people were reportedly killed in 88 mob-related incidents. Attacks targeting shrines, Baul singers, religious minorities, and other vulnerable groups have become disturbingly regular. This state of

affairs points to a serious failure of law enforcement in the country. In Kushtia, the authorities reportedly knew about the possibility of an unrest, and police were also present there. Still, they failed to prevent the attack. There was no strong and immediate response from the government either, which is equally frustrating. At a time when a clear condemnation and warning could have reassured the public, the government’s silence sent the wrong message. Meanwhile, the Kushtia pir’s family has reportedly decided not to file a case, likely out of fear and insecurity. This is most unfortunate and utterly unacceptable. We urge the police to file a case and launch a thorough investigation into Shamim’s murder, and arrest everyone involved. The government must send a strong message that mob violence will no longer be tolerated by ensuring proper punishment for the perpetrators. It must also take action to stem the spread of hate speech and incitement and strengthen preventive measures at the community level. If left unchecked, this trend of mob violence will continue to erode public trust in the rule of law and threaten our social fabric. As we celebrate Pahela Baishakh today, the government must reaffirm that no violent groups can attack our diverse social and cultural practices and traditions in the name of religion or any other pretext.

Why is BNP reneging on its own commitments to judicial independence



In discussions on legal and constitutional reforms in Bangladesh, the independence of the judiciary has long been a central issue. Indeed, the BNP, now in government after a long period in opposition, has itself consistently called for ensuring full judicial independence over the past two decades or so. There were political factors behind these demands. As BNP itself has repeatedly alleged, the judiciary was used to harass its leaders and activists. The conviction of the party’s top leader, Begum Khaleda Zia, in controversial cases, her imprisonment, and the restrictions on her movement abroad for medical treatment as well as defaming her using the judiciary—all of these were indicators of a lack of judicial independence in the country. Similarly, the current prime minister also faced politically motivated cases. He had to stay outside the country for a long period due to such cases and convictions against him. BNP has at various times stated that if the judiciary were truly independent and impartial, its leaders and activists would not have faced judicial harassment. However, following BNP’s formation of the government in February 2026, a sharp contradiction seems to have emerged in its position.

While in opposition, on July 13, 2023, BNP announced a 31-point outline for structural reforms in Bangladesh. Point 10 reads: “The effective independence of the Judiciary will be ensured in line with the Constitution and the Masdar Hossain Case verdict... Control and discipline of sub-ordinate courts shall vest with the Supreme Court. A separate secretariat for the Judiciary will be established to function under the Supreme Court... Legislation specifying qualifications and standards for Supreme Court Judges will be enacted...”

During discussions at the National Consensus Commission last year, BNP

supported all of the above. These are also fully reflected in the July National Charter, and BNP has not expressed any note of dissent in regard to any of these. BNP does not have any stated reservations whatsoever about the July charter’s commitments to vesting control of the subordinate courts with the Supreme Court, establishing a separate secretariat for the judiciary, or enacting a law for the appointment of SC judges. BNP also supported the referendum on the July charter, requesting citizens to vote “yes” and thereby endorsing the charter’s mandate on control of the subordinate courts, establishment of a judicial secretariat, and the appointment process of judges under a law. Finally, in its manifesto for the February 12 election, BNP stated that control of the subordinate courts will be placed under the SC, a law for the appointment of judges will be enacted, and the separate secretariat for the judiciary established in 2025 will be strengthened.

Regrettably, the parliament formed after the election, in which BNP holds a two-thirds majority, repealed on April 9 the ordinances on the separate secretariat for the judiciary and the appointment of

judges to the SC. It is interesting that BNP’s 31-point outline refers to the famous Masdar Hossain Case, a landmark ruling on judicial independence. This case was decided within the framework of the then version of Article 116 of the constitution, which provided that “the control (including the power of posting, promotion and grant of leave) and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising judicial functions shall vest in the President and shall be exercised by him in consultation with the Supreme Court.”

Article 116, which determines matters related to the control of the subordinate courts, has long been a subject of controversy. In the original 1972 constitution, this authority was vested in the SC. However, through the Fourth Amendment, this power was transferred to the President and later, in the Fifth and 15th Amendments, provisions were made requiring consultation with the SC. After August 5, 2024, these successive amendments to Article 116 were challenged in a public interest case, namely Mohammad Saddam Hossen v Bangladesh (hereinafter, the Article 116 case).

When the Masdar Hossain case was decided, control over the subordinate judiciary was exercised by the executive branch—specifically, the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs—in consultation with the SC. Within this framework, the Appellate Division of the SC sought, through legal interpretation, to assert a degree of judicial independence. However, the Appellate Division was fully cognisant of the limits of such interpretive efforts, not only in the Masdar Hossain case but also on other occasions. For instance, in the case of the 16th Amendment, the Appellate Division observed that so long as the control and discipline of lower judiciary officers remain with the executive, the judiciary cannot be independent. In this context, the significance of the Article 116 case is far greater than that of the Masdar Hossain case. The judgment of the High Court, delivered on September 2, 2025—the full written version of which was made public on April 7, 2026—annulled the amendments to Article 116 and directed the restoration of Article 116 to its 1972 state. Thus, control over the subordinate judiciary was once again placed under the SC.

In the same judgment, to ensure effective independence of the judiciary, the court also directed the law ministry to take steps to establish a separate secretariat for the judiciary within three months. In reaching its conclusion, the court, among other authorities and materials, relied on the commitments of political parties in the July charter regarding the restoration of control over the subordinate courts to the SC and the establishment of a judicial secretariat.

Following this judgment, the ordinance establishing a separate judicial secretariat was issued on November 30, 2025. Considerable progress in this regard was also made during the tenure of the interim government. A secretary has been appointed to the secretariat and, pursuant to the ordinance, a committee was constituted to develop the human resources organogram. The committee has held multiple meetings, finalised the organogram, and a significant number of personnel have already been appointed. In addition, budget allocations for the secretariat have been made up to June of the current fiscal year, and work is ongoing based on these allocations. Preparations are also underway to release

the budget for the next fiscal year.

In other words, significant progress has been made under the ordinance since its issuance. Both formal and practical measures have been taken to establish the secretariat, which is already operational. But now that parliament has repealed the ordinance, the secretariat’s status has become uncertain, potentially creating a vacuum and administrative complications. Since the court ruling imposes a legal obligation to establish a separate secretariat, a question arises as to how the law ministry would fulfil this obligation. Failure by the ministry to comply could constitute contempt of court, thereby giving rise to various difficulties.

It is essential to consider whether, at this early stage of the current government’s tenure, this could trigger an unnecessary, entirely avoidable conflict between the judiciary and the executive over a matter of significant importance. Since an independent, impartial judiciary free from executive influence is one of the key prerequisites for good governance, we, as citizens, would expect that the High Court’s verdict in the Article 116 case will be upheld by the Appellate Division as well, and that the judgment will be fully implemented. This would mean that control over the subordinate courts would be vested in the Supreme Court, and a separate secretariat under the SC would be made operational to ensure effective implementation of this control.

However, by outright repealing the relevant ordinances, BNP has cast serious doubt on its own commitment to implementing the July charter word for word. While BNP remains insistent on implementing the charter along with its notes of dissent, it is telling that none of these dissents relate to judicial independence. Hence, citizens are left perplexed by its actions so far.

For fifty months, inflation exceeds salaries

By fishing, Rafique Majhi earns about Tk 500 on a good day, if luck favours him.

The income has barely changed over the years. After the pandemic, when the cost of daily essentials began to surge, food was the first item he cut back on. At Mahipur in Patuakhali district, his family began seeing fish or eggs on their plates less frequently. Over time, that has worsened rather than improved. When catches fail or fishing bans are imposed, borrowing has become more frequent.

Each day, Rafique’s struggle is to secure three meals, often only rice and vegetables. After weeks of disrupted fishing due to fuel shortages, he is now anxious about surviving the next fishing ban from mid-April. “Prices of everything have gone up, but income has remained the same,” said the 52-year-old fisherman. Like him, many low-income households across the country are under pressure as earnings fail to keep pace with rising prices. The difference between income growth and inflation have driven real incomes down

Official data show real incomes have remained negative for four consecutive years. “It’s impossible to cover all basic needs,” said Kabir Hossain, an employee at a fish depot at Mohipur Fish Landing Centre in the same southern district. He said his children often ask for better meals, but he

cannot afford them. To manage daily expenses, he relies on borrowing almost every month. The upcoming fishing ban is also a major concern. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), inflation has outpaced wage growth for 50 consecutive months up to March, despite a gradual rise in pay since February 2022.

The wage growth rate stood at 8.09 percent in March, 0.62 percentage points below inflation of 8.71 percent, according to the Wage Rate Index. In the previous month, the gap between inflation and wage growth was 1.05 percentage points.

Unlike Rafique or Hossain, Prashanna Kumar Roy, a farm labourer at Rajpur union in Lalmonirhat, is not concerned about fishing bans. But his pressure comes from rising farming costs, which he said have reduced his income. Roy, who used to earn Tk 15,000 to Tk 20,000 a month during the farming season, said it is now difficult to earn even Tk 14,000.

After cutting all possible expenses, including exhausting the very small family savings and skimping on nutritious food, the 45-year-old labourer said any emergency, such as medical needs, now forces him to take loans, adding to existing debt.

These people belong to the country’s informal sector, which makes up about 84 percent of the

total employed population of 6.9 crore. A large share of them are now at risk of falling into poverty or is already below the poverty line. Mohammad Lutfor Rahman, professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University, said low-income households are cutting back on protein-rich foods such as fish, meat, eggs, milk and fruit, relying instead on basic calorie intake just enough to work the next day. He said such compromises could have long-term consequences.

“A malnourished workforce cannot remain productive, and their physical capacity declines over time,” Prof Rahman said, adding that children in low-income families risk falling behind in cognitive development. He said weak labour demand is adding further pressure. Several sectors, including construction, have recorded weak or negative growth in recent months, reducing demand for labour. “At the same time, more people are entering the labour force, creating excess supply and pushing wages down.”

The prof also pointed to sluggish public spending. “ADP implementation has been among the lowest in decades, cutting off an important source of income for workers,” he added. In its latest monthly update, the General Economics Division (GED) warned that rising energy and utility costs could further increase real income pressures as households

face higher spending on electricity, gas and transport, disproportionately affecting lower-income groups. “This divergence underscores intensifying real income pressures, as households face rising costs without corresponding wage adjustments,” said the report. It added that stagnant wages in this context highlight the erosion of purchasing power, particularly among lower-income groups whose spending is dominated by essentials.

The February assessment suggested inflationary pressures are rising faster than wage adjustments, widening the mismatch between incomes and expenditure. “This identifies a need for coordinated wage and price management, as inflationary pressures continue to undermine real income stability,” the report said.

In March, wage growth in agriculture stood at 8.10 percent, up 0.01 percentage points from February. Industrial wages rose to 8.02 percent, while services recorded 8.23 percent. The Wage Rate Index tracks wages of informal daily workers across 63 occupations in agriculture, industry and services. To ease pressure, Prof Rahman called for targeted intervention.

“The government should expand subsidised food distribution and consider compensation measures so low-income households can at least maintain minimum nutrition and purchasing power.” Ban-

gladesh Bank reported a slight rise in nominal wage growth in the second quarter of fiscal year 2025-26, with the wage index increasing to 8.07 percent in December 2025 from 8.02 percent in September, although still below the previous fiscal year.

All major sectors saw marginal gains, with agriculture at 8.16 percent, industry at 7.91 percent and services at 8.24 percent, supported partly by Aman harvest demand. However, wage growth continued to lag inflation, keeping real wages negative and steadily eroding household purchasing power.

Last week, the World Bank projected weaker economic growth for Bangladesh in the current fiscal year, saying an additional 12 lakh people will remain below the poverty line mainly due to the impact of the US-Israel war on Iran. Before the conflict in the Middle East, about 17 lakh people were expected to move out of poverty this year.

That figure has now dropped to 5 lakh. At the \$3 international poverty line, an additional 14 lakh people are projected to fall into poverty over the same period, it added. The Washington-based multilateral lender said the conflict is likely to affect Bangladesh’s economy materially, compounding existing vulnerabilities, including high inflation, financial sector stress, limited policy space and weakened confidence.

Market worth of the top 8 companies increased by Rs 4.13 lakh cr last week

New Delhi: Indian equity markets witnessed a sharp rally last week, lifting the combined market valuation of eight out of the top-10 most valued companies by a massive Rs 4,13,003.23 crore. The gain was led by strong gains in banking heavyweights HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank. The upbeat sentiment in the market was reflected in benchmark indices, with the Sensex surging 4,230.7 points or 5.77 per cent, while the Nifty climbed 1,337.5 points or 5.88 per cent during the week. According to Ajit Mishra of Religare Broking Limited, market sentiment remained buoyant amid optimism over a temporary US-Iran ceasefire. However,

lingering geopolitical uncertainties capped the pace of gains toward the latter part of the week. He also noted that a sharp drop in crude oil prices below the \$100 mark eased domestic concerns and supported a broad-based rebound in equities. Among the top performers, HDFC



Bank emerged as the biggest gainer, adding Rs 91,282.67 crore to take its market capitalisation to Rs 12,47,478.57 crore. ICICI Bank followed closely, with its valuation jumping Rs 76,036.36 crore to Rs 9,46,741.85 crore. Financial services major Bajaj Finance saw its market value surge by Rs 60,980.35 crore to Rs 5,75,206.47 crore, while engineering giant Larsen & Toubro added Rs 47,624.97 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 5,44,736.59 crore. Telecom major Bharti Airtel

gained Rs 45,873.43 crore to reach a market capitalisation of Rs 10,66,293.69 crore. Public sector lender State Bank of India also witnessed a strong rally, with its valuation rising Rs 43,614.67 crore to Rs 9,84,629.98 crore.

In the IT space, Tata Consultancy Services added Rs 26,303.49 crore to its market cap, which stood at Rs 9,13,331.92 crore. FMCG major Hindustan Unilever also posted gains, with its valuation climbing Rs 21,287.29 crore to Rs 5,06,477.89 crore.

However, not all companies shared in the rally. IT giant Infosys saw its market capitalisation decline by Rs 3,285.03 crore to Rs 5,24,124.40 crore. Similarly, Reliance Industries experienced a marginal erosion of Rs 947.28 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 18,27,086.79 crore.

Despite the dip, Reliance Industries retained its position as India's most valued company, followed by HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank and Tata Consultancy Services.

Pharma cos to face continued margin pressure, says HDFC

New Delhi: The Indian pharmaceutical and healthcare sector is expected to see moderate revenue growth, with EBITDA margins remaining flat, in the March quarter, according to a brokerage report by HDFC Securities. "We project sales/EBITDA growth of 11%/6% YoY for our coverage universe," the brokerage added.

According to ANI report, the pharmaceutical companies are expected to see 10% YoY sales growth, driven by a 15% YoY increase in the India business. However, this growth will be offset by a 5% QoQ decline in the US formulations due to pricing pressures and the absence of gRevlimid sales. "EBITDA margins for the pharma segment are expected to come down (-110bps YoY), with an increase in input cost, price erosion in the US, absence of gRevlimid, steady R&D, and higher SG&A," said the report.

The hospital business is projected to grow by 15% YoY during the reporting quarter, driven by steady occupancy and ARPOBs and bed capacity addition. The diagnostics segment is expected to post 15% YoY sales growth, driven by volume increases leading to moderate margin expansion. The retail pharmacy business is expected to see strong growth, with Medplus expected to see 22% YoY growth and Apollo HealthCo expected to see steady 20%



YoY growth.

"The US generics market is likely to decline QoQ due to the absence of gRevlimid sales and pricing pressures in the base business," said the report. However, there is expected to be some traction in key products such as gJynarque, gSpiriva, and gMyrbetriq. The Indian pharma market is expected to have seen steady growth of 12% in Jan/Feb'26, led by strong 16% growth in the chronic segment and ~9% growth in the acute segment. "We expect our coverage universe to see 15% YoY growth in India business on the back of traction in the speciality port-

folio and chronic," the brokerage said in its report. The research report by HDFC Securities noted that margins will remain under check due to an increase in input costs, pricing pressures in the US business, absence of high margin gRevlimid, steady research and development, and higher selling, general, and administrative expenses. The Contract Research, Development, and Manufacturing Organisation business is expected to sustain its margins as new capacities mature, while the hospital business could see some pressure on lower international payor mix and new bed additions.

UP hikes minimum wages across districts, categorie

Mumbai: The Uttar Pradesh government has hiked minimum wages across worker categories following unrest in Noida, with revised rates coming into effect from April 1 retrospectively, officials said on Tuesday.

Gautam Buddh Nagar District Magistrate Medha Roopam said, "The wage increase has been done by the high-powered committee. The decision was approved by CM UP late last night." In Gautam Buddh Nagar and Ghaziabad, unskilled workers will now get ₹13,690 per month, up from ₹11,313, while semi-skilled workers will receive ₹15,059, and skilled workers ₹16,868, according to an official statement.

For other municipal corporation areas, the revised monthly wages have been fixed at ₹13,006 for unskilled workers, ₹14,306 for semi-skilled workers, and ₹16,025 for skilled workers. The decision follows consultations with employers' bodies and labour organisations. The government said suggestions and objections were examined to ensure a "balanced and practical" outcome. The move comes against the backdrop of large-scale protests by factory workers in Noida on Monday, when thousands demanded higher wages and better working conditions. According to the statement, the committee is working towards resolving industrial discord through dialogue and coordination, while also considering further measures to address workers' concerns. It said that industries are facing global economic challenges, including rising input costs and declining exports, even as workers' demands regarding wages, overtime, safety and working conditions remain "relevant and important. The demonstrations turned violent in parts of the district, prompting the government to constitute a committee to address the situation and engage with the workers and employers.

France subsidiary under probe, 4 million euro worth asset seized

Mumbai: Jyoti CNC Automation is down 14.31% in today's trade. The stock reacted to the announcement by Jyoti CNC that it is facing a regulatory probe in France involving its subsidiary, Huron Graffenstaden SAS.

The probe by French authorities is linked to alleged violations of European Union export control laws involving the export of machines classified as dual-use technology. Certain of its employees of the subsidiary have also been questioned as part of the investigation. "Over this week, certain relevant authorities for our material subsidiary Huron Graffenstaden SAS had initiated investigation against Huron Graffenstaden SAS and certain of its employees where such employees had been interviewed by French authorities regarding export controls and export-documentation of machinery considered to be of dual-use," Jyoti CNC Automation stated in its regulatory filing. Assets seized, director general restricted

As part of interim measures, authorities have temporarily barred the Director General of Huron Graffenstaden SAS from discharging duties. They have also seized certain bank accounts



of the subsidiary amounting to around 4 million euro. In addition, two residential properties owned by Jyoti SAS have been seized. A formal judicial investigation has now been launched against the subsidiary and some of its employees. Huron Graffenstaden SAS has refuted the allegations and is seeking legal advice. The company said it will strongly contest the matter and is working to get more clarity from the authorities. No immediate impact on business operations. Jyoti CNC said that despite the developments, the current business operations of Huron Graffenstaden SAS continue as usual. "At

this juncture, our Company believes that while the assets being seized and the services of certain employees who are part of the investigation may not be available to the Group for the time being, the current business and operations of Huron Graffenstaden SAS remain as usual. Some assets, which are services of employees involved in the investigation, may not be available for the time being," said Jyoti CNC. The company added that the action does not expect any immediate adverse impact on its overall business operations, as over 85% of the group's revenue comes from its standalone operations.

Iran war threatens push 2.5 mn people

New Delhi: The conflict and military escalation in West Asia threatens to push 2.5 million people in India into poverty and the country is projected to experience some loss in its human development progress, according to estimates and projections by the United Nations.

The United Nations Development Programme, in a report titled 'Military Escalation In The Middle East: Human Development Impacts Across Asia And The Pacific' noted that the conflict is "widening human development pressures across Asia and the Pacific through higher fuel, freight, and input costs, the shock is diminishing household purchasing power, raising food insecurity, straining public budgets, and weakening million, the report said. It added that the number of people pushed into poverty in the world as a result of the conflict rises from approximately 1.9 million to nearly 8.8 million across scenario. The preliminary assessment, issued Tuesday, estimates that globally 8.8 million people are at risk of falling into poverty and the West Asia military escalation could cost Asia-Pacific up to \$299 billion.

Swiggy co-founder Nandan Reddy quits



New Delhi: Swiggy co-founder Nandan Reddy has quit the online food and grocery delivery major with immediate effect, the company said in an exchange filing on Thursday. Swiggy is also looking to enhance its board composition, proposing co-founder and chief growth officer Phani Kishan and chief financial officer Rahul Bhotra to join its board. The decision will be subject to shareholder approval.

Reddy is set to start his own venture and will spend more of his time building the new startup. He played a crucial role in setting up operations during Swiggy's early days alongside co-founder and group CEO Sriharsha Majety. While Reddy has held multiple positions at the firm, he was most recently leading Crew, Swiggy's AI concierge offering. Food delivery CEO Rohit Kapoor will lead Crew going forward, according to sources aware of the matter. Aakash Bhotika, vice president at Swiggy who has worked on the product, will continue to steer operations.

Reddy is the second co-founder to exit Swiggy.

He and Majety had started the company along with Rahul Jaimini, who quit in 2020 to start his own company, Pesto Tech. Swiggy's other co-founder Phani Kishan, who also serves as chief growth officer, had joined as general manager in 2015 and was elevated to the position of co-founder in 2021.

"Nandan has been a vital collaborator and a visionary force throughout Swiggy's evolution — from our beginnings in a single Bengaluru neighbourhood to becoming a nationwide platform serving millions. His steadfast commitment to our culture, innovation, and the consumer experience is woven into our DNA. While his daily presence will be missed, I look forward to the impact of his future endeavours," Majety said.

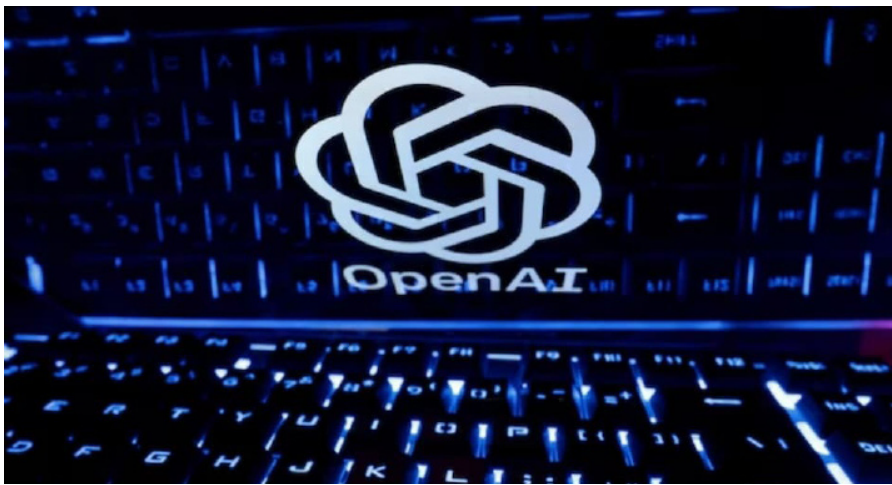
Separately, Prosus' board nomination at the company will change. Roger Clark Rabalais will resign as nominee director and Renan De Castro Alves Pinto, also an executive at Prosus, will replace him. Prosus is the single-largest shareholder in Swiggy with a stake of more than 20%.

OpenAI memo reveals cracks in Microsoft partnership, boosts Amazon ties

New Delhi: According to a CNBC report, the memo revealed its push back against Microsoft. "Our Microsoft partnership has been foundational to our success. But it has also limited our ability to meet enterprises where they are, for many that's Bedrock," Dresser wrote in the internal memo.

She further discussed its partnership with the e-commerce giant Amazon, under which Amazon will invest \$50 billion in OpenAI. "Since we announced the partnership at the end of February, inbound demand from our customers for this offering has been frankly staggering," she added.

While OpenAI has only recently tapped Amazon's technologies, including its AI models via the Bedrock platform, Microsoft has long been a backbone to the



company. It has supported OpenAI since its early days and has played a key role in

the launch of ChatGPT. Since 2019, Microsoft has invested over \$13 billion in

OpenAI. The move comes as OpenAI shifts its focus to expand its business-to-business offerings and to rival Anthropic's growing dominance in the enterprise segment. Dresser also highlighted Anthropic's growth in the AI space, saying that its strategy is built on "fear, restriction, and the idea that a small group of elites should control AI." "They use accounting treatment that makes revenue look bigger than it is, including grossing up rev share with Amazon and Google," she added. Now, as the AI war intensifies, OpenAI's message to its employees is clear: its exclusive reliance on Microsoft is over. To map the next phase of the AI, the company must be catering to its customers even if that means stepping out from under the shadow of the partner that helped build it.

LIC bonus shares: Ratio revealed; record date awaited Impact on face value, shareholding

New Delhi: LIC bonus shares news: Insurance major Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has announced its maiden bonus issue for its shareholders. The company informed us about the same after market hours. However, the record date for the issue of bonus shares is yet to be announced by the company. "The board of directors in their meeting held today inter alia considered and approved the issuance of bonus equity shares in the proportion of 1:1, to the existing shareholders as on record date, which shall be announced subsequently. The issuance of bonus equity shares shall be subject to the approval of shareholders," said LIC of India in its exchange filing on Monday, April 13. Shares of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) settled at Rs 804.25 on Monday, up 0.71 per cent for the day. The total

market capitalization of the company stood close to Rs 5.10 lakh crore. However, the stock is still 15 per cent below its IPO price of Rs 949 and 32 per cent below its all-time high near Rs 1,180 hit in August 2024. The existing authorised equity share capital of LIC is Rs 25,000 crore and the paid up equity share capital is Rs 6,324.99 crore. Post proposed bonus issuance of 1:1, the paid up equity share capital shall increase to Rs 12,649.99 crore, it said in the filing. Post bonus issue, the existing 6,32,49,97,701 equity shares of the company shall double to 12,64,99,95,402 equity shares. A bonus issue is a corporate action where a company issues free, additional shares to existing shareholders, typically in a specific ratio to convert retained earnings into equity. Once the shares of LIC

Wes Streeting claims that the strike by resident doctors has destroyed training positions and wage increases



London: Tens of thousands of doctors in England started a six-day strike, and Wes Streeting has accused resident doctors of “torpedoing” their own wage increases and training positions by going on strike once more. Concerns over pay and employment have “legitimacy,” according to the health secretary, but the British Medical Association’s rejection of what he claimed was a real offer from the government to improve the working circumstances of medics has destroyed any prospect of a breakthrough. Tuesday at 7 a.m., resident physicians went on their longest strike to date after negotiations to resolve the protracted conflict broke down. As part of their campaign for “full pay restoration,” they have staged industrial action 15 times since March 2023, including this year’s fourth consecutive walkout. According to NHS officials who spoke with the Guardian, the walkout would cost the health service an estimated £300 million, result in the cancellation of appointments, and make patients wait longer for procedures, tests, and treatments. Patients have been urged by health officials not to put off getting the care they require this week. With this upcoming round of strikes, costs to the NHS are estimated to go above £3bn since 2023, with Tuesday seeing the 60th day of

industrial action by resident doctors in the past three years, according to analysis by the Times and Telegraph. The Guardian put this estimate to the NHS which said that while it did not provide formal figures, it did not object to the £3bn estimate. Talks on Tuesday and Wednesday last week failed to reach a compromise that would have led to the BMA suspending or cancelling the strike. The union and ministers remain far apart on a number of key issues, including pay. Speaking to the Guardian before the walkout, Streeting said the BMA had not only killed off chances of securing better pay and more jobs for medics, but now threatened to derail progress made by the NHS on waiting times. “After months of detailed negotiations, collaboration and compromise, we put forward a deal would have delivered an average pay rise this year of 4.9%, a pay boost of at least 6.2% for the lowest-paid doctors, and an overall pay increase of 35.2% on average compared with four years ago.”

The government had also listened to concerns about career progression and training bottlenecks and “responded with a serious plan”, Streeting said. “We rushed through emergency legislation to prioritise UK graduates for training places, reducing competition from four to one to less than two

to one. This deal would have gone further by introducing up to 4,500 additional specialty training posts over three years, including 1,000 this April, alongside support such as reimbursing mandatory exam fees that can cost thousands.” Instead of accepting this offer, the BMA rejected it outright and announced immediate strike action. Not only does this torpedo the pay rises and training posts available to resident doctors, but it also puts at risk the recovery of the NHS.” The BMA has been seeking a 26% pay rise, spread over several years. It declared its six-day strike in response to what it said was the government having “shifted the goalposts” after weeks of productive negotiations.

The Guardian reported that the sudden breakdown of the talks was prompted by a row over when resident doctors would receive £700m of extra “progression pay”, which Streeting had agreed to give them to help meet their pay demands. The health secretary said it should be given over the next three years but the BMA was seeking the full amount in the new NHS operational year, which started last Wednesday. Speaking on Monday, the BMA resident doctors committee chair, Dr Jack Fletcher, said he was serious about ending the dispute and he blamed the government for the talks breaking down. “My colleagues and I have spent months in the negotiating room, and a deal was taking shape, yet at the last minute the government quietly watered it down, reducing the money on the table, then stretching what was left over too many years to make it worthwhile,” he said. “These strikes were entirely avoidable. We offered the government several opportunities to undo their last-minute goal-post shift and they refused.” Fletcher said it was even harder to understand why the government had pulled the plug on an offer to create 1,000 extra places in specialist medical training this year. Streeting said in a letter to the BMA last week that he had withdrawn his offer to create the extra places as that had been conditional on the BMA accepting the government’s most recent offer, which it rejected the week before. Speaking to the Guardian ahead of the strike on Tuesday, the health secretary said: “Having rejected the deal, the BMA now complain that the proposed training places are not materialising.

They can’t reject the deal and claim the benefits.” The strike is due to end at 7am next Monday. Patients have been urged to attend planned appointments unless they have been contacted to reschedule, and those with life-threatening emergencies should still call 999 or attend A&E.

Bangladesh begins a measles vaccination campaign as the number of child fatalities surpasses 100



Bangladesh: Over 100 children have died in Bangladesh’s worst measles outbreak in years, and the number of unvaccinated infants has increased. The government, in partnership with the United Nations, has begun conducting an emergency measles-rubella vaccination drive for children across the country, after more than 900 cases were confirmed since March. Measles is a highly contagious airborne illness that causes fever, respiratory symptoms, and a distinctive rash. It can occasionally cause serious or deadly complications, particularly in young children. While vast gains have been made in mass immunisation against measles, there has been a recent resurgence, attributed to falling vaccine rates, with more than 11m cases recorded globally in 2024. There was a fatal outbreak in the UK this year, which killed two people, and states across the US have also been grappling with a deadly spread, with more than 2,000 cases registered in 2025, the worst in three decades. In Bangladesh, the rise in cases that began in March is the worst the south Asian country has experienced for years. While

Bangladesh has a child immunisation programme for measles, the newly elected government said mismanagement by the previous regimes had led to programme gaps in vulnerable areas and a shortage of the vaccine stockpiles. According to the UN, 95% of the population has to be vaccinated in order to stop the disease from spreading. This month’s emergency drive will focus on children aged six months to five years old in high-risk districts and will then be expanded out across the country. One-third of those affected are below the age of nine months, which is when they would usually be eligible for a measles vaccine, which experts said showed a concerning gap in the programme.

“This resurgence highlights critical immunity gaps, particularly among zero-dose and under-vaccinated children, while infections among infants under nine months, who are not yet eligible for routine vaccination, are especially alarming,” said Rana Flow-ers, the representative for Unicef in Bangladesh. Bangladesh’s newly appointed health minister, Sardar Mohammed Sakhawat Husain,

told parliament on Monday that the political turmoil of Bangladesh over the past two years, after the toppling of prime minister Sheikh Hasina in an uprising in 2024, had led to disrupted vaccine procurement and a failure to conduct the usual measles vaccinations campaigns. The current government only came to power in elections in February. Authorities are advising parents to go to hospitals whenever someone is suspected to have measles or even just has a high temperature, rather than relying on local pharmacies. Since the launch of a massive immunisation campaign in 1979, Bangladesh has raised the coverage of fully immunised children from just 2% to 81.6%. However, experts have continued to warn that there are still stark discrepancies in measles vaccine coverage in the country of 170 million people. In a statement, Unicef said the current measles surge was caused by multiple factors. “Bangladesh has a strong history of high immunisation coverage, but even small disruptions can lead to the gradual accumulation of immunity gaps over time,” said the organisation.

According to official records, no children have been charged with Queensland’s new “adult crime, adult time” offenses in 11 years



Australia: The controversial “adult crime, adult time” legislation are being applied to additional offences by the Queensland government, however according to recent data, no juveniles have been charged with two of these offences in over ten years. A Queensland parliamentary committee reviewing the Liberal National Party government’s third round of “adult crime, adult time” laws was given access to the data in March. Certain non-violent crimes already carry life sentences for minors, while convictions for murder carry a mandatory life term. The new bill will add 12 offences to the 33 that were included in the first two versions. Aiding suicide and stupefying—drugging—are examples of crimes that can be prosecuted. Statistics provided to the committee by the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support show that no one under the age of eighteen has been charged with either offense since 2015. Since 2015, only nine juveniles have been charged with four additional proposed adult crime offenses: abusing people with

mental impairments, conspiring to commit murder, administering poison with intent, and disabling to perform indictable offenses. Only twenty-one had been accused of rioting. The state government has long conceded its laws go against human rights, including the right to protection from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and are discriminatory against children. They require an override of the state’s Human Rights Act, which is justified on the basis that “the current situation with respect to youth crime in Queensland presents an exceptional crisis situation”. The government has also argued the legislation is necessary to address a “youth crime crisis”. The most common offence was a form of assault occasioning bodily harm, committed while armed or in company, or where the offence is published on social media. There were 3,022 charges laid from 2015 to 2025. Youth Advocacy Centre CEO, Katherine Hayes, said the claim that crimes which had not been committed by young

people constituted a crisis “makes no sense” and was “simply untrue”. The specific offences were chosen by a secret panel appointed by the government. The government promised to release its advice during the committee process, but instead published a document labelled its “final report”, which did not include the guidance. Hayes provided the committee statistics that showed many of the offences were being committed dozens of times more often by adults than children, and at increasing rates. For instance, there had been more than 300 sentenced cases of stalking, intimidation, harassment or abuse by adults, but only a handful by children. She said the data showed that adult time did not deter adults, let alone children. “We really need an explanation from the government or the advice from the expert panel to understand why these offences, which are not committed by kids, have been included,” she said. “It’s nonsensical and without any basis, and I’m struggling to understand it”. The previous tranche

of adult crime legislation included six offences that had not been committed in the period covered, according to data published last year. Youth offenders committed 12% of all offences in Queensland in the last year measured, according to the ABS. The legislation is also designed to give police the power to move on homeless people from designated “business and community precincts” for up to a month and repeals the state’s drug diversion program, allowing police to issue more fines for drug possession. Youth justice minister, Laura Gerber, who tabled the bill in March, said on Tuesday: “Adult Crime, Adult Time is making Queensland safer with victim numbers down 7.2%, and we make no apology for strengthening youth crime laws to ensure there are serious consequences for actions after a decade of weak laws under the former Labor government created a youth crime crisis that saw victim numbers rise 193%.” In March, she said the 12 offences were “crimes no Queenslander should ever have to experience”.

As the Greens contend that “no one should be above the law,” Pauline Hanson declares she will not “abandon” Ben Roberts-Smith

Australia: Pauline Hanson, the leader of One Nation, declares that she would not “abandon” Ben Roberts-Smith in spite of his war crimes arrest, while the Greens assert that “no one should be above the law.” Hanson reiterated her long-standing support for Australia’s most decorated living soldier as prime minister Anthony Albanese declined to comment on Roberts-Smith’s detention at Sydney airport on Tuesday morning. The Queensland senator, whose party is gaining ground in the polls, wrote on social media, “I remain steadfast in my support of Ben Roberts-Smith despite news of his arrest today.” “I won’t desert Ben like so many other politicians because he and his immediate and larger defense family need the Australian people’s support right now.” In connection with three events, Roberts-Smith was charged late on Tuesday with five charges of war crime, including murder. Life in jail is the maximum punishment for the offense. The recipient of the Victoria Cross was previously charged in a slander lawsuit of killing defenseless people while fighting in Afghanistan with the Australian Special Air Service Regiment (SAS). He has denied any misconduct. Along with media tycoon Kerry Stokes and mining billionaire Gina Rinehart, Hanson has been one of Roberts-Smith’s corporate and political supporters. The former Liberal prime minister Tony Abbott issued a statement of support for the special forces on Tuesday afternoon, which criticised the process that resulted in Roberts-Smith’s arrest. “Of course, there are rules that have to be observed and enforced, even against soldiers in times of war. Still, it’s wrong to judge the actions of men in mortal combat by the standards of ordinary civilian life,” he said. “If Ben Roberts-Smith transgressed, why wasn’t this picked up prior to his gallantry awards and why wasn’t any culture of brutality towards prisoners detected by his more senior officers, and dealt with quickly, rather than being allowed to fester, as has been alleged, for over a decade?” he said. Ross Barnett, the director of investigations at the Office of the Special Investigator, said the five-year investigation faced “a lot of practical challenges”, given the alleged crimes were committed in Afghanistan. “All of the things that we would normally get at a crime scene. There’s no post-



mortem. Therefore, there’s no official cause of death. So there are a lot of practical challenges that confront the investigators,” Barnett said. The Greens defence spokesperson, David Shoebridge, said the arrest was a “moment of accountability and highlights the appalling cost of war on all sides.” “No one should be above the law,” he said. “These charges relate to killings that happened in Afghanistan between 2009 and 2012, for victims and survivors that is far too long to wait for justice. Deployments of troops in overseas conflicts always come at enormous cost to people on the ground who face the horror and brutality of war.” Shoebridge criticised what he described as a “gaping hole” in the accountability for what happened in Afghanistan, particularly the apparent lack of scrutiny of the role of senior officers who oversaw the deployment of troops to the Middle East. “Gold braid on your shoulder is not meant to be legal protection from complicity in war crimes,” he said, reiterating calls for a dedicated war crimes investigation unit within the Australian federal police. Appearing at a press conference shortly after the Nine papers broke news of Roberts-Smith’s arrest, Albanese said he would not comment on the

development. “I have no intention of commenting on a matter that’s clearly before the courts,” he said. Asked for a second time about the arrest of Roberts-Smith, the prime minister said: “I have no intention of prejudicing a matter that clearly is a legal matter and that’s before the courts and any comment would do so.” The opposition leader, Angus Taylor, would not comment directly on the arrest but said it “should not detract from the respect we show for our special forces in this country.” “It is important that we know that our special forces are doing the right thing but the one thing I do know is the vast majority of our special forces do do the right thing and they deserve, as do all our veterans, the respect of our nation,” he said. A subsequent statement from Taylor and senior Coalition frontbenchers James Paterson, Michael McCormack and Phil Thompson reiterated their “unwavering commitment” to defence personnel and veterans. “We cannot allow this generation of veterans to be treated like many who returned from Vietnam, left to carry stigma for decades. Today’s charges do not diminish in any way the service of the vast majority of our men and women in uniform,” the joint statement said.

Extreme dieting a growing health concern

In the pursuit of rapid weight loss, extreme dieting has become a growing concern, with experts warning of its severe health consequences. While restrictive diets may promise quick results, they often lead to nutrient deficiencies, metabolic damage, organ failure and long-term health complications.

According to experts, extreme dieting can trigger eating disorders, including anorexia and bulimia and may cause permanent metabolic slowdown. Additionally, diets that severely limit calories or eliminate entire food groups can result in organ damage, heart issues and weakened immunity. Naresh Khulkar's life took a devastating turn when he learnt that his daughter Bhavna's kidneys had failed. The shocking diagnosis was traced back to prolonged nutritional deficiencies caused by extreme dieting habits that unknowingly put immense stress on her body.

Naresh donated his kidney to save his daughter. Recounting those harrowing days, Naresh's voice still trembles, "My daughter was living in a hostel and one day I got a call from her college that she was not keeping good health. I brought her home and after a series of tests were conducted, we came to know that



both her kidneys had failed," he said. Naresh further added that Bhavna's condition was not sudden, but the result of prolonged stress on her body. Like many youngsters, she had unknowingly adopted a restrictive diet, skipping meals and avoiding essential nutrients.

"The body stopped getting the nourishment it needed," her father recalled, "and we had no idea it could lead to something so severe." Her story is now not just about recovery, but also a reminder of the importance of balanced nutrition and listening to one's body. Naresh donated his kidney to save his daughter. Recounting those harrowing days, Naresh's voice

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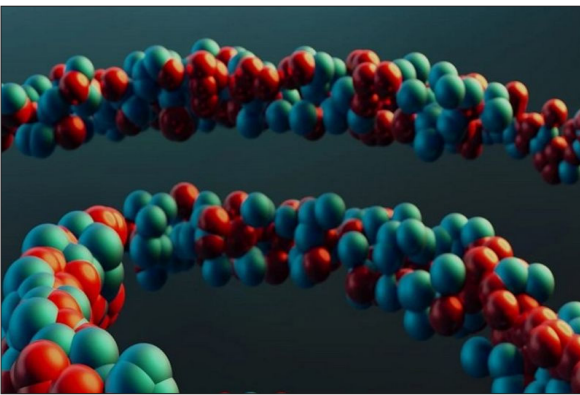
about recovery, but also a reminder of the importance of balanced nutrition and listening to one's body.

"Extreme diets may give a false sense of progress, but the aftermath is often medically serious, ranging from muscle loss and fatigue to apathy, joint pains and even hair fall due to severe protein deficiency. I've seen patients so depleted that they can't carry their own weight, literally. Sarcopenia, a condition many don't even know they're risking, weakens not just movement but vital functions, including those of the heart and lungs," said Ritu Sudhakar, Chief Dietitian at Dayanand Medical College and Hospital.

New mRNA vaccine is more effective, less costly to develop: Study

A new type of mRNA vaccine is more scalable and adaptable to continuously evolving viruses such as SARS-CoV-2 and H5N1, according to a study by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health and the Pennsylvania State University. The study was published today in npj Vaccines.

Though highly effective at inducing an immune response, current mRNA vaccines, such as those used to prevent COVID-19, present two significant challenges: the high amount of mRNA needed to produce them and the constantly evolving nature of the pathogen. "The virus changes, moving the goal post, and updating the vaccine takes some time," said senior author Suresh Kuchipudi, Ph.D., chair



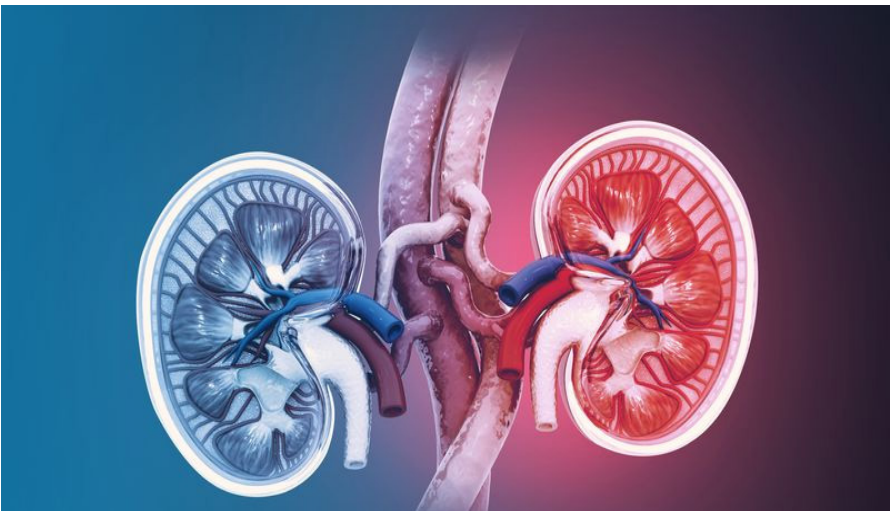
of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology at Pitt Public Health. To address these challenges, the researchers created a proof-of-concept COVID-19 vaccine using what's known as a "trans-amplifying" mRNA platform. In this approach, the mRNA is separated into two fragments -- the antigen sequence and the replicase sequence -- the latter of which

can be produced in advance, saving crucial time in the event a new vaccine must be developed urgently and produced at scale. Additionally, the researchers analysed the spike-protein sequences of all known variants of SARS-CoV-2 for commonalities, rendering what's known as a "consensus spike protein" as the basis for the vaccine's antigen.

Study: Blood Type Mismatch Drives Majority of Kidney Exchange Transplants in India

Blood group 'ABO' incompatibility could be a major factor driving kidney exchange transplants in India, where living donor transplants face numerous challenges, a study published in 'The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia' journal has found. ABO incompatibility occurs when a donor's blood group differs from that of a recipient, leading the recipient's immune system to reject the transplanted organ.

The study conducted by researchers, including those from Smt. G R Doshi and Smt. K M Mehta Institute of Kidney Diseases and Research Center (IKDRC), Ahmedabad, noted that a third of healthy and willing living donors in India are incompatible with their intended recipients, largely due to blood group mismatches. The team said that no large-scale data is available on kidney or liver exchange transplants in low and middle-income countries, including India. Kidney exchange transplants involve two or more donor-recipient pairs swapping donors to enable recipients to receive compatible kidneys. The IKDRC's website explains, a donor of one pair of donor-recipient could do-



nate a kidney to a recipient of a second pair while the donor of the second pair could donate to the recipient of the first pair. The exchange allows two ABO incompatible recipients to receive healthy, more compatible kidneys. The study analysed 1,839 kidney exchanges from 65 centres across India, revealing that ABO incompatibility was the main reason for entering such exchanges in 1,610 (87 per cent) of the cases. The remaining exchanges were due to compatible pairs 126 (seven per cent) and sensitisation 103 (six per cent), according to the authors of the study. A notable gender imbalance was found, with more men (82

per cent) being recipients in kidney exchanges, and more women (80 per cent) being donors. The researchers also looked at 259 liver exchange transplants from seven centres across India. "The majority of (liver exchange transplants) were 2-way swaps (125 two-way versus 3 three-way swaps), predominately involving male recipients (222 male versus 37 females) and for ABO incompatibility," the authors wrote. The study conducted by researchers, including those from Smt. G R Doshi and Smt. K M Mehta Institute of Kidney Diseases and Research Center (IKDRC), Ahmedabad, noted that a third of healthy and

willing living donors in India are incompatible with their intended recipients, largely due to blood group mismatches. The team said that no large-scale data is available on kidney or liver exchange. The study also highlighted a stark gender imbalance: 82% of kidney recipients were men, whereas 80% of donors were women, reflecting entrenched socio-cultural dynamics in organ donation. Researchers emphasized the need for policy interventions to address this disparity and promote equitable access to transplantation. In addition to kidney exchanges, the study examined 259 liver exchange transplants from seven centers.

HEALTH Weighing in on weight-loss drugs

INDIA's obesity numbers are rising rapidly. A recent Lancet study projected that 449 million Indians (218 million men and 231 million women), nearly one-third of the country's population, will be obese by 2050. In 2021, the number of Indians either overweight or obese stood at 180 million. As India's diabetes and obesity numbers grow at an alarming rate, this offers a big opportunity for weight-loss drugmakers, and most of the international pharma companies are actively working to tap this burgeoning market. In the past four months, two major firms have launched their injectable weight-loss drugs in India.

In March this year, US drugmaker Eli Lilly & Co was the first to launch its anti-obesity drug, Mounjaro, in India. The injectable drug, used to treat obesity and type-2 diabetes, is to be taken once a week. Last week, Danish pharma firm Novo Nordisk launched its anti-obesity injectable drug, Wegovy. Most weight-loss drugs work by helping the body effectively manage blood sugar, making a person



feel less hungry and slowing digestion, so the person feels full longer. These drugs mimic the action of a hormone called glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1), which helps the body regulate its appetite.

"Their basic mechanism is not new as similar agents from earlier generations have been in use for over two decades," says Dr Anoop Misra, chairman, Fortis C-Doc Hospital for Diabetes and Allied Sciences, New Delhi. "We have been using these GLP-1 drugs routinely for our diabetes patients. While the drugs also help in weight loss, these never really caught on because the weight loss induced was not much, say between 3 kg and 5 kg. But these were and are very good for controlling

diabetes," says Dr Ambrish Mithal, chairman and head of endocrinology and diabetes at Max Healthcare (Pan Max), New Delhi. But what sets the newer drugs apart is their enhanced efficacy for weight loss and organ protection. These should be primarily considered for individuals with severe obesity, those unable to lose weight despite lifestyle modifications, or patients with physical limitations such as osteoarthritis of the knees, points out Dr Misra, who is also the director of the National Diabetes Obesity and Cholesterol Foundation. "Some of these medications have the potential to cause weight loss up to 22 per cent of the body weight, which in previous years was only achievable through surgery,"

One-two cups of black coffee daily could lower risk of death by 14%: Study

Drinking a cup or two of black coffee daily could lower risk of death by 14 per cent, but adding milk or sugar could diminish the benefits, according to a new study. The same link was not observed for coffee with high amounts of added sugar and saturated fat, researchers said.

"The health benefits of coffee might be attributable to its bioactive compounds, but our results suggest that the addition of sugar and saturated fat may reduce the mortality benefits," Fang Fang Zhang, from Tufts University in the US, and senior author of the study published in The Journal of Nutrition, said. Data nine consecutive cycles of the US' National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey



from 1999 to 2018, linked to national death data, was analysed. Responses of more than 46,000 adults aged 20 years and above who completed first-day 24-hour dietary questionnaires were looked at. Coffee consumption was categorised by type -- caffeinated or decaffeinated -- sugar, and saturated fat content, and outcomes of

Bingjie Zhou, a PhD graduate from Tufts University, said. The authors wrote, "Consuming black coffee and coffee with low levels of added sugar and saturated fat was associated with a 14 per cent lower risk of all-cause mortality, compared with no coffee consumption."

Consuming two to three cups a day could lower the risk of death due to any cause by 17 per cent, whereas taking more than three cups daily was not associated with additional reductions, the researchers said. Further, the link between coffee and a lower risk of death by cardiovascular disease weakened when more than three cups of coffee were taken a day, they added.

Country that made smoking sexy is breaking up with cigarettes

Brigitte Bardot lounged barefoot on a Saint-Tropez beach, drawing languorous puffs from her cigarette. Another actor, Jean-Paul Belmondo, swaggered down the Champs-Élysées with smoke curling from his defiant lips, capturing a generation's restless rebellion.

In France, cigarettes were never just cigarettes — they were cinematic statements, flirtations and rebellions wrapped in rolling paper. Yet beginning July 1, if Bardot and Belmondo's iconic film scenes were repeated in real life, they would be subject to up to 135 euros (US\$ 153) in fines. After glamorising tobacco for decades, France is preparing for its most sweeping smoking ban yet.

The new restrictions, announced by Health Minister Catherine Vautrin, will outlaw smoking in virtually all outdoor public areas where children may gather, including beaches, parks, gardens, playgrounds, sports venues, school entrances and bus stops. "Tobacco must disappear where there are children," Vautrin told French media. The freedom to smoke "stops where children's right to breathe clean air starts". If Vautrin's law reflects public



health priorities, it also signals a deeper cultural shift. Smoking has defined identity, fashion and cinema here for so long that the new measure feels like a quiet French revolution in a country whose relationship with tobacco is famously complex. According to France's League Against Cancer, over 90 per cent of French films from 2015 to 2019 featured smoking scenes — more than double the rate in Hollywood productions. Each French movie averaged nearly three minutes of on-screen smoking, effectively the same exposure as six 30-second television ads.

Cinema has been particularly influential. Belmondo's rebellious smoker in Jean-Luc Godard's "Breathless" became shorthand for youthful defiance worldwide. Bardot's cigarette smoke wafted

through "And God Created Woman", symbolising unbridled sensuality. Yet this glamorisation has consequences. According to France's public health authorities, around 75,000 people die from tobacco-related illnesses each year. Although smoking rates have dipped recently — fewer than 25 per cent of French adults now smoke daily, a historic low — the habit remains stubbornly embedded, especially among young people and the urban chic. France's relationship with tobacco has long been fraught with contradiction. Air France did not ban smoking on all its flights until 2000, years after major US carriers began phasing it out in the late 1980s and early '90s. The delay reflected a country slower to sever its cultural romance with cigarettes, even at 35,000 feet.

Heatwaves Heighten Pregnancy Risks

As temperatures soar across India, with heatwaves sweeping through several states, a new analysis has shown that this severe heat is increasingly endangering maternal health and birth outcomes in countries around the world. The risks have escalated due to more days of exposure to dangerous heat levels.

Global temperatures have consistently risen over the years, with climate change also increasing the frequency, intensity, and scale of heatwaves in many countries. The latest analysis by Climate Central shows that during the past five years alone, India has experienced an average of six additional 'pregnancy heat-risk days' each year. The team arrived at these findings by analysing daily temperatures from 2020 to 2024 — across 247 countries and 940 cities around the world. They counted the number of days when temperatures were higher than 95 per cent of those historically observed at a given location (i.e., temperatures above the 95th percentile) — a threshold associated with increased risk of preterm birth. These extremely hot days were defined as 'pregnancy heat-risk days'.

Gen Z Reshapes Doctor-Patient Dynamics

As the first truly digital-native generation enters adulthood, Generation Z is transforming the doctor-patient relationship in ways that are both challenging and inspiring for the medical community. Born between the late 1990s and early 2010s, Gen Z brings with them a new set of expectations shaped by technology, access to information, and a deeper focus on mental well-being. While previous generations may have accepted a more paternalistic model of healthcare, Gen Z patients are vocal, inquisitive, and expect to be partners in their care journey. "The doctor-patient relationship is changing significantly as Gen Z enters adulthood. Social media, search engines, and even AI technology are creating a medium where the patient comes in with certain preconceived notions, some random, some correct," says Dr. Pretty Dugdar Gupta, Consultant Psychiatrist, Aster Whitefield Hospital, Bengaluru. "They are vocal and inquisitive and are often not afraid to challenge or question a conventional way of doing things." Unlike earlier generations who may have accepted medical advice at face value, Gen Z patients expect transparent, two-way communication. They want their doctors to explain not only the "what" of a diagnosis but the "why" and "how" it fits into their overall health story. This includes mental, emotional, and lifestyle factors—not just physical symptoms. Gen Z is also more comfortable with telemedicine and digital consultations, often preferring the flexibility and speed that virtual care offers. From appointment bookings to follow-ups, they expect seamless digital interactions that mirror the convenience of other online services in their lives. Paradoxically, the same access to health information that empowers Gen Z also makes them more prone to anxiety. A persistent cough, a fleeting headache, or even a normal bodily change can feel like a crisis when viewed through the lens of doom-scrolling on health forums or social media.

In barely ninety minutes, Rashmika Mandanna prepared for her wedding, rejecting bridal glam

Mumbai: In February of this year, actors Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda tied the knot in a small ceremony in Udaipur. Fans couldn't stop gushing over how stunning she looked when the actor's wedding pictures went viral on social media. Tanvi Chemburkar, Rashmika's makeup artist, disclosed in a recent podcast with Masoom Minawala that Rashmika chose a minimalist appearance over a traditional bridal look and got ready in just ninety minutes. Tanvi, who has been working with Rashmika for the past four years, stated that she was surprised by the viral success of Rashmika's wedding look. She continued, "She wanted to keep it really clean when we were talking about what she wanted to accomplish because we constantly producing so many styles. I thought, Really? It's your wedding day, don't you want to add koh! She made it quite apparent that she intended to maintain a really authentic appearance. She then



remarked, "See, I told you, keeping it minimal would help," which surprised me greatly. Tanvi disclosed that, despite the frantic nature of the process, Rashmika enjoyed working on her appearances since she had a vision and was very clear

about her hair and makeup. "She was radiating with so much joy," she continued. She hadn't gotten enough sleep because she had an event the night before. We took an hour, but she arrived cut-to-cut and said, "Guys, you have just 40 min-

utes to get me ready." In total, it took her just one and a half hours to prepare everything. However, you could see the joy on her face as she walked down the aisle, which is why she appeared that way." Although there had been long-standing rumors that the pair was dating, their relationship had never been officially verified. They became engaged in secret in September of last year, and they didn't formally announce their engagement until February. On February 26, the pair married in a small but lavish ceremony that was seen by loved ones. Several celebrities, including Ram Charan, Allu Arjun, Kriti Sanon, Karan Johar, and others, attended the couple's lavish reception for their business associates in March following the wedding. They had a star-studded reception. Additionally, the pair held a meet-and-greet in Hyderabad to commemorate their union with fans. They provided their admirers food in addition to interacting with them.

Talat Aziz and Asha Bhosle discuss their most recent conversation

Mumbai: Legendary singer Asha Bhosle passed away on April 12, leaving the music industry in shock and mourning. Her final rites were held on Monday, where numerous celebrities paid their respects. In an insightful interview with Zoom, singer Talat Aziz reflected on his close relationship with Bhosle, recounting their last conversation just days before her death. He remembered a video call they shared three days prior to his departure for Mauritius on April 3, during which he inquired about her health. Bhosle expressed that her health was not good at the time, but they enjoyed reminiscing about the past, including discussions about fellow singer Lata Mangeshkar.

She even invited Aziz to meet her upon his return, wishing to chat in person. However, fate took a tragic turn, as upon his return around

April 9-10, he learned of her critical condition on April 11. Aziz later spoke to Asha's daughter-in-law, Anjula, who informed him of her critical state, followed by the heart-breaking news of her passing. Aziz described Bhosle as "young at heart," stating, "She was not 92; she was 22 in her heart." He emphasized her positive attitude towards life, recalling how she was singing during their call and asking how her voice sounded despite her declining health, to which he responded that her singing remained extraordinary and perfectly in tune, showcasing her enduring spirit through adversity. Asha Bhosle, who was 92 years old, died on April 12.

A day ago, the renowned singer was rushed to the hospital due to respiratory and heart problems. She passed away on Sunday due to multiple organ failure. The whole

music and entertainment industries were shocked by her passing. On Monday, her final ceremonies were place. As they comforted her granddaughter, Zanaï Bhosle, a number of celebrities, including Tabu, Sachin Tendulkar, Ranveer Singh, Riteish Deshmukh, and others, were observed becoming tearful. At home, her casket was shrouded in the tricolor and decorated with white lilies. At the crematorium, the Mumbai Police gave her a gun salute. Political figures like Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, NCP-SCP MP Supriya Sule, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, Rashmi Thackeray, and Aaditya Thackeray were among those spotted at Shivaji Park, including Vicky Kaushal, Aamir Khan, Vivek Oberoi, Padmini Kolhapure, and Jackie Shroff.

Abhishek Bachchan explains why he has never purchased an IPL team

Mumbai: Because of his participation in football and kabaddi leagues, actor Abhishek Bachchan is well-known in the world of sports ownership. However, he has avoided playing in the Indian Premier League (IPL). The actor has now at last explained why he has never considered investing in the IPL. Abhishek explained why he never purchased an IPL team in a recent interview with Forbes. "It is very interesting," he remarked. Nobody that I know dislikes the IPL. It is, in my opinion, the pinnacle of sports entertainment.

I would really like to be part of it, but to be honest, it was incredibly costly when it first started. I was a budding actor. My movies had just began to go well, and I was starting to make some respectable

money, but it was beyond my means. "More importantly, I didn't know what I could contribute," he added.

What could I contribute to the BCCI's excellent infrastructure? Sitting in the stands and waving does not make me happy. "Oh, a star has arrived!"—I'm not that person. I'm really involved, if you've seen me at my matches. I take a seat alongside the players. They reside with me. If I can, I train them. I even approve of their daily diet. I like to work by micromanaging everything. He has made investments in sporting teams like Chennaiyin FC and the Jaipur Pink Panthers in the Pro Kabaddi League. He frequently goes to games with his family. The last time we saw Abhishek was in Madhumita's Kaalidhar Laapata.

Abhishek will then appear in King, directed by Siddharth Anand. Along with Suhana Khan, Deepika Padukone, Raghav Juyal, Saurabh Shukla, and Jaideep Ahlawat, Shah Rukh Khan plays the main part in the movie. December of this year is when the movie is supposed to hit theaters.

Additionally, he is working on Raja Shivaji. Riteish Deshmukh is the director and co-writer of the historical action drama. In addition to Sanjay Dutt, Mahesh Manjrekar, Sachin Khedekar, Bhagyashree, Fardeen Khan, Jitendra Joshi, Amole Gupte, and Genelia Deshmukh, the film's ensemble cast is led by Riteish in the titular role. Produced by Genelia Deshmukh and Jyoti Deshpande, the film is based on the life of Shivaji Maharaj.

Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor celebrate their fourth anniversary by going on a ski date in the Austrian Alps

Mumbai: Today, April 14, is Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor's fourth wedding anniversary. Alia shared a post and a meaningful message on social media on this momentous day. She posted pictures and a video from their vacation in Austria. In the village of Lech in the Austrian Alps, Alia Bhatt seems to be commemorating her fourth wedding anniversary with husband Ranbir Kapoor. They were spotted having fun in the snow, skiing together and enjoying hot drinks despite the chill. Alia also posted a picture of Raha, their daughter, enjoying the outing and spending time with alpacas. A glimpse of the family's vacation in the snow-covered mountains was provided by the post. "Somewhere between gliding and falling, walking and a lot of talking....we made ourselves a pretty wonderful life," Alia wrote as the caption for the photo. To put it briefly, "Tu saath hain toh

din raat hain." Check out this post: Located in the Alps in western Austria, Lech is a small yet famous village. It is most well-known for being an opulent winter resort and a well-liked location for snow activities like skiing. During the winter, Lech, which is surrounded by snow-covered mountains, draws tourists from all over the world. The community has peaceful surroundings, hiking paths, and picturesque views in the summer. The romance between Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor started while filming Ayan Mukerji's 2022 film Brahmastra: Part One-Shiva. For a number of years, the two performers kept their relationship mostly under wraps. On April 14, 2022, Alia and Ranbir tied the knot after a protracted courtship. Only close friends and family members attended the wedding, which took place at their Mumbai home. The couple revealed they were



expecting their first child in June of the same year, a few months later. On November 6, 2022, Raha, their daughter, was born. In terms of his career, Ranbir is prepared to captivate viewers as Lord Ram in the forthcoming Ramayana movie. Yash, Sunny Deol, Ravi Dubey,

and Sai Pallavi all play significant roles in the movie. This year's Diwali is when the first of the movie's two parts is supposed to be released. Alia and Ranbir are presently filming Love and War, a film directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali that also stars Vicky Kaushal.

Huma Qureshi claims that Ed Sheeran loved Gangs of Wasseypur

Mumbai: Bollywood star Huma Qureshi is now preparing for the premiere of Toxic: A Fairytale For Grown-Ups. In a recent podcast with Prakhar Gupta, Huma recounted how Ed Sheeran had seen and appreciated Anurag Kashyap's Gangs of Wasseypur, her Bollywood debut. "Ultimate flex the jab main Ed Sheeran se mili aur usne Gangs of Wasseypur dekhi thi" was how Huma described meeting Ed Sheeran at Farah Khan's party. "It was an ultimate flex when I met Ed Sheeran and he had watched Gangs of Wasseypur." And I thought, what? Have you seen Gangs of Wasseypur? Everyone met Ed Sheeran during the party that Farah Khan threw for him while he was in Mumbai. He was really kind, and I was attempting to talk to him. "I love your country, and I would love to do music here," he remarked. "So, he was being called away, and I said if you want to learn some more interesting colorful language, you must watch this film of ours, Gangs Of Wasseypur," she recalled, adding that she then attempted to teach Ed Sheeran some "interesting" Hindi terms to show him the "flavor" of India. "You were in that movie?" he asked, pausing. "Yes," I replied. After saying, "We just saw that movie," he contacted his manager. Farah asked, "What have you said to him? Why is he calling his manager?" "We just watched the film and we really loved it," Ed remarked. It's a really awesome movie. And I thought, "This is pretty cool." The film was written by Anurag and Zeishan Quadri and directed by Anurag Kashyap. Manoj Bajpayee, Richa Chadha, Reema Sen, Piyush Mishra, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Vineet Kumar Singh, Pankaj Tripathi, Anurita Jha, and Tigmanshu Dhulia, among others, played significant roles in the two-part movie. Nawazuddin Siddiqui got a Special Jury Award for his performance at the ceremony, and the movie won the National Award for Best Audiography in addition to receiving high praise from critics. The film Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups is where Huma will next be seen.

Yash plays a dual role in the film, which is directed by Geetu Mohandas and features important roles for Nayanthara, Tara Sutaria, Kiara Advani, and Rukmini Vasanth, among others. Produced by KVN Productions and Monster Mind Creations, the historical gangster movie represents Yash's big-screen comeback following KGF Chapter 2. The movie is set to open in theaters on June 4.

Following the success of Saiyaara, Ahaan Panday and Mohit Suri will return for another love drama

Mumbai: In the love musical Saiyaara, directed by Mohit Suri, actor Ahaan Panday made his screen debut and won numerous awards. Ahaan and Mohit will soon get back together for a love drama. Ahaan will star in Mohit Suri's upcoming romance drama for Yash Raj Films (YRF), according to Variety India. "Mohit completed the storyline for his upcoming movie, a romantic comedy with a younger girl and an older man. However, with the actor he had in mind, that didn't work out. Aditya Chopra was the one who proposed that he collaborate with Ahaan on another romantic comedy. The producer believed that the public would enjoy the pair's romantic comeback because his second movie is an action movie in which he portrays a mobster, according to the newspaper. According to the portal, there are huge hopes for filmmaker Mohit's next project after the success of Saiyaara. It has now been confirmed that Ahaan has been cast in the upcoming movie, despite a number of names being floated. Mohit is currently reworking the script to make it more



suitable for Ahaan. It also stated that the movie is anticipated to begin production before the end of this year. Ahaan is currently filming an action romance starring Ali Abbas Zafar. Jimmy Shergill, Bobby Deol, Aishwarya Thackeray, and Sharvari

all play major parts in the movie. Ahaan will tackle the action-romance genre in the next movie. Following its July theatrical premiere last year, Saiyaara became a phenomenon. The love drama made ₹577 crore globally, making it both the highest-grossing romantic film in Indian cinema history and the second-highest-grossing Indian film of 2025. Additionally, it instantly made its two leads famous, especially with younger audiences.

Aneet Padda, who had previously acted in Kajol's Salaam Venky, made her feature film debut with Saiyaara, while Ahaan made her Bollywood debut.

The production banner YRF also supported the movie. In Saiyaara, a struggling musician named Krish falls in love with Vaani Batra, a young poet and journalist. The main focus of the narrative is how their romance overcomes a number of obstacles. Both critics and viewers gave the movie favorable reviews, praising the chemistry between the protagonists in particular. You may watch it on Netflix.

Tejasswi Prakash responds to reports that she and boyfriend Karan Kundra are getting married

Mumbai: Since their time on Bigg Boss 15 in 2021, television celebrities Tejasswi Prakash and Karan Kundra have been romantically involved. The couple may have secretly wed, according to recent rumors. Tejasswi has now discussed their wedding plans and responded to the rumors. Tejasswi recently discussed her ambitions to marry Karan in an interview with Bombay Times, stating, "That's not happening anytime soon." Tejasswi and Karan have been collaborating on Laughter Chefs Season 3. More recently, Tejasswi was spotted hosting Splitsvilla 16 with Karan. "There are, of course, a lot of things that you do explore with each other on a professional basis," Tejasswi stated when discussing working together. You do have a tendency to comprehend how the other individual prefers to work. Karan is my senior, therefore I got to learn a lot from him. It's been a learning process for me. "Shaadi vaadi toh chalo har do chaar saal baad karwa hi dete hain (We will make the wedding happen after 2-4 years), how cute is bhindi Maamu!!!" Karan posted on X earlier in response to internet rumors about his covert marriage to Tejasswi. Bigg Boss 15, a reality TV series hosted by Salman Khan, featured Karan and Tejasswi. Fans dubbed them TejRan, and their friendship on the show evolved into love, making them one of the most talked-about couples. The two have stayed together even after the show, and they are frequently spotted sharing their adorable moments on social media and celebrating festivals with each other's families. Now, fans are anxiously anticipating their marriage. Both of them are now participating in Laughter Chefs Season 3, which is hosted by Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi and Bharti Singh. Krushna Abhishek, Kashmera Shah, Arjun Bijlani,



Samarth Jurel, Abhishek Kumar, Aly Goni, and Jannat Zubair are among the other cast members. Over time, the show has grown to be a favorite among viewers. Tejasswi and Karan will also appear together in the glossy new reality series Desi Bling on Netflix, which offers a glimpse into the opulent lifestyles of affluent Indians living in Dubai. Astrologer Janvee Gaur and businessmen Satish Sanpal and Rizwan Sajan are also featured. The show's precise premiere date has not yet been disclosed.

While visiting Wankhede Stadium with her family, Kareena Kapoor becomes clearly agitated

Mumbai: Actor Kareena Kapoor went to Wankhede Stadium to watch a cricket match with her family, including her husband Saif Ali Khan and their sons Taimur and Jeh. Even though the outing seemed happy, a video of Kareena appearing agitated from the evening has been making waves on social media. On Sunday night, Kareena was seen at Wankhede Stadium for the Mumbai Indians vs. Royal Challengers Bengaluru match. Alongside the actor were her husband, Saif Ali Khan, their boys, Jeh and Taimur Ali Khan, as well as Saif's son, Ibrahim Ali Khan. The family can be seen cheering for the Mumbai Indians in a number of videos that have been doing the rounds on social media. But a specific video that appears to show Kareena arguing has also drawn notice. In the video, Kareena and her family are seen at Wankhede Stadium waiting for the elevator when a throng of spectators swiftly congregates to snap their photos. The actor is seen in a heated conversation with a member of her crew amid the mayhem, although it's unclear what the disagreement was over or if the person was actually one of her employees. She appears to lose her temper at one point and is heard asking Saif, "What is happening?" A few minutes later, the family finally enters the elevator. Following the momentary mayhem, Kareena was subsequently spotted at Wankhede Stadium having fun with her family and looking much calmer. The actor was seen enjoying the game while grinning. In the meantime, in the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL), the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) team faced the Mumbai Indians (MI). RCB defeated MI by 18 runs in the IPL encounter. Kareena has finished filming Daayra, Meghna Gulzar's forthcoming investigative crime thriller. Prithviraj Sukumaran is another actor in the movie. The movie, which is co-produced by Pen Studios and Jungle Pictures, will open in theaters in 2026. Daayra examines how an unsettling deed might elicit opposing and equal responses, influencing public opinion and posing difficult ethical dilemmas. According to the press announcement, the movie explores the murky regions of justice and truth, challenging viewers to think critically rather than providing simple solutions. The movie is currently under post-production. Kareena last appeared in the 2024 heist comedy Crew, which starred Tabu and Kriti Sanon.

Rs 20,000 Clarification and UP’s 21% Pay Increase Amid Noida Workers’ Protest

New Delhi, Apr 14: A day after workers’ protests in Noida descended into violence, the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh announced an interim increase in minimum pay for unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled workers. However, the state administration has denied allegations that firms are not adhering to the new minimum wage of Rs 20,000 per month. According to a statement from the state administration, the Labour Codes are being used at the national level to revise the minimum wage. “The objective of this initiative is to ensure that workers across the country are provided with a uniform baseline minimum wage to ensure just and fair remuneration,” it stated. According to the statement, the state government is also consulting with all relevant parties. “The sector is currently dealing with economic and global issues. Exports have decreased as the cost of raw materials for companies has gone up. Additionally, the issues and requests brought up by employees are pertinent, significant, and deserving of consideration. The state administration stated, “In such



a situation, it is crucial to adopt a harmonious and balanced approach between both parties—industry and workers—to reach a decision.” After consulting with all relevant parties, the state government announced that it had decided to raise the minimum wage temporarily. After proposals from a Wage Board that the government will form next month, the process of establishing a minimum wage will start. With effect from April 1, the state administration has increased the minimum wage for unskilled workers throughout the state by up to 21% as part of the

temporary measure. The earnings of unskilled workers will increase by 21% in Noida and Ghaziabad, 15% in cities with municipalities, and 9% in the remaining cities. For example, the minimum wage for unskilled workers in Uttar Pradesh is currently Rs 11,313 per month. This has increased to Rs 13,690 for workers in Noida and Ghaziabad. Employees in municipal areas would receive Rs 13,006 per month, while those in other parts of the state will receive Rs 12,356. In Noida and Ghaziabad, the minimum salary for semi-skilled workers has increased from Rs

12445 to Rs 15,059 per month.

This has increased from Rs 13,940 to Rs 16,668 per month for qualified personnel. The Chief Minister has urged industrial associations to guarantee that employees obtain social security entitlements, regular overtime compensation, weekly holiday bonuses, monthly earnings in accordance with regulations, and safety and respect for female employees in their workplaces.

The Chief Minister has denounced the unlawful actions of “anarchist and external elements” and requested that authorities identify them and take appropriate action, according to the statement. Earlier, hundreds of workers in Noida staged protests to call for improved working conditions and a pay increase.

The Haryana government’s announcement of a 35% increase in the minimum wage for unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled, and highly skilled workers sparked the demonstrations. Because their Haryana counterparts are paid more for doing the same work, workers in Noida have been calling for an increase in the minimum wage.

After a dramatic hour-long operation, a lion was saved from a 15-foot well in Gujarat

New Delhi, Apr 14: After an arduous, hour-long operation by forest officials, a lion stuck in a 15-foot-deep farm well was dragged to safety in the Una taluka of Gujarat, resulting in a dramatic animal rescue. Images of the rescue went viral, and the incident, which happened on April 13 close to the forested area of Navabandar, has since garnered a lot of attention online. The lion unintentionally fell into an open, water-filled well after straying from its native area in search of prey, according to officials.

The animal struggled to keep afloat because it was unable to climb out. Locals were made aware of the situation by the lion’s roars, which reverberated throughout the neighborhood. The Jasadhar Forest Department promptly assembled a rescue squad led by Range Forest Officer Kuldeep Chauhan after obtaining information. Many residents congregated at the location as word of the imprisoned animal spread, wanting to see the lion. The forest department asked the local police for help in securing the area and controlling the gathering. The first attempts at rescue were difficult. In the hopes that the lion would cling to or be led into a position where it could be pulled out, forest workers lowered sturdy ropes into the well. But the scared animal reacted violently, biting through the ropes several times. The imprisoned animal and the rescuers engaged in a tense standoff for about thirty minutes. The rescuers eventually succeeded in securing the lion with a rope noose after much work and meticulous planning. A cage was placed at the well’s edge, and the entire area was sealed off. After that, the group started raising the animal. The team was able

to swiftly close the enclosure when the lion was brought to the surface and instinctively moved into the nearby cage. Those who had been anxiously following the entire process were relieved and applauded when the rescue was completed. Gujarat’s Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi posted a video of the rescue on X, saying, “The Forest Department team worked tirelessly for nearly an hour, ensuring every move was careful and calm, with swift coordination and remarkable courage.” The lion was safely and unharmedly retrieved as a result of their efforts, he stated. The lion was sent to the Jasadhar Animal Care Center for a comprehensive medical assessment after the rescue. The animal will be closely observed to evaluate any injuries or stress-related consequences coming from the encounter, according to forest officials. Many people have praised the forest department’s bravery, patience, and expertise for the rescue.

Concerns regarding open wells in forest-adjacent areas, which frequently endanger animals in places like Gujarat, which is home to a sizable population of Asiatic lions, have also been rekindled by the incident. “Excellent work by the Forest Department in managing a high-risk situation with precision and care,” one user commented. The significance of trained response systems in human-wildlife interactions is reinforced by such treatments. Another said, “Great effort. Congratulations to the rescue team. God will certainly bless the entire crew as they’ve saved one of His creatures. Humans are guilty of leading many species to extinction on the planet. And they’re killing each other too in wars driven by greed.”

At a concert, two MBA students overdosed on drugs and died



New Delhi, Apr 14: After attending a music event in Mumbai, two MBA students are said to have overdosed on drugs and died. The event happened on the evening of April 11, when over 4,000 people paid the Rs 2,000 admission price to attend the concert at the NESCO Centre in Goregaon.

Police sources claim that several of the attendees used narcotics, including MDMA, which is prohibited. Three pupils had breathing problems around 12:00 AM and were taken to local hospitals. The 25-year-old lady is in serious condition, while the 24-year-old woman and the 28-year-old male subsequently passed away in the hospital. One of the students who died, according to Mumbai Police sources, took a pill in a taxi on the way to the event. At the occasion, he overdosed

after taking a second tablet. According to sources, doctors have now verified that an overdose was the cause of death. According to reports, the man who provided these tablets is a student and has been taken into custody. According to accounts, six or seven tablets were found on the accused. The narcotics were imported from outside of Mumbai, according to the investigation. Event planner Vihaan, also known as Akash Samal, Sunny Vinod Jain from NESCO Event Organization and Management, internal security team member Balakrishnan Balaran, and two other students are among those detained. Now, a video of the guests dancing at the event has also gone viral. According to the NESCO Center, it is assisting the authorities. We are offering the concerned authorities our complete cooperation in their current investigation since we recognize how serious the matter is. To guarantee that the facts are confirmed as soon as possible, all pertinent information and support are being offered,” a spokeswoman said in a statement.

ED informs the Delhi court that I-PAC raised false invoices without providing services

New Delhi, Apr 14: As the federal agency sought custody of Vinesh Chandel, a director of the political consulting firm, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) accused I-PAC of creating “bogus invoices” to justify receiving money from several third-party entities “without rendering any actual consultancy or professional services.” Chandel was detained in connection with a money laundering investigation connected to alleged illicit coal mining and transportation in West Bengal. He was brought before Delhi’s Patiala House court late on Monday night and placed under 10-day ED custody hours later. The hearing went on till Tuesday morning. Simon Benjamin, the special public prosecutor for the ED, informed the Shefali Barnala Tandon court that transactions were purposefully set up to give “otherwise illicit funds” a false sense of legality and were used to layer and integrate criminal proceeds into the official financial system. According to Benjamin, the court’s remand decision stated that “substantial amounts were credited to the accounts of I-PAC from various entities without any genuine business purpose, thereby establishing that the company acted as a conduit for routing funds.” According to Benjamin, there is proof that the money obtained from criminal activity was “systematically layered” and sent through financial channels. According to Benjamin, hawala transactions and other unofficial routes were used for the unexplained cash component. It referenced remarks made throughout the probe and claimed they demonstrated how individuals connected to I-PAC facilitated hawala arrangements. The ED contended that this demonstrated the intentional use of non-banking channels for

money transfers. “This dual method of fund routing shows a deliberate attempt to hide the source and present the proceeds of crime as legal business revenue.” He said that I-PAC used a planned system of financial transactions to generate, conceal, and launder proceeds of crime through its directors, including Chandel and Rishi Raj Singh. “The company intentionally suppressed the true nature and extent of its financial activities under his direction by adopting a modus operandi of splitting receipts between accounted (banking channels) and unaccounted (cash/non-banking channels) modes.” Benjamin claimed that documentary evidence, such as confiscated documents and statements, amply illustrates the systematic and deliberate nature of this diversion. By disputing the existence of cash transactions and misrepresenting the nature of the company’s operations, Chandel was charged by the ED with making false and misleading representations. Benjamin said that Chandel and other directors oversaw the removal of private financial information and communications from important employees’ accounts. Chandel was also deemed a flight risk by the agency.

When the ED conducted raids at the I-PAC office and the property of its director, Pratik Jain, in January, it accused West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee of hindering its searches and deleting evidence. Prior to the West Bengal assembly elections, Banerjee claimed that the ED made an attempt to confiscate papers pertaining to electoral strategy from I-PAC facilities. Banerjee claimed that in order to steal the party’s data, the ED targeted I-PAC, which collaborates with the Trinamool Congress.

Air India’s Boeing 787-8 lands at Delhi Airport after renovations

New Delhi, Apr 14: More than three years after the Tata Group-owned airline announced a USD 400 million investment plan to complete a thorough refit of its heritage twin-aisle fleet, Air India’s first refurbished wide-body Boeing 787-8 aircraft touched down at Delhi Airport on Monday. According to the airline, the aircraft, VT-ANT, made a nonstop ferry journey from San Bernardino, California, across the Pacific, and touched down at Delhi’s Indra Gandhi International Airport at 10 p.m. One of the key locations for Boeing aircraft maintenance, painting, and storage is San Bernardino International Airport in California. The nose-tail cabin of the first of 26 B787 aircraft was successfully refurbished on Monday as Air India welcomed its first converted twin-aisle B787-8 (registered VT-ANT), according to the airline. Private carrier that is losing money Boeing 787-8s and B-777s make up Air India’s legacy widebody fleet. These planes fly to a number of long-distance locations in the United Kingdom, Europe, the United States, and the Far East. The aircraft was painted in Air India’s eye-catching new livery at AeroPro, an FAA Part-145 certified aircraft paint facility in California, after undergoing extensive interior renovations at Boeing’s modification center in Victorville, California, according to the airline.



The aircraft conducted a nonstop ferry journey from San Bernardino to Delhi after receiving the necessary regulatory certificates and permissions, it said. After the Tata Group reclaimed ownership of the airline from the Union Government in January 2022, Air India went private. In December of that same year, the airline announced plans to invest over USD 400 million to renovate its entire legacy wide-body fleet, which consists of 27 Boeing B787-8 (Dreamliner) and 13 B777 aircraft. The current cabin furnishings were completely redesigned as part of this renovation, and all classes now have the newest seats and in-flight entertainment. A premium economy cabin was also added to both fleets as part of the renovation. The first of these repaired aircraft was put into service. The project didn’t start until July of last year, when the first of the 26 Boeing 787-8s flew to the Victorville plant for retrofitting, due to supply chain problems and geopolitical circumstances. Air India’s fleet was reduced to 26 aircraft after one of its Boeing 787-8s was lost in an accident in Ahmedabad in June of last year.

RR Captain Riyan Parag’s Direct Admission Following SRH Pace Duo’s Rattling

New Delhi: Rajasthan Royals (RR) captain Riyan Parag described his team’s devastating defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) as “just a blip” after the game. He praised the team’s batting depth, citing a century partnership between Donovan Ferreira and Ravindra Jadeja after five wickets were lost in the first three overs, even if he acknowledged that he did not have much time to experience the emotions. Two pacers from Vidarbha and Bihar, Praful Hinge and Sakib Hussain, ended RR’s winning run as RR was dismissed for 159 against SRH, who reached 216/6 with a to a superb 91 in 44 balls from captain Ishan Kishan. With this victory, RR’s four-match winning streak is ended, and SRH now has three losses in addition to their second victory.



field) It was fairly decent, albeit it could have been better to bowl second. With the new ball, it was sticky. It slowed down once the gloss faded.

However, in retrospect, we could have batted more effectively. “It speaks volumes about the depth to be five wickets down for nine and still reach 160. It’s only a blip. We’re going to Kolkata and something better,” he continued. He disclosed that he played Sakib for Assam against Bihar in response to the performances of SRH’s uncapped pacers. Domestically, I haven’t seen them very often. played Sakib once while representing Assam against Bihar. They had excellent bowling. He concluded by saying, “The pressure they had,

with the home crowd chanting their name, the way they bowled—it was beautiful.” SRH scored 216/6 when batting first, mostly thanks to captain Ishan (91 in 44 balls, with eight fours and six sixes) and cameos from Heinrich Klaasen (40 in 26 balls, with a four and three sixes) and Nitish Kumar Reddy (28 in 13 balls, with four boundaries). In the opening over of the 217-run chase, rookie Praful (4/34 in four overs) destroyed RR’s top-order, leaving them at 9/5. For the sake of net run rate, Donovan Ferreira (69 in 44 balls, with seven fours and three sixes) and Ravindra Jadeja (45 in 32 balls, with five fours) did set up a century stand, but RR was dismissed for 159 with some late assistance from Sakib (4/24).

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi gets shortlisted by the BCCI for the Ireland T20Is

A teenager will play for India at the youngest age ever

New Delhi: Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is expected to receive an early reward, suggesting that the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee has finally taken notice of the mounting pleas from experts. After IPL 2026 concludes, the 15-year-old is allegedly being considered for India’s selection for the next T20I tour to Ireland in June. Sooryavanshi will beat Sachin Tendulkar, who made his international debut at the age of sixteen, to become the youngest player to represent India. Sooryavanshi has been selected for the Ireland tour, where India will play two games on June 26 and 28. According to a BCCI insider who spoke to the media, “he is in contention for the Ireland tour and the selectors have shortlisted his name along with those of many other players.” The reported action indicates the selectors’ intention to give the young Rajasthan Royals player a chance against comparatively weaker opponents rather than take a wait-and-watch strategy. According to the report, Sooryavanshi would be eligible for the next trip to Zimbabwe, where India will play three matches between July 23 and 26, if he performs well in Ireland. Arun Dhumal, the current IPL chairman and former BCCI treasurer, has already given Sooryavanshi his blessing. This IPL

2026 season, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi put on an incredible batting display. Given his skills, this kid most definitely deserves to make his Team India debut as the youngest. Someone with such talent at such a young age is hard to come by. Dhumal said on X, “He definitely deserves to be listed as India’s youngest debutant. Sooryavanshi first gained notoriety during the 2025 Indian Premier League.

A few months after the Rajasthan Royals acquired him for INR 1.1 crore, making him one of the youngest acquisitions at an IPL auction, the young Bihar player showed off his skills by hitting a six off Shardul Thakur on his debut ball. A few days later, in just his third game, he lit up the tournament with an incredible 35-ball century against the Gujarat Titans. He played for India’s Under-19 team for the remainder of the year, amassing runs with a string of quick fifties and hundreds. Discussions regarding the BCCI perhaps expediting the prodigy into the senior squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup cycle were initially triggered by that run of form. After his spectacular 80-ball 175 against England in the Under-19 World Cup final earlier this week—the highest individual score in a final—which helped India win a record sixth trophy, those



calls only got louder. After being taken aback by the blow, former England captain Michael Vaughan joined the increasing number of people pleading with the BCCI to take Sooryavanshi into consideration. His remarks followed the 15-year-old’s game-winning 52 off just 17 balls against Chen-

nai Super Kings in Rajasthan’s IPL 2026 first match. Whether it was Irfan Pathan, Harbhajan Singh or several other former cricketers, the message to the BCCI was unanimous — pick Sooryavanshi for the Indian team after the IPL season — as they gushed over the youngster.

Shane Warne's Son Claims Covid Vaccine Was Responsible For The Cricket Legend's Death

New Delhi: Four years after Shane Warne's death shook the cricketing world, his son Jackson has claimed that the spin legend's demise may have been linked to the COVID-19 vaccines he was "forced to take for work."

Warne, widely regarded as one of the greatest bowlers in the history of the game, died at the age of 52 in Thailand in 2022 after suffering a heart attack. Speaking on the '2 Worlds Collide' podcast, Jackson said he believes the vaccines played a role, even as he acknowledged that his father had underlying health issues. "I definitely think that it (COVID vaccine) was involved. I don't even think saying that is controversial anymore. Even if dad had underlying health issues, I think this brought it out right to the surface and that's one thing that I've always struggled with," he said. Jackson revealed that his first reaction after hearing the news of his father's death was to look for reasons beyond natural causes. "My first impression, as soon as I hung up the phone, I in-



stantly blamed the government. I instantly blamed COVID and the vaccine," he said, adding that he had to restrain himself from voicing those thoughts publicly during the memorial service. "It was probably smart I didn't, I would be in a very different position if I did. But that was how I felt," he said.

He went on to claim that Warne had taken multiple vaccine doses despite his reluctance. "Yes, a lot of people were dying of heart attacks before.

But dad was okay. I think he might have got three or four (vaccine doses)," he said, adding that he had to restrain himself from voicing those thoughts publicly during the memorial service. "It was probably smart I didn't, I would be in a very different position if I did. But that was how I felt," he said.

He went on to claim that Warne had taken multiple vaccine doses despite his reluctance. "Yes, a lot of people were dying of heart attacks before.

Warne as being in good shape in the lead-up to his death. "Dad, at the time, was healthy, he was happy. He looked the best he had in a while. Yes, he smoked and drank, but so many more people in their 80s and 90s still smoke and drink a lot more than dad," he said. Warne had contracted COVID-19 a few months before his death during his 2021 coaching stint with The Hundred in England. However, he was not known to have any major ailment at the time of his sudden demise, later. "Sad to hear the news that Rod Marsh has passed. He was a legend of our great game & an inspiration to so many young boys & girls. Rod cared deeply about cricket & gave so much-especially to Australia & England players. Sending lots & lots of love to Ros & the family. RIP mate," he had written on Twitter. Legendary Australia spinner Shane Warne passed away on Friday aged 52 of a suspected heart attack. The Australian cricketer was at a villa in Thailand when the doctors unsuccessfully tried to revive him.

Army Women Boxers Achieve Great Success At The International Boxing Meet In Mongolia



Chandigarh: They are relatively new to don the olive green, but have made their mark. Recently inducted women boxers from the Indian Army have punched their way to top positions in the Asian Elite Boxing Championship – 2026, clinching two gold medals and a silver medal. They were among the four

Indian women gold medalists at the meet. The lone Indian male gold medalist was also from the Army. The meet was held at Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia from March 28 to April 10, in which 230 boxers from 25 nations participated.

Overall, the 20-member Indian squad, which fielded both male and female boxers, in-

cluding civilians, secured second place. The Army's women medalists were all from the Corps of Military Police (CMP) Center and School, Bengaluru. The CMP is the only arm in the Army to have inducted women personnel in the ranks and file, when recruitment began in 2022 under the Agnipath scheme.

Sanju Samson Outshines Jasprit Bumrah To Secure ICC Award For T20 World Cup Heroics



New Delhi: Sanju Samson has been named the ICC Player of the Month after his match-winning heroics in the T20 World Cup 2026. The India batter beat his teammate and pace ace Jasprit Bumrah amongst the contenders to clinch the award following his standout performances in the tournament. Samson's award comes on the back of India's title-winning campaign. Speaking after receiving the honour, he reflected on what has been a defining phase of his career.

"Winning the ICC Player of the Month award is an incredible feeling, especially as it comes during what has been the most unforgettable phase of my cricketing journey. Playing a part in India's triumph at the Men's T20 World Cup was truly a dream realised," Samson said.

"It took some time for the magnitude of that moment to fully sink in. This is an exciting era for Indian cricket, with immense talent across the board. I feel grateful for the opportuni-

ties I've received, and for the trust and support from my team-mates and coaching staff," he added. Alongside Samson, New Zealand all-rounder Melie Kerr won the women's award for her consistent performances across formats. Samson's journey to the award was not straightforward, having started the tournament on the bench before forcing his way into the XI and delivering when it mattered most.

He announced himself with an unbeaten 97 against the West Indies in a virtu-

al knockout, guiding India through a tricky chase. That was followed by back-to-back scores of 89 in the semifinal against England and the final against New Zealand, where he once again set the platform in high-pressure situations. Those performances not only secured India the title but also earned Samson the Player of the Tournament award, underlining his importance to the side.

The transition from international success to the IPL was not entirely smooth. After moving from Rajasthan Royals to Chennai Super Kings, Samson struggled for rhythm in the early matches of IPL 2026, failing to convert starts into significant scores. However, he soon found his touch again. Samson became the first centurion of the season, scoring a match-winning hundred against Delhi Capitals to guide CSK to their first win after a difficult start. It was another reminder that when it comes to big moments, Samson has a way of delivering.

Pooja And Ajita Advance To The GD Birla Memorial Open Final Following Impressive Upset Victories

Mumbai: It was doomsday for a majority of the seeded players in the semi-finals of the GD Birla Memorial Masters Inter-Cub Badminton Tournament, hosted by Bombay Gymkhana on Monday. The top two seeds in the women's singles 45+, Priya Ambekar and Namita Mehta-Vijayakar, were shown the door, losing in contrasting fashion. While top seed Priya lost 6-21, 13-21 to Pooja Jhalani, second seed Namita put up a better fight before losing in three games, 14-21, 21-15, 11-21. Seeded teams also lost out in the Men's Doubles 110+ and the Mixed Doubles 80+.

In the mixed doubles, the top seed pairing of Shailesh Daga and former international Aparna Papat were defeated by Sandeep Mohan and Tejasvi Sawant 21-14, 19-21, 21-9. There was heartbreak for the second seeds too as Shiv Thakur and Naheed Divecha were beaten by Hemant Duggal and Shweta Thakur 21-12, 21-16.

There was solace for Daga, however, who won the men's doubles 110+, paired with Gautam Lad. The duo seeded first, defeated Anis Badami and Vipool Patel 21-18, 21-8 to make the title round. Action will now resume on Thursday. The much-anticipated family entertainer Tomchi had its grand trailer launch, drawing an illustrious gathering of veteran actors and filmmakers. The event was graced by esteemed personalities including Upasana Singh,



Delnaaz Irani, Ameeta Nangia, Sheetal Shah, Ajita Kulkarni, Mahesh Thakur, Kurush Deboo, and Madhu Saha. Their presence added a touch of glamour and nostalgia, celebrating the film's heart-felt narrative. Directed and produced by Rajesh Gupta, Tomchi is a heart-warming tale that revolves around six mischievous children whose lives take a turn when they befriend a lovable dog named Tomchi. Their bond leads them on an adventurous journey filled with laughter, challenges, and life lessons. The film features a stellar cast including Manoj Joshi, Yashpal Sharma, Rati Agnihotri, Mahesh Thakur, and others, promising a delightful cinematic experience for audiences of all ages. The trailer launch event showcased the film's captivating visuals and soulful music, composed by Anand Raj Anand,

Ritesh Bhojar with lyrics penned by Narendra Bedi and others. The songs, brought to life by the powerful voice of Kailash Kher, add depth and emotion to the storytelling.

At the trailer launch, Upasana Singh shared her thoughts on the film: "Tomchi is more than just a children's film; it's a heartwarming tale that reminds us of the innocence of childhood and the profound impact of friendship. Being part of this project has been a fulfilling experience, and I believe audiences will connect deeply with its message." Director Rajesh Gupta shared his vision for the film, stating, "Tomchi is a celebration of innocence, friendship, and doing what's right. It's a film that will make you smile, feel, and leave with a full heart." Tomchi is set to release in theaters across India on May.

Kochi's Kalina Rangers Clinch Their Maiden Red Bull Four 2 Score National Championship In Coimbatore



Coimbatore: Team Kalina Rangers from Kochi emerged victorious in the Red Bull Four 2 Score National Finals, which concluded with a spectacular display of football, as amateur players from across the country battled it out for the coveted title and the opportunity to represent India on the global stage. The high-energy 4v4 tournament lived up to its reputation, delivering intense action and showcasing the immense talent of grassroots footballers. Mumbai City FC star and Indian National team forward Vikram Pratap Singh was also present on the occasion, according to a

Release. Team Kalina Rangers won with the help of a sudden-death golden goal by Tyson Patel, defeating all other teams to bag the bragging rights and a chance to represent India at the World Finals. Throughout the competition, teams from 10 cities showcased their talent, resilience, and passion for the sport. After weeks of exhilarating qualifiers, the National Finals in Coimbatore saw the best of India go head-to-head in a battle for supremacy.

The victorious team, Kalina Rangers, will now embark on an even greater journey, the Road to the World Finals in Canada, where they will

represent India at the Red Bull Four 2 Score World Final later this year, where they will be looking to etch their name in Red Bull Four 2 Score history. Kalina Rangers, who are originally from Mumbai, began their journey from the Kochi qualifiers, upsetting the crowd favourite MRFC A, defeating them via a sudden-death golden goal in the final. The Rangers, who qualified for the India Finals after beating stiff competition in Red Bull Four 2 Score 2025's Kochi Qualifiers, are a tight-knit group of friends represented by Craig Dsouza, Scott Moraes, Tyson Patel, Clinton Dsouza,

and Faheez Mohammed. The finale proved to be an end-to-end affair as both sides were relentless in their efforts to score. However, it was an encore for the side from Kochi to book a spot in the Red Bull Four 2 Score 2026 World Final. "We are ecstatic about the win at the Red Bull Four 2 Score India Finals, after putting in the hard work and beating the top teams in the country. But now the focus shifts to the world finals in Canada. We are going there to win & not just to participate," said Scott Moraes, Kalina Rangers "I used to play a lot of futsal in the start of my footballing career.

There is more quickness involved in this game. Red Bull Four 2 Score gives a great platform to young grassroot stars to showcase their talent. I congratulate Kalina Rangers on winning their maiden Red Bull Four 2 Score tournament," said Vikram Partap Singh, Red Bull athlete and India footballer. Red Bull Four 2 Score embodies Red Bull's 'power football' philosophy and challenges players to show their best small-field, 4v4 football skills - 10-minute rounds, no breaks and no goalies - plus, goals scored during the first and last min-

ute count as double. Tie-breakers are settled with one player from each team going head-to-head, trying to outsmart the other to score the winning goal. After a relatively even first half, City took control in emphatic fashion after the break.

Nico O'Reilly opened the scoring just six minutes into the second half after a well-worked move led by Rayan Cherki, who was instrumental throughout the contest. Cherki then turned provider again, setting up Marc Guehi to double the advantage in the 57th minute. Jeremy Doku added the finishing touch with a third goal in the 68th minute, capping a dominant display. The result marked City's third major win in succession, following victories over Arsenal in the League Cup final and Liverpool in the FA Cup, underlining their growing dominance across competitions. For Chelsea, the defeat dealt another setback in their push for Champions League qualification. Managed by Liam Rosenior, they remain inconsistent and are now four points behind the top five, having managed just one win in their last seven league outings. At the other end of the table, Tottenham relegation.

Chepauk Anticipates Potential Return of MS Dhoni for CSK Versus KKR Match



New Delhi: As Chennai celebrates Tamil New Year this Tuesday, attention turns to the MA Chidambaram Stadium, which is expected to be packed to the rafters for the IPL 2026 match between Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR). The central question remains: Will MS Dhoni finally return? The stakes are high. Though CSK ended a three-match losing streak with a recent victory over Delhi Capitals, the team is still searching for a settled combination.

The influential presence of Dhoni has been absent since the season began, following an official pre-season announcement that the 44-year-old veteran would be sidelined for at least two weeks due to a calf

strain. During his initial recovery, Dhoni stayed in Chennai For rehabilitation and did not travel with the squad for away fixtures. Fans marked April 14 as his expected return date, but recent indications from the Super Kings camp suggest the comeback may be delayed. Reports indicate Dhoni requires more time to be fully match-ready. Although he was seen training ahead of the Delhi Capitals game and again before the KKR clash, his involvement was limited.

On Monday evening at Chepauk, Dhoni took part only in light training, mostly taking throwdowns in the nets. Notably, he did not wear the wicketkeeping gloves or engage in high-intensity drills, implying his calf may not yet

support the lateral movements needed behind the stumps. In Dhoni's absence, Sanju Samson has taken over wicketkeeping duties. The wicket-keeper-batter, acquired from Rajasthan Royals, scored a century in CSK's win over Delhi Capitals. After a challenging start, Samson has found his rhythm and made a significant impact. Nevertheless, CSK have missed Dhoni's presence behind the stumps. It remains uncertain whether the team will reintegrate him directly into the playing XI once fully fit or ease him back by using him as an Impact Player. Former New Zealand pacer Mitchell McClenaghan believes CSK has a prime opportunity to use the Impact Player Monday.