

Scindia engages youth at Ashtalakshmi Darshan exchange program event

Guwahati, Apr 25: Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region Jyoti-raditya M. Scindia virtually interacted with students of Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme, a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER). The programme was attended by Secretary, Sanjay Jaju, Joint Secretary Niraj Kumar, and other dignitaries. As part of the programme, the Union Minister interacted with the students of Batch-13, 14 and 15 at IIT Guwahati, Assam University and Tezpur University, respectively. The batches comprised 100 students, including 20 students each from Chhattisgarh, New Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Goa, participating in the exchange programme scheduled from March 15 to April 10. The interaction programme commenced with opening remarks by Niraj Kumar,



Joint Secretary, Ministry of DoNER, followed by a keynote address by the DoNER Minister. During the interactive session, students shared their experiences and reflections on the exposure visit: Ragini Sahu from Durg, Chhattisgarh highlighted the unique aspects of the NE region, including visits to diverse locations, and emphasized that such exposure visits are extremely valuable and

should be encouraged for students across India. Another participant from Chhattisgarh, Harish Kumar Sahu shared that after visiting the North East, he truly understood why the region is referred to as “Ashtalakshmi”, symbolizing its richness and diversity. Sharing her experience, Ifrah Kawa from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, appreciated the warm hospitality of the region and expressed her interest in the hospitality management and cultural richness of the NE region. Reflecting on his experience, Vikas Bali from Central University of Rajasthan stated that his visit to the North Eastern region was truly enriching. He expressed that seeing the region firsthand gave him a deeper appreciation of its natural beauty, culture, and diversity, making the experience both insightful and memorable.

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Authorities In Mizoram Seize Heroin Valued At Over Twenty-Six Lakhs From Suspect

Aizawl, Apr 25: A joint operation conducted by Assam Rifles in coordination with Champhai Police led to the seizure of 35.83 grams of Heroin No. 4 in the general area of Zote in Champhai district, Mizoram on 23 April 2026. Online News Subscription According to officials, the seized contraband is estimated to be valued at approximately ₹26.87 lakh. One individual was apprehended during the operation.

The recovered narcotics, along with the arrested individual, have been handed over to the Excise and Narcotics Department in Champhai for further investigation and legal proceedings. In a significant blow to the narcotics trade operating along the Indo-Myanmar border, a joint operation by the Assam Rifles and the Champhai Police has resulted in the seizure of a substantial consignment of Heroin No. 4. The operation, which took place on April 23, 2026, led to the recovery of contraband valued at approximately ₹26.87 lakh and the arrest of one individual suspected of involvement in a cross-border trafficking network. The seizure underscores the escalating “War on Drugs” in Northeast India, particularly in Mizoram, which has become a primary transit route for illicit substances entering the country from the



Golden Triangle via Myanmar. The crackdown was the result of “specific intelligence inputs” received by the Serchhip Battalion of the Assam Rifles regarding the movement of a high-value narcotics consignment through the Zote area in the Champhai district. Acting swiftly on this information, a joint team comprising personnel from the Assam Rifles and local police from the Champhai Police Station established a mobile vehicle check post and intensified patrolling in the suspected corridor. During the late-evening operation, security forces intercepted a suspicious individual. A thorough search of the person’s belongings led to the discovery of 35.83 grams of Heroin No. 4, a highly potent and refined form of the drug. The contraband was meticulously packed to evade detection during routine transit.

Supreme Court Issues Notice in Custodial Torture Case Appeal

Jorhat, Apr 25: The Supreme Court of India has issued a notice to the Assam government and former Jorhat Superintendent of Police Mohan Lal Meena in connection with an appeal challenging the Gauhati High Court’s refusal to order a CBI probe into an alleged custodial torture case from 2023. The appeal was filed by Rimly Gogoi, who alleged that her brother, Dipankar Gogoi, was detained by personnel of Titabar police station on December 22, 2023, in connection with a bomb blast that took place on December 14 at Lichubari in Jorhat. He was released during the night of December 22–23. In her petition, she claimed that Dipankar was picked up without any valid reason. She further alleged that Mohan Lal Meena, then SP of Jorhat and named as the main accused, threatened him with a service pistol and forced him to confess to the blast. According to her, Dipankar was brutally tortured when he denied involvement. She also alleged that he was repeatedly picked up on December 23, 24, and 25 and subjected to further torture. Following a protest petition, a lower court ordered a re-investigation by a senior police officer. However, expressing dissatisfaction with the progress, the family approached the Gauhati High Court in 2025 seeking a CBI probe.

West Bengal needs industrial revival, more jobs and transparent governance: Himanta Biswa Sarma

Guwahati, Apr 25: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that West Bengal needs strong industrial revival, better job opportunities and transparent governance to regain its economic strength and realise its full potential. The Assam chief minister made the remarks while speaking about the economic condition of West Bengal and its development trajectory over the years. In a post shared on social media platform X, Sarma said the state was once among the country’s leading centres of intellectual, cultural and industrial growth, but over time it lost much of its economic momentum. Referring to the legacy of noted personalities from Bengal, Sarma said the state had once produced some of India’s most respected thinkers and national leaders, including Rabindranath Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose and Swami Vivekananda. He said the state had historically played a major role in shaping India’s intellectual and economic landscape. However, Sarma claimed

that the state gradually witnessed industrial decline and slower economic growth over several decades. He blamed the situation on the long period of rule under the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Front government. According to him, the prolonged political environment during that period affected industrial expansion, discouraged fresh investments and reduced employment opportunities for people in the state. The Assam chief minister further alleged that the situation did not improve significantly even after the change in government in the state. He claimed that despite political changes, West Bengal has continued to struggle in attracting large-scale industrial investments and generating enough employment opportunities for its growing population. Sarma said West Bengal still has strong advantages that can help it become an important economic hub once again. He pointed to the state’s strategic geographical location, its connectivity with the northeastern region and

neighbouring countries, as well as access to ports and trade routes. According to him, these factors provide West Bengal with major opportunities for trade, manufacturing and industrial growth. He said that for the state to move forward, there is a need for stable policies, transparent governance and an environment that encourages industries and businesses to invest. He added that creating jobs for the youth should remain one of the top priorities for any government aiming to strengthen the economy. The Assam chief minister also stressed that industrial development is necessary not only for economic growth but also for improving the overall standard of living of people. He said large-scale investments and industrial expansion can help create employment opportunities across different sectors and support long-term development. Sarma’s remarks have once again brought attention to the political debate over development, industrialisation and governance in West Bengal.

BJP will gain strength from AAP Rajya Sabha realignment, says Himanta Biswa Sarma



Guwahati, Apr 25: Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the reported move involving members of the Aam Aadmi Party in the Rajya Sabha aligning with the Bharatiya Janata Party would strengthen the BJP politically at the national level. Speaking while reacting to recent political developments, the Assam chief minister said such a shift would add more strength to the BJP and could have a wider impact on national politics in the coming months. Sarma made the remarks while also commenting on the reported high voter turnout in the first phase of the West Bengal Assembly Elections. Referring to reports that around 91.91 per cent voter turnout was recorded during the first phase of polling, he claimed that the large participation reflected a strong public mood in favour of political change in West Bengal.

According to Sarma, the high turnout showed that people had come out in large numbers with the intention of supporting a new government in the state. He expressed confidence that the BJP would perform strongly in the elections and said the party expected major gains in the first phase itself. “The public has voted in large numbers for change and to form a BJP government in West Bengal,” Sarma said while speaking to reporters. The Assam chief minister further claimed that the BJP would secure a large number of seats in the election. He said the party was expecting to win around 110 seats from the first phase alone and added that the BJP was confident of forming the next government in West Bengal with around 200 seats overall.

Rare natural triplet birth successfully conducted at Itanagar hospital

Itanagar, Apr 25: A rare and successful delivery of naturally conceived triplets was carried out at Polo Hospital, bringing joy to a family from Kurung Kumey district and drawing attention to an uncommon medical case handled by doctors in the state capital. Hospital officials said a 30-year-old woman from Kurung Kumey district delivered healthy full-term triplets through a caesarean section at the hospital. The operation was conducted by a medical team led by gynaecologist Dr Posting Bayang Neri along with MS Dr Meli Dodum. Doctors involved in the procedure said the pregnancy was especially rare because the triplets were conceived naturally without the help of assisted reproductive technologies such as in-vitro fertilisation (IVF), which is more commonly associated with multiple pregnancies. Medical experts say pregnancies involving triplets are generally considered high-risk because they can lead to complications for both the mother and the babies. In many cases, such pregnancies require close monitoring throughout the pregnancy period due to risks linked to premature birth, low birth weight and complications during delivery. However, in this case, doctors said the surgery was completed successfully without any complications during or after the operation. According to the medical team, both the mother and the newborns remained stable following the delivery. Speaking about the case, Dr Neri said the pregnancy was a spontaneous and natural triplet pregnancy, which made it an exceptionally uncommon case. He said the successful outcome reflected the coordinated efforts of the doctors, nurses and hospital staff involved in the treatment and care of the patient. Hospital sources said all three babies were born at full term and weighed around 2.3 kilograms each, which doctors described as a healthy weight for triplets. The newborns also did not require support from the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), something that is often needed in multiple births due to premature delivery or other medical concerns.

The Mizoram Board Of School Education Will Declare HSSLC Examination Results This April Twenty-Ninth

Aizawl, Apr 25: The Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) is scheduled to declare the results of the Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate (HSSLC) examination on April 29, according to a notification issued by the board on Friday. The notification said the results will be available at the MBSE office in Chaltlang and the board’s regional office in Lunglei. Students can also check their results online at www.mbse.edu.in and www.mbseonline.com. Printed result booklets will also be available for purchase for those who require them, it added. Results can also be obtained through the designated office numbers during working hours, it said. The Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) on Tuesday (May 6, 2025) announced the results of the Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate (HSSLC) examinations, revealing a strong overall pass percentage of 81.10%. The announce-



ment was made at the MBSE office in Chaltlang, Aizawl. The announcement was made at the MBSE office in Chaltlang, Aizawl. Breaking down the results by stream, the Arts stream recorded a pass rate of 81.13%, closely followed by Science at an impressive 85.63%. The Commerce stream also demonstrated a commendable performance with a 74.42% pass rate. A significant number of students achieved high honors, with 701 students securing Distinction,

3,250 achieving First Division, 3,970 in the Second Division, and 1,896 in the Third Division. This year also saw a notable gender disparity in the number of candidates, with 1,015 more female students appearing for the examinations than their male counterparts. Adding to the impressive performance of female candidates, all stream toppers are girls: Arts: Lalrammawii Tochwawng from Mount Carmel School, Aizawl, emerged as the

Arts topper with an outstanding score of 471 out of 500. Science: Cynthia Lahlupuii Shangpliang of St. Paul’s Higher Secondary School, Aizawl, secured the top position in the Science stream with an impressive 477 out of 500 marks. Boys outperformed girls in the Mizoram Class 10 board examinations for the fifth consecutive year since 2022, according to results released on Thursday.

The examination results announced by the Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE) on Thursday showed that 80.31 per cent of the total 18,257 students who appeared for the High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination cleared the exam. This marked a significant improvement over last year’s overall pass rate of 76.68 per cent. Of the 8,448 boys who appeared for the exam, 81.16 per cent passed. In comparison, girls recorded a pass rate of 79.59 per cent out of 9,809 candidates.

In Brief

Supreme Court Issues Notice in Custodial Torture Case Appeal

Jorhat: The Supreme Court of India has issued a notice to the Assam government and former Jorhat Superintendent of Police Mohan Lal Meena in connection with an appeal challenging the Gauhati High Court’s refusal to order a CBI probe into an alleged custodial torture case from 2023. The appeal was filed by Rimly Gogoi, who alleged that her brother, Dipankar Gogoi, was detained by personnel of Titabar police station on December 22, 2023, in connection with a bomb blast that took place on December 14 at Lichubari in Jorhat. He was released during the night of December 22–23. In her petition, she claimed that Dipankar was picked up without any valid reason.

Renovated Lunglei War Memorial inaugurated

Lunglei: The newly renovated War Memorial located at the heart of Lunglei town was inaugurated by General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 3 Corps, Lt Gen. Abhijit S. Pendharkar through video conferencing. Representing the GOC at the site, Commander of 23 Sector Assam Rifles, Brig. Puspendar Sorayan, formally unveiled the memorial and laid a wreath in honour of the fallen soldiers. Wreaths were also laid by Lunglei Municipal Council Chairman Lalzuithanga, District Sainik Welfare & Resettlement Officer Maj. Rebecca L. Chhakhuak (Retd), leaders of the Mizoram Ex-Services League and family members of the martyrs. A two-minute silence was observed in remembrance of the brave soldiers, accompanied by ceremonial honours.

Bihu troupe meets with accident in Assam

Guwahati: A young Bihu dancer was killed, and 11 other members of a Bihu troupe were injured after the vehicle they were travelling in collided with a trailer truck in Assam’s Tamulpur on Friday night. Five of the injured are said to be in a critical condition. The deceased has been identified as 25-year-old Nishamoni Haloi, a resident of Niz Jhargaoon under Nakata in Tamulpur district. She died on the spot. The death of a promising artiste in the accident has cast a pall of gloom in the area. The group was en route to Tamulpur to perform at a Bihu competition when the accident occurred. The collision took place near Nowakhat village along the Tamulpur-Nagrijiuli connecting road.

Shutdown observed in Manipur’s Kangpokpi

Imphal: Normal life was disrupted in parts of Manipur’s Kangpokpi district on Saturday as a 10-hour shutdown was observed following the killing of two village volunteers in Mulam village. The shutdown was called by the Committee on Tribal Unity to honour the two deceased volunteers. The bandh was observed from 6 am to 4 pm amid rising tension in the region a day after the killings. During the shutdown, shops and business establishments remained closed across several areas of the district. Educational institutions and private offices also suspended operations in support of the protest. Vehicular movement, however, remained largely unaffected during the shutdown period. The bodies of the two village volunteers are scheduled to be buried later in the day at the Martyrs’ Cemetery in Phaijang.

Kuki body warns of “full-scale self-defence”

Ukhrul: The Kuki CSO Working Committee in Ukhrul has warned of “full-scale self-defence” following a series of violent incidents in Kuki-inhabited villages in Manipur’s Ukhrul district. The organisation described the attacks as a “clear declaration of war” and held both the state government and the Centre responsible for any further escalation. In a detailed statement issued on Friday, the committee alleged that coordinated attacks were carried out by Tangkhul militants in several villages, including Mulam, Shongphel, Mongkot Chepu, Shangkai and Zalenbung, on April 24.

East Khasi Hills bans illegal sand extraction, quarrying

Guwahati, Apr 25: The District Magistrate of East Khasi Hills has issued an order prohibiting illegal sand extraction from riverbeds and unauthorised mining on hill slopes across the district, with immediate effect.District Magistrate H.M.L. Kynta issued the directive on April 23 under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), citing growing environmental degradation caused by unchecked sand mining, particularly along the Wahnianglen river near Myllem. The move follows directions from the Principal Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in New Delhi, which has barred mining, quarrying and sand removal without valid licences, permits and environmental



clearances as mandated under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006.Officials said unregulated extraction has led to large-scale ecological damage, including loss of slope vegetation, contamination of water sources, decline in aquatic life and deterioration of water quality, making it unsafe for consumption. Residents

in nearby areas have already reported disruptions to their water supply.The order makes it clear that no individual, company or authority shall undertake mining, quarrying or sand removal in the district without obtaining the necessary approvals from competent authorities. Violations are likely to invite strict action under the law.

Assam: Amritpal Singh produced before Dibrugarh court via VC in jail gadgets case

Dibrugarh, Apr 25: A day after his re-arrest by Punjab Police following the expiry of his three-year National Security Act (NSA) detention, Amritpal Singh, chief of Waris Punjab De and Khadoor Sahib MP, was produced before a court in Dibrugarh on Friday via video-conference in connection with a case related to the recovery of unauthorised electronic devices from the NSA cell of Dibrugarh Central Jail in February 2024. Singh's counsel, Jasbir Kaur, said the proceedings were conducted through video-conference as permitted by the Punjab and Haryana High Court. She stated that all detainees, including those lodged in jails in Punjab, were produced via video-conference.The proceedings, conducted before First Class Judicial Magistrate Chandan Saikia, saw Singh appear from the Dibrugarh Police Station, where he is currently being held under tight



security. Nine of his associates, who were earlier lodged alongside him in Dibrugarh but later transferred to various jails in Punjab were also produced simultaneously via video-conference from Goin-dwal, Bhatinda and Patiala jails.

The case dates back to February 17, 2024, when the then Superintendent of Dibrugarh Central Jail, Nipen Das, recovered a spy-camera pen, a smartphone with a SIM card, a keypad phone, a TV remote with a keyboard, pen drives, Bluetooth

headphones, speakers and a smart-watch from the high-security NSA cell where Singh and his nine aides were lodged. An FIR was subsequently registered at Dibrugarh Police Station. Notably, Das, himself was arrested on March 8, 2024, in connection with the same case and charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the Assam Prisons Act and criminal conspiracy.Singh was re-arrested by a Punjab Police team on Thursday, hours after his NSA detention expired at midnight on April 22. He was taken into two-day police custody in connection with the Ajnala police station attack case of February 2023. The Punjab and Haryana High Court had last week permitted the Punjab government to arrest him after the expiry of his NSA term, while allowing proceedings to be conducted via video-conference.

Manipur State Museum to get Royal, Traditional Textiles galleries

Guwahati, Apr 25: The Ministry of Culture has approved the upgradation of the Manipur State Museum with the addition of two new galleries — a Royal Gallery and a Traditional Textiles Gallery, in a move aimed at strengthening the state's cultural infrastructure. The museum currently houses eight indoor and outdoor galleries, including sections on archaeology, art, ethnology and musical instruments, as well as the Hiyang Hiren (royal boat). Established in 1969 and inaugurated by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, it remains a key repository of Manipur's history and cultural traditions.Located in the heart of Imphal, the museum holds a diverse collection of artefacts reflecting the state's heritage and the cultural practices of its various communities. Officials said the proposed galleries would showcase rare objects linked to royal families and ethnic groups, incorporating modern display technologies such as 3D visualisation and enhanced lighting. The upgraded facility is expected to emerge as a major centre for cultural education and public engagement.Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Friday chaired a high-level meeting at the Secretariat to review the proposed expansion and modernisation of the museum. In a social media post, he said the long-pending upgradation would be taken forward with measures to bring the institution in line with contemporary standards while preserving the state's cultural heritage. A presentation was made by former Union Culture



Secretary Raghvendra Singh in the presence of Arts and Culture Minister Kh. Loken Singh, Chief Secretary Puneet Kumar Goel and Additional Chief Secretary Anurag Bajpai. The Chief Minister said the recommendations would guide the government's efforts to strengthen museum development in the state.Officials noted that the museum has faced challenges in recent years, including reduced public footfall amid ongoing ethnic tensions. The proposed upgrade is expected to revitalise the institution, attract visitors from across the country and contribute to the local economy, while also promoting cultural exchange.

Politics of threat: Congress backs Khera as HC denies protection from arrest Justice will prevail over

Guwahati, Apr 25: The Congress on Saturday expressed solidarity with its leader Pawan Khera and said it will challenge the Gauhati High Court order rejecting his anticipatory bail plea in the Supreme Court. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the party stood firmly with Khera and expressed confidence that "justice will prevail over the politics of threat and intimidation."“The entire Indian National Congress stands solidly in solidarity with Pawan Khera, the Chairman of its Media and Publicity Department. The verdict of the Guwahati High Court is in the process of being challenged in the Supreme Court,” Ramesh said in a post on “We are confident that justice will prevail over the politics of threat, intimidation, and harassment,” he added.The Gauhati High Court on Friday rejected Khera's anticipatory bail petition in a case linked to his allega-

tions that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife possessed multiple passports and undisclosed foreign properties.The single-judge bench of Justice Parthiv Jyoti Saikia rejected the plea filed on Monday after Khera was directed by the Supreme Court to first approach the Gauhati High Court. Following the press conference where the allegations were made, Sarma's wife Riniki Bhuyan Sharma filed criminal cases against Khera at the Guwahati Crime Branch Police Station under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)The court observed that the matter cannot be treated as “defamation simpliciter”, noting that it involved additional allegations beyond simple defamation. Khera had earlier approached the Telangana High Court, being a resident of Hyderabad, which granted him seven-day transit anticipatory bail. However, the Assam Police moved the Supreme



Court, which stayed the order and directed him to approach the Gauhati High Court.It also said there were materials for a prima facie case under Section 339 of the BNS, which deals with possession of forged documents or electronic records, and observed that Khera had been avoiding police investigation.The court further said custodial interrogation was necessary to determine his associates, who collected the documents, and how they were obtained.

250 Indian Jews from NE region reach Israel; 1,200 more to reach by 2026 end

Guwahati, Apr 25: Some 250 Jews from north-east India have landed in Israel as part of an initiative announced by the government here last year to bring all remaining members of the community to the Jewish state.It is the first batch of Bnei Menashe to arrive in Israel, on Thursday, since the announcement in November last year to fund the immigration of thousands more community members waiting to immigrate to Israel over the next five years. The Bnei Menashe community, which lives in parts of Manipur and Mizoram, claims descent from the biblical tribe of Manasseh, and has been slowly making its way to Israel since the 1990s.About 4,000 community members have reportedly immigrated to Israel over the past three decades with approximately 6,000 more waiting.On Thursday evening, as the men among the newcomers walked down a red carpet wearing traditional hand knitted kippa (skull cap) and the women had their customary head coverings, the community members already living in Israel welcomed them with loud cheering at the airport.The Israel government plans to fly 1,200 more people from the community over the course of 2026 as part of the “Operation Wings of Dawn.”Two additional flights are scheduled in the next two weeks, according to the Aliyah and Integration Ministry, which provides assistance to immigrants and returning res-



idents, establishes policies and procedures, allocates budget aid to immigrants and provides specialized services in housing, employment and culture.The whole relocation plan is estimated to require a budget of 90 million shekels (USD 30 million) to cover the costs of the flights of these immigrants, their conversion classes, housing, Hebrew lessons, and other special benefits, the ministry said. The process is being managed by The Jewish Agency in coordination with the Chief Rabbinate, the Conversion Authority, the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, the Population and Immigration Authority, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and additional Israeli government ministries. There have been intense

debates around the Jewishness of Bnei Menashe in the past, but in 2005, the then Chief Rabbi of the Sephardi community, Rabbi Shlomo Amar, recognised them as “descendants of Israel,” paving the way for their immigration.The community claims it belongs to the Menashe tribe, one of the 10 tribes pushed into exile by the Assyrians some 2,700 years ago. The oral history of the Bnei Menashe tells of a centuries-long exodus through Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet and China, all the while adhering to certain Jewish religious practices, such as circumcision. Missionaries in India converted them to Christianity, and they will have to undergo a conversion process to become Israeli citizens, as per the Jewish agency.

Atanu Nath, an Assamese physicist, receives the “Oscars of Science

Guwahati, Apr 25: An assistant professor from Assam, Atanu Nath, is among the winners of the ‘Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics 2026’, often referred to as the ‘Oscars of Science’. Nath shared the award with 376 scientists, including 11 from India, as part of an international collaboration recognised for their work on the Muon g-2 experiments conducted at CERN, Brookhaven National Laboratory, and Fermilab.An assistant professor of physics at Tihu College in Nalbari district, Nath expressed delight at the achievement and exhorted youth to pursue research as a career rather than focusing on traditional jobs only. Talking to reporters, Nath said it was a proud moment to be among the winners of one of the most prestigious awards in science.He said while most students in Assam want to become doctors or engi-

neers, more should pursue their potential for becoming scientists and researchers, as it also has a lucrative future, and they can contribute meaningfully to society.“Perseverance will bring success one day, and students must be willing to work for it,” the assistant professor added. Nath, hailing from Hailakandi district, had completed his graduation at Gurucharan College (now University) in Silchar. He received his postgraduate degree from SN Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences in Kolkata and conducted advanced studies at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai.In 2013, he joined the University of Naples Federico II in Italy for doctoral research.He received his PhD in 2016 and then worked as a guest researcher in the Muon-2 laboratory and as a guest professor at US-based Fermilab.After returning



from the United States in 2020, he joined IIT-Guwahati as a postdoctoral researcher and started working in his current position in 2022. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, congratulating Nath, said his achievement is an inspiration for young minds.“From Hailakandi to the global stage. Congratulations

to Dr. Atanu Nath on being awarded the 2026 Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics, often called the ‘Oscars of Science’,” Sarma said in a post on X. “His achievement is a matter of pride for the entire Northeast and an inspiration for young minds,” he added.

A minister from M'laya claims that the VPP is taking advantage of teachers

Shillong, Apr 25: Meghalaya Education Minister Lakhmen Rymbui on Friday accused the opposition Voice of the People Party (VPP) of exploiting the teachers' cause for political mileage. Rymbui was reacting to VPP President Ardent Miller Basaiawmoit's demands that the government stop harassing teachers and withdraw anti-teacher policies.The opposition VPP had also demanded that the government cease requiring long-serving teachers to clear the Meghalaya Teacher Eligibility Test (MTET) at the twilight of their careers. Rymbui said Basaiawmoit is not just misleading; it is a deliberate distortion of facts aimed at provoking fear among teachers for political mileage.“This kind of opportunistic narrative, especially on an issue as sensitive as teachers' careers, is irresponsible and deeply unfair to the very community they claim to defend,” he stated.The minister said that Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) is “not state imposed,” but arises from

Central law under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and upheld by the Supreme Court in September 2025. The court has ruled that all in-service teachers (Classes 1-8) with more than five years of remaining service must clear TET within two years (by 31 August 2027.) Rymbui said, only teachers with less than five years of service are not required to clear TET for continuation, though it remains relevant for promotions.“So, who is misleading teachers here? Is the Government bound by a Supreme Court directive, or is the opposition conveniently ignoring it?” the Minister asked.“What the VPP is doing is nothing short of political theatre. They have developed a pattern of misrepresentation and half-truths, hoping to create unrest where none is warranted. But this strategy will not work,” Rymbui stated.On the other hand, the minister said that the Conrad Sangma-led government has supported the teachers by fil-

ing a review petition before the Supreme Court, challenging the retrospective implications of the judgement.The state's largest teachers' body, the Meghalaya Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan Schools Association has also approached the court with its own review petition.“The state government has taken several steps by conducting at least three MTET examinations before the Supreme Court deadline, published a dedicated MTET guidebook to support preparation,” the minister informed.He also informed that the Chief Minister is personally engaging with the Union Minister of Education to seek a fair and practical resolution.“The government is working through lawful, constructive channels to protect teachers. The opposition is working through distortion, exaggeration, and theatrics. Teachers deserve honesty, not alarmism. They deserve solutions, not slogans. And they certainly deserve better than being used as a tool for political propaganda,” Rymbui said.

Mizoram Seeks Winter Capital Status With Major October Tourism Conclave



Aizawl, Apr 25: Mizoram is preparing to position itself as India’s “winter capital” for tourism, with plans advancing for a major Tourism Conclave scheduled in October. The initiative was emphasized during a meeting in New Delhi between Tourism Minister Lalnghinglova Hmar and NITI Aayog officials at Mizoram House, where strategies were discussed to ensure the conclave’s success and maximize its benefits for the state. The NITI Aayog delegation, led by Deputy Director General Swapnalee Bhattacharya, joined Mizoram officials in deliberating on modalities for collaboration, allocation of responsibilities, and identification of key participants. A pre-conclave meeting has been slated for May at Vigyan Bhawan, bringing together stakeholders from India’s tourism industry for brainstorming

sessions on Mizoram’s potential. Minister Hmar Emphasized the sharp rise in tourist arrivals following the introduction of rail connectivity to Sairang, noting that visitor numbers have crossed an average of one lakh per month. He attributed the surge to improved accessibility and emphasized the government’s efforts to expand attractions and activities to encourage longer stays.

The Tourism Conclave initiative traces back to a meeting held on November 10 last year at NITI Bhawan between NITI Aayog member Dr. V. K. Paul and Hmar, where the idea of organizing a large-scale tourism event in Mizoram was first proposed. Officials said ideas generated during the pre-conclave discussions would be refined and implemented during the October conclave, which aims to attract diverse stakeholders and generate actionable strategies for tourism-led growth. The meeting was also attended by Alexander V. Chongthu, Additional Resident Commissioner at Mizoram House, and H. Lalramenga, Private Secretary to the minister. From NITI Aayog, participants included Dr. Priscilla C. Ngaihte, Public Policy Specialist, Aashna Sharma, and other officials.

DNSU to file FIR against businessman over alleged forgery of indigenous certificate in Nagaland

Dimapur, Apr 25: The Dimapur Naga Students’ Union (DNSU) has announced that it will file a First Information Report (FIR) against a businessman identified as Nirmal Jain for allegedly forging documents to obtain a Non-Naga Indigenous Inhabitant Certificate and using it to acquire land in Nagaland. The announcement was made on Friday during a press conference held at the union’s office following an emergency assembly session convened by the student body. Addressing reporters, DNSU president Hinoto P. Aomi said the matter involved serious allegations of document forgery and illegal land transactions carried out after obtaining the certificate. He stated that the issue should be treated as a criminal matter and said the union had unanimously decided to lodge an FIR at the earliest. According to Aomi, once the FIR is filed, the union expects the concerned investigating agencies to carry out a detailed probe into the matter and determine the extent of the alleged fraud. He also expressed concern that the case may not be an isolated incident. Aomi said the union believes there could be other similar cases involving fraudulent acquisition of indigenous

certificates and land rights. He warned that if more such cases are discovered and found to be genuine, the union would continue to pursue them legally. “No one is above the law, irrespective of how powerful one is,” he said during the press conference. Referring to the inquiry process linked to the case, the DNSU president alleged that Jain had attempted to shift responsibility onto the state government and district administration during hearings conducted as part of the investigation process. However, he maintained that the businessman had allegedly misled the competent authority and used forged documents to obtain the certificate. Aomi further said that the protection of indigenous rights should not be seen as the responsibility of only one organisation. He called upon all Naga communities and civil society groups to remain alert and united against activities that could threaten indigenous identity and land rights in the state. The issue has once again brought attention to long-standing concerns in Nagaland over land ownership, indigenous identity and the alleged misuse of official certificates for personal gain. During the press conference, Aomi

■ *DNSU president Hinoto P. Aomi announced the decision during a press conference after an emergency assembly, labeling the allegations as serious.*

also spoke about cases involving Naga women who marry non-Naga individuals and later apply for Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Indigenous certificates. He said the administration was reviewing such cases and cancelling certificates wherever necessary after verification. He additionally called for the repeal of laws that permit leasing of land to non-Nagas, arguing that such provisions could weaken the protection of indigenous land rights in the state. When asked about the accountability of officials who may have been involved in issuing the certificate, Aomi said the union was still examining the matter and would take further steps based on its findings. Meanwhile, DNSU general secretary Michael Kath thanked the union’s constituent units, senior members and members of the public for supporting the organisation during the issue. He also appreciated the district administration led by the Deputy Commissioner for dealing with the matter seriously.

Renovated Lunglei War Memorial inaugurated



Lunglei, Apr 25: The newly renovated War Memorial located at the heart of Lunglei town was inaugurated by General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 3 Corps, Lt Gen. Abhijit S. Pendharkar through video conferencing. Representing the GOC at the site, Commander of 23 Sector Assam Rifles, Brig. Puspendar Sorayan, formally unveiled the memorial and laid a wreath in honour of the fallen soldiers. Wreaths were also laid by Lunglei Municipal Council Chairman Lalzuithanga, District Sainik Welfare & Resettlement Officer Maj. Rebecca L. Chhakchhuak (Retd), leaders of the Mizoram Ex-Services League and family members of the martyrs. A two-minute silence was observed in remembrance of the brave soldiers, accompanied by ceremonial honours. In his address, Lt Gen. Pendharkar highlighted that the War Memorial stands as a tribute to the courage and sacrifice of soldiers who laid down their lives for the nation. He expressed appreciation for the renovation efforts and urged that the legacy of the martyrs be remembered not only in monuments but in the hearts of the people, inspiring unity, peace and selfless service. Brig. Sorayan emphasised the invaluable contributions of soldiers and reiterated Assam Rifles’ continued commitment to the welfare and development of Mizoram, including support in security, healthcare, education and anti-drug initiatives. LMC Vice Chairman K. Lalrinawma acknowledged the importance of the memorial for the people of Lunglei and appreciated the efforts made in its renovation. Maj. Rebecca L. Chhakchhuak noted that the memorial, originally established on land allotted by the Government of Mizoram in 1977, now consolidates the names of 108 martyrs, including 103 from World War II and five from post-Independence operations. Located at Chanmari in central Lunglei, the War Memorial serves as a lasting symbol of honour and remembrance for the fallen heroes.

Bihu troupe meets with accident in Assam; one dies, 11 hurt

Guwahati, Apr 25: A young Bihu dancer was killed, and 11 other members of a Bihu troupe were injured after the vehicle they were travelling in collided with a trailer truck in Assam’s Tamulpur on Friday night. Five of the injured are said to be in a critical condition.

The deceased has been identified as 25-year-old Nishamoni Haloi, a resident of Niz Jhargaon under Naokata in Tamulpur district. She died on the spot.

The death of a promising artiste in the accident has cast a pall of gloom in the area.

The group was en route to Tamulpur to perform at a Bihu competition when the accident occurred.

The collision took place near Nowakhat village along the Tamulpur-Nagrijuli connecting road.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has expressed grief over the incident and deepest condolences to the families of the victims.

Kuki body warns of “full-scale self-defence” after violence in Manipur’s Ukhrul

Ukhrul, Apr 25: The Kuki CSO Working Committee in Ukhrul has warned of “full-scale self-defence” following a series of violent incidents in Kuki-inhabited villages in Manipur’s Ukhrul district. The organisation described the attacks as a “clear declaration of war” and held both the state government and the Centre responsible for any further escalation. In a detailed statement issued on Friday, the committee alleged that coordinated attacks were carried out by Tangkhul militants in several villages, including Mulam, Shongphel, Mongkot Chepu, Shangkhai and Zalenbung, on April 24. According to the committee, the violence began in the early hours of the day when armed attackers launched what it called a multi-directional offensive from Sirarikhong and Sinakeithel areas. The committee claimed that an ambush was set up along the IVR route

between Mulam and Shongphel. Two Kuki village volunteers — Paominlin Haolai, 22, and Letlal Sithou, 41 — were killed while allegedly trying to help residents during the attack. At least nine people were injured in the violence. The injured were identified as L Vahneihling Mate, Letjakai Kipgen, Ngamgousem Baite, Nemeichong Baite, Lhingkhoneng Haokip, Chinneikim Baite, Baby Chinnunkim Baite, Lalkhoahao Vaiphei and Seilenmang Simte. The committee also alleged that 16 houses in Mulam village were completely destroyed in arson attacks. The affected households belonged to Paokholun Haokip, Letkothang Haokip, Seitimnang Baite, Thangjangam Haokip, Thangthong Haokip, Jangmang Haokip, Nemkhohoi Chongloi, Janglalkai Khongsai, Thangmang Haokip, Thangminlun Touthang, Mangkhogin Haokip, Manglun Haokip,

Lalcha Mate, Simon Haokip, Thangminlun Haokip and Thangminshon. The statement said the intervention of the 4th Mahar Regiment helped prevent further damage. Security personnel, along with teams from the Border Security Force, carried out rescue operations and evacuated injured residents, including a minor girl and an elderly person. The committee further claimed that a police spot inquiry found ammunition at the site linked to looted state armoury weapons allegedly connected to Arambai Tenggol. It also alleged the involvement of Tangkhul militants associated with NSCN (EF) and accused them of attempting to displace Kuki communities from Ukhrul district. According to the committee, another attack took place in Mongkot Chepu between 10 am and 2 pm on April 24. Fresh gunfire was also reported

around 4:50 pm, leading village volunteers to take what the committee described as defensive action. In another incident around 5:45 pm, heavy firing was reported in Shangkhai and Zalenbung villages from the Thawai Tangkhul side. The committee alleged that cadres linked to NSCN-IM and NSCN (EF) were involved despite the presence of security forces in the area. Describing the incidents as a “co-ordinated campaign of aggression,” the committee claimed that the violence against Kuki civilians was being underreported. It also alleged that injured Tangkhul attackers were being airlifted for treatment. The committee rejected reports claiming that Sinakeithel had been attacked by Kuki groups. It called such reports “false narratives” aimed at diverting attention from the attacks on Kuki villages.

Nagaland signs agreement to strengthen maternal and child services in Eastern districts

Kohima, Apr 25: A major initiative aimed at improving maternal and child health, nutrition and early childhood development services in eastern parts of Nagaland has been launched through a joint agreement signed between government departments, district authorities and a non-governmental organisation. According to an official report issued by the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), a Letter of Agreement (LoA) was signed on April 24 at the commissioner’s office in Kohima to strengthen service delivery at the grass-roots level in selected districts of the state. The agreement brought together the Department of School Education (DoSE), the Health and Family Welfare Department, Eleutheros Christian Society and district administrations under a common framework aimed at improving coordination among departments working in health, education and nutrition sectors. Officials said the initiative has been designed to ensure that mothers and

children in identified districts receive better access to integrated services related to healthcare, nutrition and early childhood education. During the initial phase, the programme will cover 60 villages spread across six eastern districts of the state — Mon district, Longleng district, Tuensang district, Shamator district, Kiphire district and Noklak district. These districts were selected because of concerns related to high levels of malnutrition and challenges linked to maternal and child health. Officials involved in the programme said the initiative is expected to serve as a pilot model that could later be expanded to other districts across Nagaland if successful. Under the agreement, different departments and organisations have been assigned specific responsibilities to improve coordination and avoid gaps in service delivery. The Department of School Education will focus on strengthening early learning programmes, supporting

school-based health activities and improving infrastructure as well as teacher accountability in schools. Officials said education support during early childhood plays an important role in the overall development of children. The Health and Family Welfare Department will be responsible for ensuring that essential maternal and child healthcare services reach beneficiaries in the targeted villages. These services include immunisation, antenatal and postnatal care, medical support for mothers and children, and the availability of medicines and diagnostic services. Eleutheros Christian Society will work closely with communities to increase awareness and encourage participation in health and nutrition programmes. The organisation will also help in conducting awareness campaigns, supporting supplementary nutrition initiatives and organising training programmes for frontline workers involved in service delivery.

Arunachal government distributes dairy cattle to boost milk production in Longding

Itanagar, Apr 25: In an effort to strengthen milk production and support dairy farming in Longding district, the Department of Animal Husbandry, Veterinary and Dairy Development of the Government of Arunachal Pradesh has distributed cattle to local dairy cooperative societies in the district. Officials said the distribution programme was carried out on April 24 at Senua village, a village located close to Longding town. Under the initiative, a total of 20 cattle, including 19 pregnant cows and one breeding bull, were handed over to dairy cooperative societies operating in the village. According to officials from the department, the initiative has been launched with the aim of improving dairy output in the district and encouraging organised dairy farming among local residents. Authorities believe that the programme will help increase milk

availability in the area while also creating additional income opportunities for villagers involved in livestock rearing. Department officials said Senua village was selected for the programme after several rounds of field surveys and assessments were conducted in the area. During the surveys, officials found that many residents of the village already had experience in cattle rearing and livestock management. Because of this existing experience, the department felt that the villagers would be able to properly manage and utilise the cattle provided under the programme. The cattle distributed under the initiative were brought from Sahiwal district, an area known for dairy breeds that produce high quantities of milk. Officials said the selected cattle are expected to help improve milk production levels in Longding district over the coming months.

Shutdown observed in Manipur’s Kangpokpi after killing of two village volunteers



Imphal, Apr 25: Normal life was disrupted in parts of Manipur’s Kangpokpi district on Saturday as a 10-hour shutdown was observed following the killing of two village volunteers in Mulam village. The shutdown was called by the Committee on Tribal Unity to honour the two deceased volunteers. The bandh was observed from 6 am to 4 pm amid rising tension in the region a day after the killings. During the shutdown, shops and business establishments remained closed across several areas of the district. Educational institutions and private offices also suspended operations in support of the protest. Vehicular movement, however, remained largely unaffected during the shutdown period. The bodies of the two village volunteers are scheduled to be buried later in the day at the Martyrs’ Cemetery in Phaijang. The burial programme is set to begin at 12 noon and is expected to draw a large number of people. The killing of the two volunteers in Mulam has raised fresh concerns over the security situation and stability in the area. Authorities are closely monitoring the situation to prevent any further escalation.

First “Office-Based” Remote Robotic Surgery Performed in Eastern India

Guwahati, Apr 25: In a landmark achievement for medical science and technological innovation, Swagat Endolaparoscopic Surgical Research Institute, in collaboration with Swagat Superspecialty Surgical Hospital, has successfully conducted what is believed to be East India’s first “office telerobotic surgery,” marking a major breakthrough for eastern India. It is to be shared that Swagat Super Speciality Hospital was the first in Eastern India to do two remote tele surgeries on the 10th of Sept 2025 between Gurgaon to Guwahati covering a distance of 1950 kms where in two Robotic cholecystectomies were performed remotely from Gurgaon.

The present pioneering procedure was performed between the two Swagat facilities - Shantipur and Maligaon - over a distance of approximately 2 kilometres. In this novel workflow, the patient-side

SSI Mantra Surgical Robotic System was docked in the operation theatre at the Maligaon hospital, while the lead surgeon Prof. Subhash Khanna operated remotely from the Shantipur institute.

What distinguishes this surgery is the use of an advanced, indigenously developed remote surgeon console chair known as Mantrasan developed by SS Innovations.

Unlike conventional telesurgery setups that require full robotic consoles at both locations, this system enables the surgeon to perform the procedure entirely from a compact chair equipped with virtual reality visualisation, intuitive hand controls, and a stable high-bandwidth, low-latency internet connection. This specialized empowered chair is called Mantrasna and is developed by the SSI Innovation Gurgaon , India. This effectively transforms a standard office space into a fully functional robotic surgical workstation. The

surgeon views the operative field with his augmented reality Glasses and everything is seen in a high resolution through this glasses.

Remote surgery, or Telesurgery, was first demonstrated in the early 2000s. However, due to technological and connectivity limitations, its adoption remained limited for years. With recent advances in communication infrastructure, telesurgery has re-emerged as a transformative force in modern healthcare.

Building on earlier successful inter-hospital telesurgeries in India using the SSI Mantra platform, this “office-based” approach represents a further evolution - decoupling the surgeon’s physical location from the operating theatre. It opens up new possibilities for hub-and-spoke models of specialist care, improved surgeon ergonomics, and enhanced access to advanced minimally invasive procedures,

particularly in geographically challenging regions.

Eminent robotic surgeon Prof. Subhash Khanna remotely operated from a designated space within the Shantipur facility. Prof Swagata Khanna supervised the co-ordination of both the teams at both locations. The patient, located at the Maligaon hospital, was supported by an expert on-site surgical team comprising Dr. Pranab Kumar Das, Dr. Supriyo Choudhury, anaesthetist Dr. Kanineeka Das , and a team of trained robotic surgical nurses - Alvanisha, Bidya, Lipika, and Songita - under the coordination of Rina Pradhan.

The on-site team managed all patient-side responsibilities, including docking of the robotic system, trocar placement, and intraoperative assistance, ensuring seamless coordination between the remote surgeon and the operating theatre. A team of engineers from SSI, led by

Prashant kumar and including Sridhar, Indranil, Adam Frank Deepak, Ankan Roy, and several others on both ends, closely monitored system safety and connectivity. Their efforts were crucial in establishing reliable connectivity and achieving low latency.

Speaking after the successful procedure, Prof. Khanna noted that the initiative was not merely a demonstration of feasibility but a step toward democratizing advanced surgical care. “With innovations like the Mantrasan , a surgeon can potentially connect to a robotic system anywhere in the world and perform complex procedures, irrespective of distance - whether 2 kilometres or 2,000 kilometres,” he said. This milestone underscores the growing capabilities of indigenous robotic technologies and positions Guwahati as a pioneering hub for next-generation surgical innovation in India and beyond.

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*Editorial*

Every Drop Counts: The Long Fight to Make Clean Water a Reality for All

Water is life — yet for millions, clean drinking water remains a distant dream. Despite technological advances and decades of policy pledges, nearly two billion people worldwide still lack access to safe water at home. In India alone, thousands of villages depend on contaminated sources, seasonal rivers, or distant hand-pumps. Women and children, in particular, bear the crushing burden of fetching water daily, sacrificing education and livelihood in the process. Government schemes such as the Jal Jeevan Mission promise piped water to every rural household — an ambitious and necessary goal. Yet implementation lags far behind promise. Pipes are laid but left dry; infrastructure crumbles without maintenance; fluoride and arsenic silently poison aquifers. Intent alone cannot quench thirst. The solution demands more than pipes — it demands accountability. Local communities must be empowered to monitor water quality and infrastructure. Panchayats must be given funds and authority. Corporate polluters must face consequences for contaminating groundwater. Above all, governments must treat water not as a political gift but as a constitutional right. Safe drinking water for all is not idealism — it is achievable. What is missing is not resources but resolve. The measure of a just society lies not in its skyscrapers, but in whether every citizen can turn on a tap and drink without fear.

The silent exclusion built into Bangladesh’s ID system

When Haya (not real name) applied for an e-passport recently, the form allowed her to provide either her parents’ names or those of a legal guardian. She listed her guardian. But during biometric enrolment, officials demanded the names of her biological parents. Weeks turned into months, and she found herself trapped in bureaucratic limbo as her opportunity to study abroad was slipping away. Her story is far from unique. Across Bangladesh, obtaining a birth certificate, National Identity Card (NID) or passport, the trifecta of documents essential for daily life and travel, is often a puzzle where the pieces don’t fit. The Citizenship Act, 1951 provides that a person born in Bangladesh is a citizen of the country.

As a corollary, every citizen is entitled to obtain key identity documents: a passport under the Bangladesh Passport Rules, 1974, framed pursuant to the Bangladesh Passport Order, 1973; a birth certificate under the Birth and Death Registration Act, 2004; and, if eligible to vote, an NID under the National Identity Registration Act, 2010. While the law does not always require both parents’ names, administrative forms, government circulars and digital systems frequently insist on them. The result is frustration, delay, and exclusion for many citizens. The problem becomes clearer when each document is examined individually. For e-passports, adults can apply using a guardian’s name instead of parental details. In practice, however, applications are often halted

during biometric enrolment if the biological parents’ names are missing, as in Haya’s case. Applicants using guardians’ names must also obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the home ministry, an additional hurdle not imposed on those able to provide parental information. For NIDs, there is no option to include a guardian’s name in the application form, nor is there space for it on the card itself. As a result, some individuals who are not raised by their parents have had “jana nei” (not known) recorded in place of parental names.

Birth certificates present similar challenges. Application forms and the certificate don’t accommodate legal guardians’ names. Although the law allows limited flexibility when parental details are unavailable, in practice, this often leads to inconsistent and improvised entries. These documents don’t operate in isolation. To obtain an adult passport, personal information must typically match the NID; a child’s passport must align with the birth certificate, and NID applications generally rely on birth registration data. A single discrepancy, especially in parental information, can cascade across systems, blocking access to multiple services. For individuals without known parents, this creates overwhelming barriers. The impact is deeply unequal. Children raised by single mothers, individuals with other guardians than parents, orphans, abandoned children, and those born as a result of sexual violence are disproportionately affected. For them, this is more than an administrative



inconvenience. Without a birth certificate, children may be unable to enrol in school. Without an NID, adults face barriers to opening bank accounts, accessing employment, paying taxes, or voting. Without a passport, opportunities for travel and education abroad are effectively closed. In March 2024, rights organisations Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, and Naripokkho filed a writ petition challenging these barriers. They contended that recognition of citizenship should not depend on naming parents, and that mandatory parental disclosure violates fundamental rights guaranteed under the constitution, including equality before the law, equal protection of law, non-discrimination, the right to life (encompassing education, healthcare, and work), and freedom of movement. The petition also argued that such requirements

are inconsistent with Bangladesh’s obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which prohibits discrimination based on sex and marital status, and adversely affect children unable to identify their biological parents, contrary to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). On March 10, 2024, the High Court issued a rule nisi asking the government to explain why it should not amend relevant forms and circulars to allow the inclusion of a guardian’s name as an alternative to that of a father or mother. The court also questioned the continued use of derogatory terms such as “jana nei” and directed the government to report on steps taken to harmonise all three identity systems, while enabling correction of existing records. Yet, more than two years later, there has been no meaningful progress,

leaving applicants like Haya stuck in bureaucratic uncertainty. The principle is not new. In 2023, the High Court allowed students to use the name of a father, mother, or legal guardian on SSC and HSC examination forms. Extending this approach to identity documents is both logical and necessary. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of NID correction applications remain pending, many regarding errors in parental information. Delays stretch for months or even years, costing people jobs, educational opportunities, and access to essential services. While proposals by the interim government for a unified civil registration commission could streamline administration, without removing exclusionary requirements of biological parents’ details or placing extra hurdles for those naming legal guardians, such reforms will do little to resolve the problem. The solution is straightforward: shift from a lineage-based to a citizenship-based identity system. At the same time, processes and databases across agencies must be harmonised to ensure consistency and accessibility. Haya eventually obtained her passport after months of struggle. But her NID still does not recognise her legal guardian. Many others remain blocked by rigid administrative practices that go beyond what the law requires. Recognition of citizenship should not hinge on naming a parent. Until Bangladesh’s identity systems reflect that principle, some Bangladeshis will continue to ask whether they are truly equal before the law.

Even without social media, phones have a subtle, damaging effect on our mental health

When I first started teaching at Oxford in 2005, I would offer “office hours” a couple of times a week. They were literally that – time for students to come by my office and chat about anything on their mind. Emails were formal and for rare occasions, with the expectation that most issues would be discussed in person. Fast forward to 2026, and office hours have been replaced at many universities by constant email and Teams communication. These are incessant, with responses often expected within hours, if not minutes, blurring the line between evenings, weekends and normal working hours. I have to admit that every time a notification pops up on my phone or laptop, even before reading it, I can feel my stress levels rising. It’s made me reflect on how modern communication is pushing our minds to the limit. While most of the recent conversation on mental health and technology has focused on social media, we forget how even older forms of digital communication can push us into a stressful, “always on” way of being.

If we go back to our basic wiring, human brains and society did not evolve in a world of instant, virtual communication. For most of our history, communication occurred face to face within small, stable groups, typically no larger than 150 individuals. Prominent anthropologists say that this is

the number of meaningful social relationships we can maintain. Until quite recently, social interaction was in person, and with context – meaning facial expressions, vocal tone, eye contact and body language. We learn a lot not just from someone’s words but their non-verbal cues. Modern digital messaging has removed this added dimension. In its place, we rely on short, text-based interactions that are stripped of nuance and prone to misinterpretation. And studies show that it is generally more stressful than in-person interaction. For instance, a 2022 study in Boston looked at various forms of communication on levels of participant stress. They found that days with more frequent text messaging were linked to greater stress and more negative feelings, while days with in-person contact were linked to feeling more positive. A 2026 review of numerous studies on texting versus in-person interaction found the same: quite simply, our wellbeing is higher with in-person interaction versus screen-based communication. Which brings me to two blue ticks, which signal if a message has been read, a step even further than just pure texting used to be. As such, it’s brought a new source of stress and emotional burden for many people. From a neuroscience perspective, delayed or ignored messages can activate the same brain regions associated with



physical pain, particularly the anterior cingulate cortex and the anterior insula. This is known as social pain, and it reflects the way our brains respond to exclusion or rejection. When someone abruptly ends communication without explanation, often called “ghosting” or “to patch” someone, it can feel incredibly painful. For nearly all of human history, people lived in small, tight-knit groups where disap-

pearing from someone’s life wasn’t an option. You couldn’t simply vanish. Modern studies show that unexplained disconnection in romantic relationships activates our biological alarm systems, including raised stress levels, heart rate and blood pressure, that push us to do something to restore the bond or seek an explanation: “But why did they ghost me? What did I do?” Without a narrative, our

brain has no way to resolve what has happened. Even short periods of being left unread, or “on read” and receiving no reply, can lead to feelings of micro-rejection, because the brain is primed to detect tiny shifts in social availability, and it can be especially hard for those who already suffer from low self-esteem. We are wired for in-person conversation: not wait-

ing for a response that could come instantly if the other person chooses to engage ... but doesn’t. There is a parallel group: those who feel pressured to reply quickly, especially when they’ve been seen online or their message has been marked as read. The introduction of read receipts and the ability to see when someone is typing, or last online, has intensified the pressure to be constantly present. These features create an environment where you may feel as if you have to engage, even if you don’t want to, to avoid appearing rude or emotionally distant. This constant availability to others has consequences. The brain’s cognitive function system, which is responsible for decision-making, can easily become overloaded by the demands of digital interaction. Every notification represents a small decision: should I respond now, later or just forget about it? Multiply this by dozens of times a day and this constant multitasking leads to cognitive fatigue and emotional exhaustion. We have study after study on high rates of burnout, exhaustion and loneliness, not just in the UK but globally. We’re more in touch than ever, yet more lonely and stressed than ever before. Perhaps it’s because our nervous systems were designed for immediate, tangible threats, not for the constant pinging in our pocket – and the stress of being left unread.

My assisted dying bill has a democratic mandate – the Lords who blocked it today do not

Today has been a sorry day for democracy in this country. After more than 220 hours of debate in both Houses of Parliament, a small minority of unelected peers has defied not only the clear will of democratically elected MPs, but perhaps more importantly the wishes of a large majority of our constituents.

The terminally ill adults (end of life) bill has failed because it has run out of time and it will no longer be able to go through the required stages to pass it into law. Seven lords tabled more than half of the amendments of the 1,280 total and have used up the

allotted time to debate the bill. This morning, as on so many days over the past 18 months, I met with terminally ill people and their loved ones. We hugged and shared our deep and heartfelt sadness that the bill they believed would bring the choice of a better, more dignified death would run out of time. The courage they have shown in sharing their experiences of the injustice and cruelty of the current law has kept my colleagues and I going in the face of a relentless campaign of misinformation about the bill that I introduced into parliament. It was the most robust and

safest piece of assisted dying legislation in the world when it was sent to the Lords 10 months ago and it remains exactly that today. It actually didn’t suffer a single defeat in the upper house because opponents prevented it even getting to the stage where votes could be taken on their amendments. This suggests that they, like me, believe there is a majority in the Lords in favour of the bill and wanted to prevent it from reaching that stage. Today, no fewer than 200 peers wrote to MPs regretting that the bill had fallen, saying they hope the Commons will send it back to

them in the next session so they can finish the job they should have done this time. The best way for that to happen is for one of the many MPs who support the bill to bring it back to the Commons if they are successful in the private members’ bill ballot next month. Indeed, I have had conversations with MPs who voted against the bill last time, but who are so angry with what the Lords have done that they would welcome the opportunity to send it back and allow the Parliament Act – which is designed to guarantee that the elected chamber can have its way if the Lords



seek to defeat a bill twice in a row – to help ensure it

can’t be blocked again. This wouldn’t bypass the

Lords or prevent further scrutiny as some opponents

claim – that’s misinformation again. The Lords could amend the bill if they chose and send it back to the Commons. If MPs agreed, their amendments would be incorporated just as with any other piece of legislation. All they couldn’t do is filibuster for a second time and talk it out. That is what democracy looks like: put your case to a vote and if you lose, accept defeat with good grace. When I spoke to those brave terminally ill people this morning across the road from Westminster, I promised that our fight on their behalf is not over. We owe it to them to reintroduce the bill.

Sagility India to be debt-free Elara Capital sees a massive 26% upside potential

Mumbai: Elara Capital initiated coverage on Sagility India with a ‘Buy’ rating, with a target price of Rs 54, looking at an upside of 26% from the current market price. The brokerage said that industry tailwinds, scale-up potential of top accounts, and many other factors contributed to the rating of the stock.Sagility India: Favourable industry tailwinds for outsourcing

Rising Medical Loss Ratios (MLR) and persistent inflation in administrative costs are forcing US healthcare payers to optimise their cost structures. This creates a strong “outsourcing imperative” for core and non-core workflows like claims adjudication and member services to maintain profitability.Titan, Tata Steel to BEL: 6 Nifty heavyweights surged 35%–63% in 1 year, What’s driving the gains

Sagility India: Significant scale-up potential in top accounts Beyond



large payers, Sagility India is successfully targeting the under-penetrated mid-market segment, which saw 28.5% YoY growth as of December 2025. Additionally, the company is expanding its Provider Revenue Cycle Management (RCM) services, which are fueled by a structural shortage of clinical talent in the US.Sagility India: Financial deleveraging

Sagility India is expected to post a 20% earnings CAGR through FY26-

28. This growth is supported by strong free cash flow generation and the planned full repayment of debt by FY27, which will eliminate finance costs and drive a jump in FY28 earnings.The share price of Sagility India has risen 0.8% in the last five trading sessions. The stock has given a return of 16.3% in the past one month. However, the stock has declined 7.8% in the last six months and 1.9% over the previous 12 months. Sagility India

has strong connections with major clients, servicing seven of the top 10 US healthcare payers with an average tenure of 18 years for its top-five accounts. Elara expects the revenue from these top-five accounts to have the potential to double through further account mining and service expansion.“Sagility generated 60% of revenue from the top 3, 71% from the top 5, and 85% from the top 10 as of December 2025. With a view to gauging the potential scale-up in these accounts in the long-term, revenue from the top 3 accounts was \$465 million as of December 2025, with potential to be scaled up further by 40%,” said Elara Capital. The company has strengthened its market position, moving from a “major contender” in 2019 to a “leader” in Everest Group’s Payer Operations PEAK Matrix by 2023. This reflects its comprehensive, end-to-end capabilities across the payer value chain.

Google to Invest \$40 Billion in Anthropic



and Broadcom.The investment underscores intensifying competition among tech giants, with Google’s Gemini models competing directly against Anthropic’s offerings. Since its founding in 2021 by former OpenAI researchers, Anthropic has rapidly grown, with Claude models driving annualized revenue past \$30 billion. Google has steadily

increased its stake since its first \$300 million investment in 2023, now holding about 14% prior to this deal. The move mirrors Amazon’s recent commitment of up to \$25 billion in Anthropic, highlighting how major firms are committing tens of billions to secure leadership in advanced AI infrastructure and applications.

Stellantis India hits 50,000 vehicle milestone at TN manufacturing unit



Mumbai: Stellantis India on Friday announced the rollout of its 50,000th vehicle from its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Thiruvallur, marking a significant milestone in the company’s growth journey in India.

The achievement reflects the success of Stellantis’ Smart Car platform, developed in India for India and the rest of the world, with research and development teams in India leading the programme’s development and industrialisation. The platform is widely deployed in vehicle development across conti-

nents — Europe, South America, and Asia — underscoring India’s growing role as a centre of engineering excellence within Stellantis’ global ecosystem.Vehicles built on the Smart Car platform at the Thiruvallur plant cater to both the Indian market and select international regions, including Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa, reinforcing Tamil Nadu’s position as a competitive, export-ready automotive manufacturing hub. The milestone highlights the plant’s operational excellence, manufacturing agility, and increasing contribution to Stellantis’ global supply chain.

Can Amazon of Education gain 20% JP Morgan becomes “overweight” on this EdTech

Mumbai: JP Morgan has initiated coverage on Physicswallah with an ‘Overweight’ rating and set a target price of Rs 125, implying an upside of about 20%. The brokerage’s note dated April 20 builds its case around the company’s low-cost online test preparation model, a fast-growing digital education market and improving margins driven by scale. It expects revenue to rise to Rs 6,364.1 crore by FY28 from Rs 2,886.6 crore in FY25, while margins improve as the offline business moves towards breakeven. The firm values the company using a sum-of-parts approach and sees the online segment as the main driver of earnings and cash flow, with offline centres and schools adding incremental optional value. “Physicswallah is one of India’s leading EdTech players that has disrupted online test prep with a low cost model for content delivery,” JP Morgan says in its report.The brokerage notes that the company’s model benefits from scale economics, where a single instructor can cater to a large number of students, keeping costs under control. This, combined with a wide range of course offerings, helps the platform expand its reach without a proportionate increase in expenses.JP Morgan on PhysicsWallah: Online business anchors growth and margins

The brokerage expects the online segment to remain the primary earnings driver over the next few years. It projects growth of about 30% between FY26 and FY28 for the online business, supported by higher enrolments and increasing uptake of premium courses. Margins are also expected to improve as scale kicks in. JP Morgan estimates online margins rising to 33% by FY27 from around 30%, driven by operating leverage and better monetisation. “We primarily like PWL’s online business, which we expect



to grow at 30% over FY26-28 with margins rising from 30% to 33%,” the report adds.

The firm adds that the online segment provides strong cash flow visibility and remains central to its valuation framework. The broader online education market in India is also expanding rapidly, which supports long term demand.JP Morgan on PhysicsWallah: Offline centres add incremental upside

While online remains dominant, JP Morgan sees value in the company’s offline expansion, though it takes a measured view on its contribution. The brokerage expects offline centres to reach breakeven around FY27 as utilisation improves.The report points out that the pace of new centre additions is likely to slow, allowing existing centres to scale up and improve profitability. This should support over-

all margin expansion over the medium term

JP Morgan on PhysicsWallah: A low-cost model builds scaleJP Morgan’s initiation note places Physicswallah Ltd. among the few education platforms that have managed to grow rapidly while keeping pricing accessible across income groups. The brokerage says the company has built a large user base through affordable courses for competitive exams such as engineering and medical entrances, and this pricing approach continues to support enrolments. The report states that the company operates across online, offline and hybrid formats, allowing it to reach students across geographies and income levels. Online remains the core business, supported by a growing content library, structured courses and a large faculty network.

DMart jumps 26% in 1 month: Record store expansion & 500-store milestone drive rally

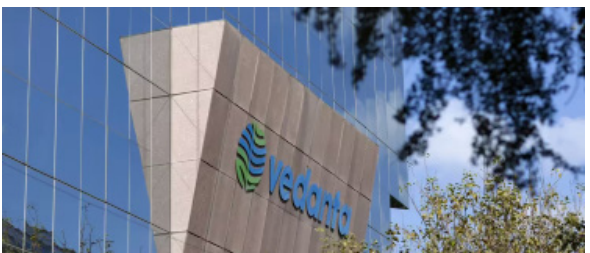
Mumbai: The share price of Avenue Supermarts, which owns and operates DMart, has been on an upward trajectory lately. In the last one month, Avenue Supermarts share price surged over 26%. This is particularly striking given the sharp correction seen after the shares hit an all-time high of Rs 4,949.50 on September 04, 2025. Soon after that, the stock had started to move downwards, declining over 24% between September 4, 2025, and March 23, 2026. Moving forward, high margins are what keep businesses like Avenue Supermarts profitable. Despite expanding robustly, the company’s operating margins remained steady at 8% over the past three years. DMart: Tracking growth trajectory between

FY23-FY25 From here on, the company’s former managing director and chief executive officer, Ignatius Navil Noronha, concluded his 20-year-long term on January 31, 2026. He was succeeded by former Unilever executive Anshul Asawa as CEO and MD for a three-year term. Also, Kalpana Unadkat became Chairperson, succeeding Chandrashekhar Bhawe.Apart from store expansion and change in leadership, the overall improving consumer demand, supported by stable macroeconomics, is expected to further support these initiatives and drive growth in high-margin general merchandise and apparel categories. Additionally, a reduction in the GST rate has spurred consumption and indirectly supported dis-

cretionary spending.Despite a challenging environment marked by pressure in GM&A sales and rising competition from other value retailers and Q-commerce players, the company has maintained its overall Gross and EBITDA margins at approximately 15% and 7-8%, respectively, over the past several quarters. “This reflects D-Mart’s strong execution capabilities, robust business model (EDLP), and operational efficiencies,” said Axis Securities.What had changed after March 2026? Well, the company reported its provisional business update for the fourth quarter of FY26. Based on that, domestic brokerage house JM Financial pointed out that DMart’s “store additions (is) a positive surprise.” Another brokerage firm,

Motilal Oswal Financial, said that Avenue Supermarts’ revenue growth trajectory improved to 19% YoY in Q4 FY26. The reason was one and only, acceleration in store additions (though most of it was back-ended) and likely recovery in SSSG (Same Store Sales Growth), as against 6% in the last few quarters. DMart added 58 stores quarter-on-quarter, compared to an expectation of 33, taking the total store count to 500. Notably, 34 stores were added in the last eight days of Q4 alone. The store openings also highlight that the management stood firm to their guidance. DMart, in its last analyst call, had highlighted accelerating store openings, which are finally starting to show up.

Adani backs lenders, Vedanta’s late bid



Mumbai: In the ongoing insolvency proceedings of Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL), Adani Group has come out in support of the Committee of Creditors (CoC), opposing any consideration of Vedanta’s revised bid submitted after the close of the process.

The CoC is a committee of lenders which has the last say in the insolvency process of a distressed company.

Before the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), senior advocate Ritin Rai, appearing for Adani, argued that the bidding process under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) was conducted in a “fair, transparent and structured manner”, with equal opportunity provided to all participants. He told the appellate tribunal bench headed by Chairperson Justice Ashok Bhushan that multiple rounds of bidding were held, with each round identifying the highest bidder, and that no modifications were permitted after the submission deadline in line with insolvency procedure rules.

He argued that Vedanta had participated in the bidding process with full knowledge of timelines and financial criteria, but is now crying foul, seeking to reopen the process by submitting a higher offer after its closure. This approach, he said, is impermissible under the IBC. He also argued that permitting a late-stage revision would undermine the integrity of the insolvency framework and disrupt the level playing field among bidders. The submission aligned with the CoC’s stand that the process had concluded in accordance with prescribed timelines and rules, leaving no scope for post-deadline alterations.

The CoC, which is responsible for evaluating and approving resolution plans under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), has maintained that Vedanta’s subsequent offer falls outside the bounds of the agreed bidding structure. It has emphasised that any deviation at this stage would compromise procedural certainty and fairness.

Motilal Oswal bets on T&D: Siemens Energy, CG Power among 4 stocks with up to 23% upside

Mumbai: The domestic brokerage house, Motilal Oswal has turned bullish on India’s transmission and power equipment space, highlighting it as one of the key sectors to watch. In its latest report, the brokerage has initiated coverage on select companies and reiterated its positive stance on others. Motilal Oswal believes that the transmission and distribution (T&D) segment is entering a multi-year growth phase. The brokerage sees select stocks offering upside potential of up to 23% from current levels. Motilal Oswal’s T&D picks: Target price and upside potential In the power generation segment, the brokerage has clearly identified its favourites. According to the brokerage report, “JSW Energy and NTPC are our top picks in power.”The brokerage believes both companies are well placed to benefit from rising power demand as well as policy support.Jefferies on Renewable Energy: Solar demand rising on policy pushThe report also highlighted strong growth in solar energy installations. Government schemes are playing a key role here.It noted, “The solar rooftop program (PM Suryaghar) has achieved ~9GW of installations in FY26, up



from 5GW in FY25.”Another scheme, PM Kusum, which focuses on solar-powered agriculture pumps, is also driving demand.Motilal Oswal has initiated coverage on CG Power The brokerage house has also initiated coverage on Atlanta Electricals with a ‘Buy’ rating and a target of Rs 1,650. In the solar manufacturing space, the brokerage prefers companies

with strong financial positions and order visibility.

This indicates a potential upside of around 20% from the current price.Another key pick is GE Vernova T&D India, where Motilal Oswal has assigned a ‘Buy’ rating with a target price of Rs 4,750. This translates to an upside of nearly 15% from the current levels.

How the ceasefire with Iran was Pakistan’s “biggest diplomatic win in years”



Europe: The leaders of Pakistan had all but given up. The US-Israeli confrontation with Iran appeared to be turning into Islamabad’s worst nightmare after more than two weeks of desperate talks, phone conversations, and diplomatic conferences to try to put an end to the conflict. Shehbaz Sharif, the prime minister of Pakistan, was depressed during a cabinet meeting on Tuesday at around 5 p.m. He advised his cabinet colleagues, “We should prepare ourselves for the impact of the war.” “The state of affairs has truly deteriorated. The likelihood of peace has diminished. There seemed to be less chance of a truce earlier that day. An Iranian gas factory was destroyed by Israeli raids, and an important Saudi petrochemical complex was hit by Iranian strikes, raising concerns that the Gulf nation would become more inclined to enter the conflict. Enraged by what they perceived as a “dangerous escalation,” In an unusually harsh public statement, Pakistan’s military leadership accused Tehran of “spoiling” peace attempts.Donald Trump’s rhetoric in Washington, meanwhile, had reached unprecedented heights of hysteria as he threatened that Iran’s “whole civilization will die tonight” if they did not comply with his demands for a ceasefire, with a deadline set for the end of the day. This included bombing power plants and bridges. For Pakistan’s government and its military, the country’s de facto rulers, helping to mediate an end to the war was not simply a matter of prestige; its economy, defence, national security and sectarian harmony depended on it. A freshly signed defence pact with Saudi Arabia meant that if Riyadh chose to enter the war, they would be dragged into it too. “We were in a very fragile situation and desperate for negotiations to begin,” said one Pakistani official.Behind the scenes, Asim Munir, the powerful army chief, and Asim Malik, the country’s head of army intelligence and national security adviser, carried on working the phones. Munir occupied a uniquely advantageous position as a peace broker, boasting both

a strong personal rapport with Trump and a longstanding relationship with Iran’s Revolutionary Guards. In a typically bullish press conference in the White House on Wednesday, the US secretary of defence, Pete Hegseth, would later claim Iran had “begged” for the ceasefire.Pakistani officials, however, have a different version of events. Both sides wanted an end to the fighting, they said, but the push for a ceasefire had come primarily from Trump, who was “trapped” in a war he had thought “might not go beyond three days”.Over several hours, calls went back and forth – primarily involving Munir and Malik, with Trump, his secretary of state, Marco Rubio, the vice-president, JD Vance, and the US special envoy Steve Witkoff on one side, and senior Iranian ministers including Iran’s parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, on the other. Sharif also made calls to the Iranian side and to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.Until Tuesday evening, Iran remained “reluctant” to commit to any ceasefire, according to accounts, having little trust that the Trump administration was not simply using talks as a guise for the US and Israel to regroup and then strike again. But this time, said officials, there was a new key player involved, one who wielded crucial influence with the Iranians: China, previously “reluctant” to get too entwined in a messy war that was visibly weakening Trump, was quietly taking a different tack as the toll of the war on its own economy grew.Just over a week earlier, Pakistan’s foreign minister, Ishaq Dar, had flown to Beijing to discuss ways to secure peace in the Middle East and to ask for a bigger commitment from China to help end the conflict. In a marked shift, Pakistani officials claimed China had been persuaded by “friendly countries” to make a pivotal leap into Tuesday’s negotiations. “Pakistan had to involve China to convince Iran to go for a ceasefire,” said one official.By 8pm, Sharif held a much more optimistic meeting with his cabinet. “A ray of hope has

emerged for negotiations and a ceasefire,” he said, adding that Munir was leading a breakthrough.According to accounts, China directly encouraged Iran to accept a ceasefire, promising to act as a guarantor of Iran’s safety in any talks. Among the assurances offered by China was that Iranian leaders would not be assassinated if they travelled for negotiations. “We were the mediator, not the guarantor,” said one Pakistani official. “The main role was played by China. They became a guarantor of the ceasefire and pledged that the US would standby the agreement and that talks would go smoothly in Islamabad. They told Iran to accept this deal.”Pakistani officials claimed the US was aware and comfortable with China’s intervention. Trump appeared to later confirm this account in an interview, where he said he believed China had persuaded Iran to negotiate.By 4am in Islamabad, the seemingly impossible had been secured. A – temporary, fragile – ceasefire deal was agreed by both the US and Iran. Michael Kugelman, south Asia fellow at the Atlantic council, described it as Pakistan’s “biggest diplomatic win in years”.On Wednesday, Sharif hailed the ceasefire as a “shining moment” in Pakistan’s history and a “first step” towards peace. He pledged that peace talks involving both the US and Iran would go ahead in Islamabad on Friday, with apparent preparations in place for them to be held at the city’s Serena hotel. An Iranian source confirmed that Tehran intended to send Ghalibaf and Araghchi as its negotiators.Pakistani officials have privately expressed fears that Israel and the United Arab Emirates could still try to “sabotage” the peace process, especially as Israel has said Lebanon is not part of the ceasefire deal and trade through the strait of Hormuz remains largely blocked. Kugelman said Pakistan had “defied many skeptics and naysayers that didn’t think it had the capacity to pull off such a complex, high-stakes feat”, adding: “What matters the most is it helped avert a potential catastrophe in Iran.”

Will the United States accept Iran’s 10-point ceasefire plan

Iran : Just one hour before Donald Trump’s deadline to destroy Iran was about to expire, the US and Iran agreed to a two-week ceasefire on Tuesday. Tehran also agreed to temporarily reopen the Strait of Hormuz.According to the White House, Israel also consented to the ceasefire. The US president claimed to have received a 10-point proposal from Iran that was a “workable basis on which to negotiate” as he declared he was postponing his intentions to intensify strikes throughout Iran. But will Trump agree to this Iranian plan? What is included in Iran’s 10-point plan?Iran will only accept the end of the conflict, according to state media, if all the specifics are finalized in accordance with a 10-point peace plan that was allegedly delivered to the White House through Pakistani middlemen.Iranian official media released a list of ten demands, some of which the US has already rejected. The strategy calls for:the removal of Iran’s primary and secondary sanctions.Persistent Iranian authority over the Hormuz Strait.US military pullout from the Middle East.an end to assaults on Iran and its allies.the release of Iranian assets that have been frozen.a resolution by the UN Security Council that makes any agreement legally binding. In the version released in Farsi, Iran also included the phrase “acceptance of enrichment” for its nuclear program. But for reasons that remain unclear, that phrase was missing in English versions shared by Iranian diplomats to journalists. What does the ceasefire plan mean for the strait of Hormuz?The Iranian foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, said safe passage through the strait would be allowed under Iranian military management. It wasn’t immediately clear whether that meant Iran would completely loosen its hold on the waterway.The plan allows Iran and Oman to charge a fee of up to \$2m a ship on vessels transiting through the strait, according to reports. Iran would then use the money it raises for reconstruction.If peace talks fail, Tehran may again seek to close the strait. Will the US agree to this 10-point plan and Iran’s proposals?Since negotiations began between the

Trump administration and Iran over the status of Tehran’s nuclear programme almost a year ago, their vastly different demands and the limits to what each side would concede have proved a barrier to any lasting agreement.Iran’s demand that it retains control over the strait of Hormuz has been highlighted as of particular concern, as it held no control over the strait before the conflict began.The Democratic senator Chris Murphy leapt on the comments from Iran, telling CNN “who knows if any of that is true, but if this agreement gives Iran the right to control the strait that is cataclysmic for the world”.Trump himself has not commented directly on Iran’s demands, but said the US would “be helping with the traffic buildup in the strait of Hormuz”. Experts and analysts have suggested that Iran’s maximalist demands are unlikely to be agreed to by the US, but will rather form the basis for talks. Is Israel part of the deal?Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said Israel supports the US decision to suspend strikes against Iran for two weeks, but that the ceasefire does not include Lebanon. Pakistan’s prime minister had previously said that the agreed ceasefire covered “everywhere including Lebanon.”Netanyahu’s office said Tehran must immediately open the strait and stop attacks against the US, Israel and countries in the region. Israel also said it supported US efforts to ensure Iran no longer posed a nuclear, missile or “terror” threat.The Israeli offensive in Lebanon has killed at least 1,500 people and displaced 1.2 million others. Lebanon was pulled into the war when Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel in solidarity with Tehran. What will happen next?Pakistan’s prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif, who helped mediate the ceasefire, said in a post on X that he had invited Iranian and US delegations to meet in Islamabad on Friday.Tehran has said it will participate in the talks. The White House said it is considering in-person talks with Iran but they have not been finalised. What happened in the hours leading up to Trump pausing his deadline

The United States withdrew from the Iranian precipice However, what comes next

Iran: Donald Trump presents himself as an unbeatable tough person who never gives up. However, he doesn’t always follow through on his threats. Think of his threats to raise tariffs on trading partners or his demand that Denmark give up Greenland. He has even managed to prolong his deadlines for Tehran to reopen the Hormuz Strait by asserting—without proof—that Iran was “begging” for an agreement. Trump went above and beyond on Monday. He threatened to “kill a whole civilization tonight” if Tehran did not reopen the strait by Tuesday at 8 p.m. ET. The United States was rocked by the president’s open threat to carry out genocide. “Trump has lost his mind,” according to several Democratic leaders. His removal from office was demanded by more than 70 Democratic members of Congress. Some politicians and media figures who supported Maga either followed suit or severely chastised him. Commentators reminded soldiers that they had to defy instructions that were blatantly unlawful. There has never been a spectacle like this in American presidential politics. Iranians were taken aback, even those who opposed the administration. Around bridges and power plants that Trump might target, thousands of people built defiant human chains. Trump, according to one military general, is “delusional,” and Iran will retaliate even more forcefully. The senior leadership of the nation said that direct diplomatic relations with the United States will cease. In public, Tehran declared that it would never compromise. Trump was left with two poor options. The first was to raze Iran. However, that would have exacerbated the domestic political frenzy—some Republican lawmakers may have even called for his removal—and set off a wave of international criticism, including from friends. The price of energy and other commodities (fertilizers, aluminum, helium, and petrochemicals) would have increased further as a result of Iran’s strikes on Persian Gulf oil and gas infrastructure, perhaps creating the conditions for a global recession. Additionally, the midterm elections are scheduled for November, and Trump’s poll numbers have already plummeted. He might lose power over legislation and Supreme Court confirmations if the



Democrats win, and probes into the Epstein scandal and accusations of official corruption would get more intense. Trump could have ordered the US navy to open the strait – which he has sometimes declared unimportant to an oil-rich United States – but keeping it open would have been far more difficult. That would have required a permanent military presence that went beyond warships alone. And the mission would have been hazardous and open-ended. Iran overlooks the strait. It has many mines, short-range missiles, and Ghadir- and Nahang-class mini submarines. Tehran would not have to fight US warships. It could instead choose to strike a tanker every now and then, causing red lights to flash, and limit traffic to ships from countries willing to pay the transit fee. For other vessels, sailing through the strait would be perilous. Moreover, the largest supertankers cost north of \$100m and insurers would balk.The other option was to back away. That would have prompted renewed cries of “Taco” – Trump always chickens out. Trump would also have been diminished in the eyes of world leaders, especially China’s president Xi Jinping, whom he is scheduled to meet in Beijing this month.The Taco taunts would subside, and diehard Maga devotees will forgive him for anything. But a GOP defeat in the midterms would have ended the overweening power he has wielded, thanks to a supine GOP-controlled Congress.As the deadline neared, Trump faced a decision between escalation or capitulation. He chose the latter but has tried to dignify his retreat by claiming that he granted Pakistan’s request for a two-week ceasefire, providing Iran opens the strait.Iran’s foreign minister tweeted that, thanks to Pakistan’s good offices, Trump had agreed to accept Tehran’s 10-point

plan, presented on Monday, as “a general framework” for negotiations and that the US had requested talks based on Trump’s 15-point plan, which dates back to May last year. (It came to naught after the US and Israel attacked Iran the following month, and another version sent in late March was also rejected.) Iran had steadfastly said no to a ceasefire. It insists on a permanent end to the war, reimbursement for war damages, a non-aggression pledge from Israel and the US, and an Israeli commitment to cease attacks on Tehran’s Lebanese ally, Hezbollah. It seeks the full lifting of primary and secondary economic sanctions and the right to levy a \$2m per ship fee, split with Oman, to finance postwar reconstruction. It demands that US troops depart the Middle East.Iran has now agreed to permit safe passage through the strait for two weeks but will likely keep collecting tolls. Major differences remain, however, between the US and Iranian plans, particularly on the extent of sanctions relief. Moreover, since the Geneva talks that Trump abandoned to launch the war, Iran has not offered any major concessions on nuclear enrichment – it insists on the right to enrichment for peaceful purposes – or agreed to slash its missile stocks, both key Israeli demands. Perhaps there will be a real ceasefire that lasts a fortnight. But if there’s no firm deal, then what? Iran still controls the strait, remains defiant, and retains the military muscle to spark a worldwide recession. Its demands remain unacceptable to Trump and vice versa.If there’s a ceasefire but no comprehensive deal, he and Benjamin Netanyahu could resume their war. But to what end?They can’t achieve “regime change” from the skies alone, and a ground war would be bloody and protracted. Though Iran cannot match

US military power, it has 1 million active, reserve, and paramilitary troops, who would be fighting on home ground. Its territory, more than half of it mountainous, exceeds that of Spain, France and Germany combined. Many Iranians – even those who dislike their rulers – might be hostile toward American ground troops, given that the United States and Israel have targeted, among other structures, bridges, 30 universities, and the famed Pasteur Institute, founded more than 100 years ago.A mega-deal remains the only path to averting a return to full-scale war. Under the 2015 Joint and Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which Trump was quick to ditch, Iran made substantial and verifiable concessions on uranium and plutonium enrichment and went much further during the Geneva talks that Trump’s war scuttled. Despite the scaremongering, Tehran was neither hell-bent on building nuclear weapons nor on the verge of acquiring them when Israel and the US attacked on 28 February. Getting Tehran to cut its ballistic missile stocks will be harder now – the US-Israeli attack has made them seem all the more essential – but full sanctions relief and a non-aggression commitment might still change the calculus. None of this, however, will be achievable unless Trump stops making maximalist demands and civilization-ending threats and also reins in Israel. Iran said on Wednesday that Israel must end its Lebanon war before the strait can be fully reopened. That same morning, airstrikes hit Iran’s Lavan Island refinery. (By whom remains unclear as of now.)Now there is an uneasy pause. The chasm between the two sides remains vast. Absent compromises and adept diplomacy the conflict will almost certainly reignite.

A 19-year-old in ICE detention on a typical day “I feel that this nightmare is not going to end”

Africa: The 19-year-old DRC asylum seeker has spent more than four months at the Dilley Immigration Processing Center in Texas.“Another day goes by, another night arrives,” she remarked. “And there are moments when I think this nightmare will never end.”She is among the approximately 5,600 immigrants who have been held at the expansive Texas facility since it reopened last year, with over half of them being youngsters. Lawmakers, pediatricians, and human rights activists have all urged the Trump administration to close the facility and cease locking up youngsters in recent months. Olivia was apprehended with her mother and two younger siblings in November. Then they were separated, reunited at Dilley and separated again after ICE agreed to release them, but not her. Since then, Olivia has grown increasingly listless as the days pass. Speaking to the Guardian over video call, she recounted her day-to-day life. She used to cry in her sleep during the initial weeks following her incarceration, but these days she has trouble falling asleep at all. “I can cry at night



when no one is watching and everyone is asleep,” she remarked. She sobs and paces till she is too tired to keep her eyes open. This usually occurs about three in the morning. The nightmares start shortly after. She occasionally reflects on her brother Manuel, who drowned at the age of eight while traveling with her family

from South America to the United States. In December 2022, she, her mother, and her younger siblings, Manuel, Estefania, and Joel, finished their arduous voyage to the United States after fleeing political persecution in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and making a stop in South America.

The Pentagon released its UFO videos – so I went to the US to chase aliens. This is what I found

I never gave much thought to aliens beyond Star Wars. I put extraterrestrials and their flying saucers in a box marked “nonsense” long ago, along with political manifestos, loyalty cards, Black Friday, fairies, pixies, elves, ghosts and ghouls. Then, in 2017, the New York Times published an article with the headline “Glowing Auras and ‘Black Money’: The Pentagon’s Mysterious UFO Program”. Apparently, the US government had been chasing UFOs for years. These weren’t the ramblings of the kind of straw-chewing rancher you would see in a sci-fi film; the story was told by a military intelligence officer called Luis Elizondo. He claimed he ran a secret Pentagon programme called the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP), which had found evidence that UFOs were flying around military bases, behaving in ways that defied the laws of physics. A couple of striking videos accompanied the New York Times piece and were subsequently released by the Pentagon. One appeared to show a dark, glowing object that looked remarkably like a flying saucer, while the voices of startled navy pilots played in the background. “There’s a whole fleet of them; look at the SA,” came the first voice on the video, referring to the multifunctional cockpit display. “My gosh!” a second voice replied. “They’re all going against the wind. The wind is 120 knots [138 miles an hour] out of the west,” chimed in a third voice. “Look at that thing, dude. Look at that thing . . . It’s rotating!” A few years later, the plot thickened. In June 2021, the Pentagon released a report confirming that it could not explain more than 140 incidents of flying objects reported by navy officers over the previous two decades. A month before, on The Late Late Show With James Corden, Barack Obama had confirmed that things were happening in the sky that could not be explained. (In February, he went further and told a podcast host that aliens were “real”.) In July 2023, a former US intelli-

gence officer, David Grusch, told a packed congressional hearing that secret government programmes were hoarding crashed spaceships and “non-human biologics”. I found myself withdrawing little green men from the nonsense box in my mind. Either an alien invasion was taking place under our noses or there were some very confused people in the upper echelons of US intelligence. Either way, there was a story to tell. So, much to the surprise of my close friends and family, in the autumn of 2023, I dropped everything and headed to the US to chase aliens. I don’t know what I was expecting, but I fantasised about having a Woodward and Bernstein moment on my trip. In a dusty diner in the American south-west, a source would hand me a brown envelope containing indisputable proof of the alien invasion. However, none of the major players in the disclosure movement – those who have been lobbying the government to declassify the UFO evidence – replied to my emails or calls. These include Elizondo and the Blink-182 frontman Tom DeLonge, who has an entertainment company devoted to uncovering alien life. The radio silence prompted me to dig a little deeper into the stories of whistleblowers such as Elizondo and Grusch. It didn’t take much excavating to realise that the alien invasion wasn’t all that it seemed. It was true that the Pentagon had a UFO programme, but it wasn’t called AATIP and, according to the Pentagon, Elizondo had nothing to do with it. The programme that was concerned with UFOs – or unexplained anomalous phenomena (UAPs) – was called the Advanced Aerospace Weapon System Applications Program (AAWSAP). The story of how AAWSAP came about is convoluted and absurd, but it all started because a spook saw a ghost on a ranch. The spook was James Lacatski, an intelligence officer who had visited the 200-hectare (500-acre) Skinwalker Ranch in Utah, a supposed hotspot for paranormal activity and UFO sightings. Lacatski had read Hunt for the



Skinwalker, an obscure book about the ranch published in 2005, which documented research funded by the ranch’s owner, the real-estate billionaire turned aerospace mogul Robert Bigelow, whose National Institute for Discovery Science looked into space exploration and the paranormal. The book is a bizarre tome, featuring flying orbs, mysterious cattle mutilations, monsters, portals to other realities and invisible objects emitting magnetic fields on the property. In June 2007, Lacatski wrote to Bigelow, requesting to visit the ranch to see “how my office can characterize the potential threat aspects of the phenomena encountered in your research efforts”. Shortly after arriving, Lacatski claimed to have had a strange encounter. He described seeing an “uneasily technological device” that took the form of “a complex semi-opaque, yellowish, tubular structure”. Apparently, it looked a bit like the image on the cover of Mike Oldfield’s album Tubular Bells. This alleged encounter led to the creation of AAWSAP in 2007. In 2008, Bigelow’s company was the only bidder for a \$22m government contract to research the technical aspects of the

putative advanced aerospace weapon systems of the programme’s title. It did not mention that it wanted intel on monsters, apparitions, orbs, portals, werewolves or dinosaurs, but that is exactly where the taxpayers’ money went. Elizondo disputes the Pentagon’s statement that he never led AATIP. In 2021, he filed an official complaint, accusing his former employer of campaigning to discredit him. That year, a book co-authored by Lacatski cataloguing AAWSAP’s research claimed that AATIP was “an unclassified nickname” used for a “completely separate, small” initiative to study UFOs encountered by people in the military. What is clear is that the full story of Elizondo’s background was not apparent in the initial reports around his whistleblowing. In his 2024 memoir, Imminent, he wrote about possessing psychic powers. He also claimed he had met “remote viewers” – people who believe they can see things that their eyes can’t, sometimes thousands of miles away. Elizondo claimed he managed on one occasion to pay a psychic visit to a jailed terrorist. If these details had been publicly available when he blew the whistle on the

Pentagon, his story may not have taken off in the same way. Elizondo did not respond to my many requests to interview him, but I seized an opportunity to meet him in Washington DC in May 2025, at a UFO hearing he was chairing. The meeting was organised by the UAP Disclosure Fund, “a nonpartisan nonprofit supporting UAP legislation, protecting whistleblowers, and raising public awareness for greater transparency”. We spoke briefly before his opening speech and he promised me time later. I then took my seat and watched him put forward the views he has been sharing for close to a decade: that UFOs are thumbing their noses at physics while posing threats to national security. At one point during the three-hour-long event, Elizondo held up a photo of what appeared to be a large, white floating disc casting a shadow on what looked like agricultural land. Elizondo described the object as “lenticular” and “anywhere between 600 and 1,000ft in diameter”. Elizondo claimed he received the image from a civilian pilot. However, internet sleuths were quick to point out that Elizondo’s lenticular object was almost certainly two irri-

gation circles, one white and the other black, creating the illusion of a flying disc. Seven months earlier, at an event in Philadelphia, he had presented a slide purporting to show a giant light emerging from clouds in Romania. He said it looked like “the mothership from Close Encounters of the Third Kind”. The image, which ended up online, was believed by many other observers to show a window reflecting a ceiling light. Indeed, if you look closely, you can see the outline of what appears to be a head of hair, presumably that of the photographer. Then there were those videos recorded by the US navy. Mick West, a UFO video analyst, deduced that the object of the video that made an officer go: “Oh gosh,” was likely glare from a nearby heat source – probably a jet plane’s exhaust. And yet, beyond publications such as Popular Mechanics and niche YouTube shows such as The Basement Office, these updates have been missing from the media’s coverage of UFOs in the US. Elizondo, Grusch and other ufology “whistleblowers” and “experts” appear regularly as talking heads on rolling news channels. Just this month, the talkshow host

Bill Maher remarked on his HBO show: “If you don’t believe aliens are here, then maybe you’re the conspiracy theorist.” Elizondo and I did not meet after the Washington event. I emailed him and he said he would be happy to be interviewed once he had returned home from a tour, but I never heard from him again. I spent several months travelling across the US trying to find evidence that aliens were among us. I interviewed people who alleged they had been abducted by aliens in places as different and distant as Florida and Arizona. I tried to connect with aliens through “starseeds”, people who believe they lived past lives as aliens on other planets. Through it all, I learned far more about human beings than I did about extraterrestrials. So, if there are no aliens, what is going on? Why has ufology had a resurgence? Perhaps it is because the past decade of political unreality has made it almost impossible to separate fact from fiction, or because popular culture has trained us to point to ET when unexplained phenomena appear in our skies. UFOs are spotted worldwide, but stories of alien visitors sit particularly prominently in American

minds. The US’s obsession with UFOs erupted in the late 60s, a period of great unrest and mistrust of power, from the “red scare” to the Cuban missile crisis, the assassination of John F Kennedy to Watergate. Hollywood reinforced these beliefs when it succeeded in turning extraterrestrials into an American myth on a par with the cowboy on the frontier. American exceptionalism is at the heart of this: if the US is the greatest slice of land in the known universe, then why would invading aliens go anywhere else? When I interviewed the Harvard physicist Avi Loeb, who achieved notoriety when he hypothesised that an asteroid passing through the solar system could have been an interstellar solar sail belonging to an extraterrestrial, I asked him if intelligent life begins and ends with us. “Oh, that would be very disappointing,” Loeb said, sipping from a glass of water. Humans, he said, “are not that intelligent. If that’s the best that the universe made, I would lose my respect for the size, the scale and the length of time that the universe existed.” The assumption here is that an extraterrestrial that succeeds in reaching Earth must possess an intelligence that far exceeds our own. The hope is that aliens aren’t cosmic colonists hell bent on winning their latest planetary trophy, but beings that travel to share wisdom. Of course, there isn’t a shred of evidence that aliens have visited our planet – and it’s highly unlikely that there ever will be. The distance between our solar system and others that could host a planet similar to Earth is vast. The nearest exoplanet to ours is Proxima b, 4.2 light years away. The fastest spaceship humans have engineered would take thousands of years to cover such a distance and would need, according to one calculation, a year’s worth of Earth’s total energy output. Ask yourself this, then: would you embark on a journey you would never finish for the remote possibility that your distant descendants might meet the men from Ork? Aliens would have to answer the same question.

Egyptian mummy has part of the ‘Iliad’ in its abdomen, archaeologists discover

Archaeologists in Egypt have discovered a Roman-era mummy with a copy of Homer’s epic poem the “Iliad” inside its abdomen — a unique find that archaeologists are calling “exceptional.” Written on papyrus in Greek, the text records part of Book 2 of the “Iliad,” which details the legendary Trojan War. The text found in the mummy lists the ships used against the city of Troy, according to a statement from the University of Barcelona. It would have been placed within the abdomen during the embalming ritual. The mummy, which dates to a time when the Romans controlled Egypt, was found at a tomb within a cemetery in the modern-day town of Al-Bahnasa in Egypt, which was known as Oxyrhynchus in ancient times. The Romans controlled Egypt starting in 30 B.C., after Cleopatra died by suicide, until A.D. 641, when the Rashidun Caliphate took control of Egypt. The site of Oxyrhynchus has been excavated off and on for well over a century. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, archaeologists found around 500,000 fragments of papyri at the site. The newly discovered “papyrus was placed on the abdomen to protect [the] deceased in the afterlife,” Esther Pons Mellado, co-director of the archaeological mission in Oxyrhynchus, told Live Science in an email. Pons Mellado and Maite Mascort, who is also a co-director of the mission, explained that during the time the Romans controlled Egypt, it was common for papyri to be put inside mummies, in the chest or abdomen.



However, it’s unclear why ancient Egyptians thought papyri would help protect the deceased, Pons and Mascort said. Remarkably,

this is the first time a copy of Homer’s “Iliad” has been found inside a mummy. “The discovery is exceptional: it is the first time in the

history of archaeology that a Greek literary text has been found deliberately incorporated into the mummification process,” the Univer-

sity of Barcelona statement noted. Although other Greek literary texts have been unearthed at Oxyrhynchus, “the real novelty” of the newfound literary papyrus is its “funerary context,” Ignasi-Xavier Adiego, a linguistics professor at the University of Barcelona who analyzed the papyrus, said in the statement. He explained that papyri found inside mummies are often magical texts. So far, archaeologists don’t know much about the mummy with the “Iliad” papyrus. “We know that [it] was a male mummified individual but it’s still under investigation,” Pons and Mascort wrote in the email. They noted that the person was an adult. The “Iliad” mummy was found during a November-December 2025 excavation of a cemetery at Oxyrhynchus. The team’s previous excavations at the cemetery revealed more than a dozen mummies with gold tongues, which ancient Egyptians thought would help the mummies communicate in the afterlife. The team found three additional gold tongues and one copper tongue during the November-December 2025 excavation, a translated statement from Egypt’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities said. For the ancient Egyptians, gold symbolized the flesh of the gods and it was thought that having a tongue made of gold would help you communicate with them. It’s not clear why copper was used for one of the tongues. It’s also unknown if the mummy with the “Iliad” text had a gold or copper tongue; study of the mummy is ongoing.

Orry, Nora Fatehi, and Shraddha Kapoor’s names will be removed from the narcotics case if police uncover no proof



Mumbai: In a 2022 drug case, actors Shraddha Kapoor and Nora Fatehi have been granted relief after it was reported recently that their names would be removed off the supplemental chargesheet.

The two actors were first mentioned in the 2022 Mumbai drug delivery case involving mephedrone, along with politician Zeeshan Siddiqui, social media star Orhan “Orry” Awatramani, and Siddhant Kapoor. Shraddha’s brother. However, the Mumbai Police have not discovered any proof against them, according to a report in the Indian Express. The investigation has been concluded by the police’s Anti Narcotics Cell (ANC), which will shortly submit the supplemental chargesheet.

According to a source cited by the publication, Shraddha, Siddhant, Nora, Orry, and Zeeshan’s names would be removed after that. “A supplemental chargesheet will now be filed against two apprehended accused and the other wanted accused, following the filing of an original chargesheet against three individuals. According to the source, there is now insufficient proof to

connect the celebrities to the case. Social media sensation Orhan Awatramani, often known as Orry, who is acquainted with a number of Bollywood celebrities, reacted angrily to the news.

Orry posted a screenshot of the Express piece on Stories on his Instagram account on Saturday. “Where are all the clickbaiting jealous virgins who oversensationalized this and dragged my good name for weeks?” he wrote beneath it.

Priyanka Chopra in a BTS shoot from Varanasi with choreographer Bosco Martis

Mumbai: With SS Rajamouli’s masterpiece Varanasi, Priyanka Chopra is poised for a spectacular return. In recent months, the actress has traveled to India frequently to film the movie in Hyderabad and other locations.

A BTS photo of the Desi girl and choreographer Bosco Martis was posted on a fan page devoted to the actress. The description said, “A picture of Priyanka (from the Hyderabad schedule) with Bosco Martis, who coordinated a big choreography for Varanasi.” The movie’s official title

was revealed on November 15, 2025, at the Globetrotter event in Hyderabad.For the first time, Priyanka Chopra and Mahesh Babu have been teamed. Varanasi’s relationship to the epic Ramayana was recently established by director SS Rajamouli. “All my films are inspired by the epics of (Lord) Rama,” the director stated in an interview with Polygon. He also stated, “In this film, I have a chance to actually take an actual episode from the Ramayana itself and present it in this way.” When asked how he would make the

movie accessible to all age groups, Rajamouli responded that it is his responsibility to do so.It’s my responsibility to keep you from getting lost and to make the movie so it doesn’t strain your brain.” “You might not comprehend the entire story of Rama, but there is no need to,” he continued. You’ll comprehend what’s happening if you can relate to the characters’ feelings.”Prithviraj Sukumaran, who plays the antagonist, is another actor in the film.The movie will be released on April 7, 2027.

As Qarib Qarib Singlle, Parvathy Thiruvothu recalls her late co-star Irrfan Khan



Mumbai: One of India’s best actors, Irrfan, passed away in 2020 at the age of 53. He passed away in Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Mumbai, where he had been fighting a neuroendocrine tumor since 2018 and had been admitted due to a colon infection. Among his many notable works is the love comedy Qarib Qarib Singlle.

In a conversation with Pinkvilla, actor Parvathy, who costarred with Irrfan in the movie, remembered working with him. “I don’t think we talk about death enough,” Parvathy said in response to a fan asking about her experience working with Irrfan during the discussion. I don’t

think we as a society are doing a very good job of discussing grief.

Allow yourself to feel that pain because we have lost someone who has lived and you have shared those times with them. Irrfan and Puneet [Rajkumar] are two of my co-stars that we lost, and I find it unbelievable every time someone asks about them. I still lack the words to describe how absurd it is that they are not present.”Irrfan used to say, ‘Abhi toh sirf shuruat hain (It is just the beginning),’ she continued. He was ecstatic about this new phase of his life during the filming of Qarib Qarib Singlle.

We are unaware of how fortunate we

are to be alive because it defies logic that I am alive while he is not. The reasoning behind that is beyond me. He had such innocent interest every day. He was that individual; he was like a bouncing ball. He was polite and compassionate, but if I were to think about him—something I prefer to avoid—we would have to consider the fact that he is no longer with us. He was enthusiastic about life. Irrfan debuted on screen in the Academy Award-nominated 1988 film Salaam Bombay after making appearances in a number of television shows! He then demonstrated his versatility as an actor in films including The Lunchbox, Maqbool, Haider, and Piku. In addition to becoming well-known for his work in the Hindi cinema business, Irrfan made a reputation for himself internationally with films like Inferno, Life of Pi, and The Amazing Spider-Man, among others. The actor revealed his diagnosis of a neuroendocrine tumor to the world in 2018. He had posted on social media at the time, saying, “I hope to be back with more stories to tell.”

After a protracted fight with the illness, he passed away in 2020. His most recent appearance was in the comedic drama Angrezi Medium, which was a follow-up to his successful 2017 film Hindi Medium. Babil and Ayan, Irrfan’s two kids, are survived by his wife, Sutapa Sikdar.

Mamitha Baiju responds to criticism on the use of Malayalam actresses in Tamil movies

Mumbai: Mamitha Baiju is all ready to star opposite Dhanush in the Tamil movie Kara. Tamilians have been pleading with filmmakers to cast local actors in prominent roles for the past few years, but the criteria are only applied to actors, not actresses. The most recent director to face criticism is Vignesh Raja, who did more than just cast Mamitha Baiju, a Malayalam performer, in Kara. What does Mamitha think about the same matter, though? The actor explained that she doesn’t think it’s unfair because she sees it as a chance to convince the director and herself that she’s qualified for the role. Mamitha responded, “When I got the chance, I took it and as an actor I look towards more exploration, and how to be more versatile,” when asked about the discussion around the casting of Tamil



films in a recent interview with Sudhir Srinivasan. I’m taking advantage of the opportunity to accomplish that. Therefore, it is up to the creator to decide whether or not to cast me in a certain role. I can’t refuse. I want to put in the effort to get that job.” “I am getting that opportunity, so it is not unfair, and my

goal is to look convincing in that character,” she continued. The ultimate honor for me would be if I were to play a rural character and I looked credible. It all comes down to breaking down barriers, both linguistically and otherwise. We must push the boundaries because it is my job and my responsibility.

Mamitha continued on her collaboration with Dhanush, describing him as an extremely committed actor who puts a lot of effort into the role. The actor stated that she used to watch Dhanush act out lengthy scenes with lengthy dialogue and that she views him as a major inspiration.

Mamitha stated that she enjoyed learning about the role of Selli in Kara and that she enjoys being pushed as an actor.Jayaram, Karunas, Lal, Suraj Venjaramoodu, KS Ravikumar, Dhanush, and Mamitha are also featured in Kara. GV Prakash Kumar wrote the music for Kara, which is directed by Vignesh Raja and produced by Vels Film International. Srijith Sarang is in charge of editing, and Theni Eswar is in charge of cinematography. On April 30, it will be released in theaters.

Prior to Saiyaara’s release, Ahaan Panday took Aneet Padda to a church and temple

Mumbai: Mohit Suri’s Saiyaara, which debuted in July 2025, was a significant event that gave rise to two new breakthrough stars: Aneet Padda and Ahaan Panday. There has been a lot of conjecture that the main actors were dating since the movie’s success. In a recent conversation, Ahaan Panday talked about their relationship and how, prior to the movie’s premiere, he took her to several places of worship simply to pray. Ahaan Panday told Filmfare that “I remember taking her to different places of worship, simply praying-not for a hit but simply that the film would recover its cost so we could keep getting work and continue doing what we love.”

“Then someone from the direction team sent us a video of people waiting outside a theatre on the morning of the release,” he went on. It was unbelievable. “This can’t be for our film,” I remarked. “Bro, it is,” he said. “Is this real?” I asked Aneet and Mohit Sir over the phone, and he said, “Yeah, it’s happening.” The movie is genuinely being seen by people. It was just two months of total shock after that. “She had a great deal of passion. She taught me so much. She was so skilled on the set, constantly hitting her target and fully aware of her lighting, that I used to refer to her as “senior.” I really learned a lot from her. We were shocked when the movie came out. We weren’t prepared for any of that,” Ahaan said. The musical romance, which was released in July of last year, became one of 2025’s biggest hits. The movie, which starred



Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda, made Rs 577 crore globally. It became the highest-grossing romance picture in Indian cinema history and the second-highest-grossing Indian film of the year. For its lead actors, the movie was also a pivotal moment. Aneet Padda, who had earlier starred in Kajol’s Salaam Venky, took on her first major part in the project, while Saiyaara brought Ahaan Panday to Bollywood. The narrative centers on Krish, a struggling musician who develops feelings for Vaani Batra, a budding poet and journalist.

The bodyguard for Kiara Advani remembers a terrifying moment when a fan attempted to embrace her

Mumbai: Zeeshan Qureshi, the bodyguard for Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani, talks about a frightening moment when a fan approached the actress while she was pregnant and describes the months-long secret operation that went into the couple’s infamously secretive Jaisalmer wedding. Zeeshan revealed that while Kiara was seven months pregnant and went for a brand shoot, a member of a Reliance-affiliated corporate team tried to approach her and give her a hug as she exited her vanity van. Zeeshan stepped in right away, starting a furious dispute. He had to personally contact Akash Ambani’s manager to diffuse the situation after it got out of control. Zeeshan remarked, “He was wearing a suit, I thought he was a decent man,” noting that even well-groomed, well-connected people can become agitated in the presence of celebrities. “Many fans lose control when they see actors for real.”The bodyguard disclosed that even though Kiara had her own security, Sidharth had specifically asked him to go with her on the shoot. “Sidharth was afraid of sending her,” he stated, adding that because of the pregnancy, he had to take far more precautions than normal. Zeeshan said that the team made several reconnaissance visits to Jaisalmer more than four months before the wedding in February 2023. The media had surrounded the event from all directions, drone surveillance had been set up, and Sidharth himself was in charge of the secrecy plan. All logistical details had been secured well in advance.Zeeshan stated, “It’s not like they went to get married after talking on the phone to arrange everything.” Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani first crossed paths on the sets of their 2021 movie Shershaah,



where their on-screen chemistry soon gained popularity. The two apparently started dating in the ensuing months as what started out as a work cooperation quickly developed into a romantic one.

Later, in February 2023, the couple got married in a small, private ceremony in Jaisalmer that was only attended by close friends and family. A new and significant chapter in their life journey began in July 2025 when they welcomed their first child, a daughter called Saraayah, after a few years of marriage.

One was detained after pestering Akshay Kumar’s daughter by asking to provide nude photos



Mumbai: In the internet harassment case involving Nitara Kumar, the daughter of Akshay Kumar, the Maharashtra internet Department announced an arrest on Friday. While playing an online game, an unidentified person begged the 13-year-old for her naked photos. According to a MidDay article, Yashasvi Yadav, Additional Director General of Police, Maharashtra Cyber Department, disclosed

this information.

While playing an internet game, Akshay’s 13-year-old daughter received a message requesting naked pictures. Akshay Kumar has talked about the upsetting encounter back in October 2025. “I would like to share with you a small incident that occurred at my home a few months ago,” he had added. My daughter was engrossed in a video game. You can play certain

video games with someone, but you’re playing with an unidentified stranger. You receive polite messages while playing, such as “Thank you, that was great” or “You are doing so good.” “Where are you from?” the person said abruptly. “Mumbai,” she wrote. After then, everything returned to normal.

“Well played,” the person said to her. You performed really well. Very polite; it was respectful. “Then a message came, ‘Are you male or female?’” he continued. “Female,” she retorted. It continued. “Can you send me a naked picture of yours?” he then messaged. My kid turned everything off. She went to tell my wife.

That she went and discussed it with my wife was fantastic. This is the starting point. Cybercrime includes this as well. Children and adults tend to get carried away.

Ahaan Panday shares the lessons he learned from Shah Rukh Khan, the superstar

Mumbai: With Mohit Suri’s Saiyaara, actor Ahaan Panday became well-known overnight. It should come as no surprise that Shah Rukh Khan, the king of romance, served as some of his inspiration. In an interview with Filmfare, the actor discussed the lessons he received from the “one-of-a-kind” superstar while growing up. Ahaan referred to Shah Rukh as his “earliest inspiration” throughout the conversation. Given that Ahaan has been friends with his children Aryan Khan and Suhana Khan since they were young, he responded, “It’s hard to pinpoint exactly what I’ve learned,” when asked what he has learned from him. Because a lot of it occurs unconsciously as you mature. If anything, rather than something concrete or outside, it’s been those subdued, internalized cues. Ahaan went on to describe the Khans as a “generous” family and said that he had spent his first Christmas vacation in Dubai with them. “With Shah Rukh Khan, what you see is truly what you get,” he continued. He is as smart and compassionate as others think. He has a unique ability to make you feel important and recognized, even when the cameras aren’t on him. The actor added in the interview that he begged “uncle” Shah Rukh to

show him his short film, Fifty, when he was just 17 years old, and Shah Rukh was more than happy to do so. He even offered advice on how to make it more interesting.

This story was presented by Ahaan as evidence that “there’s really no one like him.” For those who don’t know, Ahaan is the son of health specialist Deanne Panday and businessman Chikki Panday. In addition, he is the cousin of actor Ananya Panday and the nephew of actor Chunky Panday. Alanna Panday, his sister, is a well-known influencer who starred in The Tribe, a reality web series on Prime Video. Ahaan’s first movie, Saiyaara, made over ₹570 crore globally, making it the highest-grossing romantic movie in India. In addition to an action movie, he now has another project in the works alongside Mohit and Aneet Padda. The 2023 movies Pathaan, Jawan, and Dunki were Shah Rukh’s most recent appearances. In Salman Khan’s YRF spy movie Tiger 3, he also made a brief appearance as Pathaan. Along with his daughter Suhana, Deepika Padukone, Rani Mukerji, Abhishek Bachchan, and others, Shah Rukh is now filming King, directed by Siddharth Anand. Christmas is when the movie will be released.

While incarcerated, Sanjay Dutt had the idea for a Khalnayak sequel

New Delhi: On Friday, actor Sanjay Dutt revealed the details of his upcoming movie, Khalnayak Returns. It presents a novel interpretation of the cult favorite from 1993.Filmmaker Subhash Ghai and Mukta Arts have granted Dutt’s Three Dimension Motion Pictures and producer Aksha Kamboj’s Aspect Entertainment the rights to the action-crime film’s sequel.

Madhuri Dixit and Jackie Shroff were also featured in the original.At a special event, the makers released a teaser. In a more rough appearance, Sanjay Dutt plays Ballu again. The 66-year-old actor expressed gratitude to Ghai for the chance. Without Subhash ji, the lengthy voyage of “Khalnayak” would not have been feasible. He is a man of entertainment and a legend. “He will participate in this ‘Khalnayak,’” Dutt informed the press. According to Dutt, the concept originated while he was incarcerated for the 1993 Mumbai explosion case. “I asked everyone nearby if they would be interested in seeing it while I was incarcerated. They all agreed, according to the 4,000 prisoners. It took me some time to read all 4,000 pages after I ordered each of them to write one page about the new “Khalnayak” story.I asked Subhash Sir to review it when I was released on parole. He then stated that it ought to be made, according to Dutt. Ghai expressed his happiness that Dutt is producing the movie. “Making this (‘Khalnayak Returns’) was his inner desire and the enthusiasm of Sanju and Maanyata. It will undoubtedly be superior to the original. “I’m always available to help,” the director declared. Ghai produced and directed the original, which became a cult favorite in the 1990s. Shroff played officer Ram, Dixit played undercover cop Ganga, and Dutt played anti-hero Ballu.

Virat Kohli spoke with the coach of the Gujarat Titans following RCB's victory



New Delhi: Despite playing a game-winning knock against the Gujarat Titans in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 match at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Friday, Virat Kohli, the star for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), wasn't entirely pleased with his effort. With five wickets remaining and seven balls remaining in the match, the 37-year-old scored 81 runs to assist RCB reach the target of 206. Additionally, he and Devdutt Padikkal shared a 115-run partnership for the third wicket, which helped the reigning champions begin their chase. At one point, it appeared as though Kohli would reach his century effortlessly. But in an attempt to push the pace, he lost his wicket to Jason Holder, so it was not to be. In the end, Kohli amassed 81 runs off 44 balls, including four sixes and eight fours. Following the game, Gujarat Titans assistant coach Vijay Dahiya disclosed that Kohli was unhappy with himself because he believed he could have scored his ninth IPL century overall by turning his knock into a hundred. "I think it's incredible. You can tell by his energy. Skill is one thing, and game sense is another. But his consciousness, his vigor, and his readiness. He was disappointed when I was just chatting with him after the game. I could have turned this into a 100, he said. "It's for someone who doesn't know how to do it," I said. He made the surface appear incredibly simple. "You have been doing it day in and day out." At the press conference following the game, Dahiya told reporters, "It wasn't an easy wicket." "The bowler bowls where you want him to bowl while you are playing and controlling the situation. And Virat has played innings like that. Apply pressure on the bowlers. Virat Kohli is all about world-class bowlers. "He's one of the best runners so far; he's pushing the youngsters on his side," he continued. "It's his mindset that sets him apart from many people." After defeating the Gujarat Titans, RCB moved up to second place in the standings, only behind the Punjab Kings. The RCB captain won the toss in the match and chose to bowl.

Then, with to a century from Sai Sudharsan, Gujarat scored 205/3 in 20 overs. But with just 205 runs, the team was unable to build on the 128-run opening partnership between Sudharsan and Shubman Gill. Following that, RCB chased the score down thanks to half-centuries from Padikkal and Kohli. On Monday, RCB will play the Delhi Capitals in New Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium.

Maoist ties are being investigated after a Rs 95 crore foreign funding trail was discovered

Bhopal, Apr 25: A vast foreign funding network that purportedly operates through covert cash withdrawals throughout India has been discovered by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Serious concerns regarding the potential use of foreign funds in Maoist-affected areas and, more explosively, for purported religious conversions have been highlighted by the investigation, which is connected to "The Timothy Initiative (TTI)". The ED headquarters conducted coordinated search operations at six locations across many states in response to intelligence inputs. Investigators discovered evidence of a carefully planned scheme to get around India's financial laws by using foreign-issued debit cards to take out large sums of money from ATMs all around the nation. Officials claim that during the raids, they found Rs 40 lakh in cash, digital gadgets, and damning documents in addition to 25 international bank debit cards, most of which were connected to a US-based bank. Agencies have been astounded by the scope of the operation; it is believed that approximately Rs 95 crore was transferred into India between November 2025 and April 2026. Investigators claim that financial problems are not the end of the money trail. Many of these withdrawals have been linked to areas impacted by Left Wing Extremism (LWE), especially Bastar in Chhattisgarh, where more than Rs 6.5 crore has been taken out in recent years. The withdrawal pattern, which is dispersed between states and regions, suggests



what authorities refer to as a "parallel cash economy" that is going unnoticed. A deeper concern raised by sources involved in the investigation is that TTI India, an organization not registered under FCRA regulations, allegedly used the withdrew monies to fuel its operations, raising questions about their legitimacy. Investigators are currently looking into whether the money was used to influence vulnerable groups in conflict areas, including potential religious conversion initiatives. The case has rapidly escalated into a contentious political issue. The Congress was sharply attacked by BJP spokesperson Anurag Agarwal, who stated, "The same agency whose credibility Congress keeps questioning has now exposed a major nexus." A network of illicit conversions financed by foreign funds has been established by the

ED. Congress has frequently attempted to undermine investigative agencies in order to protect such actions. His comments have given an already tense probe a heated political component. Additionally, the ED discovered that an internet billing and accounting platform that was purportedly controlled from abroad was being used to track the usage of cash and consistently record ATM withdrawals. This suggests a well organized and monitored operation rather than isolated financial misbehavior. One of the main suspects, Micah Mark, was apprehended at Bengaluru airport in violation of a lookout circular while purportedly bringing these international debit cards into India, which heightened the suspense. He may serve as a vital conduit between ground-level agents and abroad handlers, according to officials.

Coach Kumar Sangakkara of the Rajasthan Royals speaks out against Riyan Parag's subpar play

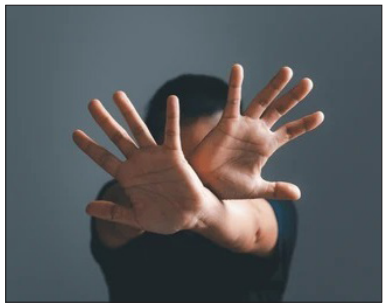
New Delhi: So far in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, the Rajasthan Royals are performing remarkably well. They have won five of their seven games and are now in third place. The Assamese all-rounder has been effectively organizing his team, and Riyan Parag has been able to bring out the best in his players. The captain's performance, however, is one obstacle to Rajasthan's chances in the current 19th T20 event. On all seven of his batting attempts thus far, the right-handed hitter has failed to ignite the stage. With just 81 runs at an average of 13.50 and a strike rate of 117.39 in seven games since his return, the 24-year-old's top score was 20 against the Lucknow Super Giants. However, Parag's head coach, Kumar Sangakkara, gave him support prior to Saturday's game against Sunrisers Hyderabad. Parag is doing everything, according to the former captain of Sri Lanka, and the young batsman simply needs one strong innings. He's batting pretty well, in my opinion. Sometimes you don't always score when you're batting well. If he wasn't hitting the ball well, I would have

been worried. He's really hitting it, in my opinion. At the pre-match press conference, Sangakkara told reporters, "He just needs to stitch together a few more runs so that he sets himself up to attack in the end." "The team fully supports him as a player and batter. And I find it fascinating how he has recently accepted leadership and captaincy. Even in the most recent game, you could see how excellent a captain he was. Thus, I believe he will improve and understand more and more about pressure," he continued. Sangakkara also provided an explanation for the management's choice of Parag as captain, stating that the young player has demonstrated a desire to learn and continue improving every day. "We selected Riyan as captain mostly because of his challenging learning curve, rather than any other factor. He has gained a lot of knowledge from both himself and other people. I have never witnessed a young player in RR under such intense strain from the beginning of his career. In many of our social media posts, Riyan was frequently the main focus. Sangakkara stated, "He was always put out there."

Six People Arrested Following Protests Over Allegations of Sexual Harassment in J&K

New Delhi, Apr 25: The Jammu and Kashmir Police have initiated a crackdown following protests over alleged sexual harassment of a student in Sopore, north Kashmir. Six protesters have been charged under the Public Safety Act (PSA), allowing detention for up to two years without trial. These individuals, now held in Bhadarwah jail 300 kilometers away, are accused of vandalism and disturbing public order. The unrest began after a student of a girls' higher secondary school reported harassment by a teacher on April 13, prompting protests involving around 1,500 students. In response, the Jammu and Kashmir Education Department has suspended the accused teacher and launched an inquiry with a report due in 15 days. While police have registered a First Information Report (FIR) regarding the harassment complaint, no arrests have been made related to the harass-

ment itself. A police officer stated that the protests turned violent after outsiders joined in, leading to more severe law and order issues. The application of the PSA has faced criticism, particularly concerning how it has been used in Jammu and Kashmir. Recently, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court raised concerns about its frequent invocation, suggesting it lacked appropriate care. Nonetheless, police defended their operations, stating that they acted firmly to maintain public order. The six individuals detained under the PSA have been identified by their residences: Umar Akbar Hajam, Salman Ahmed Shalla, Altaf Ahmed Sheikh, Mubashir Ahmed Gilkar, Muzammil Mushtaq Changa, and Majid Firdous Dar. Law enforcement maintains that these individuals were key participants in instigating unrest and vandalism during the protests. The Jammu and Kashmir



Police emphasized a strict stance against unlawful activities, expressing zero tolerance for actions that threaten peace and stability. They have promised to pursue additional individuals involved in recent disruptions and issued warnings against activities that could lead to further unrest. The police urged community leaders to guide their members away from illegal actions and instigators, advocating for responsible participation in civic matters.

Kejriwal is abandoned by Raghav Chadha and six other Rajya Sabha MPs who leave the AAP to join the BJP

New Delhi, Apr 25: Less than a year before Punjab's assembly elections, Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha shocked the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday by announcing that seven of the ten members of the Upper House were leaving the party and joining the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Sandeep Pathak, a former close friend of party leader Arvind Kejriwal, and Ashok Mittal, Chadha's successor in the Upper House, joined him at a press conference in Delhi. Chadha was recently dismissed as the party's deputy leader in the Rajya Sabha. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) faced a significant internal crisis as a majority of its Rajya Sabha members, led by Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak, and Ashok Mittal, announced their decision to merge with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). During a press conference, Chadha stated that more than two-thirds of the 10 AAP Rajya Sabha MPs had signed a letter endorsing the merger, which was submitted to the Rajya Sabha chairman. This move included other prominent figures, such as Harbhajan Singh, Rajinder



Gupta, Vikramjit Singh Sahney, and Swati Maliwal, all of whom have previously expressed dissatisfaction with the party's current direction. This mass exodus, particularly of long-time party members like Pathak, who had been associated with AAP for a decade, reflects growing discontent with the party's leadership under Arvind Kejriwal. Chadha criticized AAP for straying from its foundational principles and emphasized his intention to serve the public more effectively alongside the BJP. The merger appears to comply with the an-

ti-defection law, potentially exempting the departing members from disqualification, as two-thirds of the party's Rajya Sabha members supported the move. The BJP's gain is significant; they may increase their influence in the Rajya Sabha from 106 to 113 members, edging closer to a two-thirds majority. Following the announcement, BJP chief Nitin Nabin welcomed the new members, reinforcing the party's commitment to Punjab and the broader goal of "Viksit Bharat 2047." Reactions from AAP leaders were swift, with Sanjay Singh declaring plans to seek the disqualification of the defecting members, arguing that their actions amounted to relinquishing their party membership. Punjab's Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann condemned the BJP's efforts as a betrayal against Punjab, while Congress leader Amarinder Singh Raja Warring perceived the split as inevitable given AAP's lack of ideology. This upheaval signals potential electoral ramifications for AAP in the upcoming Punjab polls in early 2027, possibly culminating in a loss of control in the state for the first time since 2015.

A Border Force officer who died in the custody of the Anti-Drugs Agency had 34 injuries

New Delhi, Apr 25: A Border Security Force (BSF) jawan who died mysteriously while in the Narcotics Control Bureau's custody had 34 damage marks on his body, according to a postmortem report, raising concerns about the circumstances surrounding his death. According to the police in March, Jaswinder Singh, 35, passed away after his condition worsened while being questioned by the NCB in Amritsar, Punjab. The family had protested outside the postmortem home at the time, claiming that the BSF jawan had been beaten by the Narcotics team. A Narcotics squad reportedly detained Jammu resident Jaswinder Singh and transported him to Amritsar for interrogation. He passed away while being questioned. Sarabjit Singh Verka, chief investigator of the Punjab Human Rights Organization (PHRO), and the victim's family shared the postmortem report, which was performed by medical professionals at the district civil hospital in Amritsar. The investigation states that nine injuries were sustained approximately eighteen to twenty-four hours prior to the jawan's death, while twenty-five injuries were sustained two to four days prior. According to the report, this time frame corresponds with the jawan's detention by the NCB. Lovjeet Kaur, the jawan's wife, responded to the results by accusing him of mistreatment while in custody. "My spouse was tortured to death, according to the postmortem report. Thirty-four injuries are a serious issue. She claimed that while he was being held, NCB employees mistreated him. Gurmeet Kaur had stated earlier in March that her son had returned home on leave while working as a policeman in the BSF.

15% Internal Reservation for Scheduled Castes Approved by the Karnataka Cabinet

Bengaluru, Apr 25: A revised internal reservation formula for Scheduled Castes inside the total 15% quota was approved by the Karnataka Cabinet during a special meeting on Friday, opening the door for long-awaited government hiring. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah informed reporters during the meeting that the Cabinet had authorized reservations of 5.25 percent for "right-hand groups" and "left-hand groups" and roughly 4.5 percent for other Scheduled Castes, including nomadic people.

He emphasized that the classification had been determined proportionately after the quota was revised. "Finally, the Cabinet unanimously decided on 5.25 percent, 5.25 percent, and 4.5 percent allocations," he stated. "The recruitment process will start tomorrow with the issuance of notifications," he stated, adding that quick action will be made for internal reservation hiring. According to Siddaramaiah, legal restrictions caused the government's original proposal of a 17% reservation for Scheduled Castes and a 7% reservation for Sched-



uled Tribes to be lowered to 15% for SCs and 3% for STs. "Based on the 50 percent ceiling, SC reservation comes to 15 percent and ST to 3 percent," he stated. In reference to the legal issue, he stated that the cap is derived from the ceiling established in the Indra Sawhney case and that the Supreme Court had permitted internal reservation within constitutional bounds in a Constitution Bench decision. The 1992 Indra Sawhney vs Union of India case maintained a 50% cap on total reservations, allowing continuation for SCs and STs but limiting overall reservations. Karnataka's Chief Minister Siddaramaiah an-

nounced Cabinet consensus on internal reservation following a commission report by retired judge H N Nagamohan Das, which led to the decision to revise previous reservation notifications. The earlier formula will be replaced, and the six percent reserved due to court intervention will remain as a backlog until further court rulings. Additionally, within Category C, a portion will be reserved for nomadic communities, specifying one out of every five posts in that category. Recruitment will proceed under the 50% limit until the courts issue a final verdict, at which point necessary adjustments will be made.

Shubman Gill is teased by Suyash Sharma with a bow down celebration



New Delhi: During an IPL 2026 encounter at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Friday, Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill was dismissed by Royal Challengers Bengaluru bowler Suyash Sharma. The limelight was dominated by the leg-spinner's delight after taking the wicket. Suyash produced a short googly on the fourth ball of GT's thirteenth over, and Gill struck it into Devdutt Padikkal's hands at long-on. After hitting 32 off 24 balls, he fell. Suyash came up with a "bow down" gesture while celebrating the wicket, which is Gill's signature move when he celebrates a century. As RCB easily defeated GT by five wickets, Virat Kohli punished Gujarat Titans for dropping him on nought with a scorching half-century.

Rajat Patidar put Gujarat to bat at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, and left-handed opener Sai Sudharsan's third IPL century served as the cornerstone of their 205 for 3. But in Bengaluru's last league game of the season at the venue, Kohli (81) and Devdutt Padikkal (55) tore at the bowling during a thrilling 115-run second-wicket stand to delight a full crowd. In the first over of the chase, Kohli was dismissed by Washington Sundar at mid-wicket off the first ball he saw from Mohammed Siraj, but he made Gujarat pay for their generosity

with an exciting display of stroke-making. In the third over, Bengaluru lost Englishman Jacob Bethell, who was substituting for injured countryman Phil Salt in his maiden match of the season. That was the signal for Kohli and Padikkal to put on a wonderful display of stroke-making, characterized more by silken delicacy and timing than by brute force.

With Kohli only slightly behind, Rangy left-hander Padikkal dominated the early running with an incredible string of sixes as he made excellent use of his long levers.

After 20 deliveries, Padikkal became the first player to reach his half-century, while Kohli needed 30 balls to do it before being dismissed by Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan. Kohli kept having fun, surpassing Abhishek Sharma to take the Orange Cap and become the tournament's top run scorer (328). Gujarat's innings, led by Sudharsan's aggressive batting, faced a mini-collapse after a dismissal by Jason Holder. Sudharsan and Shubman Gill opened with a solid 128-run partnership, although Gill had limited impact. Despite aiming for a total around 220, Bengaluru's bowlers, including Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Josh Hazlewood, and Raskh Salam, made a strong comeback. Gujarat managed to reach just over 200 runs, a competitive score, but considered insufficient.

Sehwag Questions Selection Issues Hindering Padikkal's India Entry Despite Strong IPL Form

New Delhi: Devdutt Padikkal's blazing Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 form with Royal Challengers Bengaluru has reignited calls for his return to Team India. But former India opener Virender Sehwag believes the bigger hurdle is not performance, but the lack of space in an already stacked batting lineup. The left-hander's form has put him back in the spotlight, but the bigger question remains about space in India's packed batting order. Speaking to Cricbuzz, Sehwag pointed out the depth in Indian cricket that makes it difficult for even in-form players to break in.

Dinesh Karthik is saying that Padikkal should play for India, but every season players emerge who feel that they should play for India. But where is the space in the Indian team?" Sehwag said. "There is no place for Rajat Patidar, Shreyas Iyer, Devdutt Padikkal, and there are many more players. There is no place for Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Yashasvi Jaiswal. There



are five players who are scoring runs, but who will you drop for them? Where is the space?" That is the reality right now. You can score runs, you can win games, and still find the door shut because there are just too many players doing the same thing. Padikkal has not just been good this season.

He has been different. Playing for Royal Challengers Bengaluru, he has moved away from the "take your time" version of himself. Now, he walks in and starts swinging from the first over. The best example came against Gujarat Titans. Chasing 206, he smashed 55 off

27 balls, got to his fifty in 20 deliveries, and hit six sixes. Along with Virat Kohli, he added 115 runs for the second wicket and pretty much killed the chase by the half-way mark. The numbers show how big the shift has been. His strike rate in the first ten balls this season is 170.18. Last year it was 126.51. The year before, just 74.42.

Overall, the jump is even crazier. After 99 T20 innings at 131.98, he is now striking at 165.36 in his last 22. In IPL 2026 alone, that number has gone past 180. He has already scored over 200 runs in the first six games and is closing in on last season's

tally. But more than runs, it is the impact. Powerplay overs are no longer quiet when he is around. Bowlers are under pressure from ball one. And yet, this is where things get tricky. In T20Is alone, you already have Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson and Ishan Kishan in the mix. Then there is Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill, who are already ahead in the queue. Throw in Tilak Varma, T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav, and even emerging names like Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, and it becomes a crowd. If a senior player is given a break, then some of these players can be given a chance. But in that team, where the competition is so tough, I would say that I don't need a break. Because if I take a break and someone else comes in my place and scores runs, then I will be left out," Sehwag added. The ODI side is not any easier. Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Gill have a strong grip on the top order, while players like Ruturaj Gaikwad and also waiting.

Sawan Barwal Targets LA 2028 Olympics Following His Record-Breaking Debut Marathon Performance

New Delhi: India's long-distance running has a new name to watch in Sawan Barwal, who is targeting the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics after ending a 48-year wait for a new national marathon record. The 28-year-old runner from Joginder Nagar in Himachal Pradesh made a sensational debut at the Rotterdam Marathon 2026, clocking 2:11:58 to break the long-standing mark held by Shivnath Singh since 1978. Reflecting on the moment, Barwal told Olympics.com, "When I crossed the finish line at the Rotterdam Marathon, I honestly wasn't thinking about the record at all.

The race had taken everything out of me, especially in the final stretch, so my only focus was to finish. It was only after a few moments that I realised I had broken Shivnath Singh's record. That's when it really hit me - this was something that had stood for 48 years. It felt special, not just personally but for Indian athletics as a whole." Barwal admitted the closing stages of the race pushed him to his limits and said, "The last couple of kilometres were the toughest part of the race. The cold and wind made it very difficult, especially after I poured water on myself to stay cool. My body started reacting badly, and I did feel dizzy and lost balance a couple of times. But at that point, it becomes more of a mental battle than a physical one. I



just kept telling myself that I had come too far to stop. Finishing the race became the only goal, and that mindset helped me push through." Having competed across distances from 1500m to 5000m earlier in his career, Barwal spoke about the challenge of stepping up to the marathon. "It's not easy at all.

The 1500m and even 5000m require speed and explosive strength, while the marathon is all about patience, rhythm, and endurance. The biggest challenge is changing your mindset - you go from thinking in minutes to thinking in hours. Physically, too, the training is very different. Building endurance while maintaining some level of speed is the toughest

balance to achieve, and that's something I've worked on over the years," he added. The move to the marathon, he said, was a gradual process. "The decision came gradually. After competing in track events and longer road races, I felt my strength was more suited to endurance. Over time, with guidance from coaches and my performances in longer distances, the marathon became a natural progression. The record wasn't really on my mind when I made that decision. The focus was more on performing well and improving step by step," Barwal said. With an eye on the Olympics, Barwal confirmed his long-term focus. "Yes, the marathon will definitely be a major focus going forward.

IPL Play Of The Day: RCB Triple Threat Chokehold Clamps GT In Final Stretch

Bengaluru: With four overs to go for the Gujarat Titans, Royal Challengers Bengaluru had a problem to solve at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Friday, April 25. Jos Buttler was set and beginning to look dangerous. Washington Sundar had walked in and immediately found his timing. The scoring rate was already above 10, and despite the earlier dismissal of Sai Sudharsan, the platform was firmly in place for a total well beyond 170, maybe even pushing towards 190 if things clicked. This was the phase where games usually get away. Instead, RCB pulled it back. Across the 17th, 18th and 19th overs, just 17 runs were conceded. There were no boundaries in two of those overs, one key wicket fell, and most importantly, the momentum shifted completely.

The shift began with a decision from Rajat Patidar that was far from obvious. He went back to Suyash Sharma, even after the young leg-spinner had been taken for 14 in his previous over. At that stage of the innings, with a set batter in and a new one looking fluent, most captains might have turned to safer options. But Patidar read the situation differently. Sundar was still new at the crease, still finding his tempo. Buttler, although set, had not yet



gone into full acceleration mode. The thinking was clear. If there was an over to sneak through quietly, this was it. Suyash executed that plan to perfection. There were no big shots attempted, no risks taken. Sundar played himself in, Buttler stayed watchful, and the over yielded just four runs. On paper, it looked harmless. In context, it was the start of the squeeze. T20 games do not always turn on big moments. Sometimes, they shift through small, quiet overs that force batters to rethink. From cruising comfortably, the batting side suddenly found itself needing to accelerate with fewer deliveries left. The margin for error narrowed, and the pressure began to transfer onto the batters. That is where Bhuvne-



shwar Kumar made his impact. He recognised the moment and, more importantly, the batter. Buttler's ramp shot is often a release option in the death overs, a way to break the rhythm of a bowler. Bhuvneshwar set the trap and executed it well, resulting in Buttler's dismissal. That wicket changed everything. With the set batter gone, the innings lost its anchor. Sundar now had to take on the role of aggressor, while Jason Holder walked in for his franchise debut.

While Holder has the ability to clear the ropes, expecting him to do so immediately in that situation was always going to be difficult. The over reflected that reality. There were no boundaries, no release shots. Just

singles and doubles, resulting in five runs. In a phase where teams often look to score 15 or more, that kind of over is invaluable. Having built that pressure, Patidar made another key call. Instead of saving his lead pacer for the final over, he brought on Josh Hazlewood for the 19th. It was a move that ensured there was no easy over left to target. If the batting side had found momentum in that over, it could have carried into the final six balls. By using Hazlewood earlier, RCB shut that door completely. Hazlewood delivered with control and discipline. There were no boundaries, no chances for the batters to break free. Every delivery added to the pressure that had already been created in the previous two overs. By the end of the 19th, the innings had been firmly pulled back. Seventeen runs in three overs. What had once looked like a total heading well beyond 170 was now far more manageable. There were a few late boundaries in the final over, with fatigue visible in the field as Rasikh Salam Dar and Krunal Pandya pushed through cramps, but by then, the hard work had already been done. In a format where totals can escalate rapidly, this was a reminder of how quickly control can be regained execution.

UTT Season 7 Auction: Manika And Sathiyan Retained As Manav Thakkar Returns To Pool



New Delhi: Indian stars Manav Thakkar, Manush Shah, and Diya Chitale headline the Butterfly Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) Season 7 player pool, as team retentions see stalwarts Sathiyan Gnanasekaran and Manika Batra retained ahead of the auction. According to a release, the action-packed Season 7 will commence from July 9th to July 26th at the Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium in Goa and will be broadcast live on the Star Sports network and live-streamed on JioHotstar. The player pool for the

Upcoming season features a strong mix of established Indian names, emerging talent, and top international paddlers, with franchises set to shape their squads at the auction, scheduled for April 28 at Mumbai's Sahara Star. Thakkar and Shah return to the auction pool after a year-long hiatus due to international commitments, with the duo currently ranked World No. 5 in men's doubles and a regular presence on the international circuit. Shah also pairs with Chitale in mixed doubles, with the duo ranked World No. 6 and having cre-

ated history as the first Indians to qualify for the WTT Finals. Chitale, the most expensive pick in last season's auction, returns to the pool after Dabang Delhi TTC opted to retain Sathiyan, extending his association with the franchise into a record seventh successive season. Batra, meanwhile, returns to the league after missing the previous edition due to injury, having been retained by Ahmedabad APL Pipers.

Ahead of the auction, teams have also exercised their retention options. Alongside Batra and Gnanasekaran,

Ankur Bhattacharjee and doubles specialist Akash Pal were retained by Kolkata Thunderblades and U Mumbai TT, respectively. Dempo Goa Challengers and PBG Pune Jaguars opted against using their retention and will start the auction with a full purse alongside the newly inducted UP Prometheans. The franchise-based league, promoted by Niraj Bajaj and Vita Dani under the aegis of the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI), will once again see teams build their rosters through the auction system, with each franchise allocated a purse of 1 crore tokens.

The auction will follow a structured format with revised base prices across four pools--Rs 20 lakhs, Rs 12 lakhs, Rs 7 lakhs, and Rs 3 lakhs tokens--with bidding increments set at 20,000 tokens. Among the international names, Welsh paddler Anna Hursey could become the first player from her country to feature in Butterfly UTT if picked, while France's Prithika Pavade adds further depth to the women's pool.

RCB Star Devdutt Padikkal Embraces A Bold And Fiery New Version In IPL 2026 Padikkal's Aggression Benefits RCB

Bengaluru: Devdutt Padikkal has always been easy on the eye. Timing, balance, and that effortless flow through the off-side made him one of the more pleasing batters to watch in the Indian Premier League (IPL). But for all that elegance, there was always a lingering question around intent, especially in a format that demands you to take the game on from ball one. IPL 2026 is answering that question in the most emphatic way possible. This is not the Padikkal who eases himself in anymore.

This is a version that is taking first-ball risks, clearing boundaries early, and forcing bowlers to rethink their plans within the first over itself. And the numbers are catching up with the eye test. A strike rate pushing 185, sixes coming at a rate he has never managed before, and a clear shift in how he approaches phases of the innings. This is not just form. This is transformation. Against Gujarat Titans, the shift was on full display. Chasing 206, Padikkal smashed 55



Off 27 balls, bringing up a 20-ball fifty and setting up a 115-run second-wicket stand with Virat Kohli. By the time he fell to Rashid Khan, the game had already tilted decisively in Royal Challengers Bengaluru's favour. This is not a one-off innings. It is part of a clear shift. Padikkal's strike rate in the first ten balls of his innings this season stands at 170.18, a massive jump from 126.51 last year and just 74.42 the year before. That change alone

Reflects a batter who is no longer easing into innings but dictating them from the start. In 99 T20 innings until 2024, his strike rate stood at 131.98. Since then, across 22 innings, it has jumped to 165.36. In IPL 2026, it has gone even higher to 184.07. The intent is visible in his shot-making. Earlier, he was not known for taking on length deliveries consistently. This season, that has flipped. His strike rate against length balls has surged from 111.31

To 221.73, while his balls-per-six ratio has improved drastically from 29.31 to 5.11. That explains moments like the six over cover off Mohammed Siraj or the flick over fine leg against Kagiso Rabada. These are not low-risk strokes. They are statements of intent. Speaking in the post-match press conference, Padikkal was clear that this change has been deliberate. "I think it's time we forget the previous version.