

ZPM Eyes Landslide Victory in Aizawl Polls

Aizawl, Apr 15: Vanlalhlana, the Education Minister and leader of the Zoram People's Movement, stated on Monday that he was confident the ruling party will win the upcoming Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) elections by a wide margin, citing rising popular support and discontent with the previous administration.

Vanlalhlana stated at a party office gathering that the ZPM wants to win every seat in the AMC in order to duplicate its performance in the Lunglei Municipal Council (LMC) elections. He attributed the party's optimism to increasing support from politically neutral voters, who, he said, are drawn to the government's "Kalphungthar" or new system of governance and its developmental initiatives.

"We are seeing support from people who are not politically aligned but

are keen on progress. Many are backing the ZPM after witnessing the changes brought by the Kalphungthar government," he said, adding that the party could potentially win all seats, as it did in Lunglei.

The Minister also expressed gratitude to churches and the public for their continued guidance and support. Launching an attack on the opposition Mizo National Front, Vanlalhlana alleged that the previous regime was marked by "poor-quality" projects. He cited delays in the commissioning of the Solid Waste Management Centre and incinerator, substandard school infrastructure, and inadequate public facilities. "It is strange to see them projecting themselves as champions of public welfare ahead of elections, despite failing to deliver basic services during their tenure," he said.

Manipur CM Meets Imphal East Villagers; Residents Seek Retention of UNLF Camp

Imphal, Apr 15: Residents of 28 Meitei villages in the peripheral areas of Imphal East district have urged Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh not to relocate or replace the designated camp of the Pambei-led United National Liberation Front (UNLF) at Nungshum village, citing concerns over security and stability.

The appeal follows a protest held on April 15 at Nungshum village, where locals demanded that the camp remain at its current location. A delegation representing the villages later met the Chief Minister and submitted a memorandum detailing their concerns. In the memorandum, residents highlighted the vulnerability of peripheral areas, particularly the Khamenlok Hill Range in the Uyumpok-Nongshum belt, which they said has been severely affected since the onset of the ongoing crisis in the state. They alleged that the presence of armed groups, including those linked to Kuki militant factions operating



under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) arrangement, has contributed to a deteriorating security situation. The villagers said such activities have created an atmosphere of fear and instability, making it difficult to

carry out daily life. However, they noted that the situation improved significantly after the establishment of the Pambei-led UNLF camp in the area.

Expressing concern over reports that the camp may be relocated or withdrawn, the residents said its presence has played a key role in maintaining peace and stability. They urged the government not to take any step that could adversely impact the security of the region. Responding to the concerns, Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh said the issue is under "careful and serious consideration." In a social media post after meeting a delegation of 25 representatives at the Secretariat, he assured that no hasty decision would be taken. "All aspects will be thoroughly examined to ensure that the safety and protection of the villages are fully safeguarded," the Chief Minister said, underscoring the need to maintain peace, stability and security in the region.

In Brief

Misunderstanding Sparked Thinungei Clash

Imphal: Manipur Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam on Wednesday said the recent clash at Thinungei in Bishnupur district was triggered by a misunderstanding between civilians and security forces. Addressing mediapersons at the New Secretariat Complex, Mantripukhri, the Minister clarified that the situation escalated after a rumour spread, reportedly initiated by a woman, leading to clashes that left around 30 people injured. Appealing for calm, he urged the public not to resort to road blockades and to maintain peace, while asking people to place their trust in the agencies investigating the Tronglaobi incident. Responding to queries on the Tronglaobi blast case, Konthoujam said the probe is being handled by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Bishnupur Under Prohibitory Orders

Imphal, Apr 15: Following a clash between local demonstrators and security personnel on Tuesday, April 14, Manipur's Bishnupur district saw increased agitation. In an effort to calm the situation, authorities imposed restrictions. When people of Thingungei and neighboring Ningthoukhong gathered to the streets in protest of the recent explosion at Tronglaobi, which claimed the lives of two children, violence initially broke out. Unverified reports that armed people of dubious identities were traveling through the area caused the situation to worsen. Officials reported that over ten people suffered slight injuries during the episode, while at least one vehicle was torched by the angry crowd. A group of residents obstructed the movement of security vehicles, and the situation quickly escalated, with vehicles being damaged and set on fire and attempts made to detain security personnel.

National Youth Boxing Championship Kicks Off in Assam

Guwahati, Apr 15: The eighth Men's and Women's National Youth Boxing Championship began at Assam Don Bosco University in Sonapur near Guwahati on Monday, drawing around 800 participants, including players, coaches and technical officials from 33 states. Organised by the Assam Amateur Boxing Association (AABA) in collaboration with the Boxing Federation of India (BFI), the championship will run till April 19 and will serve as a selection platform for India's youth teams for the Youth Olympic Games and the Youth World Championships. The host state made a positive start, with two Assam boxers registering wins on the opening day. In the boys' 55kg category, Mohammad Ayan defeated Jharkhand's Shivam Dubey 5-0 to advance to the second round.

Pema Khandu Rolls Out Infrastructure Projects Worth ₹196.44 Cr in Siang District

Itanagar, Apr 15: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Tuesday inaugurated and laid the foundation for projects totalling a 'landmark investment' of Rs 196.44 crore during his visit to Riga village in Siang district, aimed at boosting infrastructure, connectivity, education and public services.

Addressing a gathering at Riga, Khandu emphasised the significance of the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP), while terming it a project of national importance.

"Around 70 percent of stakeholders have supported the Preliminary Feasibility and Allied Reports (PFAR)," the Chief Minister informed while seeking support from others.

He said the project would help in flood control, water regulation, protecting downstream communities and strengthening strategic preparedness.

Clarifying concerns, Khandu said PFAR does not imply final approval and assured that public hearings and community



consultations will precede any decision.

Khandu observed that the proposed Rs 1.5 lakh crore investment under SUMP could bring major economic opportunities, including infrastructure growth, employment generation and benefits for affected landowners.

He also announced key projects such as improvement of Riga township roads, construction of a circuit house, an integrated water supply project for Boleng, and a modern stadium for the district.

Foundation stones were laid for multiple projects, including staff quarters, school infrastruc-

Misunderstanding Sparked Thinungei Clash: Manipur Home Minister

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Addressing mediapersons at the New Secretariat Complex, Mantripukhri, the Minister clarified that the situation escalated after a rumour spread, reportedly initiated by a woman, leading to clashes that left around 30 people injured.

Appealing for calm, he urged the public not to resort to road blockades and to maintain peace, while asking people to place their trust in the agencies investigating the Tronglaobi incident.

Responding to queries on the Tronglaobi blast case, Konthoujam said the probe is being handled by the National Investigation

Agency (NIA).

He said that five suspected cadres of the United Kuki National Army (UKNA) have been arrested so far, and further developments are expected as the investigation progresses.

Giving details on the Thinungei violence, the minister said eight firearms were snatched by protestors during the unrest but were later recovered by security personnel.

Meanwhile, the State government has stepped up security measures in view of the growing unrest. Over 34,000 security personnel are currently deployed across Manipur, the minister informed even as he acknowledged a shortfall of more than 7,000 personnel.

He further said that the government would soon launch a recruitment drive to fill the vacancies.

SC stays Telangana High Court's anticipatory bail to Pawan Khera

Guwahati, Apr 15: The Supreme Court today stayed the Telangana High Court's order granting transit anticipatory bail to Congress leader Pawan Khera in connection with an FIR registered by the Assam Police based on a complaint lodged by Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma, over Khera's allegations that she held multiple passports of different countries and offshore properties.

A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and Atul S Chandurkar passed the interim order while issuing notice on the petition filed by the State of Assam against the High Court's order.

The bench said that if Khera applies for anticipatory bail in the Court having jurisdiction in Assam, then the interim order passed by the Supreme Court will not have any adverse effect on the consideration of such an application.

Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta, appearing for the State of Assam, submitted that there was no averment in Khera's petition as to how there was territorial jurisdiction in Telangana.

SG also submitted that the High Court missed the fact that one of the offences carried a maximum punishment of 10-year imprisonment.

Justice Maheshwari observed that



Khera's note submitted during the hearing stated that his wife was residing in Hyderabad. However, the SG replied that his wife's Aadhaar card showed her as a resident of Delhi.

"If this is the case, a person can buy properties across the country, and seek anticipatory bail from the places they choose. This is forum-shopping, if not forum-choosing..." SG said, adding that such practices were frowned upon by the Supreme Court in the judgment in Priya Indoria. "This is complete abuse of process. He doesn't say why

he cannot go to Assam. In the petition, he doesn't say that his wife has a property (in Hyderabad)," SG said. "We are surprised [by the High Court's order]," Justice Maheshwari said. Justice Maheshwari also said that Khera has filed an application for extension of the anticipatory bail. To recap, on April 10, Justice K Sujana of the Telangana High Court granted anticipatory bail to Khera for one week, subject to conditions, including that he will approach the Gauhati High Court to seek appropriate relief.

Bishnupur Under Prohibitory Orders After Protest Clashes

Imphal, Apr 15: Following a clash between local demonstrators and security personnel on Tuesday, April 14, Manipur's Bishnupur district saw increased agitation. In an effort to calm the situation, authorities imposed restrictions.

When people of Thingungei and neighboring Ningthoukhong gathered to the streets in protest of the recent explosion at Tronglaobi, which claimed the lives of two children, violence initially broke out. Unverified reports that armed people of dubious identities were traveling through the area caused the situation to worsen. Officials reported that over ten people suffered slight injuries during the episode, while at least one vehicle was torched by the angry crowd. A group of residents obstructed the movement of security vehicles, and the situation quickly escalated, with vehicles being damaged and set on fire and attempts made to detain security personnel.

To bring the situation under control, reinforcements were deployed, and authorities used controlled measures, including tear gas, to disperse the crowd. Law enforcement officials confirmed that four individuals have been arrested in connection with the incident, while identification of others involved in arson, unlawful gathering, and interference with official duties is still underway. Security forces also conducted a flag march in the locality to restore confidence and normal conditions.

Officials urged people not to circulate unverified claims and warned that anyone participating in violence would face strict legal consequences.

At the same time, the district administration put restrictions in place under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) starting from 5 pm, limiting public movement in the impacted zones until further notice.

Police explained that the trouble began around 1:30 pm when a security convoy was blocked near Thingungei after misleading information about the personnel spread among locals.



Sikkim Fire and Emergency Service

Sikkim, Apr 15: Sikkim Fire and Emergency Service solemnly observed Fire Service Martyr’s Day on 14th April, 2026, in honour of the brave firefighters who laid down their lives in the line of duty. This day holds historical significance as it marks the anniversary of the tragic Bombay Dock Explosion of 1944, one of the most devastating fire disasters in India, where numerous fire personnel lost their lives while combating the massive fire and explosions. Their courage and sacrifice continue to inspire the fire service fraternity across the nation. On this occasion, a two-minute silence was observed at Fire Headquarters and all Fire Stations across the State as a mark of respect and remembrance to the fallen heroes, followed by singing of the Fire Anthem.

Further, SFES has commenced the observance of Fire Service Week 2026 (14th to 21st April), with the theme: “Safe School, Safe Hospital & Fire Safety Aware Society.” The week-long programme including fire safety drills and demonstrations will focus on enhancing fire safety



awareness in schools, healthcare institutions, and community gathering areas. Sports events shall also be organized by all units, aligned with Fit India Movement. Sikkim Fire and Emergency

Service reiterates its commitment to public safety and calls upon citizens to actively participate in fire safety awareness initiatives for building a safer and more resilient society.

Issues notice on Assam plea SC stays Telangana HC order granting transit anticipatory bail to Pawan Khera

Guwahati, Apr 15: In a setback to Congress leader Pawan Khera, the Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the Telangana High Court order granting him one-week transit anticipatory bail in a case registered for levelling allegations against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s wife. A bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and A S Chandurkar issued notice to Khera and others seeking their responses on a plea filed by the Assam government challenging the Telangana High Court order. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Assam government, told the bench that Khera moving the Telangana High Court for bail in a case registered in Assam was a “complete abuse of process” and amounted to “forum choosing”



The bench, while issuing notice on the plea, said the operation of the High Court order would remain stayed. The matter has been posted for hearing after three weeks.

On April 10, the Telangana High Court had granted Khera one-week transit anticipatory bail with

conditions, allowing him time to approach the competent court in Assam. The case stems from an FIR registered at the Guwahati Crime Branch Police Station over allegations arising from Khera’s April 5 press conference, in which he claimed that CM Sarma’s wife,

Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, held multiple passports and foreign properties that were not disclosed in the Chief Minister’s election affidavit for the April 9 Assembly polls. The Sarma family rejected the allegations as false and fabricated.

Earlier, on April 7, an Assam Police team accompanied by Delhi Police personnel had visited Khera’s residence in connection with the case but did not find him. Officials had also claimed recovery of “incriminating” material during searches. The FIR against Khera has been registered under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including sections relating to false statement in connection with an election, right of private defence of body and property, and cheating.

Shift of SC votes: From Left to Didi and then BJP

Guwahati, Apr 15: The current electoral map of constituencies reserved for Scheduled Castes (SC) in West Bengal is widely dispersed yet politically convergent across key corridors. There are 68 SC-reserved Assembly seats, spanning northern districts to the silted expanses of the Sundarbans. The spread is extensive; the clustering is concentrated. What demands attention is not merely the aggregate, but the patterning. Dense concentrations appear in North Bengal—Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur—and in the Matua-dominated tracts of North 24-Parganas and Nadia. These are not incidental cartographic outcomes. They are historically sedimented formations that map onto Rajbongshi and Namashudra settlement geographies shaped by colonial agrarian regimes and post-Partition movements. Geography is not passive; it is political memory.

Voting patterns in these seats have undergone huge transformations—rupture, consolidation, and rupture again. In 2006, the Left Front’s dominance in SC constituencies was complete—electoral, organisational and social. The rupture came in 2011. The Trinamool Congress did not merely gain seats; it absorbed an entire social base. The 2011 shift foregrounded political dignity and anti-incumbency. The 2016 phase reflected welfare-led stabilisation. The 2021 rupture brought identity—particularly caste-inflected and refugee-mediated identity—back to the centre of electoral politics. This divergence complicates reductive readings. Caste in Bengal may not operate with the overt rigidity seen in North India—less declarative, less codified—but it does not disappear. It persists elliptically: subtle, yet consequential. emerges, then, is not a settled alignment but a densely intertwined field of forces. Class doesn’t vanish; caste doesn’t dissolve; identity doesn’t operate in isolation. Each reflects the other—quietly, persistently. understand why these alignments remain fluid, one must return to the longer trajectory of caste assertion in Bengal. The deeper grammar of this politics lies in the Namashudra movement. Its early phase, led by Harichand Thakur and Guruchand Thakur, foregrounded dignity, community con-

solidation, and social restructuring through a religious idiom that was both egalitarian and insurgent. This hardened into political assertion in the early 20th Century, as leaders began seeking institutional representation. Within this conjuncture emerged Jogendra Nath Mandal, a Namashudra leader shaped by the Matua social world, who operated through strategic ties—mostly with All-India Muslim League. It was through this network of SC legislators in Bengal that B R Ambedkar, after failing to secure a seat from the Bombay Presidency, was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1946. Bengal became the conduit for Ambedkar’s entry into the constitutional project—a moment when regional caste politics acquired national consequence. Discontent over land acquisition, accumulated grievances against cadre dominance, and a desire for political dignity translated into a sweeping transfer of SC votes. The Left’s collapse from 57 to 13 seats in SC constituencies was not incremental erosion; it was systemic dislocation. By 2016, this shift consolidated into dominance. The TMC’s near sweep of SC seats reflected the success of a different political idiom. Welfare schemes addressing education, mobility and rural livelihoods deepened the party’s reach. The electorate did not just shift allegiance; it stabilised. For a moment, the field appeared settled. It was not. The 2021 election marked another rupture, but of a different kind. Unlike 2011, which saw a transfer from one hegemonic bloc to another, 2021 produced fragmentation. The BJP emerged as a contender in SC constituencies, winning 32 seats.

In North Bengal, particularly among Rajbongshis, identity-based mobilisation gained traction. In the Bangaon-Ranaghat belt, consolidation of the Matua vote—driven by anxieties around citizenship and the promise of legal recognition—shifted electoral behaviour. The TMC retained a majority but no longer exercised monopoly. Across these four elections, what emerges is not a simple partisan shift but a reconfiguration of the underlying logic of mobilisation. The 2006 moment was anchored in class consolidation.

Minister files defamation suit against TMP MLA

Agartala, Apr 15: Tripura Forest Minister Animesh Debbarma has filed a defamation suit against Tipra Motha Party MLA Ranjit Debbarma for allegedly making “false and derogatory” remarks against him, a senior lawyer said on Tuesday. The petition was moved before the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) court, West Tripura, the minister’s counsel said. Both the minister and the legislator belong to the Tipra Motha Party. In the petition, the forest minister claimed that Ranjit Debbarma, during the cam-

paigns for the TTAADC elections, had made “derogatory remarks” against him. The party MLA alleged that Animesh Debbarma had purchased “two flats and a plot” and “talks were going on to buy a flat in Delhi”, the lawyer said. “These claims are false,” Animesh Debbarma’s counsel Sankar Lodh said. “The Tipra Motha Party’s Ramchandraghat MLA (Ranjit Debbarma) also accused the minister of staying in forest bungalows to attend parties with a few women. This allegation is baseless,” he said.

Meghalaya to launch DNA and linguistic research to trace origins of indigenous tribes

Guwahati, Apr 15: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma introduced a major research initiative aimed at exploring the historical origins of the state’s indigenous communities, including the Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo tribes, on Tuesday, April 14.

He said that the government has formed two separate expert panels to carry out the work, with one dedicated to the Khasi-Jaintia community and the other assigned to the Garo tribe, so that each study can be carried out in a more specialised manner. The study will examine genetic evidence through DNA-related research, alongside detailed analysis of language structures and cultural traditions, while also collaborating with scholars to record the evolution and background of these communities.

After chairing meetings at Tara Ghar State Guest House in Shillong, Sangma said the purpose is to strengthen documentation and uncover additional historical evidence. He further mentioned that the entire project is likely to continue for 18 to 24 months, and findings will be shared in phases as the work progresses. The programme is expected to be formally launched in May.

Officials confirmed that preliminary activities have already begun, with research teams initiating early-stage work since February. The study will also involve coordination with both Indian and overseas institutions to ensure a broader and more detailed examination of tribal origins in Meghalaya.

Prohibitory orders imposed in Bishnupur after protesters clash with security forces

Guwahati, Apr 15: Manipur’s Bishnupur district witnessed heightened unrest after a confrontation broke out between local protesters and security forces on Tuesday, April 14, leading authorities to introduce restrictions to bring the situation under control.

Violence first emerged in Thingungei and nearby Ningthoukhong when residents took to the streets in response to the recent blast at Tronglaobi that resulted in the death of two children. The situation further deteriorated after unverified claims began circulating, suggesting that armed individuals of suspicious identity were moving through the region. Officials reported that over ten people suffered slight injuries during the episode, while at least one vehicle was torched by the angry crowd. Police explained that the trouble began around 1:30 pm when a security convoy was blocked near Thingungei after misleading information about the personnel spread among locals. A group of residents obstructed the movement of security vehicles, and the situation quickly escalated, with vehicles being damaged and set on fire and attempts made to detain security personnel. To bring the situation under control, reinforcements were deployed,



and authorities used controlled measures, including tear gas, to disperse the crowd.

Law enforcement officials confirmed that four individuals have been arrested in connection with the incident, while identification of others involved in arson, unlawful gathering, and interference with official duties is still underway. Security forces also conducted a flag march in the locality to restore confidence and normal

conditions. Officials urged people not to circulate unverified claims and warned that anyone participating in violence would face strict legal consequences. At the same time, the district administration put restrictions in place under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) starting from 5 pm, limiting public movement in the impacted zones until further notice.

The Meghalaya BJP files a formal complaint against the destruction of a statue of Jesus

Guwahati, Apr 15: Meghalaya BJP vice president Bernard Marak filed an FIR on Tuesday over the desecration of a statue of Jesus Christ at Chibinang market in West Garo Hills. In a complaint lodged with the district police chief of West Garo Hills, Abraham Sangma, Marak who is also a member of the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC), alleged that a statue of Lord Jesus Christ was vandalised by a mob. “A mob, allegedly consisting largely of illegal migrants, assembled unlawfully and engaged in acts of violence in Chibinang area on March 9, 2026 which was reportedly instigated and provoked by former MLA and MDC, Esmatur Momnin,” Marak stated in the FIR. Momnin was arrested by West Garo Hills police on Monday soon after

he surrendered before police officials at Nongpoh police station following a period of evasion.

Marak alleged that the mob set fire to several shops and residential houses, causing extensive damage to property and livelihood. “The mob deliberately destroyed and desecrated a statue. Demanding a thorough, impartial, and time-bound investigation be conducted, the BJP leader demanded that all accused persons, including those who instigated and participated in the incident, be identified and arrested. Marak said that protection should be provided to affected residents, witnesses and Christian faithfuls. “Steps be taken to restore law and order and prevent recurrence of such incidents,” the BJP leader said.

Assam govt moves Supreme Court against relief to Khera

Dimapur, Apr 15: The Assam government has moved the Supreme Court challenging the interim relief granted by the Telangana High Court to Congress leader Pawan Khera in the criminal case registered against him by Assam Police over his alleged defamatory remarks against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sarma. As per details available on the apex court’s official website, a Special Leave Petition (SLP) has been filed by the state of Assam assailing the Telangana High Court’s April 10 order granting transit anticipatory bail to Khera for one week.

The matter, registered as Diary No. 22236/2026, was filed late on Sunday and is currently listed as “pending”.

The SLP was mentioned before Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant with a request for urgent listing on Wednesday.

The Telangana High Court had granted interim protection from arrest to Khera to enable him to approach the competent court in Assam and seek regular bail in connection with the FIR lodged by Assam Police. Granting relief, a single-judge Bench of Justice K. Sujana had directed that the Congress leader be released on anticipatory bail for one week in the event of arrest. Khera had approached the Telangana High Court seeking transit anticipatory bail after Assam Police registered a case against him for allegedly making defamatory and malicious allegations against Riniki Bhuyan Sarma. During the hearing before the Telangana High Court, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Khera, had argued that the FIR was a product of political vendetta and that the Congress leader was being targeted for questioning the Assam Chief Minister and his family. He had contended that the allegations, even if assumed to be incorrect,



would at best constitute defamation and not warrant arrest.

Opposing the plea, Assam Advocate General Devajit Saikia had questioned the maintainability of the petition before the Telangana High Court, arguing that Khera, being a resident of Delhi, had no compelling reason to seek relief outside Assam.

The Assam Police have booked Khera under multiple provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including charges of defamation, forgery and criminal conspiracy, following his allegations that Riniki Bhuyan Sarma possessed multiple foreign passports, undeclared luxury properties in Dubai, and shell companies in the United States. The controversy had triggered a sharp political confrontation between the BJP and Congress ahead of the Assam Assembly elections, with the Congress rallying behind Khera and accusing the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government of using the police machinery to silence political opponents. Senior Congress leaders had defended Khera and maintained that instead of initiating criminal action, the Assam Chief Minister and his family should respond to the allegations levelled against them.

National Youth Boxing Championship Kicks Off in Assam

Guwahati, Apr 15: The eighth Men’s and Women’s National Youth Boxing Championship began at Assam Don Bosco University in Sonapur near Guwahati on Monday, drawing around 800 participants, including players, coaches and technical officials from 33 states.

Organised by the Assam Amateur Boxing Association (AABA) in collaboration with the Boxing Federation of India (BFI), the championship will run till April 19 and will serve as a selection platform for India’s youth teams for the Youth Olympic Games and the Youth World Championships.

The host state made a positive start, with two Assam boxers registering wins on the opening day.

In the boys’ 55kg category, Mohammad Ayan defeated Bharkhand’s Shivam Dubey 5-0 to advance to the second round. In the girls’ 60kg category, Pun-sang secured a 4-1 win over Punjab’s Samarjit Kaur in her opening bout.

However, it was a mixed day overall for Assam. In the boys’ 70kg category, Arman Khan lost to Uttarakhand’s Dipesh Singh Adhikari in the first round. In the girls’ 51kg category, Sunena Akhtar Amin also bowed out after losing to Mizoram’s T.C Malsawm-kimi. Three more Assam boxers were scheduled to compete later in the day. Mridupam Barua was set to feature in the boys’ 75kg category, while Nishita Konwar (65kg) and Astina Saikia (above 80kg) were

to compete in the girls’ events.

The championship was formally inaugurated by Guwahati MP Bijuli Kalita Medhi. Among those present were BFI President Ajay Singh, Olympic medalist Lovlina Borgohain, junior world champion Ankushita Boro, AABA President Siddhartha Bhattacharya, its Secretary Hemanta Kumar Kalita, and Assam Don Bosco University vice chancellor Fr J Paley.“Hosting the championship will provide a strong opportunity for Assam’s young boxers to perform well and push for selection to international events. The competition is part of a broader effort to prepare talent for the 2028 Olympics,” the AABA secretary said.

Siang Project Study Gets 70% Local Support, Says Khandu

Itanagar, Apr 15: Pema Khandu, the chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, stated on Tuesday, April 14, that the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP) is a significant national project with significance related to security requirements, environmental equilibrium, and economic advancement.

Approximately 70% of the villagers have already signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for the project’s pre-feasibility study, the chief minister informed a public gathering during his visit to Riga village in Siang district. He also called on remaining residents to extend their support, saying the project offers wider benefits for the region.

According to him, the project would play a role in controlling floods, maintaining steady river flow, improving water regulation and protecting communities living downstream. He further stated that it would help protect the Siang river ecosystem while also improving India’s preparedness in view of developments taking place in upstream regions.Responding to concerns, Khandu made it clear that the current study stage does not mean approval for construction.

He added that consultations with the public will take place in later phases and that final decisions will be taken only after discussions with affected

communities.

The project, estimated at around Rs 1.5 lakh crore, is expected to bring major gains in infrastructure development, job creation, agriculture-related growth and compensation support for landowners, he said.

During the same programme, development works worth Rs 196.44 crore were also initiated and foundation stones were laid, according to reports.

These works include staff housing, a community hall at New Hiram in Riga, a women’s police station at Pangin and a multipurpose cultural hall at Pegging Bote. He also began construction of a 120-bed hostel and other infrastructure upgrades at Government Higher Secondary School in Pangin, along with road improvement works at Boleng headquarters.Separately, several completed projects were inaugurated, including an Industrial Training Institute (ITI) at Pangin, a two-lane road linking BRTF Rengo with the district hospital in Boleng, a 70-metre Bailey bridge over the Subbung river on the Dosing–Pareng–Yibuk route, and a fire station at Boleng.At Riga, Boleng and across the district, the chief minister unveiled plans for several new projects, which include a circuit house, an upgraded water supply system and a stadium to be developed for public use.

Census 2027: Self-enumeration to start in Arunachal from Apr 16

Itanagar, Apr 15: The self-enumeration process under the Census 2027 will begin across Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday.

Arunachal Pradesh Directorate of Census Operations Assistant Director (Training) Chafikhur Rahman said this important exercise will continue till April 30, allowing residents to provide their

household details through self-enumeration. Self-enumeration is a simple and convenient process that allows individuals and families to provide their information through official platforms, he said. Rahman said the process helps ensure accurate and timely data collection, urging residents to participate actively and submit cor-

rect details about their household, housing conditions and basic amenities. Following this phase, the Houselisting and Housing Census (HLO) field operations will begin on May 1 and continue till May 30.

During this period, trained enumerators will visit households across the state to collect data directly.Rahman

said these visits are essential to verify and complete the information gathered. Speaking about the launch, officials emphasized the importance of the census in shaping future policies. “Accurate data is the backbone of planning. Self-enumeration gives citizens a chance to contribute directly to this national exercise,” said a senior census

officer. The Census 2027 is expected to provide crucial insights into Arunachal Pradesh’s demographic profile, socio-economic conditions, and cultural diversity. With self-enumeration beginning on April 16, the state is preparing for a landmark exercise that blends tradition with technology to capture the voice of its people.

International Maha Sangken Festival Begins in Arunachal Pradesh

Namsai, Apr 15: The International Maha Sangken Festival 2026 commenced in a spiritually enriching manner at the Golden Pagoda (Kongmu Kham), Namsai in Arunachal Pradesh, celebrating the vibrant culture of the Tai-Khamti community with rituals, traditional dance and international participation. Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein led the opening day’s sacred events, including the symbolic “Descent of Lord Buddha to Earth” at dawn and a ceremonial procession.

In his message, Mein extended Sangken greetings, highlighting the festival as a celebration of both spiritual devotion and seasonal renewal. The event featured the ritual washing of monks’ feet and a touching tradition where families washed the feet of elders to seek blessings. “Sangken symbolises purification, peace, and prosperity,” Mein said, noting the pouring of water as a gesture of washing away sins and welcoming the spring. Cultural highlights included traditional Tai-Kham-



ti performances and mesmerizing dances by Thai cultural troupes, drawing tourists and devotees alike. Mein emphasised that the festival serves as a cultural tourism initiative, showcasing Arunachal’s rich heri-

tage to a global audience. The International Maha Sangken Festival will continue over the next two days, strengthening Arunachal Pradesh’s identity as a centre for spiritual and cultural tourism.

Itanagar Job Fair Draws 40+ Firms, Offers Diverse Employment Opportunities

Itanagar, Apr 15: Over 40 companies from diverse sectors including healthcare, hospitality, banking, technology, logistics, and human resources participated in the Annual Job Fair 2026 at the state capital on Wednesday.The job fair, organised under the aegis of the Department of Youth Affairs, took place at D.K Convention Hall, offering a major platform for job seekers to connect directly with recruiters.According to the organisers, the participating companies included prominent names such as Axis Bank, Zomato, Buzzworks, Team Plus HR Services Pvt Ltd, Omkar MSPL, Talent Acquaintance, Hekam India Pvt Ltd, Ishubk Home Healthcare Services, Omika Home Health Care, Shivam Healthcare, and Raysons Manpower, among others.Firms from emerging sectors such as agro-tech, digital services, design consultancy, and skill development were also part of the event, reflecting the expanding employment landscape in the state. Companies like X5 Agrotech, Chocki Technologies, My Design Minds, PeopleKart Pvt Ltd and Lernem offered oppor-

■ *Organized by the Department of Youth Affairs, the fair aimed to connect job seekers directly with recruiters.*

tunities across multiple domains.In addition, organisations from hospitality and mobility sectors, including Donyi Polo International Hotel and Far Rides, along with local enterprises such as GoArunachal, Nibo-Robo, and Dibang Egg Farm, showcased employment prospects in tourism and allied industries.The fair also witnessed participation from foundations, consultancies, and training institutions, indicating a focus on skill-building and career development alongside direct recruitment.Officials said the initiative aimed to bridge the gap between employers and aspiring youth by providing a common platform for interaction, recruitment, and career guidance.

Wangki Lowang, Minister for Forest and Environment, Coal and Mining, along with Secretary of Youth Affairs Abu Tayeng, attended the event.

BJP, Opposition Lock Horns Over Delimitation

New Delhi, Apr 15: The government and Opposition are headed for a showdown in the Lok Sabha with the tabling of the Women’s Reservation Amendments Bill on Thursday. During the three-day special Parliament session amidst ongoing Assembly polls, while the government will move to fast-track other delimitation reforms needed to see through the women’s reservation law, the Opposition will look to corner the Centre over linking it with the delimitation exercise and timing of the debate.

While most political parties broadly extend their support to a 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies, many Opposition parties have raised a red flag against linking it with delimitation. On its part, the government is rallying support for The Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill 2026, calling it a “big-ticket reform”. The Opposition has decided to oppose the bill due to its provisions on delimitation. On the

eve of the special three-day sitting of Parliament, Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi said, “The Congress party unequivocally supports women’s reservation. Parliament unanimously passed the bill in 2023; it is already part of our Constitution. What the government is proposing now has nothing to do with women’s reservation. This amendment is an attempted power grab using delimitation and gerrymandering.”

“We will not allow ‘Hissa Chori’ from OBC, Dalit and Adivasi communities by ignoring the caste census data. We will also not allow Southern, North Eastern, North Western and smaller states to be treated unfairly,” Mr Gandhi said. Ahead of the tabling of the bill, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India stands on the brink of making one of the most significant decisions of the 21st century as Parliament meets to end “decades of waiting” by amending the Women’s Reservation Act for its implementation in 2029.

Mizoram Governor releases former CM Zoramthanga’s memoir

● *Mizoram Governor, General Vijay Kumar Singh (retd), released the memoir of former Chief Minister Zoramthanga titled “From Guerrilla Fighter to Chief Minister” at the Aijal Club in Aizawl.*
● *The Governor described the book as a significant historical document that offers valuable insights into Mizoram’s political history, chronicling Zoramthanga’s journey from insurgency to democratic governance.*

Aizawl, Apr 15: Mizoram Governor, General Vijay Kumar Singh (retd), formally released the memoir of former Chief Minister Zoramthanga titled “From Guerrilla Fighter to Chief Minister”, at the Aijal Club in Aizawl on Tuesday.

Speaking at the launch event, the Governor described the book as far more than a mere personal narrative. He lauded it as a significant and reliable historical document that provides valuable insights into important phases of Mizoram’s political history. “The book chronicles the author’s remarkable journey from insurgency to responsible democratic governance and statesmanship,” he said. The Governor noted that the memoir serves as a powerful reminder that dialogue, understanding, and perseverance can overcome even the most difficult challenges. He praised Zoramthanga’s dedication and lifelong desire to learn, saying these qualities reflect exceptional political acumen and true statesmanship. “It shows that if there is a will, there is a way,” he remarked.

General Singh highlighted that Mizoram’s history is unique -- a journey from struggle and conflict, through



reconciliation, to lasting peace and progress. He commended the author for documenting history based on his own lived experiences and expressed hope that the memoir would help the younger generation better understand the complexities of conflict while appreciating the true value of peace and the strength of democratic institutions. The Governor believes the book will prove to be a valuable resource for students, scholars, policymakers, and citizens alike.

Author and former Chief Minister Zoramthanga described the release of the book as a deeply significant milestone in his life. He revealed that he had meticulously maintained personal diaries for 50 years, which served as key references while writing the memoir. He emphasised that most of the events described in the book were personally witnessed or experienced by him. Zoramthanga expressed sincere gratitude to all

those who assisted in the preparation and publication of the book. He hoped that the memoir would not only benefit the Mizo people but also enable readers from other communities to gain a clearer and deeper understanding of Mizo history.Former Chief Minister also shared a memorable personal anecdote, recalling that he had first met the Governor decades earlier during the 1971 East Pakistan War, when General Singh was serving as a young Lieutenant in the Indian Army. Zoramthanga remarked that it was a remarkable and unexpected coincidence that the same officer is now releasing his book as the Governor of Mizoram.During the event, Dr Lalnunkimi Colney delivered an insightful book preview.The memoir is published by Penguin Random House. Spanning 430 pages and priced at Rs 400, the book is now available for purchase at bookstores and can also be ordered online via Amazon.

Hatighuli Erosion Work Under Fire from Local Groups

Tinsukia, Apr 15: The State Water Resources Department has come under fire from local organizations for what they call “superficial and ineffective” anti-erosion measures in Hatighuli, which is located in the Dibru-Saikhowa region of Assam’s Tinsukia district, as the monsoon draws near.

The problem stems from the sparsely distributed and ill-planned use of geo-bags along susceptible riverbank sections, which locals and experts worry may not be able to survive the Brahmaputra River’s currents, endangering lives, houses, and farms. The disputed work, carried

out near Kenopsa (also locally known as Canopus or Kenopus), has led to dissatisfaction among erosion-affected communities who have experienced repeated land loss over the years.

Locals allege that the current intervention lacks both scientific backing and the scale required to withstand the river’s intensity, especially during peak monsoon flows. The Forum termed the initiative an “eyewash,” warning that relying on a handful of geo-bags to resist the Brahmaputra’s force “borders on absurdity.”

Members cautioned that such measures are likely to

be washed away once water levels rise, making the intervention ineffective. The Forum reiterated its long-standing demand for a comprehensive and scientific solution to the crisis. It pointed to the altered course of the Dibang River originating from Arunachal Pradesh as a key factor contributing to erosion in the Hatighuli region.

According to the group, unless the Dibang is redirected to its original channel or effectively managed, temporary measures like geo-bags will continue to fail.

Adding to the concern, local residents have alleged

possible involvement of vested interests among certain officials, contractors, and political actors, suggesting that the persistence of the erosion issue may benefit select groups.

While such claims remain unverified, they reflect growing frustration and mistrust among affected communities. The Forum has urged the government to act urgently by implementing durable, scientifically designed solutions, including reinforced embankments and structural interventions such as geotube spurs. With river levels already beginning their seasonal rise, any delay could

lead to further erosion in the coming months. Hatighuli, situated in the erosion-prone Dibru-Saikhowa landscape, has long been affected by the Brahmaputra’s shifting channels, heavy sediment load, and seasonal surges. Decades of erosion have repeatedly displaced families and damaged agricultural land, highlighting the need for long-term, sustainable solutions.

As pressure mounts, the Forum has said that symbolic actions will not be sufficient.

The people of Hatighuli now look to the authorities for decisive, evidence-based intervention before the monsoon leads to further erosion.

Assam Police bust cybercrime racket in Barpeta

Barpeta, Apr 15: Assam Police has busted a cybercrime racket operating out of Azad Nagar in Barpeta Road, arresting eight accused in a coordinated operation led by the Crime Branch.

According to officials, the accused were running a well-organised cyber fraud network from a rented accommodation. The house, owned by a retired army personnel identified as Kazi Lutfur Rahman, had been taken on rent by the group, who allegedly used it as a temporary operational base to carry out illegal activities.

Police sources said the racket had set up a makeshift office inside the premises and was involved in siphoning off money from unsuspecting bank customers using sophisticated online fraud

techniques. The operation was carried out under the leadership of ASP Samiran Baishya, who supervised the raid and arrests.

Notably, three other cybercrime accused had already been arrested on Monday as part of the ongoing investigation, indicating the larger scale and network of the operation.

During the raid, police recovered several electronic devices, including mobile phones, laptops, and documents suspected of having been used in executing the fraud. Authorities are now probing possible interstate links and expect more arrests as the investigation progresses.

Further investigation is underway, and police have not ruled out the possibility of more arrests in the case.

North East Chronicle

APRIL 16 2026 VOL 02 NO. 53



The Visual Breakthrough

Redefining Indian Music

April 4, 2026, marked a striking moment where politics and culture intersected in an unusual yet meaningful way when Prime Minister Narendra Modi met renowned composer and innovator Ramesh Vinayakam and his family in Chennai during an intense phase of election campaigning. While such visits are often associated with strategy and public outreach, this particular interaction stood out for its deeper cultural resonance. Amid discussions with political leaders and campaign activities, the Prime Minister chose to engage with a musician whose work is rooted not in electoral politics but in the preservation and transformation of India’s classical heritage. The meeting symbolized an important recognition—that India’s artistic traditions are not relics of the past but living systems capable of innovation, global relevance, and technological evolution. At the centre of this recognition lies Ramesh Vinayakam’s most ambitious contribution: the Gamaka Box Notation System (GBNS). To understand its significance, one must first appreciate a fundamental challenge in Indian classical music. Unlike Western classical music, which relies heavily on written notation to capture melodies and harmonies, Indian music has historically been transmitted orally. Students learn by listening to their guru (teacher), imitating subtle nuances over years of practice. While this method ensures depth and authenticity, it also makes the system difficult to access, preserve, and globalize. In simple terms, the Gamaka Box Notation System is a visual tool designed to show how a musical note should actually be performed—not just which note to sing or play, but how to move within and around it. In Indian classical music, notes are rarely static. They bend, oscillate, glide, and stretch in highly expressive ways known as “gamakas”. These gamakas are not decorative extras; they are the very soul of a raga. Nevertheless, traditional notation systems only indicate the basic notes leaving the performer to learn the intricate movements through years of listening. The Gamaka Box changes this by introducing a simple but powerful visual framework. Above each note, a small box is drawn with three horizontal lines. The middle line represents the main note being played, while the top and bottom lines represent the adjacent notes in the scale. Inside this box, curves, lines, and symbols are drawn to indicate how the note should move over time. A smooth curve might show a gentle glide between pitches, while a jagged line could indicate a rapid oscillation. Dots may suggest pauses or sustained notes. In essence, the box becomes a miniature map of the note’s journey, capturing its motion rather than just its position. This innovation has the potential to fundamentally transform how Indian classical music is learned and shared. For students, it dramatically reduces the time required to grasp complex phrases. Instead of relying solely on repeated listening, they can visually understand what is happening within the music. For international learners who may not have access to a traditional teacher, the system opens a door that was previously difficult to unlock. It provides a level of clarity that allows musicians from different cultural backgrounds to engage with Indian music more authentically. Beyond education, the system also has implications for preservation. Many unique styles, or “banis”, music are at risk of fading away as older generations pass on. By documenting these styles in a precise visual format, the Gamaka Box offers a way to archive them for future generations. It transforms an ephemeral art form into something that can be stored, studied, and revisited. Technologically, the possibilities are equally compelling. Modern music software and artificial intelligence systems often struggle to interpret Indian classical music because they are designed around Western concepts of fixed pitches and discrete notes. The Gamaka Box, with its emphasis on continuous movement and microtonal variation, provides a framework that could be adapted for digital formats. This could lead to more accurate virtual instruments, better music analysis tools, and even AI systems capable of generating or accompanying Indian classical performances with greater authenticity. When viewed in a global context, the Gamaka Box joins a long line of attempts to create universal or culturally adaptive notation systems. Western staff notation, the most widely used system in the world, excels at representing harmony and structured compositions but falls short when dealing with fluid pitch movements. Other systems, such as cypher notation in East Asia or specialized microtonal notations in contemporary music, attempt to address similar challenges. However, many of these or remain too abstract for practical learning. What sets the Gamaka Box apart is its balance between specificity and intuitiveness. It does not attempt to replace existing notation systems entirely but rather complements them. It acts as a layer that adds depth to the basic structure, making it particularly suited to the needs of Indian classical music. In this sense, it represents a “best practice” approach—one that respects tradition while embracing innovation. The system has received significant praise from musicians and scholars. Many have described it as a breakthrough that finally makes it possible to transcribe the elusive gamakas with clarity. Some have even noted that pieces which would traditionally take months or years to learn can now be grasped in a fraction of the time. Such endorsements highlight the system’s potential to democratize access to a highly specialized art form. However, the Gamaka Box is not without its critics. One of the primary concerns is that excessive detail in notation might reduce the role of the performer’s creativity. Indian classical music is deeply rooted in improvisation, and no two performances of a raga are ever identical. By prescribing exact movements, there is a risk that the music could become rigid, losing the personal expression that defines it. Some scholars argue that music should not be reduced to a set of visual instructions, as such an approach may turn a living art into a mechanical exercise. Another challenge lies in practicality. Notating an entire composition using the Gamaka Box can be time-consuming and complex.

Bangla folk music is influenced by rural living and waterways

Bangladesh is criss-crossed by innumerable rivers and rivulets. These rivers with their might and whims continue to shape the land mass of the country, the largest delta on earth. The vast expenses of water in tranquility or in fury also shape the lives of its people. Water is their life. They sing with passion in praise, fear, love for the creator or his creation, nature included. They sing in funfare or mundane pains. Depending on the composition and tune, we term these outbursts form the core of their hearts as Baul, Bhatiyali, Bhawayea, Jari-Shari, Murshidi-Marfati or by the very name of the composer. Folk music of a community, uninfluenced by any sophisticated musical rules or any standard music styles. Bangladesh has a rich folk music which includes both religious and secular songs. Folk music may be described as that type of ancient music which springs from the heart of a community, based on its natural style of expression uninfluenced by the rules of classical music and modern popular songs. Any mode or form created by the combination of tune, voice and dance may be described as music. Thus, the combination of folk song, folk dance, and folk tune may be called folk music. For example, Baul songs are a combination of tune, music and dance. Folk music has the following characteristics: (i) It is composed by rural folk on the basis of ancient rules transmitted orally; (ii) These ancient rules of music have not been influenced by classical or modern music; (iii) Folk songs may be sung in groups or individually; (iv) No regular practice is required for folk music; (v) It is composed and performed by illiterate or semi-literate people; (vi) It is a spontaneous expression in easy language, local dialect, and simple tune; (vii) Both words and tune are appealing; (viii) Despite its universal appeal it uses local dialect; (ix) It depends upon nature and the rural environment; (x) It is an explicit manifestation of the joys and sorrows of daily life; (xi) It uses simple and natural rhythms;

(xii) It contains a strong emotive expression of human love and separation. In Bangladesh folk music has great variety, with songs being composed on the culture, festivals, views of life, natural beauty, rivers and rural and riverine life. These songs are also about social inequality and poverty, about the material world and the supernatural. Mystical songs have been composed using the metaphors of rivers and boats. Since the country is basically riverine, the Bhatiyali forms an important genre of folk music. Folk music is formed and develops according to the environment. Differences in the natural environment are reflected in the people of the different regions. The dialects too vary across the different regions. Bangladeshi folk music therefore varies from region to region. Thus there are the northern Bhawaiya, the eastern Bhatiyali and the southwestern Baul songs. The culture and the lifestyle of the different tribes have also influenced folk music. Tribes like the Santal, Garo, Hajong, Chakma, Manipuri, Tripuri, Marma, etc., have interacted with ethnic Bengali culture and lifestyle over the years. The interaction has been clearly reflected in the richness of folk music. Folk songs may be sung individually or in chorus. Folk songs sung individually include Baul, Bhatiyali, Murshidi, Marfati, while songs sung in chorus include Kavigan, Leto, Alkap and Gambhira. Some songs are regional in character, but others are common to both Bangladesh and West Bengal. Similarly, some songs belong distinctively to one religious community, Hindu or Muslim; others cross religious boundaries. Some songs belong exclusively to men, others to women, while some are sung by both men and women. Thus only women compose and sing vratagan and Meyeli Geet, but both men and women participate in the ‘roof-beating’ songs that are sung while beating down and firming rooftops. Basically, Bangla folk music is divided into two broad divisions - rhythmic and arhythmic commonly



known as Sari and Bhatiyali, respectively. They have also been termed as ‘indoor’ and ‘outdoor’ music. But these epithets do not reveal their real inner character. Rhythmic songs are generally group songs represented mostly by work songs though there are rare cases of arhythmic group songs also. The marriage songs sung by women in groups are arhythmic. Songs sung solo or individually without dance, without any manual work integrated into or without any musical instrument in the hand of the musician or any of his associates, are arhythmic in the real sense of the term. Unlike ‘outdoor’ songs which are sung in group, Bhatiyali, which is considered to be in the ‘indoor’ category of songs, is sung individually in loneliness. It reveals the inner self most faithfully with warmth and fidelity and as such has not only been the very best specimen of Bangla folk song, but also the very basis of it. It expresses the intensity of emotions like love and devotion and its love songs were the feelings of frustration in love, rather than joy in it. It also covers religious folk songs, absolute mental and physical relaxation for the villagers, especially of the boatman on the river holding the helm straight without any effort while going downstream. The word Bhatiyali literally means going down the tide. Rhythmic song in Bangla is known as Sari which is generally group song and is integrated into some sort of manual work

or rhythmic dance. Sari is an action song. Bhatiyali is slow and without any action but Sari is fast. The best specimen of Sari is that which is sung during boat races by those who pull the oars, keeping time (Tala) by beating on the raised edges of the racing boats. Bhatiyali is the solo and Sari the group song of boats. In textual and compositional variety Baul forms the richest stream of Bangla folk-music. Baul is a mystical cult pertaining to a spiritual discipline which relates to philosophical thoughts about a system of its own. Baul is popularly described as a folk religion where the proponents speak everything in songs. The greatest Baul poets, like Lalon Shah (1774 to 1890) of Kusthia, have left behind excellent Baul songs on metaphysical thoughts, rich both in textual wealth and music. There have been countless other Bauls all over the different regions of Bangladesh and west Bengal in India, each belonging to his own regional musical style. The aim of life as conceived by the mystic poets and reflected in their songs is to reach God through love and devotion. This has little to do with rituals and ceremonials observed in orthodox society. A mystic is best defined as one who has intimate spiritual experience of the divine being. The mystical element found in their songs may be explained by reference to the influence of Persian sufism. The three types of mystics, Baul, Marfati and Musshidi, have much in

common. Towering poets like Radha Raman (1834-1915) and Hason Raja (1854-1922) of Sunamganj in Bangladesh have left behind excellent mystic songs on metaphysical thoughts, underpinned by divine love, rich both in textual wealth and music. Folk music has a basic style of composition and can be classified into four groups: First, tunes consisting of ‘Sa Ra Ma Pa’, secondly, ‘Sa Ga Ma Pa’, thirdly, ‘Sa Ra Ga Pa’, and fourthly, ‘Sa Ra Ga Ma Pa’. Folk music strictly follows this pattern which is followed only in classical music. Suresh Chandra Chakraborty has observed two aspects of folk songs such as: (i) lyric songs such as Bhatiyali, Baul etc, and (ii) songs like Bhater Gan which cannot even be properly termed as poetry. All folk songs in the world usually involve the pentatonic scale, which is found in Bangla folk songs as well as in Santal and Garo-Hajang songs. The folk music of Bangladesh is different from other music not only because of its distinctive mode but also because of the richness of its seventh note. Apart from its tunes, Bangla folk music is also distinct in its rhythm. Many of the ragas in the classical tradition like Abher, Saveri, Malavi, Kanadi, Pahadi, Madh and Vangal have been named after folk music. Classical ragas like Jhinjhit, Desh, Bhairavi, Bhupali, Vibhas, etc., resemble Bhatiyali which involves the use of a tune belonging to classical tunes such as Khamvaj and Pilu.

Quite often it is similar to classical ragas like Bhimpalashri and Patadip. With regard to its style, Bhatiyali comes close to the classical tunes of Khamvaj and Kafi. The traces of Khamvaj or Pilu are also found in the Jhumur. Baul songs resemble the musical ragas of Vehag, Khamvaj, Bhairavi, Vilaval, etc. In some folk songs both Bhimpalashri and Khamvaj ragas may be noticed. Two modes of Jhinjhit have been recognised. The first goes only up to the seventh pitch of Dhaivat in classical music. In the second the scale is as follows: Sa Ra Ma/ Pa Ma Ga Ra Sa Na Dha Pa/ Pa Dha Sa Ra Ga Ma Ga/ Dha Sa. In folk music Jhinjhit varies slightly: Sa Ra Ma/ Pa Ma Ga Ra Sa Na Dha/ Dha Sa Sa Ra Ga, Ra Ga Ma. It should be remembered that in most folk songs the tune of the constant stave and the middle staves is nearly identical. For example, the first few lines of a famous song composed by Gagan Harkara, ami kothay pabo tare/ amar maner manus ye re (Where shall I find him, the man after my heart?), illustrates the use of seven pure notes and sometimes the use of soft melody. The tune mostly used in the Bhatiyali, called Kashauli Jhinjhit, is as follows: Sa Ra Ma, Pa Ma Ga Dha Sa Na Dha, Dha Sa Sa Ra Ga, Ra Ga Sa. An analysis of folk songs shows a variety of rhythms and tempo. Sari and Jhumur are sung at a quick tempo, and Bhatiyali and Bhawaiya at a delayed tempo. In conclusion, it may be said that each category of Bangla folk or traditional songs has a peculiar characteristic tune. Nonetheless, the tunes of all folk songs ultimately smack of a folk air which is distinct from modern or classical music. The fact of the matter is that forms of folk music are different. Strands of the tunes find adequate expression. This reminds one of the several kinds of laboratories in which different branches of science are pursued. And just as results of experiments of the several laboratories are eventually brought together and synthesised, so a synthesis occurs in the field of tunes.

Close the funding gap for female entrepreneurs

Imagine a woman in Dhaka who has spent three years building a small textile business. She has loyal customers, a product that keeps people coming back, and a clear vision for growth. All she needs is a loan to expand. But when she walks into a bank, the conversation turns to collateral, and she has none to offer. And just like that, her application goes nowhere. She is one of the 28 lakh women-led SME owners in Bangladesh, who contribute to the economy, but rarely receives the investment needed to survive. Bangladesh has been producing the right language around women’s entrepreneurship for years, but what seems not to keep pace is action. Women-led enterprises represent the majority of the country’s \$2.8 billion financing gap in the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector, according to an estimate by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in 2023. The primary obstacle is collateral: women in Bangladesh disproportionately lack assets registered in their own names, which are the standard requirement for formal lending. That structural barrier has a predictable consequence: less than six percent of Bangladeshi women entrepreneurs are able to obtain bank loans. Men, by contrast, receive roughly 93 percent of startup loans from banks. Those are not figures from a country that has decided to overlook women found-



ers but from a country that keeps describing the problem without redesigning the system that produces it. Bangladesh Bank’s 2025 startup financing policy was an important step to bridge this gap. It allowed banks to move beyond traditional lending and make equity investments in startups. Interest rates have been capped at four percent, loan limits raised to Tk 8 crore, and the minimum age for founders lowered to 21. Most importantly, it introduced a mandate that at least 10 percent of startup financing should be allocated to women entrepreneurs. This directive matters but 10 percent is a floor, not an aspiration. A 2026 study examined fe-

male-owned SMEs in Bangladesh and found that gender-based discrimination, entrenched by both local tradition and colonial-era frameworks, restricts women’s mobility and their participation in professional networks. This is particularly difficult to accept when we take into consideration that women-led startups globally outperform male-led counterparts by over 60 percent. Yet in 2024, all-female founding teams captured just only around two percent of global venture capital. The underinvestment is not explained by performance. It is explained by proximity: who investors know, who gets introduced into their networks, and whose

story matches the picture investors have already formed of what a successful founder looks like. Bangladesh has a version of this problem that goes beyond investor bias. The network that matters for early-stage funding here is small, largely male, and inaccessible to founders who did not come up through the right institutions. Women founders describe doing everything right and still finding that the room where decisions get made is one they were never invited into. The remedies are not a mystery. They have been identified across enough contexts, in enough sectors, and by enough women founders themselves, that continu-

ing to present this as an unsolved problem is itself a kind of evasion. Collateral reform is the most urgent fix. A financing system that requires land title or property as the basis for lending will keep excluding women founders regardless of what targets are announced. Revenue-based lending and peer group models have worked in comparable markets. They require banks to change their internal processes, not just their public commitments. Mentorship is the second gap. The Harvard Business Review has identified poor matching and a lack of ongoing honest dialogue as one of the core reasons why mentoring programmes fail. For women founders in Bangladesh, that failure is made worse by a shortage of female mentors who successfully raised capital in this market. Network access is the third. Research revealed structured introductions to capital have 3.7 times more impact than general networking events. Bangladesh has competitions and accelerators. What it lacks is the pipeline that moves women founders from those programmes into rooms where capital decisions are made. And then there is the question of who makes the decisions. A financing ecosystem with very few women in senior roles at venture capital firms, banks, and accelerators will keep replicating the same blind spots, regardless of the targets written into policy.

FII withdrawals and a spike in crude, the rupee falls 52 paise to a two-week low

New Delhi: The rupee depreciated by 52 paise against the US dollar on Monday, recording its steepest drop in a fortnight, as escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia and a sharp spike in crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiment and triggered foreign fund outflows. The domestic currency opened at 93.30 per dollar in the interbank foreign exchange market and traded in a narrow band of 93.25 to 93.40 during the session. It eventually settled at 93.35, compared with Friday's close of 92.83. The decline follows heightened uncertainty after US-Iran talks failed over the weekend, alongside concerns over a potential US blockade of Iran's ports, which has stoked fears of supply disruptions and pushed global crude oil prices above the \$100 per barrel mark.

The rupee's weakness comes despite recent regulatory measures by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) aimed at curbing volatility in the



currency market. According to a Reuters report, the central bank is also examining the methods used by large banks to unwind rupee arbitrage positions and is considering mandating the reporting of offshore rupee derivative trades. In late March and early April, the RBI introduced two rounds of stabilisation measures. It first capped banks' net open rupee positions at \$100 million, replacing the ear-

lier limit of up to 25 per cent of their capital. Subsequently, the central bank barred banks from offering rupee non-deliverable forwards (NDFs) to both resident and non-resident clients seeking to exploit arbitrage opportunities. RBI deputy governor T. Rabi Shankar had earlier said the steps were aimed at easing "disruptive volatility" and addressing artificial tightening of liquidity in the cur-

rency market. "Our objective was to cool that phase," he said.

Analysts attributed the latest fall in the rupee to a combination of rising crude prices and a strengthening US dollar amid global risk aversion.

"The rupee extended its losing streak, recording its sharpest drop in a fortnight, as crude prices surged following geopolitical developments," said Dilip Parmar of HDFC Securities. Echoing similar views, Anuj Choudhury of Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said continued gains in the dollar and elevated oil prices could exert further pressure on the rupee. He added that sustained foreign institutional investor (FII) outflows from domestic equities may also weigh on the currency. Brent crude was trading 5.6 per cent higher at \$100.52 per barrel, after touching \$103.88 earlier in futures trade. Foreign portfolio investors have remained net sellers in April so far, with equity outflows amounting to \$4.9 billion.

Pakistan stock market rebounds over 4,300

New Delhi: Pakistani equities recovered on Tuesday, buoyed by easing oil prices and renewed optimism over potential US-Iran talks, which lifted overall investor sentiment.

The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 index was last seen trading at 164,923.14, up 4,329 points or 2.7 per cent. The KSE-30 index also advanced 1,302.99 points or 2.68 per cent to 49,762.75. The upmove came as global oil prices declined sharply, with markets betting on a possible diplomatic breakthrough between the United States and Iran. Brent crude fell 2.7 per cent to \$96.66 per barrel, while US crude dropped 3 per cent to \$96.13, as traders assessed reports that both sides remain open to dialogue despite stalled negotiations over the weekend.

News agency Reuters reported, citing sources, that both sides had kept the door open to dialogue, while a US official pointed to forward movement towards a potential agreement. The sharp rebound in Pakistani equities follows a steep decline in the previous session, when the KSE-100 index had slumped 6,600.05 points or 3.95 per cent to close at 160,591.33. Mean-



while, Indian equity markets remained shut on Tuesday on account of Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Jayanti and are set to resume trading on Wednesday. On Monday, Indian benchmarks extended their losses after a brief one-day pause, dragged lower by broad-based selling across sectors. The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 702.68 points or 0.91 per cent to settle at 76,847.57, while the NSE Nifty50 declined 207.95 points or 0.86 per cent to close at 23,842.65.

Master investors RK Damani Mukul Agrawal

New Delhi: Ace investors' portfolio: Seasoned investors including Radhakishan Damani, Mukul Mahavir Agrawal, Vijay Kedia, Sunil Singhania, Madhusudan Kela and others have made some new additions to their portfolio. However, some of these stocks have been part of their portfolios previously also. However, their shareholding would have slipped below one per cent in them, removing their name from the key shareholders' list. All the listed companies have to mandatorily disclose their shareholding pattern on a quarterly basis, naming all the investors who own at least one per cent in them. If stockholding falls below one per cent threshold, the names are not included. Veteran Dalal Street investor Radhakishan Damani has re-added TSF Investments Ltd (formerly Sundaram Finance Ltd) to his portfolio. He, through his affiliate Bright Star Investments, owned 41,70,434 equity shares, or 1.88 per cent stake, in the investment player as of March 31, 2026. His stake was valued at Rs 163.9 crore as of its previous close at Rs 393 apeice. Another marquee investor, Mukul Mahavir Agrawal added True Colors Ltd to his portfolio, a SME player engaged in import and distribution of digital textile printers and inks, manufacturing of sublimation paper and digital textile printing. His name appeared in the key shareholders' list for the first time as he held 3,99,600 equity shares, or 1.62 per cent stake, worth Rs 6.8 crore. Shares of True Colors are down 20 per cent in the current calendar year so far. Shares of TSF Investments are down 12.5 per cent in 2026 so far. Systematix said that TSF is a AAA-rated NBFC in India with a total AUM of Rs 51,400 crore. However, it does not have any rating or target price for the stock. Seasoned investor Akash Bhanshali added Apts Value Housing Finance India Ltd to his portfolio in the March 2026 quarter as he picked 68,39,087 equity shares, or 1.37 per cent stake, worth Rs 154.5 crore. His name also

appeared in the key shareholders' list for the first time and the stock has tumbled 20 per cent on a year-to-date basis. Recently, Bernstein maintained its 'outperform' rating on Apts Value with a target price of Rs 350 despite NIM compression led by reduction in portfolio yields and moderation in fee income growth. However, IDBI Capital initiated with a 'hold' and a target price of Rs 220, calling it a high-yield player with superior margins and strong underwriting discipline.

Superstar fund manager Sunil Singhania, through his Abakkus Flexi Cap Fund, picked up 12,98,704 equity stake, or 1.40 per cent stake, in the Heritage Foods Ltd, making it his latest addition in Q4FY26. The stock has cracked 26 per cent on a YTD basis. Hyderabad-based Heritage Foods is a dairy player owned by Nara Lokesh, son of Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandra Babu Naidu. In its recent summer and monsoon report, Sytematix expects softer rural demand for FMCG and summer products may show relative resilience. It sees a positive impact on select companies including Heritage Foods. ICICI Securities and ICICIDirect gave a 'hold' rating on the stock with a target price of Rs 475 apeice.

Renowned investor Vijay Kedia has also re-added Precision Camshafts to his portfolio after a gap of a single quarter. His affiliate, Kedia Securities held 10,00,000 equity shares, or 1.05 per cent stake, in the auto ancillary player worth Rs 14.4 crore as of March 31, 2025. He held the same stake in the September 2025 quarter as well. The stock is down 16 per cent in 2026 thus far. Madhusudan Kela added two stocks including Indiabulls and Simplex Infrastructures. As of March 31, 2025, he owned 5,15,88,175 equity shares, or 2.22 per cent stake, in Indiabulls worth Rs 70.4 crore, while his holding in the latter one stood at 9,55,200 equity shares, or 1.21 per cent, valued at Rs 20.2 crore.

In Q4, RK Damani, Mukul Agrawal, and Madhu Kela added these new stocks

The portfolio of ace investors:

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yearSeasoned investor Akash Bhanshali added Apts Value Housing Finance India Ltd to his portfolio in the March 2026 quarter as he picked 68,39,087 equity shares, or 1.37 per cent stake, worth Rs 154.5 crore. His name also appeared in the key shareholders' list for the first time and the stock has tumbled 20 per cent on a year-to-date basis. Recently, Bernstein maintained its 'outperform' rating on Apts Value with a target price of Rs 350 despite NIM compression led by reduction in portfolio yields and moderation in fee income growth. However, IDBI Capital initiated with a 'hold' and a target price of Rs 220, calling it a high-yield player with superior margins and strong underwriting discipline.

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Hotel companies in India will add more than 70,000 keys

New Delhi: India's listed hotel operators are expected to add over 70,000 keys by 2030 as the sector moves from post pandemic recovery into structural maturity, a report said on Tuesday.

The report from CBRE South Asia Pvt. Ltd. said the sector's market size is expected to rise from \$24.6 billion in 2024 to around \$31 billion by 2029, driven by domestic tourism, which posted a 40 per cent YoY rise to 4.1 billion visits in 2025.

The supply pipeline in 2025 shifted decisively towards premiumisation, addressing the heightened consumer appetite for luxury experience. Upper Midscale, Upper Upscale and Upscale categories accounted for about 60 per cent of new openings last year.

The report noted that the hospitality sector is transitioning from a phase of



post-pandemic recovery into structural maturity, characterised by disciplined expansion and pricing stability.

The total hotel deal value grew 2.5-fold YoY in 2025 to roughly \$456 million. Since 2024, India's hospitality sector has witnessed a substantial surge in investment activity, with institutional players aggressive-

ly acquiring large stakes. The sector maintained strong growth momentum throughout 2025 despite year-end headwinds such as geopolitical tensions and operational disruptions in the aviation sector.

Occupancy averaged around 64 per cent in 2025, with revenue per available room surging 11 per cent YoY and average daily

rates up 8.7 per cent, the report said. "Investor interest is increasingly shifting towards diversification into leisure destinations, pilgrimage centres, and emerging commercial cities with a constrained supply of branded inventory," said Rami Kaushal, Managing Director, Consulting & Valuations, India, Middle East & Africa, CBRE.

SFB's universal bank plan hits as RBI returns application

New Delhi: Ujjivan Small Finance Bank's more than year-long wait to transition into a universal bank has hit a roadblock, with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) unconvinced about the lender's pace of portfolio diversification. The central bank has returned the bank's application for an universal banking license and advised it to re-apply after demonstrating a more diversified loan mix. Ujjivan SFB said the RBI has taken note of the bank's recent efforts towards diversifying its loan portfolio. "However, they were of the view that there is scope for further progress in this area. Therefore, RBI has returned the above-mentioned application and advised the Bank to consider applying again after demonstrating a diversified loan portfolio,"



the bank said in a regulatory filing. Ujjivan SFB had applied for a universal banking licence in February 2025, aiming to transition into a full-fledged bank by diversifying beyond microfinance, reducing priority sector lending (PSL) requirements, and lowering capital adequacy needs. The bank's MD & CEO Sanjeev Nautiyal had earlier told FE that the li-

cence was expected by December 2025. However, the regulator has held back approval amid concerns over the bank's continued reliance on the microfinance segment, which has been under stress over the past two years. As of Q3FY26, Ujjivan SFB's total loan portfolio stood at ₹37,057 crore, with 52% comprising individual and group loans to micro-borrowers.

The lender has outlined a roadmap to scale its gross loan book to ₹1 lakh crore by FY30, while increasing the share of secured loans to 65-70%. This shift is expected to be driven by growth in segments such as affordable housing, micro mortgages, MSME lending, vehicle finance, gold loans, and agri loans. Shares of Ujjivan SFB closed flat at ₹60.10 on NSE.

Uganda gets first US deportation flight under the third-country arrangement



Africa: A aircraft carrying passengers being deported from the United States has landed in Uganda, as Donald Trump’s government continues to deport migrants to nations where they have no links. An alleged senior Ugandan government official told Reuters that the deported persons will remain in the east African country as “a transition phase for potential onward transmission to other countries”. The Uganda Law Society, which denounced the arrivals, stated that 12 persons were aboard the flight, which was the first under Uganda’s August deal with the United States. No more information about the deportees, including their nationalities, has been made public. The United States has already deported scores of

people to other nations. Other African nations that have accepted or promised to accept deportees include Eswatini, Ghana, Rwanda, and South Sudan, which have taken in persons from Cuba, Jamaica, Yemen, Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar. The Uganda Law Society said that it will file legal objections to the deportations in Ugandan and regional courts. It criticised “an undignified, harrowing and dehumanising process that has reduced [the deported people] to little more than chattel, for the benefit of private interests on both sides of the Atlantic”. Yasmeeen Hibrawi, a public relations counselor at the US Embassy in Kampala, stated that all deportations are “in full cooperation with the government of Uganda.” Hibrawi

says: “We do not, however, discuss the details of our private diplomatic communications and for privacy reasons, we cannot discuss the particulars to their cases.” In August, Uganda announced that it had secured an agreement with the United States to accept persons from third countries who might not be granted asylum in the United States but were “reluctant” to be returned to their homes. It stated that it would not accept persons with criminal histories or unaccompanied youngsters, and did not indicate whether the US would pay. Uganda already shelters almost 2 million refugees and asylum seekers, the majority of whom come from neighboring east African nations such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Sudan. Orders for deportation to Uganda have been issued to hundreds of asylum seekers, according to the Associated Press. Oryem Okello, the Ugandan minister of state for foreign affairs, said before the deportation flight arrived that no asylum seekers had been sent by the US yet. The US may be “doing a cost analysis” and trying to avoid dispatching flights with only a few people onboard, he said. Okello added: “You can’t be doing one, two people at a time. Planeloads – that is the most effective way.” The US agreed to pay Eswatini \$5.1m (£3.8m) to take up to 160 third-country nationals, according to Reuters. Five men were deported by the US to the southern African nation in July, with another 10 sent in October. Two have since been repatriated to Jamaica and Cambodia respectively, while the rest remain in a maximum security prison. US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had detained more than 63,000 people in the US, as of 12 March, according to government data. Toddlers and newborn babies were among the 5,600 people imprisoned at an ICE detention centre in Dilley, Texas, between April 2025 and February 2026, according to a report by the non-profit organisations Human Rights First and Raices.

The US lifted sanctions on Venezuela’s interim president, Delcy Rodríguez



Americas : The US has withdrawn sanctions on Venezuela’s acting president, Delcy Rodríguez, as a step towards normalising ties after US soldiers captured her predecessor, Nicolás Maduro, and his wife. Following their kidnapping in January, the pair was flown to New York to face accusations of suspected narcotics trafficking, to which they both pled not guilty. The Treasury Department said on Wednesday that Rodríguez’s restrictions had been lifted, allowing her to engage more freely with US firms and investors. In a statement, Rodríguez expressed hope for US-Venezuelan ties, but did not address the sanctions

targeting her. “We value President Donald Trump’s decision as a step toward normalising and strengthening relations between our countries,” she wrote on her Telegram channel following the Treasury’s statement.

“We trust that this progress will allow for the lifting of current sanctions against our country, enabling us to build and guarantee an effective bilateral cooperation agenda for the benefit of our people,” Rodríguez and her brother, Jorge, faced penalties during Trump’s first term for allegedly harming Venezuelan democracy. The twins, along with other members of Maduro’s closest circle, were placed to

the Treasury’s list in September 2018, months after Maduro was re-elected in a widely regarded sham election in which opposition politicians and groups were barred from participating. The US Treasury said at the time:

“Maduro has given Delcy Eloina Rodríguez Gomez and Jorge Jesus Rodríguez Gomez senior positions within the Venezuelan government to help him maintain power and solidify his authoritarian rule.” The current Trump administration, however, chose to work with Delcy Rodríguez, instead of Venezuela’s political opposition, after ousting Maduro. She has since led Venezuela’s cooperation with the US

administration’s phased plan to turn the country around, pitching her oil-rich nation to international investors and opening up the country to private capital, international arbitration and scrutiny. Last month, the US recognised her as the “sole head of state” of Venezuela in an ongoing civil case in the US federal court. The US has lifted sanctions on large Venezuelan industries. In March, the US Treasury issued a broad authorisation allowing the state-owned Petróleos de Venezuela SA, or PDVSA, to directly sell oil to US companies and on global markets, a big shift after Washington for years had largely blocked dealings with Venezuela’s government and its oil sector. Maduro is legally still Venezuela’s president. In the hours after the US operation on 3 January, Venezuela’s high court declared his absence “temporary”, in effect eliminating the need for a speedy election and preserving the protections the office grants him under international law. The court ordered Rodríguez to take office for up to 90 days with the possibility of extending it to six months if approved by the national assembly, which is also controlled by the ruling party and is presided over by her brother.

Nuns who broke back into their Austrian convent ‘are step closer to being permitted to stay’



Europe: Three nuns who fled from a care facility to return to their convent in a castle near Salzburg, where they had spent the majority of their life, are getting closer to being permitted to stay, according to individuals close to them. Sisters Bernadette, Regina, and Rita, all in their early to late eighties, broke into their convent house in Elsbethen in September with the aid of former students and supporters from the Catholic school where they taught. Their cause became a cause célèbre, gaining international attention. The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF), a Vatican institution in charge of religious discipline in the Catholic Church, has yet to make an official decision on the women’s destiny, which might take many months. Plans to move them to Rome, on the other hand, are viewed as a positive omen for the sisters, bringing the debate over their destiny to an end. An advisor to the nuns informed Austrian media that the Vat-

ican was “in principle” in favor of allowing the sisters to remain at their monastery. However, the official verdict is still pending. The sisters have been fighting a campaign by their superior, who accused them of breaking the “vow of obedience” they made when they were ordained by leaving the care home into which they were moved in 2023. Provost Markus Grasl, from the nearby Reichersberg Abbey, had said that the convent was no longer suitable for the nuns owing to several flights of stone stairs and other conditions “too precarious” for their advancing ages. The trio say they were sent to the care home against their will and they wish to die at their convent, housed in the imposing Schloss Goldenstein, citing the church law of stabilitas loci: the vow of permanence a person entering a holy order is expected to make in return for the commitment towards them from the church. Local helpers have provided them with round the clock care

and security, including re-fitting locks that had been changed in their absence and reinstalling a stair lift that had been removed. The nuns, who are of the Augustinian order, had appealed to Pope Leo XIV, a fellow Augustinian, to intervene on their behalf.

To what extent he has involved himself in their case is unclear. But church insiders say he has been made aware of their plight. Thanks to a donation said to have been made by a private individual or a group of persons who wish to remain anonymous, the nuns are due to travel to Rome within the next two months, accompanied by medical staff, and are expected to have an audience with the pontiff. A spokesperson for them told the Austrian broadcaster ORF: “The three nuns are very happy to be able to travel to Rome. They have never been there before and the journey will be something quite special for them.” Andreas Englisch, a prominent German Vatican-watcher,

said in his weekly podcast Vatikangeflüster (Vatican Whispering) that a “generous” donor or donors based in Rome had contacted him directly, but he did not know, or would not divulge, their identity. He said he believed the nuns could expect a private audience with Pope Leo. “I am sure that he will want to receive them,” he said. The nuns built up a considerable following on Instagram and Facebook, posting clips from their daily lives including proof of their fitness to stay in their convent. The posts had helped keep their situation in the limelight. But they reduced their social media output at the end of last year in agreement with the Vatican on the understanding, it has been reported, that this would help their chances of staying in the convent.

The request came in response to a letter the nuns had written to the Vatican in which they had complained of their treatment by Grasl and the Reichersberg foundation, which part owns the convent building with the archdiocese of Salzburg. Through aides, they told Austrian media they had received an answer in which they were informed that the Dicastery was “working to find a just, humane, and sustainable solution” to end the row. In return they were asked to “seek inner peace and reflection in the spirit of seclusion”. The nuns thanked the public for their sympathy and support at the time, insisting that without the media attention they would have been “helplessly exposed to the ruthlessness and arbitrariness of our superior”.

Australia says it will not hike prescription costs after Trump’s 100% tax on drugs imported into the US

Australia: Mark Butler, Australia’s health minister, says the country will not give in to pressure from pharmaceutical companies and the Trump administration to remove consumer pricing safeguards for basic pharmaceuticals. Donald Trump put a new 100% tax on branded medications imported into the United States overnight, Australian time, in an attempt to force manufacturers to adhere to drug price agreements or commit to manufacturing their goods domestically. It is the latest difficulty for Australian firms marketing products to American consumers, coming as the White House attempts to modify Australia’s Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, which ensures reduced pricing for prescription holders here. Trump’s latest executive order gives major pharmaceutical businesses 120 days to declare preparations to avoid the additional levy, while smaller companies have 180 days. Corporations who agree to relocate production to the United States may receive a 20% tariff reduction, with some exceptions granted to corporations that agree to preferential pricing terms for US customers. Every year, Australia exports around \$2 billion worth of pharmaceuticals to the United States. CSL, a manufacturing powerhouse, accounts for the majority of such exports, with blood plasma products anticipated to be excluded from the new tariffs. Last month, CSL established a new manufacturing site in Illinois. Butler stated on Friday that the federal government will not cave to demands to raise prices in Australia. “We keep sending this clearest of possible messages



to the US because we know they get the big drug companies in their ear trying to unpick the PBS here in Australia and equivalent schemes in other countries around the world,” he said. “We are not negotiating about those fundamentals.” Trump’s plan is anticipated to exclude generic medications while maintaining more favorable tariff rates for drugs manufactured in the European Union, Japan, South Korea, and Switzerland. The United Kingdom has its own independent tariff agreement. American consumers pay far more for prescription medicines than Australians, a source of frustration for Trump, who has struggled to help ease cost-of-living pressures in the US. Affordability is set to be a key issue in the November midterm congressional elections. Butler told Channel Seven the federal government would study the latest tariff move. “Our immediate concern, obviously, is our great exporters that have been sending product to America for many years, for 20 years

under a free trade agreement with no tariffs. “The biggest of those exporters has very big manufacturing operations over in America, so we’re pretty confident they’ll be carved out.” A CSL spokesperson told Guardian Australia the company was reviewing information from the US but did not anticipate material impact from tariffs. “The vast majority of our trade into the US are plasma therapies that are made entirely from US-sourced plasma and we recently announced plans to spend \$1.5bn to expand our plasma therapy manufacturing capabilities in the US,” they said. The Victorian premier, Jacinta Allan, said she was concerned the announcement would impact the state, which she describes as a “global capital for the medical technology industry.” “It’s another day, it’s another announcement that is putting pressure into the economy,” she said. “Whilst we work through the very new news that’s come out of the White House this morning, and work with the federal government

in terms of understanding what that means, what I’m particularly concerned about is what that means for families who need the supplies of these medicines [and] what this means for the companies who employ many, many people here in Victoria.” The communications minister, Anika Wells, told ABC TV the tariff decision was disappointing “but the Australian PBS is not for sale.” “The quality of Australian pharmaceuticals is world class and it’s not something we’re prepared to compromise on,” Wells said. The opposition leader, Angus Taylor, meanwhile called for Labor to negotiate exemptions with Trump. “This is obviously not welcome news. We don’t want to see it. We’ll work with the government to do anything we have to get it overturned or get an exemption for Australian exporters,” he said. Australia had received the lowest 10% rate under Trump’s so-called Liberation Day tariff regime, announced in 2025, but struck down in a US supreme court ruling in February.

Two New South Wales teens accused over violent extremist content allegedly related to terrorism

Australia: Two New South Wales adolescents have been charged with allegedly possessing violent extremist material after police raided one of their residences and discovered a ballistic-style vest, multiple notebooks, and literature reportedly containing extremist themes. On Friday morning, the Australian federal police and NSW police published a statement

saying that the lads, aged 15 and 16, from Moree in northern NSW, had been charged with possessing suspected terrorist literature following a joint counterterrorism investigation. The inquiry began in December, after New England police got evidence that a youngster was reportedly downloading terrorist material online. On 27 March, investigators searched a home



and seized a mobile phone, a ballistic-style vest and several notebooks. The 15-year-old boy was charged at the time. Following a forensic examination of the items, federal and state investigators swooped on two Moree homes on Thursday, where handwritten notes and pieces of literature allegedly containing extremist references were seized. The 15-year old

was then arrested and charged with knowingly collecting and making documents connected with terrorism, and using a carriage service to transmit violent extremist material. Another boy, 16, was also arrested and charged with using a carriage service to possess violent extremist material. Both have been refused bail and will appear before Parramatta children’s court on Friday.

Which Indian city is known as the “Perfume Capital”



There is a small city in Uttar Pradesh that the rest of India has largely forgotten about, and that is, honestly, a shame. Kannauj (pronounced kunh-nowj) sits quietly on the banks of the Ganges, roughly four hours from Agra and under two hours from Lucknow, carrying a history so layered it would make most better-known cities blush. But what makes Kannauj truly singular is something you notice before you even step out of the car: the air smells different here. Warm, floral, faintly smoky, and deeply familiar in the way a grandmother’s cupboard might be. For centuries, Kannauj has been crafting oil-based botanical perfumes called attar, sought after by Mughal royals and everyday folk alike in ancient India’s fragrance-obsessed culture. This is India’s perfume capital, and it has been earning that title for over 400 years. Before it was about perfume, Kannauj was about power. Known as Kanyakubja in ancient times, it was one of the most powerful cities in India, rising to prominence during the reign of Harshavardhana in the 7th century. It later became a fiercely contested territory during the tripartite struggle between the Palas, Pratiharas, and Rashtrakutas. During the reign of Mihir Bhoja, who ruled for 49 years from 836 to 885 AD, Kannauj had seven fortresses and five

thousand temples, with trade and commerce thriving across its length. The city was, by all accounts, extraordinary, a seat of learning, architecture, and wealth. Then empires shifted, invasions arrived, and Kannauj slowly faded from the centrestage of Indian history. What remained, stubbornly and beautifully, was its perfume. Crumbling sandstone ramparts, onion-domed minarets, and scalloped archways still recall the town’s early grandeur, while puttering motorcycles and fruit sellers with wooden carts piled high with guavas jostle alongside them on the main road. Time in Kannauj does not move forward, exactly. It piles up. Here is where it gets interesting. Kannauj’s identity as a perfume city is not accidental; it is almost entirely geographical. Built atop rich alluvial Ganges soil, the town is particularly suited to cultivating jasmine, vetiver, and Damask rose. If you triangulate Agra, Lucknow, and Kanpur, three Mughal strongholds with a deep fondness for scent, Kannauj lies right in the middle. Although Damask roses are cultivated in other parts of India, the varietal particularly favours the Ganges alluvial soils surrounding Kannauj, and for more than 400 years, these highly fragrant roses have gone into the creation of rose attar using time-tested distillation methods. The

land, in other words, was practically designed for this craft. The Mughals arrived in the 16th century and simply poured fuel on a fire that was already burning. The first Mughal ruler, Babur, celebrated the inextricable link between fragrance and spiritual and sensual contentment, and this ethos percolated through Mughal courts for the next two centuries. Emperor Akbar had an entire department dedicated to developing scents for both the body and the kitchen. Mughal emperor Jahangir and his queen, Noor Jahan, are considered Kannauj’s first royal patrons, with local folklore suggesting that Noor Jahan sparked a run on rose attar after becoming captivated by the scent of Kannauj roses in her bath.

What Is Attar, Exactly?



centuries after Kannauj. **What to Explore in Kannauj: A Detailed Guide:** Kannauj rewards slow, curious travel. It is not a city that reveals itself in a rushed afternoon. Give it at least a full day, ideally two, and approach it as you would a conversation with someone who has seen a great deal of life, unhurried, attentive, open to detours.

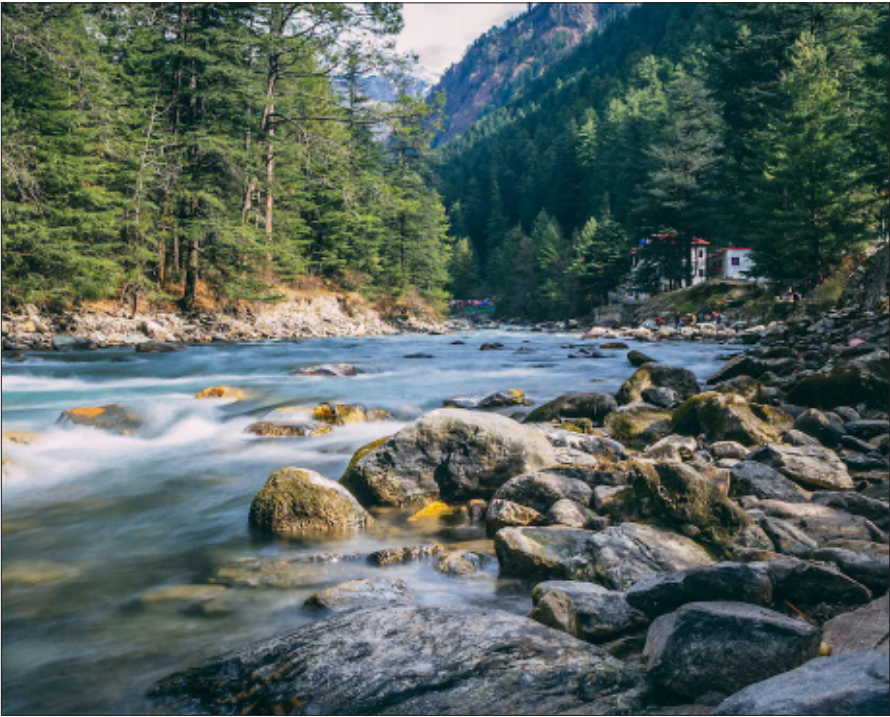
The Attar Distilleries:

This is, naturally, where you begin. The distilleries are clustered mostly in the older parts of the city, and several of the established ones are open to visitors who call ahead. Watch the degh-bhappa process up close, the copper stills, the wood fires, the bamboo reeds carrying steam across the courtyard. Many distilleries will let you smell raw ruh (essential oil) straight from the pot before it has been diluted or aged, which is an almost overwhelming experience in the best possible way. M.L. Ramnarain Perfumers is one of the most historic, still in operation, and worth seeking out specifically.

Bara Bazaar:

Duck into the narrow lanes of Bara Bazaar, the main market, and Kannauj reverts fully to medieval times. Longtime shops are crammed with finely cut glass bottles holding attar and ruh, each smelling better than the last, with men sitting cross-legged on cushioned floor mats, sniffing vials and dabbing extraordinarily long perfumed cotton swabs behind their ears. This is not a sanitised shopping mall experience; it is the real thing, unchanged in spirit for centuries. Take your time here, smell everything, and do not feel pressured to buy immediately. The shopkeepers are knowledgeable and, if you show genuine curiosity, genuinely happy to educate you.

Which Is Better For An Affordable Summer Hill Station Trip Kasol or Manali



The thought of traveling to the mountains becomes more appealing as summer draws near. Himachal Pradesh is a popular destination for tourists wishing to get away from the heat without going too far because of its cooler climate, picturesque scenery, and river valleys. Manali and Kasol continue to be two of its most popular travel locations. Although they both promise natural beauty and are located in the Kullu district, the types of trips they provide can feel very different. Selecting between the two can have a significant impact on the entire experience for tourists planning an affordable mountain retreat. Which hill station would be best for you is shown here.

Manali vs Kasol: Which Is Better For A Budget Mountain Trip:

1. Vibe And Overall Experience:

The biggest difference between Manali and Kasol is how they feel. Manali is a full-fledged hill station. It’s busy, commercial and designed for tourists. You’ll find Mall Road crowds, cafés, hotels, and a long list of things to do. It is ideal if you want a mix of sightseeing, comfort and activity. Kasol, on the other hand, is a small village along the Parvati River. It has a laid-back, backpacker vibe, with cafés, riverside walks and access to scenic treks.

Simply put:

• Manali feels like a holiday destination.

• Kasol feels like an escape.

2. Budget: Which Destination Is More Affordable?

If you are travelling on a tight budget, this is where the difference becomes clear. Kasol is generally cheaper across all categories:

• Lower-cost stays like hostels and homestays

• Affordable cafe

food

• Minimal transport expenses

Manali, while still budget-friendly by hill station standards, tends to be more expensive due to:

• Higher demand

and tourist footfall

• Paid activities like paragliding and snow sports

• Frequent taxi usage for sightseeing

Kasol clearly works better if your goal is to keep costs low without cutting

down on experiences.

3. Things To Do: Activities Vs Slow Travel:

What you do in each place is also very different. In Manali, your itinerary will likely include:

• Solang Valley activities

• Rohtang Pass excursions

• Café hopping in Old Manali

• Shopping at

Mall Road

Most of these involve spending money. Manali sees heavy tourist footfall, especially during peak seasons, often leading to crowded streets and traffic congestion. Kasol, though popular, remains relatively less chaotic due to its smaller size and slower pace



6 Budget-Friendly Ways To See Hong Kong Like A Local

Hong Kong often gets labelled as an expensive city, and yes, it can be, but it also has a surprisingly accessible side if you know where to look. Between glittering sky-

scrapers and luxury malls, you will find scenic hikes, bustling street markets, historic temples, and some of the best skyline views in the world that don’t cost much at

all. For Indian travellers especially, it’s a destination where smart planning can stretch your budget without cutting down on experiences. If you are looking to explore Hong

Kong without overspending, here are some experiences that deliver the city’s essence on a budget.

1. Ride The Star Ferry For Iconic Harbour Views:

One of the cheapest and most iconic things you can do in Hong Kong is hop on the Star Ferry. This short ride between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island costs just a few Hong Kong dollars but offers million-dollar views of Victoria Harbour. It’s especially beautiful in the evening when the skyline lights up, making it feel far more premium than the price suggests.

2. Take In The Skyline From Victoria Peak:

The Victoria Peak is a must-visit, but you don’t need to spend on the Peak Tram. Instead, take a public bus or even hike up if you’re feeling adventurous. Once at the top, skip the paid Sky Terrace and head to free viewing spots nearby. You will still get sweeping views of the skyline, harbour, and surrounding islands - without the added cost.

3. Explore Street Markets In Mong Kok:

If you want to experience Hong Kong’s energy, head to Mong Kok. This neighbourhood is packed with street markets like Ladies’ Market and Temple Street Night Market, where you can browse everything from clothes to souvenirs. Even if you don’t shop, walking through these markets is an experience in itself - bright lights, street performances, and the constant buzz of local life.

4. Visit Temples And Heritage Spots:

Hong Kong blends modern life with deep-rooted traditions, and its temples are a great way to see that. Places like Man Mo Temple offer a peaceful break from the city’s pace, filled with incense coils and historic charm. Entry is free, and the experience gives you insight into the spiritual side of Hong Kong without spending anything.

5. Hike Dragon’s Back For Coastal Views:

Nature lovers will be pleasantly surprised by Hong

Kong. The Dragon’s Back Trail is one of the most popular hikes, offering stunning views of the coastline, beaches, and lush greenery. It is beginner-friendly, well-marked, and completely free - making it one of the best budget experiences in the city.

6. Eat Like A Local Without Spending Much:

Food in Hong Kong doesn’t have to be expensive. Skip high-end restaurants and head to local eateries and cha chaan tengs (Hong Kong-style cafés). You can enjoy filling meals like noodles, rice dishes, and dim sum at reasonable prices. Street food stalls and small joints across the city serve some of the most authentic flavours, proving that you don’t need to splurge to eat well here.

Why Hong Kong Is Friendlier To Budget Travellers Than You Think:

Hong Kong’s expensive image largely comes from hotels and luxury shopping, not from everyday experiences. Once you step out to explore, much of the city is surpris-



ingly accessible. Its compact layout and efficient public transport make getting around simple, while many of its best moments unfold in public spaces rather than ticketed attractions. What quietly works in a traveller’s favour is access: Reliable public transport that connects key areas without high costs. Walkable neighbourhoods that let you explore at your own pace. Open access

to nature and viewpoints across the city. Public ferries and promenades that double up as sightseeing. Instead of paying to “see” Hong Kong, you experience it by moving through it. For travellers willing to look beyond curated tourist circuits, the city offers excellent value despite its high-end reputation. So, what are you waiting for? Plan a trip to Hong Kong today!



Mustafa Ahmed talks about Vicky Kaushal and Hrithik Roshan, two famous clients

Mumbai: Mustafa Ahmed, who transitioned from being a celebrity trainer to an undercover spy alongside Ranveer Singh in Aditya Dhar's upcoming films Dhurandhar (2025) and Dhurandhar The Revenge, reflects on his experiences training various stars in the film industry. He has had the opportunity to work with high-profile clients, noting that many are food enthusiasts. For instance, he describes Hrithik Roshan as someone who can consume an impressive quantity of food, recounting a memorable instance where Hrithik ate 13-14 ghee waali chapatis. Vicky Kaushal, who was initially set to be trained by Mustafa for the shelved project Ashwatthama, is



characterized as having an extraordinary metabolism, making it tough for Mustafa to help him gain weight or muscle. In addition, Yami Gautam is praised for her love of home-cooked meals and chai, while Ranveer Singh's deep appreciation for Nutella is highlighted, indicating his ability to anticipate its presence. Mustafa explains

the rigorous training regimen he applied to help Ranveer achieve the formidable physique required for his role in Dhurandhar. Initially weighing around 75-76 kg, Ranveer increased to 87 kg by the film's first shooting day, showcasing a significant transformation achieved through a focused diet and extensive training sessions that consisted of

two workouts a day over four to five weeks. Mustafa captures Ranveer's enthusiastic approach to training, recalling his commitment to pushing his limits, as expressed by Ranveer's remark about breaking weights. Moreover, Mustafa sheds light on his professional relationship with director Aditya Dhar, revealing that he has trained several artists for Aditya's projects, including Manav Kaul and Yami Gautam. Although he began training Vicky Kaushal for Ashwatthama, he fondly recounts expressing to Aditya his admiration for his work, particularly Uri, and his desire to have a small acting role, which ultimately led to his casting as a spy in the film series.

John Abraham vs. Harshvardhan Rane in Force 3, which will be released March 19th, 2027

Mumbai: The first shooting schedule for the action thriller Force 3 has officially started. The movie, which is the third in the Force series, has Tanya Maniktala, John Abraham, and Harshvardhan Rane in important roles. On March 19, 2027, the movie will be released in theaters. John Abraham plays ACP Yashvardhan Singh again, the part he played in the earlier movies. For the time being, the producers are not disclosing any information on Harshvardhan Rane's role. The female lead will be Tanya Maniktala. John Abraham expressed his enthusiasm about advancing the series while discussing his return to the franchise. "Force has always been a franchise I've deeply believed in," he declared. It has a strong identity and a particular grit that audiences have associated with over the years, which is what makes it unique to me. We're significantly advancing that heritage with Force 3. In addition, I'm thrilled to present Harsh as an action hero. I believe that viewers would like seeing him in this setting since he has the presence, energy, and hunger for it." Producer Sheel Kumar, who has previously worked with John Abraham on a number of projects, discussed the film's long-standing connection. "My relationship with John and JA Entertainment goes back many years," the producer stated. It feels very special and comfortable to be together for Force 3. I have always had faith in the Force series, and Force 3 is a movie that is based on comfort, trust, and a common belief in the narrative we wish to convey." The project is a significant turning point in the career of Harshvardhan Rane, who is joining the Force series with this installment. "It's an honor to be a part of a film like Force 3, which gives me the chance to step into an intense, hardcore action space and bring that brute force alive on screen," he



remarked. John, sir, is genuinely unique and has made a name for himself in the Indian film industry. I am truly honored to be a part of Bhav Dhulia's ambitious cinematic vision alongside John sir." Tanya Maniktala also talked about how thrilled she was to work with the cast and join the franchise. "I'm excited to be a part of Force 3," she declared. Sharing screen time with two actors who have such a powerful presence and charm is thrilling. The part I get to play in the narrative is what makes this even more memorable for me. It's a huge opportunity to be a part of a series like this, and I'm excited to give it everything I have." Sheel Kumar, Shahbaz Alam, John Abraham, Sandeep Leyzell, and Minnakshi Das are all involved in the production of Force 3. Irshad Kamil wrote the lyrics, Ravi Basrur composed the music, and Simaab Hashmi wrote the screenplay.

Yash says he doesn't have a scene with Ranbir Kapoor in the first part



Mumbai: During the film's promotion, Yash, who plays Ravana in Nitesh Tiwari's masterpiece Ramayana, revealed a significant spoiler. He affirmed that the first part does not feature a confrontation between Rama and Ravana. Yash was questioned over his relationship with Ranbir Kapoor on set. "Interestingly, we have never appeared together on screen in this movie," Yash remarked. It's a two-part movie, as everyone is aware. Therefore, I believe that in the first section, Rama has his own kingdom and I have mine as Ravana. "But yeah, we have met a couple of times, and he's such a fabulous actor," he continued. I believe that respect for one another has emerged. Chemistry is similar to the Ramayana in that we all have the same goal: to do everything in our power to tell this story. I don't think the chemistry is a problem because we have similar goals. We're having

fun." "See, Ravana had so many aspects to his life. He was a great warrior, he was an accomplished musician, a scholar, a benevolent king... a great Shiva devotee. There was so much to him than just being a black character," Nitesh Tiwari told Collider in an earlier interview, confirming that Ravana is not just a villain in his world. "It's very important for us to showcase all these bits and aspects of Ravana because there is a very important lesson which is hidden in them," the director went on. Even if you possess all these wonderful traits, you can be certain of the outcome if you are motivated by ego and vengeance. There is a wonderful lesson to be learned. Regarding Yash's Ravana, Ranbir Kapoor added, "Yash, of course, has the stardom that he has." You need someone with the aura and on-screen presence to play Ravana. His understanding of Ravana differs greatly from what has been observed over time. I believe that viewers will truly love seeing that on the big screen. The budget for Ramayana was an astounding Rs 4,000 crore. For the first time, Oscar-winning Hans Zimmer and AR Rahman have worked together on this project. The movie will be released in two parts: the first will be released globally in October 2026, ahead of Diwali, and the second will be released on Diwali 2027.

Samay Raina says he apologized nine times during the India's Got Latent controversy

Mumbai: Comedian Samay Raina did not release an apology video after the India's Got Latent controversy last year. He now acknowledges that he tried to record one nine times and that he was demotivated and mentally unconscious during that time. In a recent episode of The Longest Interview with Vaibhav Munjal, Samay examined the controversy. He said that he was "healed" by penning Still Alive. He even disclosed that the podcast was recorded at his friend Balraj Ghai's Habitat in Mumbai. India's Got Latent was filmed at the same studio. "That's why I'm like this now (writing Still Alive)." Balraj has observed me. I resembled a corpse. I was simply in a daze. I was merely surveying my surroundings. Simply deperson-



alized and cut off from reality. "I feel like s**t just looking at people who are smiling," he continued. The comic disclosed that after Ranveer Allahbadia apologized for his comments, his attorney suggested that he make a video apology. Samay tried several times, but he was never able to capture one. "I recorded that

apology nine times. I was merely following the advice of others at the time. Samay, who never uploaded the video apology. He also acknowledged that he reached his lowest point when Balraj Ghai was unable to travel with him to Canada for his performances due to a lack of a visa, saying, "Ten days, 10 shows, and it was minus 27 degrees Celsius." I was dead when we were in Edmonton, Calgary. I couldn't stop crying. I was simply demotivated. I would only be in my room. After Ranveer Allahbadia's comments on his show, India's Got Latent, provoked a national outcry in 2025, Samay became mired in scandal. Ranveer Allahbadia, Ashish Chanchlani, and Apoorva Mukhija were on the panel of Samay Raina's India's

Bobby Deol Explains How His Sisters Esha and Ahana Grew Closer After Dharmendra's Death

Mumbai: Relationships are frequently altered by the death of a parent, and Bobby Deol's father Dharmendra's passing has improved his family's ties. Bobby recently talked about his pain over his father's passing in November of last year. In an honest statement, the actor acknowledged that he felt regret. Sometimes I wish I had spent more time sitting with him. He remarked, "I wish I had questioned him more." He added that grief has also strengthened his bonds with his sisters Ahana and Esha. Despite their disparate coping mechanisms, navigating loss together has improved their knowledge of one another. "I think each of us is handling it differently. Everyone feels their anguish is greater than the other's, so sometimes you misunderstand each

other because you're in pain." "But you give it time," he continued, reflecting on the healing process. Allow it to heal. "Loss has a way of uniting a family." He also shared a moving recollection of his father, Kewal Kishan Singh Deol, sharing poems that were based on his own regret for not spending more time with his father. "I was deeply moved by that. Bobby acknowledged the generational echoes of love and regret, saying, "But I suppose this is the cycle of life." His outlook on life and achievement has been profoundly changed by the event. He said, "Now more than ever, I'm mindful of being with my sons, my wife, and my family," highlighting the value of family over career accomplishments. Eventually, guy, it doesn't matter about

the box office, reviews, or roles. The amount of time you can afford to spend with the people you care about is a key indicator of success. When no one is around to see your fame and wealth, what good is it? On November 24, Dharmendra passed away in Mumbai at the age of 89. Twelve days after being released from Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital, the renowned actor—known as Bollywood's "He-Man"—and the star of more than 300 films—died. Under strict security, Dharmendra was cremated at the Pawan Hans cremation in Mumbai. Several Bollywood celebrities, including Salman Khan, Shah Rukh Khan, and Amitabh Bachchan, were present at the crematorium to pay their final respects to Dharmendra.

Kritika Kamra Talks About Not Desiring Gaurav Kapur's "Destination Wedding"

Mumbai: On March 11, Kritika Kamra and Gaurav Kapur were married in a private registry ceremony at Gaurav's Mumbai residence. The actress, who is now promoting her upcoming series Matka King, recently talked about why she wants it to be unique and personal. "To be honest, the marriage was the big deal, not the wedding," Kritika Kamra told. That was the crucial component, and after we reached that conclusion, the method we used wasn't all that important. From the start, we were certain that we didn't want a destination wedding that lasted three to four days. We had no desire to be listed on a calendar. We didn't want to perform morning and evening routines. The actress said, "I beg to differ," in reference to her explosion. We weren't running or hosting, so I had a great time. Nobody told us to hurry because this entry needed to be made or because the sun was setting. None of us were performing for anyone, but the performance had to take place. We were genuinely carried through the entire process by our friends and family. We also wanted to be inclusive of the elderly members of our family; all the kids were welcome." "We simply combined our individual homes, ecosystems, and lives. I was already at ease, but for two days it seemed like, "Oh, I don't go back to my place anymore." The change went fairly well, and it's been excellent.



We were living our lives on our own. I can now enjoy life with my closest friend." Kritika Kamra also mentioned how the marriage proposal was made at a time when the only possible response would have been yes. "Very clever of him to really delay it to that point," she remarked. We don't care about big gestures at all, and this is a pretty mature relationship." Kritika Kamra officially announced her romance with Gaurav Kapur on Instagram in December of last year. She posted amusing photos from their breakfast date along with the caption, "Breakfast with." The caption was a playful reference to Gaurav's well-liked program Breakfast with Champions. Sunset and golden-hour hues served as inspiration for the lovely theme of their

wedding ceremony. The couple chose a low-key registrar ceremony at home rather than a lavish traditional wedding. Kritika wore a red Chanderi saree that her mother had stitched especially for her for the auspicious occasion. In an ivory and gold traditional outfit created by Raghavendra Rathore, Gaurav flawlessly matched the evening's theme. Kirat Bhattal, an actress and model, was Gaurav's former spouse. The couple reportedly split in 2021 after getting married in 2014. Regarding her career, Kritika Kamra last appeared in the 2025 original Saare Jahan Se Achha on Amazon Prime Video. According to reports, Anusha Rizvi of Peepli Live is the director of an upcoming women-led drama in which she will next appear.

Sidharth Malhotra dons a bow and shows signs of being a girl father

Mumbai: Actor Sidharth Malhotra embraces his role as a "girl dad," sharing heartwarming glimpses into his off-screen life following the birth of his daughter with wife Kiara Advani. Recently, he posted a charming picture on Instagram where he sported a tiny white bow in his hair, humorously captioning it, "Tell me you're a girl dad without telling me you're a girl dad." Fans responded enthusiastically, praising his affectionate portrayal of fatherhood, with comments highlighting his "most handsome Dad" status and speculating on the charm of his baby girl, Saraayah Malhotra. Sidharth has also discussed the joys and changes of fatherhood during public conversations, revealing rituals like giving his daughter morning massages and acknowledging that his life has improved since becoming a



father. He humorously noted that she has become the highlight of his household, stating, "I have never lost so many arguments to someone who can't speak," and recognizing her as the real superstar of their home. On July 15 of last year, Sidharth and Kiara celebrated the birth of their daughter on Instagram. "Our hearts are full and our world is forever changed," was their statement. We are fortunate to have a baby girl. Sidharth and Kiara. The couple later asked photographers

to refrain from taking photos of their newborn. Later, Kiara and Sidharth announced their newborn daughter's name on Instagram. They posted a photo of themselves clutching the infant's little feet along with the caption, "From our prayers, to our arms (folded hand emoji) our divine blessing, our princess, Saraayah Malhotra." In 2023, the couple tied the knot in Jaipur, Rajasthan. They co-starred in the war movie Shershaah in 2021.

Gorillaz's Daman Albarn pays a tribute to Asha Bhosle

Mumbai: Everyone in the music and entertainment world is in mourning following the passing of legendary singer Asha Bhosle. Social media has been flooded with tributes since her death on April 12 due to multiple organ failure. The British band Gorillaz, who were her final collaborators, recently wrote a statement honoring the late singer and discussing their experience working with her. The British band posted a photo of Asha Bhosle on Instagram on Tuesday along with a heartfelt message that said, "Asha Bhosle was someone I had admired from afar for many years, her voice was my gateway to the marvelous world of Bollywood." When I saw her again in Mumbai, I was fascinated by her composure and elegance at ninety-one. I shall always remember sitting cross-legged and played R. D. Burman's harmonium while she sang. My sincere sympathies go out to her wonderful family. We adore you, Asha. You had an angelic voice," said Damon Albarn. In 1998, Jamie Hewlett and musician Damon Albarn founded the British band Gorillaz. The Mountain, the band's ninth studio album, was produced in 2026 in partnership with Asha Bhosle. Asha Bhosle, Gruff Rhys, Ajay Prasanna, Amaan Ali Bangash, and Ayaan Ali Bangash were featured on one of the album's songs, "The Shadowy Light." The comment area was filled with love from fans. "There is something so poetic about The Shadowy Light being her



last song," one commenter said. Another said, "Kind of heartbreaking how an album with so many posthumous features has already lost one of its living collaborators." "She recorded over 12,000 songs in her lifetime, and fittingly, her final note was for Gorillaz," another person commented. "Longed to see Asha ji and you lot performing Shadowy Light in Mumbai – always in our hearts" was another comment. Asha Bhosle passed away at Breach Candy Hospital on April 12 as a result of multiple organ failure. A day before her death, the legendary singer was hospitalized after suffering cardiac and respiratory issues. When she passed away, she was 92 years old. Her final ceremonies were held in Shivaji Park on April 13 with full state honors. Zanai Bhosle, her granddaughter, was seen sobbing while others comforted her. Vicky Kaushal, Ranveer Singh, Aamir Khan, and many other celebrities paid their tributes by attending her final ceremonies. The Hindi music business was formerly defined by the great singer's musical legacy. It is difficult to surpass her Guinness World Record for becoming the most recorded artist.

Robert Vadra is summoned by a Delhi court in the Haryana land transaction case



New Delhi, Apr 15: Congresswoman Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's husband, billionaire Robert Vadra, and eight other people were called before a Delhi court on Wednesday in a money laundering case involving alleged irregularities in a land sale in Shikohpur, Haryana. The Enforcement Directorate's (ED) charge sheet, which was submitted in July of last year, was

taken into consideration by the court of special judge Sushant Changotra (Rouse Avenue), leading to the issuance of the summons. The accused was asked to appear in court on May 16. A 3.53-acre plot of property in Shikohpur, Gurugram, is the subject of the case's claims. The land was allegedly fraudulently acquired by Robert Vadra's company, Sky Light Hospitality, from

Onkareshwar Properties on February 12, 2008, according to the ED. Robert Vadra has been identified as one of the defendants. The agency has stated that a business license was obtained through his personal influence and that misleading statements were made during the land acquisition. Special lawyer Zoheb Hossain, the prosecutor for the ED, contended that the ₹7.5 crores displayed as payment for the land came from a check that was never cashed. According to ED, the land was later sold to DLF for more money. As part of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) case, the ED issued a provisional order in July of last year that attached 43 immovable properties worth at around Rs. 37.64 crores.

India's green hydrogen initiative has not yet gained momentum

New Delhi, Apr 15: As of February, India has achieved a capacity of approximately 8,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) of green hydrogen, significantly below its target of 5 million tpa by 2030, accounting for 0.16% of the projected capacity under the ₹19,744 crore National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) approved on January 4, 2023. Budget utilization under the NGHM has been inconsistent; for instance, 68% of the ₹300 crore allocated for 2025-26 was utilized, an improvement from 15.42% in 2024-25 and only 0.11% in 2023-24. The ongoing energy crisis, exacerbated by geopolitical conflicts in West Asia, has intensified scrutiny of India's progress. Data indicates discrepancies between ambitious budget



estimates and actual allocation; the 2023-24 budget for the mission initially set at ₹297 crore was cut to ₹100 crore, while the following budgets faced similar reductions. For 2026-27, the Union finance ministry allotted ₹600 crore, below the ₹800 crore requested by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), reflecting concerns over unspent funds and slow progress.

The MNRE spokesperson characterized green hydrogen as an emerging sector undergoing technological and market establishment, acknowledging that limited outputs are typical at this stage globally. Structural challenges, such as high electrolyser costs, hinder project timelines and investment viability, though the National Green Hydrogen Mission aims to address these systematically.

Key initiatives include the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition Programme (SIGHT), which incentivizes domestic electrolyser production and green hydrogen generation.

Pilot projects across sectors such as steel and transport are critical for gathering data to foster larger investments. Approximately 20 companies have reported a total of 7,968.87 tonnes capacity, with significant contributions from firms like JSW Steel and GAIL India.

The initiative originated with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement on August 15, 2021, asserting India's ambition to become a global hub for green hydrogen production and to inspire global clean energy transitions.

A man is arrested after sexually abusing 180 minors

Mumbai, Apr 15: In response to a complaint from a BJP MP, the police in Amravati, Maharashtra, swiftly detained a guy accused of sexually abusing at least 180 young girls and making more than 350 pornographic recordings. Paratwada city resident Mohammad Ayaz, also known as Tanveer, is accused of luring the females into a "love trap," transporting them to Mumbai and Pune, and recording pornographic movies of them. The girls were allegedly coerced into prostitution by using these videos as blackmail. Some were also extensively disseminated online. In a memo to Superintendent of Police (Rural) Vishal Anand, Rajya Sabha MP Anil Bonde said that the minors were routinely targeted through WhatsApp and Snapchat groups.

Additionally, Bonde threatened to hold demonstrations in front of the SP's office on Wednesday morning in the event that a Special Investigation Team (SIT) is not established. In order to protect the community's reputation from being damaged, some Muslims even went to the police station to demand that the accused face harsh punishment. According to reports, Mohammad Ayaz had previously held an AIMIM office. He appeared to be recording social media "reels" during the party's rallies and receiving a letter from Haji Irfan Khan, the Amravati president of the MIM, in pictures and videos that he posted on the internet.

However, after the situation became public, a number of these recordings were removed from his Instagram account. The police acted quickly in this case, apprehending Ayaz and bringing him before a judge today.

Ajinkya Rahane, the captain of the winless KKR, is having a lot of problems

New Delhi: As the captain of the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), Ajinkya Rahane has reached his lowest point in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season and has yet to win a single game. Rahane has been chastised by the Indian Premier League (IPL) Governing Council for a Code of Conduct violation in the most recent game, even though his club has not won any of the first five games, with the most recent loss occurring on Tuesday against the Chennai Super Kings (CSK). After his side failed to maintain the necessary over-rate against Rituraj Gaikwad's Super Kings in Chepauk, the KKR captain was fined Rs 12 lakh.

According to the IPL, "Kolkata Knight Riders Captain Ajinkya Rahane has been fined after his team maintained a slow over-rate during Match No. 22 of the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 against Chennai Super

Kings at MA Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai." Rahane was fined INR 12 lakhs because this was his team's first offense of the season under Article 2.22 of the IPL's Code of Conduct, which deals with minimum over-rate offenses. Regarding the game, pacer Anshul Kamboj continued his outstanding run, taking two wickets for thirty-two, while CSK spinner Noor Ahmad roared back to form with figures of three for twenty-one. As the Super Kings won their second game of the season and advanced to eighth place in the 10-team rankings with four points from five games, the two took five wickets between them. Despite late resistance from Ramandeep Singh, who top-scored for them with 35, and Rovman Powell, who contributed an undefeated 31, CSK, defending a competitive total of 192/5, struck early and kept control throughout, limiting KKR to 160/7 in 20

overs. Sunil Narine joined Finn Allen as KKR's opening combination for this game, replacing captain Rahane at the top. Allen went cheaply as Kamboj struck in the second over to give CSK an early breakthrough, while Narine demonstrated early purpose with a couple of sixes.

The three-time winners were battling at 36/2 for their lowest total after the power-play score since 2024 after Narine failed to build on his start and was defeated by pacer Khaleel Ahmed during the Power-play.

With a combination of boundaries and sixes, Rahane and Angkrish Raghuvanshi briefly increased the scoring rate in an attempt to rebuild the innings. However, KKR ultimately failed to reach the goal of 193 runs. With players like Finn Allen and Cameron Green struggling with the bat once more, they were limited to just 160/7.

Despite IPL 2026 difficulties, Rituraj Gaikwad brushes off form concerns



New Delhi: After two victories in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season, the five-time champion Chennai Super Kings (CSK) are back in action. CSK advanced to four points from five games on Tuesday by defeating the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) by 32 runs. For CSK, everything is coming together, but there is still one issue: captain Rituraj Gaikwad's performance. With a maximum score of 28 against the Punjab Kings, the right-handed hitter has only amassed 63 runs in five games. At the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Tuesday, Gaikwad even failed against KKR, coming back with a mere 7. The CSK captain is already under fire; many are urging Gaikwad to slide to No. 3 so that Ayush Mhatre and Sanju Samson can take full advantage of the powerplay. Gaikwad downplayed worries about his form during the post-match presentation, claiming he's training hard and a huge score is on the horizon. First of all,

it's nice to be on the winning side after a lengthy period. Even as I was batting, I could feel it entering my thoughts. However, I felt a little more at ease after the last game, and I'm feeling great right now. Just make sure I follow the team's or the situation's instructions. I have a great mental state and am feeling optimistic. Gaikwad stated, "Just a big knock is just around the corner." However, I will undoubtedly do it when necessary as long as the other guys are merely covering for me. "You will always have the support of the Yellow Army," he continued. After Sanju Samson and Dewald Brevis played knocks of 48 and 41, respectively, CSK scored 192/5 in the match between KKR and CSK. After that, Noor Ahmed made a comeback with numbers of 3/21 as CSK defeated KKR by 32 runs. Regarding the victory, Gaikwad remarked, "To be honest, I'm feeling good." I believe we successfully defended a high score once more. Given that the wicket altered significantly after the first seven or eight overs, I thought the score was par. It began to spin for a short while before stopping. We were initially aiming for 220 or 210, but we later decided that a score of 190 or 180 would be sufficient. After that, I believe all we needed to do was have a strong bowling power play. It was only a matter of keeping up that run rate after that. But even after the victory, Gaikwad didn't hold back when he called on his players to improve their fielding. "We only took one or two, but we dropped everything that came, so I felt like it was kind of okay. There is a lot of perspiration on the hands today. You certainly want to get better, but that's not an excuse," he remarked.

Samrat Choudhary becomes the first BJP politician to take the oath of office as chief minister of Bihar

Patna, Apr 15: Samrat Choudhary took the oath of office as Bihar's chief minister after being chosen on Tuesday to lead the BJP legislature party. With this, Choudhary becomes the state's first BJP politician to assume the top position. After Nitish Kumar resigned after winning the Rajya Sabha, Choudhary became chief minister. The BJP leader was the home minister and deputy chief minister in the Nitish Kumar-led government prior to being appointed chief minister. As deputy chief ministers of Bihar, Choudhary was sworn in alongside Bijendra Prasad Yadav and Vijay Kumar Chaudhary. After being chosen as the BJP's legislative leader in the Bihar assembly, Choudhary ascended to the highest

positions. The Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as the largest party as a result of their resounding victory, even though the BJP and Janata Dal (United) fought the Bihar elections as the NDA alliance. Choudhary met with Governor Syed Ata Hasnain to assert his claim to form a new government in Bihar following his appointment as legislative leader. Samrat Choudhary thanked the party leadership in a post on X shortly after being selected as leader, describing the position as a "sacred opportunity" to serve the people of Bihar. "I sincerely thank the Bharatiya Janata Party's central leadership for putting their faith back in me. For me, this is a spiritual opportunity to serve the people of Bihar, not just a job," he

continued. After seasoned politician Nitish Kumar resigned, a member of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was sworn in as the next chief minister of the eastern state of Bihar. Kumar's deputy, Samrat Choudhary, was sworn in as the first BJP chief minister of Bihar. Choudhary has managed significant electoral campaigns in several states and held high positions in the BJP, including state president. However, he now has a huge role to play. For the majority of the previous 20 years, Kumar—one of Bihar's most powerful leaders—served as chief minister, frequently shifting political allegiances to maintain his position of authority. Bihar, which has over 74 million vot-

ers, is the poorest state in India, with millions of its residents leaving the state in search of employment elsewhere. Additionally, it is one of the few states in India where the BJP has not yet been able to create an independent government. Last month, Kumar, a member of the Janata Dal (United), or JD(U), an ally of the BJP, was elected to the Upper House of parliament. Due to his declining health, the 75-year-old politician's transfer had been planned for some time. Choudhary's appointment was made possible by his resignation as chief minister on Tuesday. "I have to accept that Bihar has changed and show him [Kumar] the respect he deserves. Samrat Choudhary will soon take over as chief minister. BJP leader Ravi

Shankar Prasad told reporters earlier, "This is a big and historic day." Choudhary, 57, from a political family in Bihar, has over three decades of political experience across various parties. Initially a member of the Rashtriya Janata Dal, he joined the JD(U) in 2014 but switched to the BJP in 2017.

After Kumar's alliance changes, Choudhary became a notable critic but reestablished ties when the BJP and JD(U) allied again in 2024. He now serves as deputy chief minister and previously held the influential position of home minister. His rise is viewed by some as a move by the BJP to expand its social base, though others question his fit within the party's traditional structure.

Madhya Pradesh Could See Political Unrest If Two Union Ministers Win the Poll

New Delhi, Apr 15: The recent polling outcomes in Kerala and Tamil Nadu could significantly impact the political landscape in Madhya Pradesh, with potential consequences extending across party lines. Two Rajya Sabha MPs from Madhya Pradesh, Union Ministers Dr. L. Murugan and George Kurian, are contesting in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, respectively. Their electoral fortunes may influence the availability of seats in Madhya Pradesh's Rajya Sabha, where three positions recently became vacant following the completion of terms of key political figures, including Congress's Digvijaya Singh and BJP's George Kurian and Dr. Sumer Singh Solanki. The stakes are high; if Dr. Murugan wins and vacates his Rajya Sabha seat, it would trigger a scramble for the additional vacant seat, leading to complex political maneuvering among both the BJP and Congress. The formula for Rajya Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh involves calculating

the number of votes required based on the number of MLAs and vacancies: with 230 MLAs and three seats, the quota for victory stands at 58 votes. Given the BJP's strength of over 160 MLAs, it can easily secure two seats.

Conversely, Congress, holding 65 MLAs, has complications due to disqualifications and seat losses, effectively reducing its count to 62, just above the required threshold. This precarious position implies that even minor shifts, such as defections or cross-voting from within its ranks, could jeopardize Congress's chances for a seat.

The context is further complicated by internal disputes within Congress, as evidenced by a significant disqualification of Rajendra Bhati, and a nullification of Mukesh Malhotra's election tied to undisclosed criminal charges. The political dynamics are becoming increasingly pronounced as some Congress MLAs begin to appear at events

associated with RSS ideologies, exposing ideological rifts within the party. Should Murugan transition to state politics, this may create vacancies in the Union Cabinet, fueling interest among and speculation about Madhya Pradesh leaders such as Harsh Chouhan and Ranjana Baghel competing for positions in 'Team Modi.' Moreover, internal lobbying within Congress is intensifying, particularly as Digvijaya Singh declares his exit from Rajya Sabha politics after multiple terms.

The party is now faced with the intricate task of ensuring representation among Dalits, Brahmins, and Sindhis to meet diverse constituency demands. The situation is further complicated by Kamleshwar Dodiya from the Bharat Adivasi Party, who has indicated plans to field a candidate, making the race even more unpredictable. In such a tightly contested environment, each vote is poised to have a crucial impact on the final outcome of the elections.

A Maharashtra man is arrested after sexually abusing 180 minors and recording 350 videos



Mumbai, Apr 15: In response to a complaint from a BJP MP, the police in Amravati, Maharashtra, swiftly detained a guy accused of sexually abusing at least 180 young girls and making more than 350 pornographic recordings. Paratwada city resident Mohammad Ayaz, also known as Tanveer, is accused of luring the females into a "love trap," transporting them to Mumbai and Pune, and recording pornographic movies of them. The girls were allegedly coerced into prostitution by using these videos as blackmail. Some were also extensively disseminated online. In a memo to Superintendent of

Police (Rural) Vishal Anand, Rajya Sabha MP Anil Bonde said that the minors were routinely targeted through WhatsApp and Snapchat groups. Additionally, Bonde threatened to hold demonstrations in front of the SP's office on Wednesday morning in the event that a Special Investigation Team (SIT) is not established. In order to protect the community's reputation from being damaged, some Muslims even went to the police station to demand that the accused face harsh punishment. According to reports, Mohammad Ayaz had previously held an AIMIM office. He appeared to be recording social media "reels" during the party's rallies and receiving a letter from Haji Irfan Khan, the Amravati president of the MIM, in pictures and videos that he posted on the internet. However, after the situation became public, a number of these recordings were removed from his Instagram account. The police acted quickly in this case, apprehending Ayaz and bringing him before a judge today.

RCB monitors Virat Kohli's fitness as they eye victory against Lucknow Super Giants



Bengaluru: The Royal Challengers Bengaluru have made a strong start to their IPL 2026 campaign, winning three of their first four matches. However, they face a concern ahead of their clash against the Lucknow Super Giants on Wednesday, April 15 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. Virat Kohli picked up an ankle injury during RCB's 18-run win over the Mumbai

Indians at the Wankhede Stadium. With Kohli and Salt forming a settled opening pair, his absence could disrupt RCB's balance.

The Rishabh Pant-led Super Giants, meanwhile, have had a mixed campaign, winning two of their four matches and lingering in the bottom half of the table. Led by Rishabh Pant, they will need to step up if they are to break into the top four.

Virat Kohli picked up an injury, and while there's no confirmation that he will miss the game, he hasn't been officially cleared either. However, RCB fans can take some comfort from the fact that he returned to the nets, facing bowlers and throwdown specialists, and showed no visible discomfort while batting. Fast Bowler Rasikh Salam Dar, though, chose not to comment on Kohli's fitness in

the pre-match press conference. Earlier, there was speculation on social media that Kohli might stay back in Mumbai and skip the trip to Bengaluru. But with him having travelled to Bengaluru, it certainly boosts RCB's hopes. If Kohli is unavailable, RCB could look at Venkatesh Iyer as an opening option. Iyer has batted only once in the tournament after coming in as an Impact Sub against Rajasthan Royals, making 29 off 15 balls. Lucknow Super Giants haven't quite been at their best, and heading into their next game, history isn't on their side either. LSG have lost both their matches at the Chinnaswamy.

They came close in 2023 but fell short despite Nicholas Pooran's blistering 19-ball 62. In 2024, the defeat was far more one-sided, going down by 28 runs. This season, LSG have won two matches, but both victories have gone right down to the wire. They could easily have lost to Kolkata Knight Riders as well, had Mukul Choudhary not produced a match-winning knock at the Eden Gardens. RCB, on the other hand, have been dominant at the Chinnaswamy, dismantling both Sunrisers Hyderabad and Chennai Super Kings. Given the form of the two teams, it wouldn't be surprising if RCB.

Uzbekistan's Sindarov to Face Gukesh in World Championship After Candidates Chess Victory



New Delhi: Uzbekistan's Javokhir Sindarov produced a commanding performance to win the 2026 Candidates Chess Tournament on Tuesday, sealing the title with a round to spare and booking a World Championship clash against reigning champion D Gukesh later this year. The 20-year-old confirmed his victory after a controlled draw against Anish Giri in Round 13, a result that ensured he could not be caught at the top of the standings. Sindarov finished the tournament unbeaten, underlining both his consistency and his ability to manage critical mo-

ments across the two-week event. Rather than relying on a late surge, Sindarov built his campaign steadily, picking up key wins in the middle rounds before shifting focus to control and consolidation. By the closing stages, he held a clear lead and navigated the final stretch without taking unnecessary risks. India's R Praggnanandhaa, the lone Indian participant in the Candidates Open section after qualifying through the 2025 FIDE Circuit, was unable to stay in contention for the top spot despite a promising start. Sindarov's victory sets up a high-profile World

Championship match against D Gukesh, who made history in December 2024 by becoming the youngest world champion. Gukesh defeated Ding Liren 7.5-6.5 in Singapore, breaking a 39-year record held by Garry Kasparov, who had won the title at 22 in 1985.

The upcoming contest is expected to be the youngest World Championship match in history, signalling a clear generational shift at the top of the sport. The venue and dates for the match are yet to be finalised, with the showdown scheduled for later in 2026.

Atletico advance to semifinals despite 1-2 second-leg loss against Barcelona



Madrid: Atletico Madrid reached the UEFA Champions League semi-finals for the first time in nine years after surviving a strong comeback attempt from Barcelona in the quarter-finals at the Riyadh Air Metropolitan on Wednesday.

Despite losing the second leg 1-2 to Barcelona, Diego Simeone's side progressed 3-2 on aggregate thanks to their first-leg advantage, according to the UEFA Champions League website. Barcelona started brilliantly and scored early through Lamine Yamal in the 4th minute.

Ferran Torres then levelled the tie on aggregate in the 24th minute with a powerful strike, putting the visitors in control.

However, Atletico responded quickly as their forward, Ademola Lookman, scored in the 31st minute to restore their aggregate lead, giving the home side a crucial advantage going into halftime. In the second half, Barcelona pushed hard for another goal, introducing attacking players like Robert Lewandowski and Marcus Rashford, but Atletico Madrid defended strongly and held their

shape. The match turned further in Atletico's favour when Eric Garcia was sent off after being shown the red card in the 79th minute for a last-man foul Barcelona contin website. Lamine Yamal opened the scoring inside four minutes after finding space in the box, continuing his rapid rise on the European stage. The goal also saw him become the youngest player to reach 11 goals in the competition, moving past Kylian Mbappé's previous mark. Atletico struggled to settle as the visitors dictated the tempo.

Hazlewood and Duffy Duo: How Impact Subs Could Solve RCB's Bowling Puzzle

Vihari's Impact Player Plan for RCB's Overseas

New Delhi: Former India Test batter Hanuma Vihari has proposed an interesting tactical solution for Royal Challengers Bengaluru to accommodate both Josh Hazlewood and Jacob Duffy in the same XI. Speaking on his YouTube channel, Vihari said RCB could make smart use of the Impact Player rule to maximise their bowling resources without compromising balance. According to Vihari, RCB could field an Indian pacer such as Mangesh Yadav or Rasikh Salam Dar in the playing XI alongside Hazlewood. This would allow them to include both Romario Shepherd and Duffy in their list of Impact Subs. The flexibility, he explained, lies in reading the match situation. If RCB's batting struggles, Shepherd can be brought in to strengthen the lower order.

However, if the top order delivers, which has often been the case this season, the team can instead opt for Duffy as the Impact Player to bolster their bowling attack. This becomes particularly relevant given that Shepherd, despite being an all-rounder, has not been heavily relied upon with the ball so far this Season. Vihari's



Suggestion addresses one of RCB's key selection dilemmas, especially with Hazlewood's return adding to their overseas options. Hazlewood was instrumental in RCB's title-winning campaign last season, finishing as the team's leading wicket-taker with 22 wickets in 12 matches at an average of 8.77. However, the Australian pacer has been sidelined in recent months due to injury, with his last competitive appearance coming in November 2025 for New South Wales. He also missed major assignments, including the Ashes and the T20 World Cup 2026. He made

His return in the game against Rajasthan Royals in Guwahati, where he picked up figures of 2 for 44. However, Hazlewood was back on the bench in the next match against Mumbai Indians, with Duffy returning to the playing XI.

In Hazlewood's absence earlier in the season, Duffy impressed with five wickets in his first two matches and played a key role in RCB's win over Sunrisers Hyderabad. He removed Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma before dismissing Nitish Kumar Reddy, setting the tone early in the innings. Despite his strong

performances, fitting Duffy into the XI alongside Hazlewood has remained a challenge due to overseas player restrictions. Vihari's Impact Player strategy offers a potential workaround, giving RCB the option to deploy both pacers based on match situations and maintain their balance across departments.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru can use the Impact Player rule to accommodate both Josh Hazlewood and Jacob Duffy by naming an Indian pacer in the starting XI while listing the overseas bowlers as substitutes. This strategy, proposed by former India batter Hanuma Vihari, allows the team to maintain the mandatory limit of four overseas players in the active lineup. According to the tactical solution, RCB could field an Indian fast bowler like Mangesh Yadav or Rasikh Salam Dar in the initial playing XI alongside Hazlewood. This allows the team to include both Jacob Duffy and all-rounder Romario Shepherd among the Impact Subs. Depending on the match situation, RCB can then swap an Indian player for Duffy to bolster the bowling attack or for Shepherd if the recent.

MS Dhoni's influential words spark a significant turnaround for Noor Ahmad at Chepauk Stadium

Chennai: On a surface that rewarded patience and precision, Noor Ahmad delivered a decisive spell to help Chennai Super Kings secure a 32-run win over Kolkata Knight Riders on Tuesday. Defending 192 on a two-paced Chepauk track, Noor returned figures of 3 for 21, removing Ajinkya Rahane, Rinku Singh and Cameron Green as KKR collapsed from 79 for 2 to 90 for 6. "It was good. The wicket helped today. There was a little bit of turn for him.

The other wickets are quite flat, but today it was a little slower through the air. There was more side spin on the ball and more drop," CSK bowling coach Sridharan Sriram said after the match. While conditions played a part, Sriram pointed to preparation as a key factor behind Noor's Turnaround. "That is something he has been working on. Even MS had a long chat with him in one of the practice sessions, especially about getting his leg-break going. I think it was very



Helpful today, and the results were there to see." Noor's impact was built on finding the right length on a surface that offered grip. "Being able to get some deviation off the surface is very And that is what he has been Working On. Everyone accepts that there will be days when wickets are flat, but still looking to be aggressive, putting revs on the ball and getting it to spin will help. That is how you induce mistakes," Sriram explained. There was also key input during the innings from fellow spinner Akeal Hosein. "In his first over, he was either a bit short or slightly too full. Once he found that in-between length,

He became very difficult to play. Credit to Akeal as well because he pointed that out during the strategic timeout." Sriram also highlighted the role of MS Dhoni, whose interaction with Noor during training helped sharpen his approach. "One of his strengths is that he gets late movement.

His release is very good and the ball moves late. When he gets it right consistently, it becomes difficult for batters." Beyond skill, Sriram emphasised Noor's preparation and awareness. "He is a very good student of the game. He analyses batters, studies where to place his fielders and understands what speeds

to bowl. He comes prepared." With KKR unable to recover from the middle-order collapse, CSK's control through spin proved decisive. This run of form makes it the worst start for Kolkata in the history of the IPL as they continue to search for the answers required to overturn their fortunes this season.

While Noor grabbed the spotlight, CSK captain Ruturaj Gaikwad perhaps flew under the radar. The captain and the CSK think tank managed their bowlers to perfection, keeping calm heads when the score was not enough. So, on today's IPL Play of the Day, we feature CSK captain Ruturaj Gaikwad, who we thought was the difference-maker in the field today. Gaikwad's exceptional performance did not come with the bat today. He continued his horrendous run of form with the bat, hitting it straight to Rovman Powell at mid-wicket. Gaikwad was the first to fall, which compounded his four failures that he has seen league.

IPL 2026: RCB Face Virat Kohli Fitness Scare Before Crucial Clash Against LSG



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Stadium. With Kohli and Salt forming a settled opening pair, his absence could disrupt RCB's balance. The Rishabh Pant-led Super Giants, meanwhile, have had a mixed campaign, winning two of their four matches and lingering in the bottom half of the table. Led by Rishabh Pant, they will need to step up if they are to break into the top four. Virat Kohli picked up an injury, and while there's no confirmation

that he will miss the game, he hasn't been officially cleared either. However, RCB fans can take some comfort from the fact that he returned to the nets, facing bowlers and throwdown specialists, and showed no visible discomfort while batting. Fast bowler Rasikh Salam Dar, though, chose not to comment on Kohli's fitness in the pre-match press conference. Earlier, there was speculation on social media that Kohli might

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